

## Preface

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In the arena of the international society nowadays, among the types of most significantly influential entities in the political dimension would be a nation-state system. Based on this background understanding, the research project of ours (“National Integration in Asia: Processes and Structure”) was carried out with its primary purposes of (i) illuminating a part of mechanism through which dynamic changes of national integration and disintegration have developed in Asian countries, and (ii) providing better insights into possible instruments that may help us to reduce, if any, unnecessary political conflicts by a reasonable extent.

The present volume carries three papers coming out of this research project. The paper by Hiroshi Mitani examines the period of the closing days of the Tokugawa shogunate through the time of the very beginning of Meiji era in Japan. It sheds a light upon how and why the relatively continuous development of political transition took place from a form of sovereign nation to a form of nation state in that country for that period.

The paper by Robert Rickards poses a question, does partisan control of city hall affect a Japanese municipality's expenditure pattern? In answering this question, Rickards conducted an empirical work to analyze a significantly large-scale data on expenditure pattern change and partisan control of municipal government, and offered two findings: Japanese cities could be more responsive to citizens' changing demands than could other higher levels of government, and (ii) the partisan control of city hall clearly has an effect on expenditure pattern stability.

The paper by Airi Tamura deals with issues of the rise and accommodation of the two cases of the Muslim-Copt conflicts which arose in Egypt during 1906-19 and 1972-81 periods respectively. Although these conflicts have been widely regarded to be ethno-religious, Tamura argues that they are rather politico-socio-economic strifes developed under the new nation-state system than nationalism/communalism-oriented religious conflicts.

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