

## **TOWARD THE UNIVERSAL ETHICS AND VALUES IN THE AGE OF GLOBALIZATION: WITH REFERENCE TO JAPANESE RELIGIONS COMPARED TO MODERN RATIONALISM**

### ***Introduction***

It can be said that human society has undergone profound changes from the latter half of the 20th century to the 21st century. Chronologically, this is the change to a new phenomenon, suggesting a shift toward a new platform in modernity, that is, a shift to the 'post-modern'. This corresponds to 'modernization', which was a shift from pre-modernity to modernity.

Modernization has been defined in various pluralistic ways. A central core aspect points to the penetration of the idea of rationality. The development of technology based on rationalism (technical rationality) led to the industrial revolution, which in turn caused the growth of productivity that made possible material plenty. We escaped from hunger, which was a typical characteristic of pre-modern society. Furthermore, the idea of rationalism helped to uncover the groundlessness of traditional authority and to defeat the pre-modern political system in favour of the pursuit of freedom and the equality of individuals. Modernization based on the idea of rationalism has a close relationship with mastery over nature and human liberation. In this way, it is often considered that modernization leads to the progress of human society.

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On the other hand, it also becomes clear that progress based on human-centred technological rationality can destroy natural resources and cause the gap between the rich and the poor to widen under the free market economy system. Facing these negative unintended consequences, people began to question reflectively about what is modernization. The term 'post-modern' refers to the situation orienting to a new era after the modern age.

In the meantime, the growth of transportation and communication accompanied by technological innovation has caused world-wide exchange to be more frequent and closer. This means that the global economic and socio-cultural systems, which emerged around 15th century, the so-called 'era of the great navigators', has become realized and functioned more efficiently.

In the late 20th century, the innovation of information technology, the new systems of telecommunications and computerized information networks, and the growth of the world-wide capitalist economy through multinational corporations and the international division of labour brought about remarkable globalization. The nation-state, which could be seen as a product of modernity, had formed the core base of society, as an operating system as a whole. Now, however, This is challenged by a variety of global networks working beyond nation-states. Alongside this, the values and norms which have been formed at the national society level become relativized and lead to the fluidity and instability of identities. This is the globalization of human society, which is a social change based on the axis of space.

The reason why we call the 21st century a 'new era' is that the phenomena of change in human society have become clarified in time and space, which can be characterised as 'post-modern' and 'globalization'. The new era gives us a series of greater challenge which we have never seen before. One of these is that we can not yet provide any suitable theory to explain the unification of the global society and can not image any values or ethics ruling this huge public sphere.

Moreover, we can not help recognizing the limitation of modern rationalism originated in the West, which focuses on the improvement and progress of human societies by the limitless use of natural resources. Nevertheless, certain values based on modern rationalism have dominated human society and formed the core part of human lives in modern societies. We need to find alternatives at the age of 'globalization and post-modern' when rationalism has revealed its limitation. In this context, we can point to the need to consider the possibilities and potentialities of Buddhist ideas which are shared in East Asian societies where a number of Buddhist principles have been practiced implicitly. For example, the elements of Buddhist ideas which give special importance to symbiosis of all living creatures seem to aid the construction of new common values instead of human-centric values based on Western rationalism.

## **I. *The Contradictions of modern society***

**1.1** The modern society in the West has been invented through the development of technology and the revolutionized social system which were based on the spirit of rationalism. The growth of productivity with the Industrial Revolution led to considerable achievements in the release from hunger and disease, which had been regular features of pre-modern society. On the other hand, the capitalist social system comes to accomplish development, in which the limit doesn't exist in the circulation process of expanding production and digging up the demand for the commodity.

After the initial success with liberation from hunger, the development of productivity has relentlessly continued. To sustain the capitalist economy, it is crucial to arouse the demand to purchase commodities by stimulating the desire of the consumer, because to invent the demand for goods, it needs the desire of the consumer. In this process, the new desires, which go beyond necessities and the basic condition to survive, come to be demanded. The 'consumer society', where consumption itself is regarded as a central value, is based on an infinite expansion of desire connected with the endless search for a richer and more comfortable life.

As a result of the development of the productive capacity, the capitalist economy of the modern society were confronted by a big wall, that is, increase in the supply that exceeds demand. To remove this barrier, the creation of new demand that exceeds the necessity is requested. Production based on the expansion of consumption is an inevitable consequence of modern capitalism. In this economy system, it is necessary to develop and create new desires to promote consumption.

Thus, our mature modern society is caught in a vicious circle in which increased consumption is needed to support the purchase of the mass-produced commodities and to maintain the mass production system. New desires are needed to ensure the infinite expansion of consumption. This model of the market economy based on mass consumption and mass production become progressively extended on the global level and, eventually all the people in the world are forcibly pulled into this system.

As mentioned earlier, one of the main factors in the globalization has been the development of electronic media via computer technology. If McLuhan's division can be used here, the history of the development of the media can be roughly divided into three periods : that of the voice ; typeface (or print); and that of electric signal (McLuhan, 1964). At the third stage, the emergence and development of electronic media fundamentally transformed the volume, quality and range of information. The growth of the electronic media and advanced information technology, which provided large amounts of varied information, stimulated people's desires and made possible new form of consumption. This phenomenon with its infinite scope and scale of information has enabled the formation of global communication networks.

In particular, the technology which connects computers to mass communications has developed since the 1960s. This also made possible the simultaneous exchange of information at distance.

With the technical improvement of the electronic media, it became able to send not only voice signals but also an accurate image at the same time. The exchange of information based on signs and images at a global level has changed the essence of human communication and reality itself. Originally, human beings communicated by using an advanced symbolic sign system, such as language. The use of signs in human life is an indispensable element with which to construct reality. However, accompanied with the progress of information technology, the virtual reality, which was separated from original reality, functions in a separate physical space and increases its specific gravity. As quasiexperiences (simulations) generated by the sign is made more exquisite, subsequently the boundary of a concrete reality and virtual reality becomes unclear. In this process, we infinitely create and seek such desires as separated from real desires. In this way, the consumer life of human beings becomes infinitely expanded and complicated via the digitalization of information.

**1.2** The infinite expansion of scope and scale with the development of electronic media has made possible the formation of daily global communication networks. This process is closely related to the expansion of global economic interdependence of capitalism and the progress of communication technology, which is a feature of the latter half of the 20th century. However, this phenomenon of expanding process appears not only in the economic field but in various areas such as social relations and cultural systems. J. Tomlinson assumes globalization to be an empirical condition of the modern world and he calls it 'complex connectivity'. By this, he means that globalization refers to 'the rapidly developing and ever-densening network of interconnections and interdependences that characterize modern social life' (Tomlinson : 1999).

As for the globalization, its beginnings were seen in the theories of classic sociology in the early 20th century. After the 1980s, it became one of the main concepts of social theory, building on the modernization theory in the 1960s, through the appearance of World System Theory by Immanuel Wallerstein et al. According to Giddens, globalization is an expanding process in the entire earth, which is related to modernization (Giddens : 1990). Robertson shows that globalization is a long process going on for many centuries and it is not a unified one, but rather is divergent and plural (Robertson : 1990, 1992). In the initial globalization controversy, it can be said that the main argument was the comparison between homogeneous development theories as seen in Giddens, Marxism and functionalism and the plural, multi-dimensional development theory of Robertson et al. All these analytical frames of globalization are related to the consideration of taking the human world as a whole.

The former, the homogenizers, think that the universal element exists in the average of the particular world system. In short, it is a version of convergence theory. Whereas the latter, the heterogenizers do not apply the axis of the universality-specificity to the development of human societies, characterizing the West as universal and others as specific, but rather investigate the specificity of the West which has maintained its superiority over others.

The globalization of human society, with the free movement of people, things, money and information beyond national borders, can be considered as the infiltration of the modernization process to all parts of the world. In this sense, globalisation enhances the convenience, efficiency and the comfort of people's lives. In fact, national borders as sociocultural, political and physical barriers have been weakened and, with material abundance, the ideas of liberalism and human rights along with various kinds of knowledge have come to spread widely all around the world. However, on the other hand, it is also true that abundance and wealth have not spread impartially among people but it is often concentrated in the executives of multinational companies and information industry elites. This has led to an increase in the gap between the rich and the poor within the domestic economy of a country as well as between the rich and the poor nations.

With the advance of electronic information systems, the main economic dealings are almost performed by exchanging signs and numbers on the computer. Economic activities without concrete business contacts could bring about the lack of consideration and sympathy to the their business partners. If it is ruled only by the value for the pursuit of profit, then it is getting difficult to form an ethics in economic activities. The strong people in the global economy relentlessly deprive the profits of the weak by constructing advantageous economic rules for themselves. There is neither sympathy nor compassion for the others in such electronic dealings mostly based on the exchange of signs. At the same time, mass production and mass consumption for the pursuit of unlimited profit have dried up natural resources, which result in the current, serious environmental destruction.

The idea of modernization which originated in the West involved the idea of progress which was assumed to be a universal process common to all human societies. However, in the latter half of the 20th century, the results of progress have brought about not only an uneven distribution of wealth and unequal distribution of prosperity among human societies, but also the visible consumption of natural resources and environmental degradation

**1.3** The globalization of the human society brings out simultaneously the concomitant and coexistence of the local. This is to have recognized the importance of the analysis by spatial axis along with that of the time axis which has analysed human

history with the single track and one direction standard. The development of human society is not unified and single track, but consists of a plurality of divergence forms corresponding to various spatial situations. Here, the problem can be said to be that the Western-centred concept of 'modernization' is not universal, but the concept of 'multi-modernization' or 'alternative modernization' could be said to be universal with the acceptance of the existence of different societies through the perspective of global space. The characteristics of the new social theory, which is labelled post-modern, is to take the idea of space (spatiality) with time (temporality) into it (Featherstone et al. (eds): 1995, Featherstone : 2002).

It can be said that to emphasise the idea of space is not to assume a unified theory of evolution, as we find amongst many modernist theories, but to assume a plurality of developments in human societies. Max Weber thought that the essence of modern society in the West was an advanced rationality in bureaucratic organization and the capitalistic economy system. He tried to understand human history through a universal process of rationalization. The general theory of social change found in Marxist social theory suggests that it was an attempt to understand the development of human history through the time axis in terms of human relations in the production system. As for the functionalist theory of revolution, it was based on the assumption of a universal evolutionary process, with the human society gradually improving its adjustment function. These kinds of theories which were mainly formed in the West were a common paradigm to modernists at the time when the nation-state was assumed to be the main frame of human society. However, with growing globalization, it is getting clear that the Western society could be local and specific, hence, a reflection to the pseudo-universality in modernization theory has occurred.

Originally, the symmetry axis, global-local, had been identified with the universal-particular. The current global standards are those which are based on technology, the capitalist economy and political system which actually originated in the West. Ironically, it is getting clear that these two axes could be different with the growth of globalization. In a word, a pseudo-universality of a superior factor of the West (dominant particular) came to be recognized in a situation in which various contradictions in the rationalization process appeared. In non-western societies (Asia, Islam etc), the rationalism of the West is not necessarily perceived as the triumph of a supremacy value. In this sense, it is necessary to reconsider the concept of 'rationality' and its role in the construction of idealistic and realistic paradigms of Western modern society.

## **II. Rationalism in the Process of Modernization**

**2.1** Rationality means the consistent correspondence to a certain logical form, efficient-effectiveness, or certain value standards. The modernization of the West can be seen as a rationalization process over various areas of the human life. In this case,

the core rationality is a scientific rationality. The reason why we think rationalization is an inevitable process is that human beings have been pursuing more appropriate methods in order to fulfil a basic desire for living with the ability to accomplish it. The ability is to be able to replace various concrete realities with signs or symbols like language, and to rearrange and reconstruct them again in different ways, finally to accumulate them infinitely. The use of abstract signs/symbols is to extract the essential characteristics from various phenomena. This process could lead to the formation of a general scientific formula. The ability of symbolization makes it possible to invent peculiar cultures like science. Thus, it is reasonable to say that the essence of rationalization can be found in the process of symbolization.

Stephan Kalberg has identified four patterns of rationality in accordance with the Weber's theory. These are four rationalities : practical rationality, theoretical rationality, substantive rationality, and formal rationality (Kalberg: 1980). Practical rationality is to consider the best method to achieve a special purpose within the limits of everyday experiences. This is rationality in a subjective frame on the part of those who accept the given reality. It might be seen as irrational or non-rational from a more objective viewpoint or from the viewpoint of other value premises. Theoretical rationality is to understand and interpret reality by the method of acknowledgment which is theoretically and logically consistent. In the background of it, there is the belief and conviction that it is possible to grasp systematically the significant order of the world. Substantive rationality is the case in which the aim is to achieve a given purpose under the condition of its consistency with the standards based on certain cultural values. Therefore, on the premise of other different cultural values, this rationality might be seen as irrational. Finally, formal rationality is the rationality which is able to calculate technically in order to understand a phenomenon under laws and rules which can be applied generally and universally. Scientific laws and the modern state's legal system, bureaucratic organizations and the capitalist economy system are typical examples of formal rationality. Western rationalization is a process of the penetration and expansion of formal rationality into the

**2.2** Weber considered rationalization as an inevitable process in human history. Another term, McDonaldization as referred by George Ritzer, is more radical than Weber's concept of rationalization, since it suggests that the rationalization can be seen in all dimensions of life.

McDonaldization means the processes with various characteristics which determine the principle of fast-food restaurants. McDonald's management can expand into many fields and places outside the United States of America. The main principles are the characteristics of the fast-food hamburger restaurant: efficiency, predictability, calculability, and technical control in the production and sales processes of this restaurant (Ritzer: 1993). Ritzer's McDonaldization is founded on Weber's rationalization

theory which is applied in the analysis of modern society, and Ritzer's theory is presented as an extension of Weber's theory in order to analyse the contemporary society, a consumer society of the so-called post-modern.

Weber intended to find the essence of Western modern society in the high degree of rationalization in bureaucracy and the capitalist economic system. In effect, Weber understands human history from the viewpoint of rationalization (more accurately, formal rationalization). Ritzer replaced bureaucracy in Weber's rationalization theory with the fast-food restaurant, in order to show that rationalization had penetrated not only into production process but also into consumption. In affluent mature modern societies, people, who were liberated from the necessities of life, started to expand their concern for consumption based on new desires. Therefore, consumer culture becomes an important index to characterize the contemporary society. Hence, the McDonald system symbolizes the rationalization process in all dimensions of everyday life of post-modern consumption society, which is often considered as the most advanced state of modernization. According to this theory, in the McDonalidization process, human society becomes more rationalized in all life arenas, and finally it can achieve the emergence of 'a manual society' along with advanced efficiency. As a result, human beings manipulated by this efficiency principle could lose their subjectivity and creativity, falling into the contradictory state of the 'irrationality of rationality' as Ritzer pointed out.

McDonalidization is the globalization of the American type of consumer culture which is supported by the principle of the capitalist economy and is coming to dominate more and more sectors of American society as well as of the rest of the world. Ritzer pessimistically thinks this to be as an inevitable process, because he understands human history from a European and American viewpoint and also accepts the infiltration of American lifestyle as inevitable. Whereas from the perspective of non-Western culture, though it is difficult to interrupt this process completely, it is very possible to control McDonalidization, and to search for alternative direction of human history (for Ritzer's opinion and Japanese commentators' regarding this process in Japanese society, see Ritzer & Maruyama : 2003).

**2.3** The rationalization process by which the principles of formal rationality penetrate into daily life is not the same in different cultures or societies. It may provide a clear understanding to think about the problems of rationality in relation to the cultural system as a whole.

The concept of cultural system is based on the assumption that the various cultural elements of a specific cultural system relate to each other and form a system. System is a concept constructed from a certain viewpoint that constitutes a hypothetical model to analyse reality.

The elements of a cultural system (subsystems of it) refers to the cultural contents classified according to their individual characteristics. Human beings have a plurality of dimensions of life (adjustment to external nature ; formation and maintenance of the social group ; search for the real meaning of life ; etc.). In the areas of anthropology and sociology, cultural elements have been classified based on the multi-dimensionality of human life. For example, it may be reasonable to assume the existence of the following four elements of the cultural system : cognitive elements such as science and technology which seek to comprehend objectively the external world ; expressive elements related to emotional expression such as art; evaluative elements such as values and morals which illustrate the desirability of human life ; and existential elements such as life standards and beliefs in certain limited conditions.

The former two, cognitive and expressive elements, tend to be strongly related to the external and objective world. The other two, evaluative and existential elements, are related to the subjective side of the individual and the group as actors. In a word, we can consider cognitive and expressive elements as external elements of culture and the evaluative and existential elements as inner elements of culture. It can be assumed that, if these cultural elements form a system, they could be related to each other. For instance, the advance of technology as a cognitive element can influence the content of religion and morality as evaluative and existential elements. Technological improvements can also change the method of artistic expression. On the other hand, values, morality and religion might limit the method and the recognition of the object in scientific research.

If the relation of these elements to the patterns of rationalities is examined, it can be said that objective rationality and formal rationality or the principle of theoretical rationality comprise the core part of the cognitive element. Substantive rationality corresponds to the evaluative element. Likewise, practical rationality corresponds to the existential element. In this case, it is thought that expressive elements belong to an irrational category.

By using these concepts of cultural elements, the following hypothesis under the globalization process can be assumed. It is that unbalanced developments between cultural elements increase more and more under the condition of globalization. Between the two kinds of elements, the one is those which are apt to be globalized and form a worldwide system, and the other is those which are not to be globalized but rather remain localized or particularized. The former can correspond to the cognitive elements and the expressive elements. The evaluative elements and the existential elements correspond to the latter.

Science and technology represent cognitive elements and art and design do the expressive ones. Social values and norms correspond to the evaluative elements, and

religious morality and life standards to existential elements. It is easy for the cognitive elements and the expressive elements to be affected by globalization. Cognitive scientific knowledge and expressive artistic style are good examples. The utility of scientific knowledge is based on the external objective world, which can be understood as an irrefutable reality. Moreover, it is also easy for artistic beauty to be trans-culturally understood, because it is expressed in concrete visible objects. On the other hand, evaluative elements such as values and norms are based on the desirability of a subject. It is not always easy to explain these elements by an objective and universal way. Existential elements relate to subjective reality at an individual level and to the solution of personal problems which are limited to a specific situation. Therefore, it is not easy for people in other social situations to understand them and they are not easily globalized.

The cognitive elements, which can be represented by scientific technology, are most likely to be globalized and to have a cumulative capacity. It could be asserted that the cognitive cultural elements have been expanding and have overwhelmed other cultural elements in the cultural system of modern societies in the major nation-states. This type of rationality has been given priority and penetrated into all aspects of human life. As a result, its efficiency and convenience, which should be essentially regarded as a means, turns into a final purpose and becomes a kind of ethics. A good example is that the versatility of scientific technology and economic efficiency are admired as supreme values in the modern society.

### **III. *The Potentiality of Buddhist Ideas in Japanese Religions***

**3.1** Rationality refers to a coherent state based on some reasons such as logical forms, efficiency and effectiveness as a means, and a set of principles or value premises. Among these types of rationality, objective rationality with its emphasis on effective means for a given purpose, or the formal rationality in more general term, are different from those which are based on certain value or a belief. Rather, they are often contradictory with each other. It can be remarked that such a rationality as based on a certain value, which does not consider efficiency and effectiveness as a means, is regarded as irrational from the viewpoint of the formal rationality with its coherence based on an objective and general law. The latter type of rationality is represented by the natural sciences originated mostly in the modern Western Europe. There is an objective principle and a formal principle behind the theoretical structures. The neutrality of academic knowledge means to aim at the establishment of an objective law and at freedom from specific values.

The penetration of this kind of objective rationality is symbolized in the development of science and technology. In a word, the development of the rationality in-

creases the material productive capacity of human society and enriches human life. Modernization represents the achievement of abundance via the growth of technology to make people free from suffering, hunger and disease. In this sense, it can be said that it offers an advancement of human society over previous stages of modern society. Therefore, modernization and rationality inevitably overlap in terms of the progress in human history.

In the process of achieving its aim of abundant human life along with utilizing natural resources through technology, this kind of rationality has been given the first priority and was regarded as absolute. However, the knowledge system of Western modernity, including the natural sciences, is based on the tacit assumption of its effectiveness for human life. Hence, it can't be said that it is completely value free in its essential meaning. As nature has been used and developed for the purpose based on human-centric values, the limitation of natural resources has clarified. To convert natural resources into energy and to use them up thoroughly leads to the destruction of the natural environment in which human beings itself are included. The human-centred principle is to keep only a relative domination over other living things and nature. This means that the result of the rationality leads to an irrational state, the destruction of the entire environment, including us human beings.

As mentioned earlier, the rationalization of human life is strongly related to man's ability of symbolization or using signs. To understand a concrete reality by using a sign system is to convert it to a set of signs through the process of symbolizing and abstracting direct images which are obtained from the objective world. Human beings can catch the events of the external world as a stimulation which passes through the sense organs. This sense is mediated by the mechanism of an advanced nervous system peculiar to humans and it is recognized as a cognitive symbol. To convert external stimuli into cognitive perceptions brings about new relationship of 'object — sign'. This means to replace concrete reality with sign system.

Intelligence refers to the ability or a mental function to recognize the external world through cognitive perception. This has been a fundamental principle for all studies/disciplines including natural sciences. The recognition of the external world based on intelligence and reasons means to substitute it with the signs, through which the objects in it are generalized. This process relates to the invention and discovery of scientific laws and rules. In the process of the development of natural science, intelligence and reason are given the first priority over the other senses and are regarded as absolute principles. On the other hand, senses which are strongly related to the emotions or feelings have been seen as irrational or non-rational.

Making signs is to replace reality, which has originally infinite variety, with limited signs, that is, to re-compose and simplify it. The idea of scientific versatility con-

tains a kind of optimism that the essential nature of all things is able to be replaced with signs and formulas which can be calculated. Digitalization via the computer is an extreme case of this simplification. In this case, everything is replaced with the frame of the binary system in order to be generalized. This leads to the upgrade of scientific methods that enrich the material life of human beings. However, the complete use of natural resources through scientific technology results in the contradictions of the destruction of the natural environment.

**3. 2** As it becomes clear that the principle based on modern rationalism in the West has its limitations, something which can replace, correct, or supplement it should be required in other cultural traditions. Under such conditions, we can recognize an obvious contrast between the Western rationalism and Buddhist ideas which has been formed in East Asian societies. It is useful that, comparing with the Western rationalism, the possibility Buddhism, Bukkyo in Japanese, means 'the teaching of the Buddha'. The term 'Buddha' means 'enlightened or awakened person' in Sanskrit, which comes from the verb 'budh' (awaken, enlighten). A buddha is regarded as the embodiment of both wisdom and compassion, who is sometimes equated with Gautama Siddhartha (Shaka), the historical founder of Buddhism in India. According to the Mahayana tradition which is the type of Buddhism practiced in China, Korea, and Japan, there exist countless buddhas that are active throughout the cosmos, so Gautama is not necessarily regarded as the only one buddha. This Sanskrit word buddha was transliterated into Chinese characters. The Japanese term bukkyo comes from these Chinese characters and the character butsu is pronounced 'hotoke' reading in the Japanese way, which also means buddha.

Buddhism originated in India and was introduced into China in the 1st century AD. In the 6th century, Buddhism was introduced from China, through Korea, into Japan. The inner unification of Japan, that is, the formation of Japan as a nation state promoted the relation with China whose culture was the most advanced in East Asia at that time. Together with other elements of Chinese culture, such as its writing system and political institutions, Japan imported Mahayana Buddhism, which, although originated in India, had spread widely in China. Mahayana means 'great vehicle' (idaijō) which leads all the mankind to the salvation. After being introduced into Japan, Buddhism underwent a significant transformation in the process of mutual influence with the native religions, especially with Shinto. Since the Buddhism of Japan has its root in India and China, it is necessary to observe the history of Buddhism in these areas in order to understand the essential qualities of it.

The founder of Buddhism, Gautama (surname) Siddhartha, was born about 446 BC as a prince of the Sakya clan. He concerned himself with the whole problem of human existence. After living a very ascetic life, he experienced great enlightenment and became a Buddha. He was well aware of the one-sidedness and relative nature

of various systems of thoughts on metaphysical problems. After attaining enlightenment, he sought to reach out to people and to teach them truth, transcending metaphysical arguments.

Buddhism, in its early stage, did not have any specific dogmas generally stressed by professional religionists. It attempted to point to and teach 'Dharma', the true eternal law, that was not limited to any particular sects of religious doctrines. The teachings did not constitute any established dogma, but rather were a practical wisdom or ethic for reaching the ideal state of humanity.

According to Gautama, we experience suffering because everything is the result of ever-changing conditions and causes, that is, human existence is always subject to continuous movement and change (*mujo*). Therefore, it is meaningless to claim anything as belonging to oneself. In this context, even the existence of 'atman' (self) as the subject of knowing is also denied (*muga*), so the dichotomy between the subjective and objective world is disregarded. Being governed by various 'dharmas', all beings come into existence through the conditioning of innumerable causes. Our painful existence stems from various causes and, when these causes are extinguished, the suffering disappears.

This Indian tradition of Buddhism can be found in 'the new spirituality culture' of the present day Japan. In this cultural current, great value is placed on becoming free from a false self with various kinds of desire which was created and imposed by everyday life in the family and society. By means of ascetic exercises such as meditation, one can reach the goal to get 'authentic self'. (Shimazono : 1997, Bachika : 2002).

Buddhism, introduced into Japan in the 6th century from China through Korea, became prominent in the reign of the empress Suiko. Her regent, Prince Shoto-ku, who is considered the founder of Japanese Buddhism, built many monasteries. In adopting cultural elements from the outside, the tendency in Japanese history has not been exclusive, but rather open to other cultures. This is also true in the case of religion. The only major religion indigenous to Japan is Shinto, the core of which is formed by traditional Japanese beliefs and practices. Indian Buddhism (later, Chinese Buddhism) and Chinese Confucianism were introduced into Japan from the outside as global cultures at those times and assimilated into Japanese culture, co-existing with Shinto.

**3.3** When a global culture is introduced from outside into a cultural system, it is modified and forms new elements within that system. This process can be termed 'localization of global culture' which corresponds to 'glocalization' (Robertson: 1992). Later on, the new glocalized elements might be globalized again, that is, reexported to the global field. In this process, these elements become universalistic or near universalistic, because they will contain and integrate both global and local elements.

Buddhism was united with native/local cultures in various places through the process of spreading from India via China and Korea to Japan and developed its own uniqueness as a religion. As mentioned above, in Japan, a particular form of Buddhism developed which assimilated with cultural currents. Globalized Buddhism in Japan, that is, Buddhism adapted to Japan, has peculiar Japanese characteristics as well as some essential characteristics common to Buddhism in China and Korea. The form of Buddhism which is localized in Japan is considered to have independently created new elements through the concrete mind and body in the particular socio-cultural context of Japan. Observing this globalized Buddhism, it is possible to recognise and investigate the universal elements as follows.

As for Buddhism in Japan, human beings are located as only one element of all things in nature, whereas Western modern knowledge is formed around the human-centred principle as a tacit assumption. According to Japanese Buddhism, other living things and nature are not made exclusively into objects for human use, but are admitted to have existential value equal to that of human beings. For instance, the *Hongaku* philosophy in Japan (the perception of Buddhahood as immanent in all things as they are) is an idea which transcends the human-centred principle of Western modernity and focuses on a symbiotic relationship with nature (Ikemi: 2003). In the original Buddhist idea, it is meaningless to claim anything as belonging to oneself. In this context, even the existence of the self as the subject is also denied, so the dichotomy between the subjective (human beings) and objective world (nature and other living things) is rejected.

The concept of progress or advancement, which is based on the rationalization of human society, has a close relationship with the understanding of human history as a linear development. This view has led to a way of thinking based on the use and exploitation of infinite resources. However, in the modernization process by using highly developed technology, human society has faced the problem of the limitation of resources as well as of waste management of it. In these circumstances, it would be better to understand our situation by means of a cyclical world view instead of a linear one. The circularity of human existence is a basic presupposition in Buddhist ideas.

As for the validity of cause and effect replay thinking, science also understands this theoretically, but it tends toward simplification for methodological purposes. In a scientific theory, one cause is related to one effect within a certain limited framework, where it is impossible to suppose wide range of unforeseeable and irreversible consequences. Technology as a tool of human beings has fixed and defined certain objects under assumptions based on human-centred values. In this process, the effective object as meaningful to be used by human is discovered and invented. By using these objects, the quality of human life has been improved. But, at the same time,

this could well bring about negative results for other living things and nature, if we adopt a wider total framework. For example, the achievement of a comfortable life through the use of petroleum energy has brought about the depletion of the ozone layer of the atmosphere.

In the case of modern medicine, a cause of sickness is specified and, in its treatment, the cause such as bacillus must be eliminated completely. It brought about a big effect of treatment and therapeutic gain. On the other hand, this has generated new resistant microbes. The treatments of illness for a part of the human body have sometimes led to a loss of vitality for the human body as a whole.

Such a clarification and definition of a limited cause-effect relation is based on the method of the modern science that replaces concrete objects with signs and symbols and arranges them into a certain formula and a rule or law. As the result, insubstantial entities represented in signs and symbols become regarded as substantial. Whereas in the Buddhist perspective, an event is understood in the entire relatedness of all things. In the idea, everything could affect other things and be closely linked to each other.

The Buddhist ideas which have been discussed above might be limited to a vision from a particular point of view. But a number of these principles based on Buddhism are practiced implicitly by many people especially in East Asian societies. These ideas of Buddhism have the potential to form common values and ethics in the global sphere beyond the Western human-centric principle.

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## **Abstract**

**Tetsuo Maruyama**

### **TOWARD THE UNIVERSAL ETHICS AND VALUES IN THE AGE OF GLOBALIZATION: WITH REFERENCE TO JAPANESE RELIGIONS COMPARED TO MODERN RATIONALISM**

Today, globalization is still far from creating a picture in our minds about an integrated global society with certain common values and ethics. However, the exchange and flow of people, goods, money, information and images are emerging on a transnational level and, in this global sphere, some values of dominant-particularity with pseudo-universality have prevailed. Most of these values originated in Western societies. This paper presents a tentative outline of alternative common values in the new global sphere, with reference to Japanese religions, especially Buddhist ideas, making comparison with modern rationalism that originated in the West. In the globalization process of human society, those values and norms which have been formed at the nation-state level become relativized and lead to the fluidity and instability of cultural identities. Furthermore, it also becomes clear that such dominant values based on modern rationalism have revealed their limitations. Hence, we need to search for alternative values common to all human beings. In this line of thought, it is useful to consider the possibilities or potentialities of Buddhist ideas as common values.

**Key words** rationalism, Buddhism, modernization, postmodernity, globalization, McDonaldization.

## Резиме

Тецуо Марујама

### **КА УНИВЕРЗАЛНОМ МОРАЛУ И ВРЕДНОСТИМА У ДОБУ ГЛОБАЛИЗАЦИЈЕ: ЈАПАНСКЕ РЕЛИГИЈЕ У ПОРЕЂЕЊУ СА МОДЕРНИМ РАЦИОНАЛИЗМОМ**

Данас када живимо у добу глобализације, у нашој свести још увек није створена представа о интегралном глобалном друштву са одређеним заједничким вредностима и етиком. Међутим, кретање људи и проток роба, новца, информација и слика сада се одвијају на транснационалном плану. Због тога у тој глобалној сфери почињу да преовлађују неке вредности са доминантним карактеристикама псеудо универзалности. Већина тих вредности има своје корене у западним друштвима.

Основни циљ овог чланка је презентовање оквирне „скице“ алтернативних заједничких вредности у тој новој глобалној сфери, уз посебан осврт на јапанске религије и, пре свега, на будистичке идеје. При томе, праве се поређења са модерним рационализмом који је поникао на Западу. У процесу глобализације људског друштва, дошло је до релативизације оних вредности и норми које су биле формиране на нивоу националних држава. То је, даље, довело до флуидности и губљења културног идентитета. Штавише, постало је јасно и то да су се показала ограничења оних доминантних вредности које су утемељене на модерном рационализму. У тим околностима, неопходно је да пронађемо алтернативне вредности које су заједничке свим људским бићима. У складу са оваквим размишљањима, корисно је да размотримо могућности или потенцијале будистичких идеја у смислу поменутих заједничких вредности.

**Кључне речи:** рационализам, будизам, модернизација, постмодернизам, глобализација, мекдоналдизација.