AN IDEA OF POSTWAR JAPAN: HITOSHI ASHIDA AND JAPANESE LIBERALISM

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Note**

Introduction

This article will investigate the development of liberalism in postwar Japan, through an examination of Ashida Hitoshi’s policies — both foreign and domestic. Because Ashida resisted the militaristic totalitarianism and the alliance with fascist Italy and Germany during the war, he is well known as a Japanese liberal; he moved from a career in diplomacy to become a member of the Diet in 1932; thereafter he was principally concerned with international matters throughout his career. Ashida founded a new conservative party, Minshutō (Democratic Party) and managed a two-term coalition government (1947–48) with Nihon Shakaitō (the Social Democratic Party of Japan, herein referred to as the Japan Socialist Party) as Foreign Minister and Prime Minister. After the outbreak of the Korean War, Ashida headed the rearmament movement throughout the 1950s.

Until now Ashida Hitoshi has only been considered in a piecemeal fashion as part of the liberal tradition. The limited number of Ashida Hitoshi studies has mainly focused on two areas: his centrist administration¹, and rearmament.² However, there has been almost no consideration at all of Ashida’s domestic and foreign policy together, even allowing for their inherent qualitative differences.³ Assessments of Ashida Hitoshi have been sharply divided between leading players in the centrist government who adopt a revisionist capitalist perspective, and hard-line advocates on rearmament who adopt an anti-communist perspective. And yet, there was a systematic theory that pervaded and unified both his domestic and foreign policies, with liberalism as its intellectual foundation.⁴

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Here we will attempt to forge a relative understanding of the history of postwar Japanese foreign policy by looking at both aspects: liberalism, and the perspective that has been taken to date on the history of postwar Japan’s foreign policy and politics. Specifically: we can acquire an understanding of the process whereby the structure of Japan’s politics and foreign policy was narrowed down to ‘the Yoshida Line’ and ‘the 1955 system’ by: 1) re-evaluating the liberal tradition; 2) re-evaluating ideas concerning action; and 3) conducting a comprehensive analysis of external and domestic policy.  

First, I define what I mean by liberalism: ‘in economic terms it means capitalism, and in political terms it means a conceptual system that legitimates parliamentary democracy’. Liberalism is a term that acquires diverse multiple meanings according to time and place, and in Japan too liberalism exhibited its own particular trajectory. This is exemplified in Yoshino’s Sakuzō’s application of the term ‘minponshugi’ to describe parliamentary democracy in Japan.

The Yoshida Line and the 1955 System

First let us revisit the so-called axis of Japan’s postwar politics and foreign policy, namely the ‘Yoshida line’ and ‘the 1955 system’. In September 1951, Yoshida Shigeru signed both the San Francisco Peace Treaty, and the Japan–US Security Treaty. In response to the request from the United States to re-arm, Yoshida brandished Article 9’s ‘abolition of war’ clause and instead prioritised economic growth. ‘Light rearmament, reliance on the United States for security, and an emphasis on the economy and trade’ in the form of Article 9 and the Japan–
US Security Treaty coalesced as the fundamental line of postwar Japanese diplomacy, to the point that it became known as 'the Yoshida line' or 'the Yoshida doctrine'. This led to postwar Japan becoming an economic superpower. But at the same time, this situation created some problems. In particular: the background to Article 9 and its ‘abolition of war’ clause combined an antipathy to war dating from 1946, with increasing international cooperation and pacifism; whereas the Japan–US Security Treaty was born in 1951 in a Cold War context and represented the foundation for US security policy through systemically guaranteeing the stationing of troops in Japan. When we put these two phenomena together, it is evident that they are fundamentally incompatible.

Having inherited the structure that had internalised this distortion, the government came under attack from within the Liberal Democratic Party and the progressive forces centred on the Japan Socialist Party. Despite this the Japan–US Security Treaty came into effect, and without any real policy debate having taken place, two divergent yet concurrent debates concerning the constitution took place. One called for constitutional revision by resorting to the kind of traditional nationalist rhetoric that had been employed to mobilise the population behind building a modern nation state; the other contained its own internal inconsistency, having invoked one of the pillars of progressive thought — to overcome the notion of the modern nation state — and while ‘free riding’ on the Security Treaty, advocated ‘non-resistance’ and ‘unarmed neutrality’ while arguing for the preservation of the constitution. Neither position was realistic. The Yoshida Line, having consolidated itself in the 1960s and passed over the conservative/progressive conceptual conflict that was in any case divorced from real policy, was then unable to instil in the people a sense of political responsibility for themselves. Ashida was able to see through the problems that had been internalised into the Yoshida Line in his own lifetime, and relentlessly sounded the alarm about ‘the political vacuum’ and the absence of political responsibility he saw around him.

In reality, as the horizons of Japan’s diplomacy expanded to include Asia and the United Nations, and others began to question Japan’s responsibilities as an economic superpower, the inconsistencies that were embedded in the Yoshida Line became apparent. In 1993 with the Cold War having drawn to a close, the advent of the non-LDP non-communist coalition government led by Hosokawa Morihiro heralded the end of the 1955 system. Then from the 1990s onwards, the fundamental premise of the Yoshida Line from its inception, namely securing economic prosperity, was a casualty of ongoing economic contraction. We can say with these developments the mechanism that had sustained parliamentary debate also collapsed. The arrangement whereby progressive forces used their numbers in parliament to
restrain the conservative reactionary attempts to pull back the democratisation policies of the Occupation ended. At the same time, the conservatives’ abandonment of socialist reforms and their domination of parliament ended. All the while during this arrangement, both conservatives and progressives had striven to achieve economic recovery and development. But from the 1990s onwards, debate over the historical significance of the Yoshida Line and its successor began to brew. Indeed, my own research can be categorised as part of this attempt to develop a comparative appraisal of the Yoshida Line. To anticipate my conclusion, I want to focus on Ashida’s advocacy of the ‘liberal democratic’ line, which from the outset was one of the alternatives to the Yoshida Line. While both individuals were conservatives who based their thinking on liberalism, they had different ideas about postwar Japan.

The Diversity of Liberalism in Postwar Japan

Here I wish to explain the scope of my key analytical term ‘liberalism’. We can put it as a question, namely ‘what was the nature of liberalism in Japanese political and diplomatic history?’ Against the backdrop of the rise of social problems in the 1920s and 1930s along with economic problems and the decay of party politics, the liberalism that had been pulling capitalism and democracy in its wake had suffered a loss of confidence. On the one hand, in the context of the global depression of 1929, the stream of thought that regarded socialism as promising — in that it matched individual freedom with the notion of equality — became significant; on the other hand in this environment liberalism developed two new streams: one pitched social democracy against the nationalist-totalitarian criticism of socialism and communism; the other insisted that no matter what, liberalism had to respect the individual in society.

In any case through the debate on liberalism, for the first time political liberalism was defined in opposition to socialism. However, during the war the problems of class conflict and equality were forcefully eliminated by nationalist totalitarianism or by what we might call the fusion of left and right in the form of national socialism, leaving the centrist liberalist philosophy as the receptacle for those ideas. Having been forced to be silent in wartime, their definition of ‘equality’ had to be carried over into the postwar period.

Then with the advent of defeat, the category of ‘liberalist’ once again appeared in the centre of politics. Ashida and social democrats such as Nishio Suehiro and Katayama Tetsu together with the leading anti-Yoshida politician Hatoyama Ichiro were originally close to
each other. They had already opposed the pro-war administration during the war, and had contested the so-called pro-war election of 1942 without the support of a political party. Ashida, Hatoyama, and Katayama formed the Dōkōkai (the Associates Group). At the same time, Nishio and his Property-less Classes Party colleagues amalgamated with another small collective to form the Koa Giin Dōmei (Asian Development Parliamentary League). Both groups had run interference against the Tojo administration in a fierce electoral campaign. The extent to which this group forged a powerful identity as a cohort is amply demonstrated by the fact that in postwar, when party politics were being revived, the Liberal Party worked hard to include all of these individuals in their party. When the Liberal Party was formed, Hatoyama originally had it in mind to create a new progressive party using the members of the war-time Dōkōkai and the Proletarian Party affiliates as the core membership, Katayama Tetsu and Suzuki Bunji also joining in. All of these individuals shared an anti-communist stance and a proclivity towards protecting liberal democracy (parliamentary democracy), and their wartime opposition to the political and economic New Order meant that we can justly depict them as ‘liberalist’ in orientation. Clearly this situation demonstrates that at this stage, the battle lines between liberals and socialists had not yet been drawn.

On the one hand, postwar democracy was given a great push by the political participation of bureaucrats and commentators. In both the negotiations for independence and in the task of working in accordance with the Occupation administration, foreign ministry bureaucrats and political/international journalists stood out as major players. Shidehara Kijūrō, Shigemitsu Mamoru and Yoshida as former foreign ministry bureaucrats along with former journalists Ogata Taketora and Ishibashi Tanzan are representative of this group. While all of this was happening, the postwar political scene that they had flung themselves into was in the process of rejuvenating debates over class conflict, and liberalism was defining itself through association with tradition and order as a form of moderatism, aligning itself with conservatism and in opposition to socialism and the proletarian party forces.

But there were many strands of liberalism present within postwar conservatism. Because of this the conservatives were not very well organised and until 1955, they embroiled themselves in debates over conservative orthodoxy to the point where we can describe the situation as not so much a conflict between conservatives and progressives, but as a conflict amongst conservatives alone. Yoshida and his peers who entered postwar politics did not really share the same background as Ashida or Hatoyama, who as parliamentarians in the prewar era had experienced ‘constitutional politics’ under the auspices of the imperial constitution and the frustration of parliamentary democracy, and through the assault from nationalist-
totalitarianism had struggled to articulate their own intellectual positions. It is thought that instead Yoshida erased the war experience altogether, and sought instead to return to the two party system featuring the Rikken Seiyūkai (Friends of Constitutional Government) and the Rikken Minseitō (Constitutional Democratic Party) of the 1920s as his inspiration for postwar democracy. For this reason Ashida and Hatoyama, who worked assiduously to establish postwar party politics and a new constitution, were able to have a greater impact through the sheer force of their awareness of the limitations of ‘constitutional politics’ under the imperial constitution, based on their bitter memories as war-time parliamentarians.

Although Ashida and Hatoyama shared an attitude towards parliamentary democracy, Ashida was influenced by the politicisation of social and economic problems in the aftermath of WWI, and this made him more intensely conscious of the growth of socialism and class conflict. In other words, he believed that the clock could not be turned back from postwar to the 1920s. In one respect we can also say that Ashida was extremely aware of liberalism as a concept that was positioned in opposition to socialism. And it was this aspect in particular that became the foundation of centrist political theory.

Ashida aspired to forge a political landscape that comprised a rightist centrist party and a leftist centrist party. Since the Minshuto, Ashida’s journey towards a second conservative party was informed by the premise that liberal democracy should represent the conservative mainstream in the form of a rightist centrist faction. When confronted by the reunification of the two socialist parties and the collapse of the Yoshida government, Ashida realised his main objective of bringing liberals together by unifying the conservatives, but Ashida’s ‘liberal democracy’ line did not become the mainstream.

**Ashida’s Liberal Democracy**

First, I outline what Ashida meant by ‘liberal democracy’. From 1932 onwards and during the war era, when Ashida Hitoshi moved from the diplomatic service into parliament, he consistently promoted parliamentarism and cooperation with Great Britain and the United States. In the postwar period, he was renowned as a liberal for the stance he had taken during war-time in opposing military-led totalitarianism and the pro-war movement, and axis-based diplomacy.

Ashida’s theory of politics and diplomacy conveyed a global historical perspective based on a liberalist intellectual foundation along with a radical internationalist awareness that
underscored a fusion of domestic and external policies, giving them a systematic theoretical quality.\(^{23}\) Firstly we can consider Ashida’s take on post-WWI history. For Ashida this history had two aspects. One was the fact that following WWI, democracy — which had its origins in Europe — was developed around the world under the leadership of the United States.\(^{24}\) A second aspect was that while this was happening externally, within individual countries democracy was manifested as momentum from the internal to the external, as personal liberty became the foundation for domestic policy based on parliamentary democracy, then external policy, and finally engagement with international politics.\(^{25}\) In other words it was a kind of democratisation of foreign policy, whereby personal freedom was the base upon which domestic policy was established via parliamentary democracy and legitimised by the will of the people, and ‘people’s diplomacy’\(^ {26}\) promoted the safety and interests of the people externally. This ‘democratisation of foreign policy’\(^ {27}\) contributed to the development of international cooperation through consultative diplomacy between democratic states in accordance with the rule of law.

Ashida called his liberalism ‘constitutional liberalism’\(^ {28}\), which in essence meant a democracy where liberalism was guaranteed by the constitution. This is a credo that accorded with Minobe Tatsukichi’s idea of ‘constitutional politics’. We can define ‘constitutional politics’ as ‘political accountability’ based on a ‘parliament’ that ‘represents the will of the people’, giving tangible political form to ‘the rule of law’.\(^ {29}\) In other words ‘constitutionalism’ is representative democracy, which is interchangeable with liberal democracy. While democracy consists of ‘a form of politics where power resides with the people’\(^ {30}\), this can broadly be said to exist in two forms: participatory democracy (direct democracy) and liberal democracy (indirect democracy). But Ashida’s ‘constitutional liberalism’ attempted significantly to expand the understanding of liberal democracy as it had existed under the imperial constitution, and in the postwar period he tried to realise this through a clearer articulation of ‘the rule of law’ in Japan’s constitution.

Certainly in normative terms Ashida’s ‘constitutional liberalism’ comprised parliamentary democracy internally, and international cooperativism externally. However, while Ashida saw democracy as a global trend, he had already realised that, as a developing nation, Japan’s exclusion or expulsion from this global trend would endanger Japan’s ‘freedom and independence’.\(^ {31}\) The tension between this principle and this reality compelled Ashida to develop a medium to long-term perspective based on a sober analysis of the current situation. By more securely guaranteeing ‘constitutional liberalism’ through the constitution, Ashida aspired to rebuild parliamentary democracy. Through including dependable labour unions in
their ranks, centrist politics could mediate the clash between labour forces and class conflict, prevent revolution at the hands of the rapidly expanding property-less classes, and sustain parliamentary politics. This was Ashida’s strategy.32

Ashida understood that the conflict between workers and employers at the heart of the eruption of social problems was part and parcel of the development of democracy.33 Knowing that when it came to the rearmament movement that it would be the workers, housewives, youth and intellectuals who would be the bearers of democratic politics in postwar Japan, Ashida appealed to them on the basis of anti-communism and ‘the democratization of foreign policy’. Those people had endured gruesome experiences on the battlefield and had felt wartime oppression, and they were increasing their opposition to the Yoshida administration’s dogmatic approach to rearmament. Ashida wanted to avoid what he saw as radicalisation in the direction of anti-Americanism and unarmed neutrality.

This was also an attempt on Ashida’s part both to reunite the people with politics, as well as use constitutional revision to resolve the ‘distortions’ of the Yoshida line. Originally, Ashida did not see Article 9 of the constitution as implying a denial of the right of self-defence or the maintenance of forces to achieve that end34, but gradually he began to feel that it was necessary to revise Article 9 because Yoshida’s interpretation had been dominant.35 Yoshida’s clause started to be interpreted as making the maintenance of troops unconstitutional.36 This enabled the Yoshida administration to pretend that it was not engaged in rearmament; it also provided the left with a legal foundation for their position on unarmed neutrality. In fact, the unconstitutional nature of maintaining defence forces had started to become the common interpretation of Article 9. Ashida accordingly began to accept that if rearmament was to be realised on the basis of popular will, then constitutional revision would become essential. But at the same time, Ashida felt keenly that in the five years it took to establish the new constitution and conclude a peace treaty, the international environment surrounding Japan had altered dramatically, much more than he had envisaged. The unity that had been evident in the immediate postwar years for the sake of securing international peace had dissolved in the face of the signature Cold War divisions of US–Russian conflict, and the break-up of China and Korea.37

But as Occupation policy towards Japan shifted from democratization to economic independence, the political world gradually became the axis of conflict between particular political positions. Policies for economic recovery involving liberal economic policy versus policies in favour of a command economy; and taking the opportunity afforded by the peace
treaty to rearm and enter into the Japan–US Security Treaty arrangement versus the stance for unarmed neutrality, were two examples of this kind of disparate approach. These policy conflicts ultimately converged in the form of the 1955 system, and threatened to bury the political system a second time.  

Consequently Ashida’s rearmament movement became distorted. What had originally been a proposal for the pre-eminence of parliament and democratic oversight of the military in the form of civilian control, had become tied up with the Kenkokukai (Nation Building Society)’s president Akao Bin and other former military men who invoked quite nationalistic rhetoric. In this way the original theory behind Ashida’s rearmament movement, namely that of democracy, became entangled with ‘traditional nationalism’, and was recorded in history encumbered by this incompatible image.

The Ashida Line in Postwar Japan

So how can we assess Ashida’s ‘liberal democracy’ line in this maelstrom of the real world? In the prewar days, Ashida called his position on liberalism ‘constitutional liberalism’, which we can see as a kind of successor to the parliamentary democracy of the People’s Rights Movement. But the prewar parliament that operated under the auspices of the imperial constitution had been unable to fulfil its function of political accountability, and instead had facilitated the dictatorship of a bureaucracy centred on the military that rode the wave of nationalistic totalitarianism.

In the postwar era Ashida became involved with the rebuilding of ‘constitutional liberalism’. At first, Ashida became involved with the reconstruction of party politics and constitutional revision, but for him this was not so much an exercise in securing ‘accountable politics’ through ‘constitutional liberalism’ as it was an effort to reconstruct a rock solid system. In the first Yoshida administration, Ashida served as the chair of the Imperial Constitution Revision Sub-Committee where he performed a pivotal role. In this Sub-Committee it was the Prologue phrase on ‘national sovereignty’ and the Article 9 reference to ‘the abolition of war’ that garnered the most attention. In addition to making the representative parliament the principal subject of accountable politics, Ashida aspired to guarantee once again through the ‘abolition of war’ clause that Japan would not participate in external armed conflict. He also wanted to demonstrate in an unambiguous way what Japan stood for as a participant in postwar international politics as countries pursued international cooperation through the rule of law. For Ashida, this would enable Japan to retrieve its independence as soon as possible. As Foreign Minister in the Katayama administration, Ashida put this forward in the form of the ‘Ashida Memorandum’ and the Ashida Initiative.
On the one hand, the re-ignition of class conflict in the context of postwar democracy complicated the running of parliament. Ashida tried to support parliamentary politics by constructing an accord between the different ideological positions. He did this with his notions of ‘revised capitalism’ and ‘social solidarity’, through which he thought it would be possible to build an association with the more stable labour unions. Ashida’s vision for centrist politics saw it as a way to prevent the labour offensive from going into overdrive, along with preventing the expansion of communist forces or the united front through the radicalisation of socialism; thus he attempted to craft a kind of preventative strategy against that kind of socialism. While Ashida actually led the centrist administration in 1948–1949, having experienced the rigors of total war he was sensitive to the fact that the rapid pace of democratisation was making domestic politics and foreign policy, and foreign and domestic policy and the economy, fall badly out of synch. Nonetheless Ashida continued to emphasise the lead role of parliament in the policymaking process, placing politics ahead of social or economic problems. But as the conflict between the United States and Russia became inevitable, the shift in Occupation policy from disarmament and democracy to economic independence meant that through debates over the Dodge Line the political realm became an axis of conflict between two economic policy positions: liberal versus managed economic policy. Joseph Dodge announced the financial policy for Japan on 7 March 1949. It aimed for Japanese economic independence and commended for example decreasing the scope of government intervention. In this environment, Yoshida’s Minshu Jiyūtō (Democratic Liberal Party) members, who had been marginalised under the centrist administration, developed and clarified their liberal - economic conservative line. Ashida stuck to a theory of political liberalism to the end in his opposition to the Dodge Line and in his advocacy of an association with the socialist party. However, ultimately the thrust of Ashida’s centrist politics was obliterated as economic problems intensified.

With the advent of the 1950s and the outbreak of the Korean War, a unilateral peace treaty was mooted against the backdrop of the spread of the Cold War throughout Asia. Now politics became fixated on new conflicts concerning a peace treaty and rearmament. Ashida strove to achieve a supra-partisan position between conservatives and progressives over the question of a unilateral peace treaty, but he could not get a positive response from Yoshida, and the representation of the right faction of the socialist party was shrinking within the party; ultimately he could not bring the disparate entities into agreement. In this context when Yoshida came back with the peace and security treaties in hand, the debate over self-defence was transformed into a debate over rearmament.
Ashida Hitoshi later in his career

In the midst of this situation Ashida composed the Ashida Statement\textsuperscript{48} and commenced his two debates with Yoshida in parliament\textsuperscript{49}, putting the spotlight onto the fact that the Yoshida administration was using certain insidious political methods to promote rearmament while all the while denying that rearmament was taking place. Meanwhile, the Security Treaty, the Administrative Agreement and the MSA accord were signed, and the National Police Reserve morphed into first the Peace Preservation Corps and then finally into the Self Defence Forces, while Yoshida brandished Article 9 towards both the United States and the Japanese people in denial of actual rearmament. According to Ashida, the flaws of the Yoshida administration’s ‘political leadership’\textsuperscript{50} forced the putative bearers of postwar democracy — workers, housewives, youth and progressive thinkers — into advocating ‘unarmed neutrality’, non-aggression’ and ‘anti-Americanism’, leading to the loss of democratic legitimacy of those policies.\textsuperscript{51} Ashida’s popular movement in favour of rearmament was an attempt to correct the distortion embedded in the equation of Article 9 with the security treaty system; he also tried to use this movement to bring politics and the people together again. In this sense we can say that Ashida was actually trying to fuse postwar nationalism with postwar democracy, thereby taking up the same intellectual cause as the progressive thinkers (such as Maruyama Masao\textsuperscript{52}) who adopted social-democratic ideas to this end.\textsuperscript{53}

\textit{Conclusion}

The adversarial relationship between socialism and liberalism that began in the prewar era with the debates over liberalism, exhibited new variations in the modern history of Japanese politics and foreign policy. With the oppression of the war years and the revival of class
conflict accompanying the democratisation policies of the Occupation as a backdrop, the clash between socialism and liberalism in the shape of division between conservatives and progressives developed over time. However, through the travails of political contests over the economic policies associated with the Dodge Line and the differences over peace and rearmament revealed in security policy development, this adversarial relationship became rooted in an unusual structure. Ashida’s ‘liberal democratic’ line was buried a second time, and the ‘social democracy’ line became focused on ‘protecting the constitution’ as an anti-conservative stance. In this way institutional reform at the hands of socialism became emasculated. The emblematic nature of ‘constitutional revision’ versus ‘protecting the constitution’ made any systematic exposition of theory rooted in the actual world situation and the political situation at home extremely problematic. And all of this meant that a parliamentary democracy featuring the production of policies legitimised by popular consensus was without substance, and parliament itself became meaningless.

And so Japanese politics fell into a curious structural conundrum: with the mainstream conservative position (the Yoshida line) centred on ‘economy first’ political realism and the marginalised anti-Yoshida stream which mobilised ‘traditional nationalist’ rhetoric on one side, and the ‘social democratic’ framework that played a role in sustaining conservative-progressive conflict on the other side, it degenerated into a fundamental distortion that was never articulated except in the form of miscommunication. The distortions that emanated from Yoshida’s choices that took shape as the 1955 system (the Yoshida line) featuring conservative-progressive conflict had several long term, structural consequences. The peculiar external policy that was the Japan–US relationship became dissipated by the structural yet abstract nature of conflict over that system. This in turn left any understanding of the political, economic or cultural aspects of Japan’s social structure bereft of systemic principles based on any convincing analysis of reality. This circumstance meant that parliament was severely constrained as a venue for measured debate, which could have unified theory and practice.

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End Notes


6 Fujiwara, Yasunobu, *Jiyūshugi no Saikentō (The Reconsideration of Liberalism)*, Iwanami Shoten,
Ashida Hitoshi explained that diplomacy was external negotiation based on ‘the right to live’ concerning to people’s ‘security’ and ‘interests’. He understood that domestic and foreign policy became inseparable because of democratisation. See Ashida, Hitoshi, ‘Sekai no Taisei’ (Global Tendency), Seiji Kyōiku Kyōiku Kōza (Lectures on Citizenship Education), vol.3, 1927, p. 356; and Kokusai Gaikō no Shin Chishiki (New Knowledge of International Diplomacy), Hibonkaku, 1934, pp.10–11.

Ashida regarded the shift from despotic government to democratic government as global tendency concerning to victory of the United States in WWI and the collapse of the three Houses of Romanov, Hohenzollern and Habsburg. See Ashida, Hitoshi, Rekkyō no Seisen (The Political Struggle among Great Powers), Ōsaka Mainichi Shimbumsha, Ōsaka 1924, p. 24; and Goshinkō Kinen Shōhen Shu (The Memorial Pamphlet of Lecture for the Emperor), Ashida Hitoshi, 1925, pp. 95–96, p. 105.

Ashida’s liberalism allowed people to respect others and deliberation in parliamentary system. Ashida, Hitoshi, Shinkō Nippon no Shōrai (The Future of Developing Japan), Nihon Seinen Kan, 1936, pp. 24, 42, 48.

Ashida, Kokusai Gaikō no Shin Chishiki, ibid, p. 50.

Ibid., p. 65.

Ashida, Hitoshi, ‘Sekai wa Doboku e Ikō: kokusai suan wo dedokoro wo tsuk’u’ (Where is the World going to?: the causes of international instability), Ie no Hikari, June 1938, p. 66.


Chiba, Shin, Demokurashii (Democracy), Iwanami Shoten, 2000, pp. iii-viiii.

Ashida Hitoshi, ‘Dai Sanji Sekai Taisen ni Tsuite’ (On The Third World War), Chuō Kōron, June 1951, p. 77.

Ashida’s perspective was that mature parliamentary democracy was able to manage class conflict and get over the challenge of new ideologies; socialism, communism, and fascism by centrist government sweetening them. See Ashida, Hitoshi, ‘Shisōteki ni Kokka ga Tairitsu Suru Sekai no Shūsei’ (The tendency of Global Ideological Conflicts), Ie no Hikari, May 1938, p. 45.

The New Deal in the United States convinced Ashida that ‘fairness’ was becoming a political issue in proportion to democratisation. See Ashida Hitoshi Nikki (The Diaries of Ashida Hitoshi), vol.1, ibid, p. 8, the passage of 24 October 1944.

See Ueda, ‘Sennō shoki ni okeru Ashida Hitoshi no Kokusai Jōsei Ninshiki’, ibid.

Ashida, Hitoshi, ‘Kempō Kaisai ka Kempō Yōgo ka’(For or Against the Constitution?), Tokyo Daiyori, vol.71, June 1955, p. 47.

See the Diet Record of the House of Councilors, Plenary Session 17 July 1950 and on 26 January 1951. In fact Yoshida intended to rearm Japan, however he negotiated to minimise the rearmament requested by the United States based on the logic of Article 9 that Macarthur created to demilitarise Japan. The Diet Record is available on [http://kokkai.ndl.go.jp/].


Akao sometimes advised Ashida about the rearmament movement. See Ashida Hitoshi Nikki, vol.3, pp. 537–538, the passage of 4 July 1951, for example.
Ashida Hitoshi Shin Kempō Kaishaku, (Interpretation of the New Constitution), Daiaimond Sha, 1946, p. 5.
44 Ibid.
47 See Ashida Hitoshi Nikki, vol.3, pp.307–311, the passages of 26 June and 2 July 1950 to understand details of the talks between Yoshida and Ashida.
48 Ashida sent the statement to Yoshida, GHQ, and Asahi Shimbun. See the letter to Yoshida in Ashida Hitoshi Kankei Monjo, No. 319–20; ‘Ashida Shi Hankyō Jiei wo Kyōchō, Sōshireibu e Ikensho: Ashida ikensho’ (Mr. Ashida Emphasized the Importance of Anti-Communist Defense and submitted GHQ a Statement: Ashida Statement), Asahi Shimbun, 28 December 1950.
50 See the Diet Record of the House of Representatives, Budget Committee, ibid.
54 Iokibe Makoto used the three types to explain the political society in Postwar Japan; ‘keizai chūshin shugi rosen’ (mercantilist line), ‘dentōteki kokka shugi rosen’ (traditional nationalist line), and ‘shakai minshu shugi rosen’ (social democratic line) in Nichibei Sensō to Sengo Nihon (The Japan–U.S. War and Postwar Japan), Ōsaka Shoseki, Ōsaka, 1989, pp. 210–215.

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