chief of the European Section of the Bureau for Political Affairs, Komura Ken’ichi, presented a memorandum in which he urged: (1) Japan must strive for acceptance of the principle of equal treatment; (2) Japan must promote an active world peace policy and a conciliatory foreign policy; and (3) Japan must fundamentally revise its arrogant China policy. Regarding point 3, the memorandum went on to say that Japan should grasp the initiative in the abolishment of extraterritoriality and spheres of special interests in continental China, should cancel the indemnity payments accruing to Japan for its part in militarily suppressing the “Boxer Rebellion” of 1899–1900, should pull out all its troops from China, and should support the four-power financial consortium proposed by the United States. A few days later, Makino Nobuaki, who had been appointed plenipotentiary at the Versailles Peace Conference, took up Komura’s proposals at a meeting of the Gaikō Chōsakai. Foreign Minister Uchida agreed in all points. At a further meeting of the Gaikō Chōsakai on 8 December, the idea of a League of Nations was formally approved, although during the preparations for the Japanese participation in the peace conference, domestic political tensions between the conservative Gaikō Chōsakai (Committee on Foreign Relations), founded in 1917, and the “internationalist” camp, had surfaced. The latter had disapproved of the Siberian Expedition during the war and stood for a policy of nonintervention.

On 18 January 1919, the French prime minister, Georges Clemenceau, who had been minister of war under President Raymond Poincaré, opened the Peace Conference in the Paris Ministry of Foreign Affairs with seventy delegates from the twenty-seven countries on the winning side of the 1914–1918 war. On 25 January the conference approved the establishing of a League of Nations “to promote international cooperation, to insure the fulfillment of accepted international obligations and to provide safeguards against war.”

The Covenant of the League of Nations formed the first part of the peace treaties of the entente with the German empire, Austria, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Turkey, who had lost the war. The League of Nations Committee thus was set to “work out the details of the constitution and functions of the League,” under the chairmanship of the American president, Woodrow Wilson. On 3 February 1919 it met for the first time. The Japanese delegation, officially led by genrō Saionji Kinmochi, consisted of eighty members; however, due to ill health Saionji was unable to take part in the early sessions of the conference.

The top representatives besides Saionji were Baron Makino Nobuaki (1861–1949), who (like Saionji) also arrived late in the French capital and became the main speaker, the ambassador in London Chinda Sutemi (1856–1929), and the ambassador in France Matsui Keishirō (1868–1946). Though outwardly reserved in negotiations, Saionji “was an active and significant...
participant in the internal workings of the Japanese delegation.” A committed advocate of the league idea, he believed that the spread of culture would secure world peace, and thus disarmament and “cooperative diplomacy” were the realistic options.

Three drafts, one Anglo-American, one French, and one Italian, were laid before the committee for consideration. Baron Makino apologized that Japan had prepared no draft of its own to put forward, although already in October 1914, Foreign Minister Katō Takaaki (Kōmei, 1860–1926) had entrusted the head of the Bureau for Political Affairs in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nagaoka Shun’ichi, with the tasks of compiling materials relating to the future peace and studying historical precedents. Shidehara, in the beginning phase of the Versailles negotiations, and until he became ambassador in Washington in early 1919, remained in close contact with the Japanese delegation and acted as an intermediary between Tokyo and Paris.

On 14 February, the Anglo-American draft, representing “the concepts and movements concerning peace that had developed in various countries as a result of self-examination regarding World War I,” was adopted by the committee for its deliberations at Versailles. By 11 April the committee’s work was completed, and the final text was laid before the conference on 28 April, which was subsequently unanimously approved. The league’s headquarters were to be in Geneva. In spite of its unanimous approval, the League of Nations was a compromise.

In the debates the Japanese had been committed to three areas: disarmament, arbitration, and racial equality. On the other hand there were the “demands”: (1) an extension of the Japanese occupation of Jiaozhou, and (2) the taking over of the former German Pacific islands, which Japan had occupied in 1914.

The Japanese were frequently seen as “silent partners of the Conference,” yet they “never lost sight of a single angle in the discussion.” David G. Egler describes the Japanese commitment to the league: “Some optimistic intellectuals of the ‘Taishō democracy’ school openly heralded the coming league as the touchstone of human progress... Western influenced diplomats in the foreign ministry... promoted Japanese participation as a means to assure cooperative relations with the Anglo-American powers.” Among early strong supporters immediately after the war were eminent intellectuals like Yoshino Sakuzō and Anesaki Masaharu, and labor leader Suzuki Bunji. In spite of that an attitude of skepticism prevailed, since the League of Nations was seen by many as a European affair (with Europe being at the heart of the problem), and a possible instrument for maintaining the status quo in Asia.

Japan had previously, in its declaration of war against Germany (23 August 1914), emphasized that its interest was above all the continuation of free trade, which Germany appeared to jeopardize, as well as the general peace...
The alliance with Great Britain being key to Japanese foreign policy and security, this provided another “reason why Japan participated in this war.”

Japan took part in the Versailles Peace Conference as a new military industrial power (i.e., one of the “Big Five”)—together with the United States, Great Britain, France, and Italy. In September 1918 Uchida Kōsai became foreign minister in the civilian cabinet of Hara Kei (Takashi). The Japanese delegates at the peace conference were thus all civilian, liberal statesmen of the “Anglo-Saxon faction.” Moreover, the Japanese delegates comported themselves not as debutants, but as experienced diplomats.

Although Baron Makino, the delegation spokesman, spoke little English, the Japanese effected a change in the wording of article 8 of the League Covenant, approved on 3 February 1919: “The Members of the League recognize that the maintenance of peace requires the reduction of national armaments to the lowest point consistent with national safety and the enforcement by common action of international obligations.” The Japanese had proposed the words “national safety” instead of the earlier “domestic safety” and thus added clarity when it came to questions of disarmament.

On the question of arbitration for the peaceful settlement of disputes and the moratorium, which was of special interest to the conference, Japan proposed to supplement certain wording to article 12—that is, the arbitration clause submitted by Woodrow Wilson to the League of Nations Committee at its first meeting on 3 February 1919, which read:

1. The High Contracting Parties agree that should disputes arise between them which cannot be adjusted by the ordinary processes of diplomacy, they will in no case resort to war without previously submitting the questions and matters involved either to arbitration or inquiry by the Executive Council three months after the award by the arbitrators or a recommendation by the Executive Council; and that they will not even then resort to war as against a member of the League which complies with the award of the arbitrators or the recommendation of the Executive Council.

2. In any case under this Article, the award of the arbitrators shall be made within a reasonable time, and the recommendation of the Executive Council shall be made within six months after the submission of the dispute.

Baron Makino proposed adding the following words at the end of the second paragraph:

> From the time a dispute is submitted to arbitration or to inquiry by the Executive Council, and until the lapse of the aforesaid term of three months, the parties to the dispute shall refrain from making any military preparations.
This amendment, however, was not approved, when on 11 April 1919, at
the fifteenth and last session of the committee, the Japanese initiative was
discussed, at which time the British delegate Lord Robert Cecil pointed out difficulties which might arise if the Japanese amendment were adopted, saying:

Such a provision would give an important advantage to such States as main-
tained their military establishment in a highly developed state. Should a crisis
arise, the small and peaceful nations with a low military establishment would
find themselves at a serious disadvantage if they could not make use of the pe-
riod of three months in order to prepare a better defence against a nation with
superior armaments and effectives.

Baron Makino said in reply:

The whole spirit of the Covenant was opposed to the principle that nations
might make military preparations in a crisis. If they should undertake warlike
measures, a tense and anxious atmosphere would be created which would hardly
conduce to a peaceful settlement. Moreover, if the nation whose military prepa-
rations were inadequate should augment them, the better armed nation would
do the same and the discrepancy between the two military forces would remain
the same.

Lord Cecil, to defend his argument, put forth a hypothetical case as fol-
lows:

Suppose that an unscrupulous nation should be considering an attack against a
neighboring State. She mobilizes all her troops, amasses them on the frontier,
and thereupon starts a dispute of a nature calculated to lead to a rupture. The
dispute would then be submitted to arbitration,\textsuperscript{335} and while the case was being
examined the aggressor State would have all its forces ready for action. On the
other hand, the State which was threatened would not be able to take any pre-
paratory measures. As far as Naval Power was concerned, a State might quite
easily without violating Article 8 mobilize its fleet with a view to aggression.

The British delegate thus concluded: “The Japanese amendment would
therefore seem to impose obligations too great for human nature and to put
tremendous advantages into the hands of unscrupulous States.”\textsuperscript{336} Instructions from Tokyo must have shaped Makino’s proposal, and to that extent
Shidehara and possibly Denison’s hand in formulating the contents would
have been decisive.

Lord Cecil’s view was shared by the French delegates Ferdinand Larnaude
and Léon Bourgeois, the Serbian delegate Milenko Vesnić, the Portuguese
delegate Jayme Batalha Reis, and the Chinese delegate Wellington Koo (Gu
Weijun). The Italian delegate Vittorio Emanuele Orlando backed the Japanese
initiative, saying it was “unquestionably in harmony with the spirit of the Covenant.” Woodrow Wilson himself seemed to back Lord Cecil’s view in that he felt the majority of the member states would not welcome the “inconveniences which would arise if it were incorporated,” although he admitted he had “a sentimental interest in the Japanese amendment.” Thereupon Japan retracted its proposal.

However, it was the much disputed Japanese motion to adopt an article in the league covenant to stipulate racial equality that presented a dramatic climax, which “was said to be one of the most impressive proposals taken up during the whole peace conference.”337 The chief motivation for the Japan’s initiative was its aspiration, as a trading nation, to be recognized as an equal partner in African and Asian regions that were under European colonial rule, so as to freely pursue its commercial activities in these areas. In contrast, as the Japanese were well aware, Germans could trade freely in the colonies and even had positions in directorates of banking and business conglomerates, especially in the British Commonwealth.338

We have seen, when Shidehara was residing as Japan’s chief diplomatic representative to the Netherlands and Denmark in The Hague, in October 1914, the Nederlandse “Anti-Oorlog Raad” (Anti-War Council) was founded at the initiative of the Dutch organization “Vrede door Recht” (Peace through Law). Subsequently, from 7–12 April 1915, an international peace conference, sponsored by the Anti-Oorlog Raad, took place in The Hague. Shidehara must have witnessed the event; most likely he took part in some of the proceedings and discussed the pertinent issues with the participants. He was well acquainted with the Netherlands foreign minister, Dr. John Loudon, who had been ambassador to Tokyo in 1907 (i.e., the year of the Second Hague Peace Conference), and whom he had no doubt met again in 1913 in Washington.339 Loudon, like his colleague, the Dutch jurist and diplomat Cornelis van Vollenhoven, emphasized Grotius’s ideas on international security, which aimed “to organize for peace the whole society of mankind.”340 Hugo Grotius had warned against going to war, even for a just cause.341 At the April 1915 peace conference in The Hague, a “Minimum Program” was adopted, which stated in point 2:

The states are to agree to enforce, in their colonies, protectorates and spheres of interest, freedom of trade or at least the equality of all nations.342

Soon after Shidehara had left The Hague in September 1915, he returned to Japan, where he took over the chairmanship of the Commission for the Making of the Peace following the Japanese-German War (Nichi-Doku sen’eki kōwa junbi iinkai).343 The Japanese proposal on racial equality of 7 February
1919, based on the foreign ministry’s instructions dated 9 December 1918, therefore came as no surprise, and was well premeditated. Without the Hague precedent it is unlikely that Japan would have exposed itself as it did at Versailles. The Japanese proposal read:

The equality of nations being a basic principle of the League of Nations, the High Contracting Parties agree to accord, as soon as possible, to all alien nationals of States members to the League equal and just treatment in every respect, making no distinction, either in law or in fact, on account of their race or nationality.

At first the Americans appeared to react positively and even proposed to present the article themselves, with a few minor emendations. However, the British delegation was not of one mind since Britain had to take account of its dominions, which followed their own policies on racial questions and matters of immigration. The Australian prime minister, William Hughes, voted against the Japanese proposal. The two spokesmen of the Japanese delegation, Makino and Chinda, therefore made assurances that the adoption of the racial equality clause was not meant to entail unrestricted immigration allowances for the Japanese. An ardent campaign on the part of the Japanese to soften William Hughes’s determined opposition began.

David Hunter Miller, Woodrow Wilson’s legal advisor, reports on a conversation that took place on 9 February 1919 between Wilson’s personal advisor “Colonel” House and Balfour.

Colonel House called me in and talked to me about the Japanese proposal. While I was discussing it Mr. Balfour came in. There was a general discussion of the matter between Colonel House and Mr. Balfour. Colonel House handed me a pencil memorandum which he showed to Mr. Balfour, commencing with the proposition taken from the Declaration of Independence, that all men are created equal.

Balfour is said to have replied that the American Declaration of Independence was a document of the eighteenth century, and though it was true “in a certain sense that all men of a particular nation were created equal,” he disputed that “a man in Central Africa was created equal to a European.” Colonel House countered “that he did not see how the policy toward the Japanese could be continued. The world said that they could not go to Africa; they could not go to any white country; they could not go to China, and they could not go to Siberia; and yet they were a growing nation, having a country where all the land was tilled; they had to go somewhere.”

The Japanese proposal on the racial question was again discussed on 13 February, at the tenth session, in connection with a proposal on religious
freedom. Baron Makino pointed out that “racial and religious animosities have constituted a fruitful source of trouble and warfare among different peoples throughout history, often leading to deplorable excesses,” and he now proposed that the article on religious freedom be supplemented with the following clause:

The equality of nations being a basic principle of the League of Nations, the High Contracting Parties agree to accord, as soon as possible, to all alien nationals of States members to the League equal and just treatment in every respect, making no distinction, either in law or in fact, on account of their race or nationality.

Makino pointed out that in the war just ended the various races had struggled against a common enemy to achieve a common objective, and that according to the League Covenant nations were obligated to stand by one another against a possible aggressor: “[E]ach national would like to feel and in fact demand that he should be placed on an equal footing with people he undertakes to defend even with his life.” Wellington Koo openly sympathized with the Japanese proposal. Eventually, however, the committee accepted Lord Cecil motion to adjourn.

The Japanese government meanwhile made every effort to come to an understanding with the Western powers. Japan’s ambassador to the United States, Viscount Ishii Kikujirō, sent the State Department a note, as President Wilson prepared for Europe on 4 March 1919, stating inter alia:

The Japanese Government are much gratified to perceive the just and disinterested spirit in which the President is using his best endeavors to secure an enduring peace of the world. They also are sincerely grateful for the sympathy and support which the President and the American peace delegation were friendly enough to give to the proposition of the Japanese delegation on the question of doing away with race discriminations. In view of the fundamental spirit of the League of Nations the Japanese Government regards as of first importance the establishment of the principle that the difference of race should in no case constitute a basis for discriminatory treatment under the law of any country. Should this great principle fail of general recognition, the Japanese Government do not see how a perpetual friction and discontent among nations and races could possibly be eliminated.

On 14 March 1919, Ambassador Ishii spoke on the subject in New York. To placate Prime Minister Hughes, the Japanese, following Colonel House’s advice, proposed a somewhat shortened text for the covenant’s preamble. Although the South African General Smuts and Sir R. Borden now declared themselves in favor, they could not move the Australian prime minister. On
11 April, the last session held by the commission, Baron Makino merely suggested adding to the words “relations between nations” in the preamble the phrase “by the endorsement of the principle of equality of nations and just treatment of their nationals.” The Chinese delegate Wellington Koo backed the Japanese initiative, declaring:

I should be very glad to see the principle itself given recognition in the Covenant, and I hope that the Commission will not find serious difficulties in the way of its acceptance. I should like to have my statement appear in the Minutes.  

Delegates from Italy (Orlando), France (Bourgeois and Larnaude), Greece (Venizelos), Czechoslovakia (Kramar), and Poland (Dmowski), some of whom had previously voted against the clause on 13 February, now also backed the Japanese initiative. Lord Cecil regretted that he could not vote for the proposal though “the British Government realized the importance of the racial question,” arguing that “its solution could not be attempted by the Commission without encroaching upon the sovereignty” of member States.  

In his reply, Viscount Chinda referred to the negative effects that a rejection of the Japanese proposal would have on public opinion in Japan.

Indeed, the agitation in Japan, nourished by press reports about the dispute, had reached a high point. At that moment President Wilson ruled that the principle of unanimity be adopted for the vote, and the amendment was finally rejected by a vote of seventeen to eleven. Naturally this was a “bitter blow to the Japanese psyche,” which may well have cleared the stage for future discrimination and genocide in the twentieth century. However, Japan was now able to gain concessions with regard to the administration of the territories formerly leased by China to Germany around Jiaozhou Bay and elsewhere in Shandong Province. In his written report to the Japanese emperor, Saionji stated:

I am sad that we could not accomplish our wishes in total. . . . Over racial equality, we had ten private discussions with British and American delegates. . . . Although we put up a good fight in the Committee on the League covenant there was persistent opposition from the British colonies and Anglo-American delegates finally went back on their earlier acceptance. What more could we do? The Japanese delegate announced that Japan would raise this problem again at the 5th plenary Assembly, made clear our standpoint and left the decision to a later date. . . . Japan stands among the five great Powers in the world and has passed the threshold which allows her to take part in the affairs of Europe. Again, we have been granted an important place in the League of Nations and acquired the right to take part in future more and more in every aspect of the affairs of east and west. This . . . can be said that we can identify a new turning-point in Japan’s history.
Among the critics and opponents of the League of Nations was “a young bureaucrat of the Interior Ministry with the name Konoe Fumimaro” (1891–1945), who had been “Saionji’s choice of personal secretary” at the Versailles conference, and who published an article with the title “Ei-Bei hon’i no heiwashugi o haisu” (Rejecting the pacifism represented by England and America) in the 15 December 1918 issue of the nationalistic periodical Nippon oyobi Nipponjin (Japan and the Japanese), in which he wrote of Versailles and the League of Nations:

The peace that the Anglo-American leaders are urging upon us amounts to no more that maintaining a status quo that suits their interests. . . . The true nature of the present conflict is a struggle between the established powers and powers not yet established. . . . The former call for peace, and the latter cry for war. In this case pacifism does not necessarily coincide with justice and humanity.

Young Konoe warned:

In the coming peace conference, should we decide to join the League of Nations, we must demand as the minimum *sine qua non* the eradication of economic imperialism and discriminatory treatment of Asian peoples by Caucasians. Militarism is not the only force that violates justice and humanity. . . . Should the peace conference fail to suppress this rampant economic imperialism . . . Japan, which is small, resource-poor and unable to consume all its own industrial products, would have no resort but to destroy the status quo for the sake of self-preservation, just like Germany . . . we must reject economic imperialism. . . . We must require all the powers to open the doors of their colonies to others, so that all nations will have equal access to the markets and resources of the colonial areas. It is also imperative that Japan insist on the eradication of racial discrimination. At the coming peace conference we must demand this in the name of justice and humanity. Indeed the peace conference will provide the opportunity to determine whether or not the human race is capable of reforming the world on those principles.

Not only Konoe, but also most politically awake Japanese believed that a world order founded on justice would end racial discrimination between nations and respect Japan’s special interests in Manchuria. Thus Konoe’s critique gained momentum as a result of Japan’s failure to get the “race equality” clause accepted. Military men like Ugaki Kazushige (1868–1956), an influential general who became army minister and was for a short time in 1938 foreign minister, also saw the League of Nations as a pretext for the Anglo-American policy of maintaining a status quo among the world powers.

It was only natural, since Japan’s wish for equal treatment remained unfulfilled, that the focus of interest necessarily shifted to nearby areas,
to enhance Japan’s economy, trade, and industry. The decision taken at Versailles not to make concessions on the Shandong question thus was understandable. The Japanese no doubt felt the Europeans were presumptuous in claiming privileges for themselves that they did not wish to afford to others. What purpose did it serve Japan to take part in an organization that was unable or unwilling to grant the people of Asia equal standing in their own region?

Shidehara may have shared the views of many Americans that the League of Nations did not go far enough in providing for an effective administration of justice, and organization of peace, which could guarantee equal treatment and opportunities, and would oftentimes have preferred bilateral, rather than multilateral, agreements with China. An official report from the European and American division of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, stated:

It will be very much to our disadvantage to have our fate decided at this sort of a large round table discussion rather than in direct negotiations with a party whose interests are involved. I would prefer [the League proposal] go unrealized. But since it is likely to come about, there is no alternative but to align with world trends and give it serious consideration.\textsuperscript{366}

Indeed, Japan threatened to leave the Versailles Conference if its demands for concessions on the mainland were not fulfilled. Shidehara on this point had to follow the line of his government. The majority of the conference’s council of the “Big Ten,”\textsuperscript{367} and especially the Americans, were negative toward the Japanese wish to take over the former German concessions in Shandong. Around the end of April instructions arrived from Tokyo that the Japanese delegation should not sign the league covenant if the unconditional transfer of Qingdao to Japan was not granted. This proved effective. Even President Wilson was convinced and took the threat seriously: “They are no bluffers, and they will go home unless we give them what they should not have.”\textsuperscript{368}

The Japanese demands in regard to Shandong were, however, only partly fulfilled, and only after Saionji made a call on French President Georges Clemenceau (1841–1929), an old friend from his student days in Paris,\textsuperscript{369} and persuaded him that Japan harbored no unfair intentions on the mainland. Clemenceau was then able, at the next foreign ministers’ meeting, to win Wilson over to the Japanese position on the basis of the assurance that Saionji had given that Japan would return Shandong to China at an agreed-upon time.\textsuperscript{370} This, however (i.e., the conference’s decision to transfer to Japan the German rights in Shandong), in turn led to China’s refusal to sign the treaty.\textsuperscript{371}

Japan, together with the other powers, signed the Versailles Treaty on 28 June 1919 as one of the five permanent members of the league council.\textsuperscript{372}
With the transfer to Japan of former German rights in Shandong and the Pacific islands north of the equator, Japan became (with respect to the latter) a “mandatory power” in the League of Nations system for the protection and development of these territories. Nitobe Inazō accepted the influential post of the league’s under-secretary general. Although Japan was geographically far from Europe, it had a paramount interest in the peace of Europe, sensitive to the fact that a European conflict, as Adachi Mineichirō pointed out, “might, according to the circumstances, entail consequences dangerous to world peace.” Adachi (1869–1934) was an international jurist who had played an important role in the discussions that had taken place in the legal division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in connection with the league. Later, in 1930, as successor to Oda Yorozu (1868–1945), he became a judge on the Permanent International Court of Justice at The Hague where he also served for three years, until his death, as its president.

Japan would also play a leading role in the Washington Conference on Naval Limitation (1921–1922) and in the Kellogg-Briand Pact on the outlawry of war (1928), as well as in the London Naval Disarmament Conference of 1930. The Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1928, which Japan was one of the first nations to sign, represented a milestone in the development of the international law of peace. U.S. Secretary of State Henry Lewis Stimson (1867–1950) assessed the importance of the Washington treaties and the Kellogg-Briand Pact in a letter to his long-time friend, U.S. Senator William Edgar Borah (1865–1940):

> These two treaties represent independent but harmonious steps taken for the purpose of aligning the conscience and public opinion of the world in favor of a system of orderly development by the law of nations including the settlement of all controversies by methods of justice and peace instead of arbitrary force.

The Kellogg-Briand Pact notwithstanding, Japan’s military under Tanaka Giichi as prime minister already got involved in the Liaodong Leased Territory trying to forcefully regulate political affairs in the region. It was too tempting, as the conspiracy of Japanese military officers in the so-called Manchurian Incident in September 1931 showed, to resort to the use of force to ensure the Japanese interests on the Asian mainland. “[A] vast semi-colonial territory as large as France and Germany combined” only waited to be exploited. The “creation of puppet states and buffer states has been a well-recognized tactic of nineteenth century imperialism.” The editors of the Proceedings of the Fifth Conference of the Institute of Pacific Relations (IPR), held in Banff, Canada, in 1933, referring to China’s Three Eastern Provinces plus those parts of “Inner Mongolia” that were included in the new state of “Manchukuo” (proclaimed 1932), observed that there had “never
been a puppet of such gigantic dimensions and of such potential wealth and economic importance as the newly formed state in Manchuria.\textsuperscript{376}

To resolve the dilemma that the “independence” of Manchukuo had created for Japan’s international relations, in August 1933 Professors Takagi Yasaka and Yokota Kisaburō (both of the Imperial University of Tokyo) at the fifth IPR conference in Banff proposed to conclude a “regional security pact” modeled after the Locarno Pact that would include China and the other powers that had interests in China, and thereby relieve Japan of its responsibility. Nitobe Inazō had already emphasized the regional element\textsuperscript{377} at the third conference of the IPR in Kyoto in 1929:

As the League grows in membership and geographical dimensions, it will presumably be compelled to conduct some of its business in regional congresses. For, though theoretically and ideologically the concern of one nation is the concern of the whole world, there are, in practice, international questions that affect only restricted areas. Questions of this character can be best discussed by the parties interested in a regional gathering, under the general direction or oversight of the central body.\textsuperscript{378}

Shidehara, too, after the successful conclusion of the Locarno Pact in 1925, had welcomed the principle of regional arrangements to support the League of Nations system. A regional order in the Far East did not come about, however, and on 27 March 1933 Matsuoka Yōsuke (1880–1946), then the head of the Japanese delegation to the League of Nations, announced Japan’s departure from the world body, following Japan’s condemnation by the league for the seizure of Manchukuo.

Since the law of nations and its new world order had already begun to fail, the proposal for a regional order seemed only reasonable. After Japan had left the League of Nations, in the summer of 1933, Dr. Nitobe, who headed the Japanese delegation at the IPR conference in Banff, remarked:

[The] fundamental causes of international conflict . . . have their roots in divergent national economic policies. . . . Some nations are endowed with the material blessings of nature out of proportion to the size of their populations, while the reverse is the case with others. How to adjust those obvious inequalities with the principle of “live and let live” is the supreme test of enlightened statesmanship. The trend of economic self-sufficiency when carried to excess will inevitably create a psychology in the less fortunately situated countries that the only way to guarantee their own material economic security is to establish economic blocs of their own by bringing outside territories into their own political orbit. If this policy is carried to its logical conclusion it may finally divide the world into many isolated camps, and the rivalry resulting from it may end sooner or later in a great disaster for humanity.\textsuperscript{379}