



# The Rise of the Rest

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American-led globalization has enabled the third great powershift of the last five hundred years—the “rise of the rest” following on the rise of the West and then the rise of the US as the dominant power in the West.

When China, India, Brazil, Turkey and the rest sit at the table of global power with the West what will the world order look like? Will it be post-American? Will it be culturally non-Western, but play by the same rules of an open international order laid down by the American’s after World War II?

In the following pages, leading American and Asian intellectuals ponder these questions.

## Is Japan Closer to the West Than Turkey?

Japan's **KENZABURO OE** and Turkey's **ORHAN PAMUK**—two novelists who have won the Nobel Prize in Literature—sat down in late May for a dialogue at a special literature workshop in Nagoya, Japan, to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the annual forum “Creativity in the 21st Century with Nobel Laureates,” co-organized by NPQ’s associate paper in Japan, the Yomiuri Shimbun and NHK. They also responded to questions from the audience.

Aside from their status as Nobel laureates, Oe and Pamuk have faced similar battles with their nationalist compatriots. Oe was recently victorious in a long court battle with Japanese rightists for implicating the Japanese military in the mass suicides of civilians during the battle of Okinawa in his book *Okinawa Notes*. In 2005, charges were brought against Pamuk for “insulting Turkishness” after his statement regarding the mass killings of Armenians during and after World War I; the charges were dropped in 2006.

**KENZABURO OE** | The modernization of Japan began about 180 years ago, influenced by US political forces and European culture. Both Japan and Turkey began this process using Western countries as a model almost at the same time. But when I read Mr. Pamuk’s “Istanbul,” I found Turkey’s relationship with Europe to be very complicated. Japan tried to learn about Western culture from a great geographic distance. Mr. Pamuk said in his speech when he won the 2006 Nobel Prize in Literature that everyone knows there’s always a shade of humiliation and contempt in other people when someone has acted proudly, and his novel was written using such emotions as humiliation, pride, suppression and anger.

The degree of another person’s humiliation and contempt may have been one way for the political elite in the Ottoman Empire to understand the people. That reminds me of what has been brought about by the incorporation of Okinawa into Japan, at a time when Okinawa was under the influence of the more advanced culture of China. People who focus on Okinawa’s original culture in the future will provide another perspective on the Japan-China relationship.

**ORHAN PAMUK** | I was moved by the fact that Mr. Oe read my work so deeply. I first met Mr. Oe in New York in 1991 at a party of writers. Mr. Edward Said was among them. Almost all of Mr. Oe’s works can be read in Turkish. I was greatly encouraged by his writings when I was in a difficult situation after criticizing the Turkish military for its past mass killings of Armenians. If writers say something controversial about others, their movements could be severely restricted. Nevertheless, writers must write their works and express their opinions.

Currently, Westernization and secularization are promoted in Turkey with respect to lifestyle and religion. Under the circumstances, I’m aware how

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Westerners regard us and how they speak for us (in order) to dominate us. I also have a strong understanding of regionalism, our national identity and various ideologies because the country has been exposed to the threat of imperial colonialism in the past.

Western writers don't necessarily fully understand us. In some cases, visitors have helped spread incorrect notions about us. But if we only criticize such thoughts (from the outside), we end up only protecting ourselves. We need to take a balanced approach and be willing to criticize our culture from the inside.

**OE** | It's true that writers could face problems if they write about the sufferings of others. Rather, it is the duty of writers to take on those sufferings.

I hope young people read more novels because I want them to realize how important it is to use their imagination and learn to understand other people. Especially in today's society, in which young people tend to withdraw into their shells, I think novels will help them give full range to their imagination. I've thought about imagination ever since I started writing novels about 50 years ago. Therefore, I was grateful to have an opportunity to meet and talk with Mr. Pamuk again, because he has tackled, on a large scale, problems related to the sufferings of the Turkish people while expressing his opinions all over Europe.

### **On Tolerance**

**PAMUK** | Looking at a map, it is true that Turkey is close to Europe. However, if you look at things such as freedom of speech, respect for minority rights and business ethics, I have to say Japan is closer to Western society than Turkey.

You cannot judge whether a nation belongs to the West just from freedom of expression or national income levels. Culturally, Turkey is an Islamic country, but among the people are liberal Muslims and people familiar with Europe.

In the latest election, about 47 percent of voters expressed a desire for Turkey to remain secular. In other words, they hope the country will adopt a Western-style culture.

Personally, I want Turkey to join the European Union. There are groups that oppose this, but the starting point for democracy is a discussion from two different perspectives. I expect the process of democratization will progress through negotiations held between these two groups.

It is important for me to be able to produce works freely, without worrying about assassination. To that end, both the nation and society must be tolerant.

**OE** | I also think the concept of "tolerance" is important for modern society. While I was a student at a local high school surrounded by forests in Shikoku, I read

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a book written by Kazuo Watanabe, who was a scholar of French literature. I learned that the spirit of tolerance thrived in France during the Renaissance period and decided to learn about the concept.

I think tolerance is the ability to understand other people. For me, writing novels was a way to express tolerance. I suppose this may be the same for Mr. Pamuk.

### **On Novels Mixing Narratives from East and West Like Salman Rushdie**

**PAMUK** | I feel a strong sense of discomfort with regard to acting as a bridge between East and West. I am not writing novels to explain my nation or race. It also is worth noting that in Rushdie's novels, everything is mixed, not only the East and West. My mission is purely to write a beautiful novel. I am not a representative for or an advocate of the Turkish people.

**OE** | Please pay attention to Mr. Pamuk's use of the words "representative" and "advocate." With this in mind, one must understand that he is writing novels and making political statements to achieve a "tolerant" society.

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