

---

**RELEASE EMBARGO DATE: April 22, 2014 at 9:00 AM**

**Panel:** (Post)-Modern Japan? (G1)

**Date/Time:** Tuesday, April 22, 2014 / 14:30-15:45

**Talking Points for:** Yamaguchi Noboru, National Defense University of Japan

If the term “modern” is based on the European experience of evolution of communities, Japan may have swiftly caught up with the European experience for modernization. Masao Maruyama argues that the modern way of thinking is the basis for nationalism, political realism, and democracy. Japan after the Meiji Restoration was successful in achieving such basis: *Gakumon no Susume* [Encourage of Learning] by Yukichi Fukuzawa was the textbook for Japan’s Enlightenment; and the compulsory education system and the conscript army along with Shintoism introduced by the government worked well to promote both education level and nationalism as a single nation as opposed to a society divided by feudal clans’ governance. In this process, State Shintoism was used for promoting nationalism and may have caused an extreme belief of an emperor-centered Japan as a divine country. On the other hand, if the current Japan is in a post-modern or a neo-medieval period as Akihiko Tanaka argues, all of this was not brought by Japan itself but was initiated by the total destruction in 1945. This accidental process might have caused the Japanese to overlook the value of post-modern society and the problems associated with the modern society.

---

\* The views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of the Asan Institute for Policy Studies.