

Can Wisdom Prevail in Preventing another International Nuclear Arms Race?

Are we potentially facing another period of conflict that could have even more grave and unforeseen consequences than the major wars of the 20th century? An all-out 21st century military confrontation could destroy not just our civilization, but also the planet. Let us hope this is not the journey we are on...When discussing this serious topic it is tempting to throw all of the blame in one direction or another, whereas the causes of conflicts often have diverse and complicated issues behind them. They can be historically rooted to past injustices, or be linked to a lack of communications or misinterpretations of one another's actions. It can be difficult to know what is truly going on in the minds of the participants. What is openly presented to the outside world, may not be what is being communicated behind closed doors.

If issues could be looked at in a less charged and more neutral thoughtful fashion, it would often result in far more agreeable outcomes. *That is the reason why* adept diplomats/politicians are needed more than ever to enhance positive communications and avoid excessive military expenditures which can often lead to destructive engagements.

This article draws upon various current and historical events to better understand the political/military/economic situation in Asia today.

For instance, China justifiably points to a century of humiliation that she suffered under the domination of European colonial powers and Japan. In general, the period from the mid-19th Century through to the mid-20th Century occurred against the backdrop of racism against Asians by the more powerful European colonial powers. *Today*, China is in essence announcing that by becoming a dominant regional and world power, she won't ever again be pushed around by other nations. Based on China past experiences, hopefully she will be more empathetic to the other less powerful nations in her region and elsewhere.

It is also worth noting that a rapid military expansion on the part of any nation(s) often motivates other countries to expand their military preparedness, thus redirecting a great deal of resources from other essential humanitarian uses.

With the hope of decreasing current tensions in Asia and beyond, presented below are some new perspectives on the years leading up to and during WWII.

Over the past twenty-plus years, I have researched both the pre-WW II and WWII period for a historical novel and a biography focused on U.S. - Japan relations.

What is little mentioned or even known about is that during the two decades prior to that conflict, there were considerable efforts to sustain peace by many leading Japanese who promoted democracy and mutual respect in Asia. One of the reasons this is relatively unknown is that in the desire to expediently move forward after WWII and re-establish a strong alliance between the U.S. and Japan, much of the history of the Japanese domestic and international peace movement was brushed aside and forgotten. Neither the US or Japan wished to dwell on their diplomatic failure to maintain their prior friendship and cooperation. Japan also accepted and recognized the grave error of allying with the fascist Axis Powers during WWII and was ready to again move towards peace and democracy. This desire to rapidly move forward has led to a void in the historical study of that pre-WWII period.

One of the forgotten leading Japanese heroes promoting peace and democracy prior to WWII was **Prince Tokugawa Iyasato** (1863-1940) (aka Prince Iyasato Tokugawa). Prince Tokugawa had been destined to become the next all powerful Shogun ruling Japan. However, when the Tokugawa Dynasty ended after lasting 263 years, Prince Tokugawa instead took on a guiding role as a cosmopolitan



mentor of an emperor-to-be, a political leader, and as an adept international diplomat. He served as the President of the upper house of the Japanese congress for thirty years and worked jointly with six US presidents and other world leaders to promote improved international understanding. Combining his political influence with his connections with many other Japanese leaders, including other members of the Japanese royal family, he heroically strove to steer Japan away from war.

It is of importance to note that when a war had to be fought and won, Prince Tokugawa and his Japanese allies guided Japan to strongly support the democratic Allies in World War One (28 July 1914 – 11 November 1918).

And having seen the enormous destruction of WWI, Prince Tokugawa devoted his life to attempting to prevent another similar conflict. Tokugawa led the Japanese delegation to the **first international military arms limitation conference in history** that was held during 1921-1922. It was called the **Washington Naval Conference** and took place in Washington, DC. Among the other international delegates that Tokugawa befriended at this important diplomatic event was China's prominent representative to the conference, China's future first US Ambassador, **Dr. Sao-Ke Alfred Sze**. It is an interesting coincidence that this is the 100th Anniversary of that international conference - Perhaps a similar

international military arms limitation gathering is now in order, having learned significant lessons from the past century.

-Prince Tokugawa understood that conflicts are often ignited by racism, so during the **1920s** he incorporated **Lincoln Essay Contests** into all of Japan's public schools and public universities. Recognition and awards were given to those students who wrote the best essays honoring the humanitarian values and legacy of Abraham Lincoln. During the 1930s, Tokugawa oversaw an international education conference in Japan that drew three thousand educators. The attendees shared ideas aimed at establishing new educational principles that would encourage friendship and greater cooperation for the nations bordering the Pacific. The attendees represented many nations, with five hundred delegates coming from the United States. In addition, Prince Tokugawa utilized the exchange of art and culture to support better international understanding.

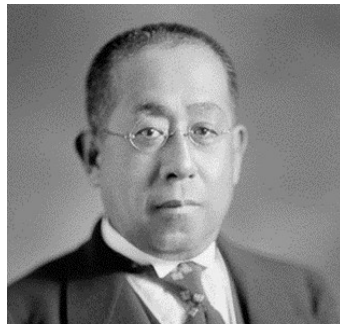
Based on his inspirational efforts, I created the below **bronze sculpture** to highlight Prince Tokugawa's promotion of improved racial relations. Copies of the sculpture are to be gifted to various international goodwill organizations.



Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

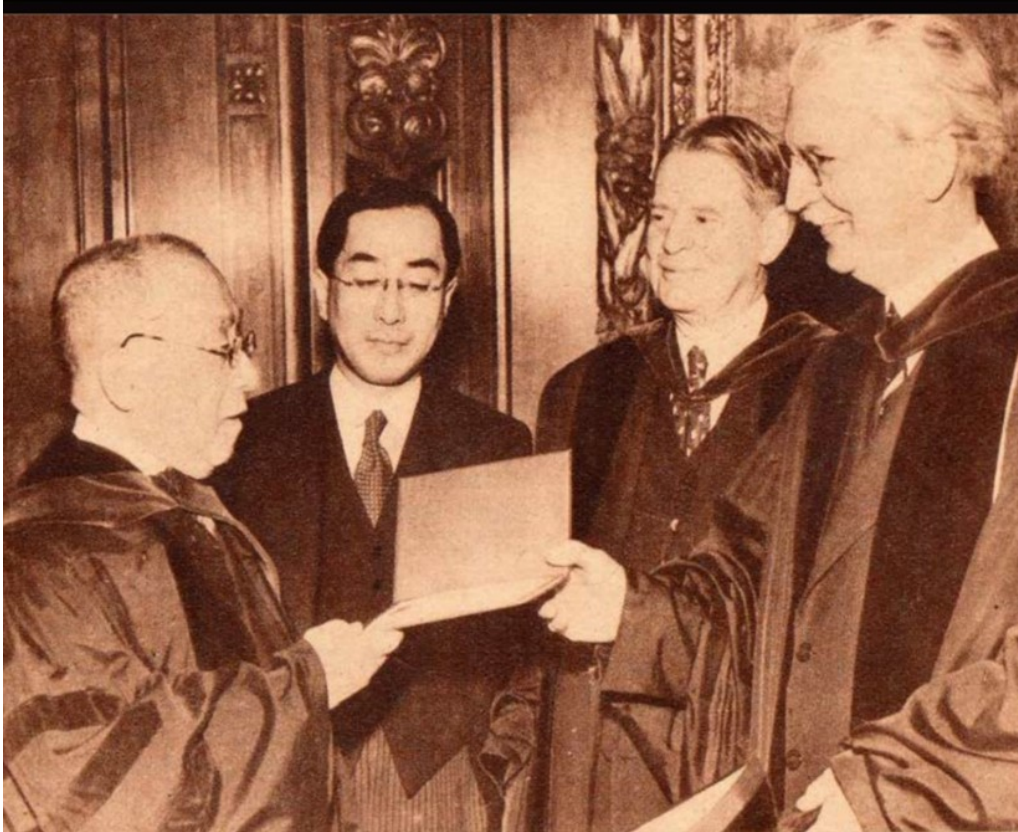


President Abraham Lincoln



Prince Iyesato Tokugawa

MEN OF PEACE



Recently discovered rare 1934 photo:

Prince Tokugawa receives an Honorary Doctor of Laws Degree from the University of Southern California (USC).

Dr. Rufus B. von Kleinsmid President of the university bestows this degree. This presentation took place during a special luncheon given March 19th, 1934 in Los Angeles that was hosted by **George I. Cochran**, President of the Board of Trustees of USC. Prince Tokugawa was accompanied by his son **Iyemasa**, the newly appointed Minister to Canada. Left to right: Prince Tokugawa; Iyemasa Tokugawa; George I. Cochran; Dr. Rufus B. von Kleinsmid.

The Los Angeles Times stated that this honorary degree was given to Prince Tokugawa *"In recognition of distinguished service in international statesmanship,"* and for his *"support of many philanthropic and educational movements."*

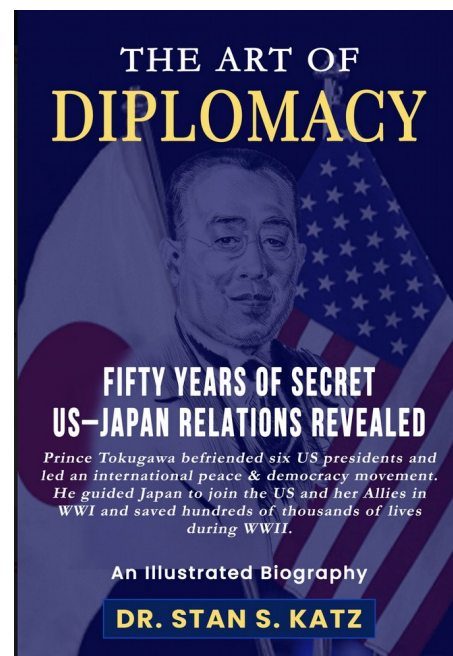
In accepting this degree, Tokugawa respectfully said, *"He wished to receive this honor in the name of the Japanese people as a whole rather than as a personal distinction."*

Prince Tokugawa working together with his Japanese friend and ally **Baron Shibusawa Eiichi** brought the study of Chinese literary classics to Japanese schools to encourage respect for their neighbor's culture, with the goal of facilitating good relations between the two neighboring countries. Based on the actions of these fine Japanese statesmen and their Japanese and non-Japanese allies, it is my opinion, WWII was delayed, but regrettably could not be stopped – As one by one of these peace-loving Japanese leaders passed away naturally or by assassination, while the dark storm clouds of war from an expanding fascist movement in Europe spread to Asia.

Prince Tokugawa's significance however lived on beyond his passing in 1940. He is not yet recognized for his humanitarian actions as President of the Red Cross Society of Japan. Through that leadership position he strove to protect as many innocent lives as possible, so he created "Safe Zones" in war-torn China in cities such as Shanghai, during the 1930s. These demilitarized safe havens helped save the lives of a half-million Chinese civilians and tens of thousands of Jewish refugees fleeing the Holocaust in Europe.

An illustrated biography honoring Prince Tokugawa Iesato was initially published with the title: **The Art of Peace** (digital Edition). It has just been republished in a Print Edition and as an eBook with the new title: **The Art of Diplomacy**. It was felt that the new title more fully and better represents Prince Tokugawa's impressive life and achievements.

This biography was preceded by a historical novel **The Emperor and the Spy** that highlights a U.S. intelligence agent, **Colonel Sidney Mashbir**. As a former owner of out-of-print and rare bookstores, I acquired the library of Colonel Mashbir, his personal letters, official documents, and photographs. These unique primary source materials presented a new window to pre-WWII history. Mashbir befriended and worked jointly with many



leading Japanese during the 1920s and '30s in an effort to avoid war between their nations. One of Mashbir's closest Japanese friends and allies was Prince Tokugawa.

During the early 1920s, Mashbir heroically defused a potential regional war linked to a major buildup of Japanese forces in China, which could have brought the US, Russia, Japan, and other nations into conflict. At that time, Mashbir also protected the lives of the leaders of the Chinese community in the Russian port city of Vladivostok.

After trying his best to prevent conflict between Japan and the US, Colonel Mashbir found his services required to expediently win WWII in the Pacific. He served as General MacArthur's top military strategist. And when that war ended, Mashbir utilized his deep understanding the Japanese to help guide the US and Japan to once again become strong allies.

To learn more about these books and the fascinating period they describe, visit the website: **TheEmperorAndTheSpy.com**

Hopefully these two books will help promote better international relations in recognition of the legacy of Prince Tokugawa and his international peace movement.

Below are two additional historical perspectives that might improve the international atmosphere of cooperation:

The first is that it took a united Allied military front composed of the U.S. and her European Allies, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and other nations that contributed greatly to winning WWII in the Pacific, thus assisting China to drive the Japanese militants from their nation. If China had been left solely to her own devices, she would definitely have suffered much more during the conflict or been defeated. China's allies during WWII dramatically directed enormous materials and human resources into protecting Chinese sovereignty.

Also worthy of note: Japan learned a hard lesson from WWII, and has since taken an exemplary path of promoting international peace in her region and in her global engagement. Japan deserves respect for having done so. Japan has also repeatedly apologized for her past actions during WWII and as a colonial power. The earnestness of her intentions can be seen by her striving to limit the size of

her military and resisting the acquisition of nuclear weapons. *Individuals and nations can make mistakes.* Remembering the past is logical, but it would be a great pity if other nations in the region refused to accept Japan's apologies for mistakes from the relatively distant past, and thereby undermine the international stability of today.

It is said: *those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.*

We live in an age where cooperation is more vital than ever to deal with major environmental issues that do not recognize national borders and require a coordinated global spirit of mutual respect and unity of purpose.

A nuclear arms race could result in accidents that spiral out of control.

Military engagements could replicate the enormous damage done by natural disasters - Just look at the Fukushima Nuclear Power plant that was destroyed by a tsunami. The environmental damage was significant and is ongoing. A major conflict could cause similar frightening results throughout the planet, impacting the health of our water and air, damaging our power grids, disrupting our internet network thus impacting important life support systems. These modern technological wonders are more fragile than we might wish to believe, and once things start going wrong, there might be hell to pay.

The Covid pandemic also reveals that there are unexpected challenges that can arise almost overnight that reshape the world we take for granted.

Our international community was gifted a wonderful opportunity during the late 1980s, when the Cold War and the Nuclear Arms Race ended in many ways with the fall of the Berlin Wall. Does any reasonable nation wish to live in a world where they are surrounded by a growing nuclear arsenal and heightened tensions? It would be a great waste if we once again followed the path towards a confrontation, when there are many other important avenues to direct our energies towards such as economic prosperity and global harmony.

On a positive note, our world economy has become more and more interdependent. This has benefited many countries, particularly China which delivers many diverse needed goods and services internationally. China is also to be applauded for improving the economic situation for many of her poorer citizens, creating numerous jobs and opportunities.

China is a great nation with an impressive culture and civilization that she can draw upon to find harmonious approaches as she deals with the world around her.

A united international front is required to remedy the issues of climate change, limited resources such as water and food, alleviate health issues, as well as to confront global extremism/terrorism (including cyber-terrorism). We need optimism and bold new approaches to solve these challenges so as to save our planet and all of its creatures. What we don't need are militarized solutions that could lead us on a dark destructive journey.

There are different parts of our mind, some more logical and others more emotional - It is hoped that this article will resonate with both. Life is precious and meant to be enjoyed. One of our greatest universal loves is for our children. Our primary goal should be to create a pleasant and peaceful world for them - and the generations still to come.

This article was written by Dr. Stan S. Katz - June 21, 2021



Stan has a background as an author, historian, teacher, and as a health professional. He is a Board member of the **San Diego World Affairs Council** (a local chapter of **World Affairs Councils of America**, a national, non-partisan, political affairs / educational non-profit organization). The opinions expressed in this article are from the author and not necessarily that of these organizations.