

POLITICAL THOUGHT AND RELIGION IN POSTWAR JAPAN: FOCUSING ON CHANGES IN THE EARLY 1970s

Abstract

This chapter discusses, in the light of political thought, the background to the emergence of a new religious awareness prevailing in Japanese society today. When taking a general look at the political thought of postwar Japan focusing on the view of the world generally held by the Japanese people and the attitudes of intellectuals, it is evident that the development of political thought up to around 1970 was centered on the Japanese people's aspiration for economic growth, praying for peace, and the sympathy for communism among intellectuals and pacifism advocated by them. However, this political thought became less prevalent in the 1970s. This is considered to be due to the fact that Japan attained its primary goal in achieving the economic growth it had pursued since defeat in the war, and this gave rise to a post-modern situation that was no longer explicable in terms of modern thought, such as existentialism and Marxism. The new situation is characterized by the perception of material goods as signs and the decline of the 'grand-narrative.' Further, the post-modern situation gave greater emphasis to our inner soul than to reality, and as such, is considered to have played a certain role in the emergence of the so-called new-new religions and the 'new spirituality culture,' which seek contact with the non-secular realm. Additionally, as interest in secular matters such as economic desire, was satisfied, people became more aware of the 'eyes of the war dead,' which had been forgotten for some time after the war. This awareness is considered to have affected the Yasukuni problem. Accordingly, it is likely that the changes in political thought around 1970 are behind both of these religious issues.

Key words: praying for peace, pacifism, sense of emptiness, the Yasukuni problem, the new-new Japanese religions, the new spirituality culture, post-modern situation.

The Yasukuni Problem, the new-new Japanese religions and the new spirituality culture are considered to be the three major religious issues that characterize modern Japanese society. These issues emerged around 1970 and have since continued to affect Japanese society, becoming increasingly complicated over the years. In this paper, I discuss the background to the emergence of these issues in the light of political thought.

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First, I will outline the political thought prevailing in Japan from the time of its defeat in World War II to around 1970, focusing on the view of the world generally held by Japanese people and the attitudes of intellectuals. Second, I will examine the changes in political thought arising in Japanese society circa 1970, especially in its ideological and philosophical aspects, in order to present a holistic picture of the changes. In so doing, I hope to make clear how such changes in political thought in postwar Japan have contributed to the emergence of the religious phenomenon we see today. Finally, I hope to identify the problems concerning political thought and the new religious consciousness that Japan is presently confronted with.

Pacifism and Praying for Peace

A Sense of Emptiness, Freedom, and Contrition

As is the case with almost all defeated nations, the Japanese people were overwhelmed by the sense of emptiness resulting from the loss after World War II, of what they had held as valuable. In prewar days, for example, the Japanese people embraced the idea of the 'Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere' with Japan at its helm, as well as the idea of deifying the Emperor as a 'living god,' which became especially popular around 1930. These ideas, however, were condemned after defeat in the war by the amendment of the Religious Corporation Ordinance (1946) and the International Military Tribunal for the Far East (1946–1948), which deprived the Japanese people of what they had believed to be most valuable. Such a situation was expected to leave the Japanese in a state of apathy for the time being.

The reality was different. The 'emptiness' the Japanese people felt upon the defeat was soon replaced with a 'feeling of freedom' resulting from the war's termination. For about a decade since the middle of the 1930s, Japan had been in a total-war system, placing people under strict restrictions in every aspect of everyday life, ranging from access to household products to participation in political activities. After the war, the US occupation forces brought with them not only food, but also freedom of speech, and were welcomed by the Japanese people as liberation forces.

In this way, the American-style democracy began to prevail in Japan after the war. Here, it should be noted that the democracy introduced to Japan after the war was American-style democracy. The notion that Japan, which had always been a totalitarian state, became a democratic state for the first time after the war is wrong and can mislead us in understanding the political thought in postwar Japan. The fact is that Japan adopted the system of constitutional government in 1890, when the Meiji Constitution was enacted, and implemented its first general election in 1928. This means that the idea of democracy was not new to the Japanese people in terms of both a national mechanism and political thought. Yet, the democracy prevailing in postwar Japan was defined mostly in American terms, unlike the democracy known to prewar Japan. We may say that, concerning the worldview held by the Japanese people in general, prewar values were forgotten and the void was filled by American values.

On the other hand, the attitude of Japanese intellectuals toward these postwar values was somewhat different from that of ordinary people—they not only forgot

the prewar values but also denied them completely. The essay that had great influence on the press and academic circles in postwar Japan was the *Theory and Psychology of Ultra-Nationalism* (1946), authored by Maruyama Masao. In this essay, Maruyama defines the ideology behind Japan's prewar system as 'ultra-nationalism' and analyzes the ideological structure and psychological basis to clarify how the ideology had driven Japan to war. As Carl Schmitt holds, the modern states in Europe are 'neutral states' in that they maintain a neutral stance in defining and selecting values. Unlike these states, Maruyama argues, the entire national order of Japan is constructed like a chain, with the Emperor as the absolute source of value (Maruyama, 1995 [1946]). In another essay, Maruyama indicates that Japanese intellectuals shared a compelling sense of guilt and remorse for their failure to take any significant action against the expanding militarism in prewar days, and calls the intellectual genealogy of postwar Japan a 'community of contrition' (Maruyama, 1996 [1982], 256).

Another thing that distinguishes the view of the world shared by the ordinary people and that of intellectuals is the attitude toward the USA. While the ordinary Japanese people developed a sense of closeness to the USA as a nation that brought liberal democracy and capitalism to Japan, intellectuals grew more sympathetic with the Soviet Union, which advocated socialism and communism. However, Marxism itself had only limited influence on Japanese society briefly after the war. Though Marxism was no longer forbidden in Japan after the war and gained greater popularity, it had little in common with the reality of Japanese society.

Soon after the war, the groups of people known as 'progressives' and 'citizen factions' came to exert significant influence over Japanese society, who were sympathetic to Marxism but kept some distance from it. The progressives denied the Japanese feudalistic or pre-modern values that remained, and pursued the ultimate goal to enlighten the Japanese people as 'modern citizens' and develop Japan into a modern society rivaling the Western world. Representative of such progressive scholars is Maruyama Masao. In the essay mentioned earlier, Maruyama concludes that the Japanese people became 'free subjects' upon defeat in the war (Maruyama, 1995[1946], 36).

The Constitution of Japan, the US-Japan Security Treaty, and Idealism

Despite the wariness towards the USA, expressed by the Japanese progressive intellectuals, the American General Headquarters (GHQ) actually held control over Japanese politics and determined its direction. Though I wrote earlier that the USA brought with them the freedom of speech to Japan, it must be admitted that the freedom was only superficial. This fact is evidenced by the process of the formulation of the Constitution of Japan. As is known widely today, the Constitution of Japan was created by the American occupation forces in a week or so. Of course, it is not permitted under international law for any occupation forces to rewrite the constitution of a defeated nation. Therefore, the process of the formulation of the Constitution of Japan was strictly kept secret from the general Japanese population.

In formulating the Constitution, the occupation forces aimed at keeping Japan from rebelling against the USA, and to this end, they incorporated the arms-renouncing clause in the Constitution: Article 9. In a sense, the vision of the renunciation of war

makes the Constitution of Japan a noble one, but obviously, no nation can defend itself without armaments. Accordingly, the USA proposed to establish its military bases in Japan to place Japan under its protection. In 1951, the San Francisco Peace Treaty and the US-Japan Security Treaty were signed. Japanese people accepted these treaties without much opposition, partly because they were kept uninformed of the process of the formation of the Constitution of Japan, but more importantly, because they were entirely sick of the war that resulted in such a huge loss of life and the devastation of their country, and sincerely prayed for peace. In this sense, we may say that the Constitution of Japan is entrusted with sincere 'praying for peace' by the Japanese people in general.

Intellectuals, too, welcomed the Constitution of Japan with its renunciation-of-war clause. However, their attitude toward peace was more radical than the praying for peace of the general public. This fact is well indicated by the debates that arose prior to the conclusion of the San Francisco Peace Treaty: in Japan, heated disputes took place around 1949 between the proponents of 'overall peace' and those of 'separate peace' with the US-led allies. The year 1949 is marked by the division of Germany into the Eastern Bloc and the Western Bloc in Europe, and also by the establishment of the People's Republic of China by the Chinese Communist Party with support of the Soviet Union. Against the backdrop of the development of the US-Soviet cold-war regime, signing a separate peace treaty meant that Japan would become a member of the Western Bloc led by the USA. The Japanese progressives insisted on overall peace, arguing that neutrality and nonaggression would be necessary to attain peaceful coexistence—they considered the Socialist Bloc states, such as the Soviet Union and China, as peace-loving nations and the USA as a warfare state.

In the 1950s, a series of incidents that betrayed the confidence of those progressives took place in succession in various parts of the world. In 1950, North Korea started the Korean War, backed by the Soviet Union. In 1956, the state authorities of the Soviet Union denounced Stalin and revealed to the world the facts about his dictatorship and the Great Purge. Again, in 1956, citizens and laborers of Hungary launched a pro-democracy political movement, which the Soviet Union suppressed with force of arms. Yet, the Japanese progressives still believed in the idealism and continued to insist on the 'protection of the Constitution of Japan, opposition to rearmament, and unarmed neutrality,' never stopping to ponder the true meaning of these positions.

The 55-Year System, the Anpo Struggle, and Realism

Setting aside the arguments of the intellectuals, which were becoming increasingly incompatible with reality, the Japanese government continued to follow the route determined by the USA. The government system formed in 1955 became Japan's domestic political framework and remained in place until the early 1990s. This system, which is known as the 55-year system, is basically founded on the confrontation between the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), a conservative wing dedicated to maintaining the ongoing national mechanism on the one hand, and the Japan Socialist Party (JSP), a reformist wing working to change the existing system on the other. On the surface, this confrontation appears to be the one between two major political parties with different political ideologies rivaling with each other. The fact is, however, that the 55-

year system was not a mechanism to allow the Japanese people to choose the 'grand design', because the grand design for the Japanese politics had been predetermined by the pacifist Constitution created by the USA and the US-Japan Security Treaty. Under the 55-year system, Japan was destined to being dedicated solely to economic reconstruction, putting aside the issue of rearmament. As a ruling party, the LDP was held responsible for implementing policy measures to distribute the wealth among the majority of the people, while the JSP, as an opposition party, was supposed to represent the minority not benefiting from the policy measures of the LDP and to criticize the ruling party. This confrontation required Japan to remain a member of the Western Bloc, or, in other words, to maintain the liberalist and capitalist system. It was not designed to impose a major policy choice on the Japanese people. They were comfortable with this political system; the economy continued to grow rapidly, and the majority of people supported the LDP, which promised further economic growth.

However, as 1960 drew near—the year the US-Japan Security Treaty was to be revised—a movement to protest its revision (the Anpo Struggle) was launched, and criticism of the LDP mounted. The movement was led mainly by university students. In those days, university students were seen as intellectual elites who embraced Marxism. Advocating a communist ideology, they began an anti-American struggle. However, it should be noted that ordinary people were only remotely concerned with the Anpo Struggle at this early stage.

The voice of protest was raised from the general public when the Kishi administration, pressed to ratify the new security treaty, rammed the revision of the US-Japan Security Treaty through the Lower House session. In those days, TV sets had just began to prevail in general households in Japan, and the fact that the Kishi administration allowed police to enter the Diet to remove opposition party members to force a vote came to the knowledge of the general public. Furthermore, Prime Minister Kishi Nobusuke served in the prewar Tojo administration as Minister of Commerce and Industry and was convicted as a 'Class A' war criminal in the International Military Tribunal for the Far East. Because of this background, the vote forced by the Kishi administration reminded the general public of the prewar political system and was viewed as a serious threat to democracy. As a result, the Anpo Struggle became a popular, nationwide movement involving not only university students, but also the general public. Considering that the US-Japan Security Treaty was revised after all, we must conclude that this movement ended in failure. Yet, Maruyama Masao positively evaluated the Anpo Struggle, arguing that this struggle evidenced that the postwar Japanese people finally took action as 'modern subjects' and that the Western democracy began to take root in Japanese society (Maruyama, 1996 [1960]).

However, it should be noted that it is not the opposition to the revision of the US-Japan Security Treaty itself but the protest to the dictatorial political management by the Kishi administration that turned the Anpo Struggle into a nationwide political movement. It is true that the call for protection of democracy did spread among the general public. As discussed above, however, the postwar Japanese democracy, whether in the context of domestic politics or international politics, was an American-style democracy imposed by the USA. In this sense, it is clear that in calling for protection of democracy in the Anpo Struggle, the general public actually called for protection of American-style democracy. In other words, the political thought held by the general

public was different from that held by university students and intellectuals.

Aware of such a view of the world held by the general public and the actual political situation, some Japanese intellectuals began to question the type of pacifism advocated by progressives. These intellectuals were of the opinion that the Security Treaty would be indispensable for Japan's national security and that the USA would be the most important partner of Japan in the realm of international politics, though they thought it undesirable for Japan to follow the USA blindly. Hence, pro-US realism emerged to replace the pro-Soviet idealism among some intellectuals (Kosaka, 1998 [1963]).

Japan continued to enjoy rapid economic development to the extent that the 1956 Economic White Paper declared: "The postwar period is now over." Ikeda Hayato, who became the Prime Minister after the Anpo Struggle, advocated the Income Doubling Plan to achieve a two-fold increase in individual income in a ten-year period. Japan since then experienced higher economic growth than originally targeted, so that, among the general public, there was not much skepticism about the political administration by the LDP, with its focus placed on economic growth and the USA that supported the LDP's national policy.

On the other hand, university students, as intellectual elites, distinguishable from the general public, gave birth to a radical movement known as the Zenkyoto (All-Campus Joint Struggle) movement in 1968. This movement was triggered by the students' anger against the authoritarian bureaucracy of universities, and they, too, embraced the communist ideology. However, the Zenkyoto movement had never garnered support from the general public, and the radical student activists became increasingly alienated from society, which eventually resulted in bloody infighting and killing in their ranks. The Zenkyoto movement finally came to its end with the Asama-Sanso Incident, a hostage-taking incident caused by some student activists in 1972.

Since the Asama-Sanso Incident and the 1970s in general, Japan's postwar political movement ebbed away at an accelerated pace. It is interesting to note that this period also saw the emergence of a new situation in the postwar Japanese religious situation. How was the decline of political movements associated with the development of the religious situation? To answer this question, let me next discuss the changes that took place around 1970 in the political thought, focusing on ideological and philosophical aspects.

Modification of Postwar Thought

The Thought Behind Political Movements

As discussed above, defeat in the war made the Japanese people aware of the negative aspects of the pre-modern system and its thought. The postwar national efforts were focused on modernizing the Japanese society by introducing the latest thought from the West. In other words, the thought that had a huge influence on the political movements in postwar Japan was modern thought brought in from the West, specifically, existentialism and Marxism.

The existentialism advocated by Jean-Paul Sartre after World War II is characterized by its emphasis on 'subjectivity,' a quality that enables us to select our own behaviors

and create values at our will without relying on God. For this reason, among a variety of versions, Sartre's existentialism is called 'atheistic existentialism.' Sartre argues that human freedom lies in the ability to take the ownership of the situation (engagement) in which we are placed, instead of viewing such a situation merely as externally imposed restraints, and in doing so, engage with society in a positive manner. Because of this notion of engagement, Sartre's existentialist ideas were applied widely to the realms of not only philosophy and literature, but also politics, and found a great many supporters in Japan. The political thought held by Japanese progressives mentioned earlier also emphasized the function of 'free modern subjects.' In this light, we may say that the modern thought at the core of the Japanese postwar society gave the greatest value to subjects.

In Marxism, however, the significance of man's subjective freedom was reduced for the time being after World War II. This is because in those days, historical materialism, with the notion that the development of history has an objective law of its own, was an orthodox ideology in the realm of thought, and the dictatorship of the Communist Party was accepted as dogma under the Stalin regime in the realm of politics. Yet, after the so-called Stalin criticism in 1956, an ideology known as Western Marxism emerged, which shed renewed light on the significance of human consciousness and subjectivity. Against this backdrop, Sartre, who was opposed to Marxism at first, gradually came to embrace this ideology, and in 1960, declared that he would work to "re-conquer man inside Marxism." With an understanding of the historical materialism of Marxism, Sartre gave greater emphasis to the significance of subjective practice than objective law, in an attempt to open up a realm of man's subjective freedom in the Marxist view of the world (Sartre, 1976[1960]).

It is questionable whether Sartre succeeded in his philosophical attempt to reconstruct historical materialism in the formula of existentialism or not. Yet, putting aside such a philosophical question, the encounter between existentialism and Marxism led to the restoration of 'subjects' into Marxism and made clear the significance of the revolutionary practice (or, at least it seemed so). Consequently, this allowed proletariats to get rid of the heavy armor imposed by the dogmatized orthodox Marxism, which reduced them to the status of mere subjects of labor, and allowed them to regain confidence as subjects of struggle' with an ability to take action for social reform.

Such an integration of existentialism and Marxism was especially compatible with the Japanese social situation up to the 1970s when the country enjoyed continued economic growth backed by an increase in industrial production. As subjects of production and subjects of labor themselves, the general public were encouraged to act as subjects of struggle to overcome the disparity and unfairness stemming from the capitalist system, through aggressive engagement with politics. In this light, existentialism and Marxism could have sufficient actuality also in Japan. People could believe in the progress of history, confident that their subjective action would lead them to victory in the class struggle between the bourgeoisie and proletariat, and eventually to the success of a revolution and establishment of a communist society.

Perhaps, the modern age can be characterized by people's denial of the guardianship of God and belief in their ability to develop history on their own by using universal human reason. Simply put, modern thought is the belief in the human ability to drive the progress of history through subjective action, and not only student

activists, but also many ordinary people, whether conservative or reformist, believed in the progress of history as far as economic growth continued.

Material Goods as Signs and Fluidity of Political Subjects

However, the oil shock triggered by the outbreak of the fourth Arab-Israeli War in 1973 put a brake on the rapid economic growth of Japan, and the Japanese people grew increasingly skeptical about the conventional 'story of progress.'

Japan had seen continued economic growth by inputting a huge amount of labor into heavy industries and mass-producing products, but this way became no longer workable by that time. Therefore, the Japanese economy shifted its emphasis from secondary industry centering on manufacturing, mining and construction to tertiary industry such as services, information and finance. The arrival of this post-industrial society not only gave rise to skepticism concerning the story of progress, but also held significant influence over Japanese society.

In the secondary industry, people were engaged in similar work at similar workplaces and earned uniform wages. They worked to buy commonly desired products, which were termed the 'three sacred treasures' (a black-and-white TV set, a washing machine and a refrigerator), in the late 1950s, and the 'new three sacred treasures' (a color TV set, an air conditioner and an automobile) in the mid 1960s, and actually acquired these products. As long as people lived a similar life and pursued common goals, they could share the same sense of values and develop common identities. However, the emergence of the tertiary industry brought about a differentiation in work patterns, lifestyles and life designs, which inevitably resulted in the diversification of individual identities.

Borrowing from Jean-François Lyotard, who defined the idea of post-modern for the first time in the realm of thought, we may say that people in the post-modern age were constructing separate, individual 'small narratives' instead of participating together in the 'grand-narrative' that holds that history would progress led by universal human reason.

In the process of the change in nature of the industrial structure, people came to form their identities, not through productive labor, but through consumption activities. We should be also aware that a major change occurred in these consumption activities, as indicated by the term high-consumption society. This change is considered to have played an important role in the development of today's religious situation and characteristics, which I will discuss in the latter part of this paper.

As all daily necessities became plentiful across the nation, companies began to add differentiating values to their products, and consumers, too, came to attach greater importance to factors other than usability when selecting products, whether clothing, furniture or cars. Hence, material goods were reduced to signs for consumers to differentiate themselves from others: people began to show off their own significance and develop their identities by means of 'material goods as signs'.

Then, a major change took place. Signs are meaningless in themselves—they can take on meaning only when compared with other signs, or placed in a system of signs. By that time, material satisfaction was no longer the main purpose of consumption—people began to consume products as a means to meet their ideological desire to

differentiate themselves from others in the system of signs. Indeed, this situation indicates that subjects were replaced with objects. The subject of consumption is not individuals, but the order of signs. People as consumers were no longer acting reasonably as independent human beings. Instead, they allowed the rhythms of material goods to control their thoughts and behaviors. Hence, human identities and subjectivity came to be defined by the system of signs, which was indifferent to subjective human thoughts and behaviors (Baudrillard, 1998 [1970]).

The situation where consumption, instead of labor, and the system, instead of subjects, was given emphasis in addressing social and human issues was no longer explicable in terms of Marxism and existentialism. Such a situation could be better addressed by structuralism, which became a mainstream in the realm of thought in the 1960s and later led to post-modern thought.

Structuralists place greater importance on 'invisible structures' that define thoughts and behaviors of subjects in the dimension of unconsciousness rather than subjects themselves, and they explore these structures in various realms. The term structure as used by structuralists represents a complex idea that cannot be simply defined, but for the purpose of this paper, it will suffice to understand it to mean an aggregation of the relationships among certain constituent factors, not substantial issues such as the lower structure as used by Marxists. One basic example is the linguistic structure that is organized and used unconsciously by unspecified members of each speech community. As such, the idea of structure, which originates from linguistics, was first introduced into the field of cultural anthropology, and then to a wider range of academic areas, including psychoanalysis, semiotics, and literary criticism. Of special importance is the cultural anthropological discovery of structures in the thinking patterns, customs, myths, and rituals of primitive societies, which turned out to be nothing inferior to those of Western societies. This discovery revealed the non-universality of Western reason and rationality, and relativized the progressive view of history that holds that history evolves "from primitive society to Western civilized society" or the Western-centric grand-narrative.

The academic achievement of Michel Foucault, known as a representative of structuralism, gave additional impact to Japanese society. Foucault argues that each period has its own particular intellectual framework (episteme), which works as the basic mechanism to delimit the possibility of all the knowledge in that given period. For example, he says that the concept of man is nothing more than a product of modern episteme, created at the end of the 18th century as an 'object' of knowledge by the modern academic community itself; it is valid for only a limited period of time and is not a universal concept.

In the 19th century, human sciences such as psychology, sociology and literature put man on the throne of knowledge and explored the inside of man. But today, sciences that attempt to define man in structural terms, such as linguistics, cultural anthropology, and psychoanalysis are prevailing. This means that right now, we are seeing a change in episteme. It is in this context that Foucault declares that the idea of man as a subject is just void (Foucault, 1974 [1966]).

Structuralism as such can deny the significance of subjective human thoughts and behaviors, and for this reason was criticized by existentialists and Marxists as an ideology to affirm the current state while forgetting about reforming reality and as

bourgeois thought that defends capitalism. However, in the face of the great results in succession achieved by structuralism introduced into various fields, it is Marxists and existentialists that were viewed as obsolete, desperate to defend the Western modernity.

From Struggle to Flight

Though Foucault was first known as a structuralist to the Japanese, gradually he came to be viewed as a post-structuralist. Whereas structuralists view structures rather as static, post-structuralists view them as more dynamic, and their interest is directed toward the process of formation and structural change.

After declaring the 'end of man,' Foucault began addressing the issue of "renewing the understanding of, and the formation of human subjects." Ideologies that place the greatest value on human subjects such as existentialism, fall into the pitfalls of Western-centrism and also overlook the point that human subjects can be formed by power. Foucault pays attention to the inner disciplinary power of the modern prison system and reveals that human subjects are defined by 'invisible power' from the inside. Foucault further argues that such a disciplinary mechanism is in place in modern institutions such as schools, hospitals, and factories, as well as prisons, and discusses how such invisible power can control the formation of human subjects in the modern situation (Foucault, 1977 [1975]).

Looking at the world in terms of the conventional struggle of the bourgeoisie versus the proletariat, or that of a state versus citizens, it is evident that subjective thoughts and behaviors play an important role in resisting power, because such power is external to human subjects. However, if human subjects are controlled by invisible power, then we should question the validity of existentialism and other ideologies that place the greatest value on human subjects and, eventually, we should question the validity of the social philosophy that is based on human-centrism. Unlike the visible, external power of a state or of capitalism, such power generates naturally within human relationships, and is inevitably invoked inside of human subjects themselves.

Since this view was presented by Foucault, post-modernism has shifted its emphasis from resisting 'large power,' such as the power of a state, capitalists and bureaucrats, to uncovering 'small power,' existent everywhere in society. At the same time, people's interest shifted from public issues to private issues and further to their inner souls.

This post-modern situation and thought reached its culmination in the 1980s. The modern age was the age when the story unfolded concerning human subjects with universal reason being freed from pre-modern restraints, such as religious authority, the order of feudalism and communal bonds. On the other hand, post-modernism aims to free people even from modern restraints arising from being an independent reasonable subject, or a human being with a solid identity. In so doing, it presents a new image of man, or a human subject, which is capable of changing his or her identity freely and easily while flirting with material goods that are rendered into signs. In other words, 'flight' (toso) from reality became the trend of the times, replacing 'struggle' (toso) with the reality. In Japanese society in those days, in fact, the free lifestyle of job hoppers, generally known as 'freeters,' gained popularity, against the rigid lifestyle of regular employees, which was considered to be bound by the existing social order.

In this connection, it is worth paying attention to the fact that, coincidentally, psychotherapy using personal counseling began to prevail in Japan around that time. For example, at Japanese universities and graduate schools, departments of clinical psychology have continued to boast outstanding popularity among students. Additionally, terms such as healing and mental care, which were hardly known during the 1970s, drew increasing attention among the general public. Such a social phenomenon, often referred to as the therapy culture, must have a close association with the post-modern situation, along with the new religious situation we see today.

The Post-modern Situation and New Religious Situation

Virtualization of the World and New-New Religions

Generally speaking, the process of the post-modern situation affecting the development of a new religious situation is often explained like this: as people became increasingly aware of the limits of modern reason and the rational system, they began to pay renewed attention to the religious view of the world as an alternative to them. However, the point of this paper is somewhat different from this conventional explanation.

One of the situations that characterize post-modernism is the emergence of separate, individual small narratives resulting from the growing skepticism about the grand-narrative. In this connection, Lyotard remarks that the purpose of life is dependent on individual choice and everyone is sent back onto himself (Lyotard, 1984 [1979], 15). Contemporary people living in the post-modern situation have no choice but to pursue their own respective small narratives separately, instead of finding their roles in the ready-made grand-narrative. Furthermore, if contemporary people are to draw up a narrative in the post-modern situation, they have to rely on consumption.

However, the new consumption pattern that has arisen in the post-modern age knows no limit. If motivated by the desire to possess particular goods, the urge for consumption is satisfied once the goods are acquired. However, for people in post-modern society, consumption is a means of creating their own unique significance that differentiates themselves from others. As such, consumption is pursued within the system of signs as a virtual act that is never-ending. Accordingly, contemporary people living in the post-modern situation are suffering from hunger that will never be satisfied in spite of the material affluence. The advent of a never-ending virtual world has expanded the scope of freedom, but, paradoxically, it has also given these people the strong feeling of being locked up.

Against this backdrop, it is quite natural that people living in the post-modern situation began to seek counseling, mental therapy, healing and mental care. Importantly, this situation is considered to be associated with the development of a new religious situation, or the emergence of new-new religions.

Before that time, Japan had already seen the prevalence of new religions, against traditional religions with long history behind them. New religions refer to the religions established in the later Edo period (the early 19th century). Especially, these new religions began growing after World War II in the wake of the upset of the existing values and the disappearance of traditional communities. Characteristically, poverty

and other hardships of life, illness, and family disputes, namely, poverty, illness and disputes are major factors that motivate people to become believers in these new religions. These religions aim at mental improvement and encourage believers to repent on their past mental states and look straightly into the inside of their own souls, while teaching them to associate with others with gratitude and goodwill. Seen from the other side, we may say that the view of the world that prevailed during the period when the new religions were growing held that ultimate happiness lies in living an affluent, healthy, and peaceful life. This period coincides with the modern age when Japan enjoyed continued economic growth from its reconstruction period, when Japanese people believed in the 'story of progress.'

Starting from around 1970, on the other hand, there have been an increasing number of cases where people who appear to be happy, healthy and free from family disputes enter religions to overcome their 'mental uneasiness' and 'sense of emptiness.' These religions are called new-new religions and their major aim is to change mental and physical states and develop a bright mindset, rather than to improve the relationships with others. Therefore, believers in the new-new religions aim at developing the skill to control their own minds, which may explain the reason of the growing popularity of psychology, mental therapy and healing.

What is characteristic of the new-new religions is their emphasis on mystical experience. For example, these religions encourage meditation as a means to access a mental realm that is separate from everyday life. Additionally, they advocate the immortality of spirits, taking for granted the existence of previous lives, life after death, the world of the dead, and other worlds, and in not a few cases, they embrace the notion of a sacred universe in their view of the world.

While the new religions place focus on the secular realm, such as happiness in everyday life, the new-new religions emphasize the fragility and deterioration of this world and pay greater attention to the non-secular realm, such as the world of the dead. This shift of emphasis is considered to coincide with the change from the modern age when people work and struggle in the real world to the post-modern age where people consume goods within the system of signs in the virtual world and flee reality.

Therapy Culture and New Spirituality Culture

It should be noted that the characteristics of the new-new religions are applicable not only to a limited group of people. It is true that at that time, the term cult, which refers to weird and dangerous religious groups, prevailed in Japanese society, and as this fact indicates, most Japanese people responded negatively to religion in general. On the other hand, an increasing number of people grew interested in mystical topics and sacred matters—they were cautious to keep themselves distant from the new-new religions and cults, but were drawn nearer to these religions without knowing it. This phenomenon is best evidenced by the prevalence of the culture of the 'spiritual world' since the end of the 1970s.

Through publications, the culture of the spiritual world is gaining popularity among the Japanese people to the extent that today many Japanese bookstores have shelves dedicated to books about spiritual topics, including qigong, feng sui,

meditation, the born-again phenomenon, near-death experiences, healing, breathing and self-enlightenment. These topics, though different from religious issues in a conventional sense, are associated with the therapy culture and include some religious factors. However, readers of these books consider themselves as “spiritual persons distinguishable from religious persons.” Shimazono Susumu, a representative religious scholar of today’s Japan, describes such a situation collectively with the term new spirituality culture (Shimazono, 1996, 50).

Unlike traditional and new religions, the new spirituality culture is characterized by the absence of any established doctrine, organization, authoritarian founder, or system. Instead, it places emphasis on voluntary pursuit and action by individuals. The new spirituality culture is distinguishable from other religions in that it pays little attention to establishing sustainable relationships with others. Instead, it aims exclusively to stabilize and further enhance the level of individual consciousness (Shimazono, 1996, 213).

The new spirituality culture is supported by a variety of people, ranging from those actively working to achieve ‘self-change,’ to passive consumers who occasionally purchase books about self-enlightenment or goods to heal themselves for their own mental stability. It is true that such a diversity of supporters dilutes the religious nature of the new spirituality culture, but even so, these people do share the concept of spirituality, and as far as the concept is oriented toward a non-secular realm, the new spirituality culture inevitably takes on a religious nature. The new spirituality culture, however, places importance on delving into our inner soul instead of worshipping external objects, which makes this culture different from conventional religious cultures.

The individualistic nature of the new spirituality culture, its distaste for acting in groups and the emphasis on the quest into our inner soul together indicate that the change from a grand-narrative to small narratives is behind the emergence of this culture. Furthermore, just like the case of new-new religions, people rely on the virtual non-secular world, instead of the real secular world, in order to draw up their respective small narratives.

The Eyes of the War Dead and the Yasukuni Problem

Finally, let me address the Yasukuni Problem. Yasukuni Shrine is dedicated to the spirits of people who died on behalf of Japan, mainly in battlefields from the time of the arrival of Commodore Perry at the end of the Edo Period to the Great East Asia War. Before World War II, the shrine was placed under the control of the national government as a public institution, but after the war, it was given the status of a private corporation following the amendment of the Religious Corporation Ordinance (1946). The Yasukuni Problem refers to an aggregation of the controversies over the change of the public status of this shrine from the prewar to postwar era.

On the Yasukuni problem, public opinion is divided between two main groups: the proponents acknowledge Yasukuni Shrine as having a public status on the ground that people who lost their lives during official service deserve being publicly mourned and eulogized; and the opponents insist that the official acknowledgement of Yasukuni Shrine having a public status amounts to an affirmation of the Great East Asia War and

can eventually lead Japan back to militarism.

Though the movement to restore Yasukuni Shrine's prewar public status began soon after the end of the war, it was around 1970 that bills to this end were submitted to the Diet in a quick succession. Judging only from the chronological incidents, this development may seem to have resulted from the change in Japan's position in the international political arena, or specifically, the normalization of diplomatic ties between Japan and China in 1972, because, today, the issuance of statements of denunciation by the Chinese or Korean government against the visits of the Japanese prime minister and cabinet members to Yasukuni Shrine constitutes the main part of the Yasukuni Problem. However, it should be noted that Prime Minister Tanaka Kakuei, who contributed to the normalization of diplomatic ties between the two nations, paid around five official visits to Yasukuni Shrine while in office and visited the shrine also after the diplomatic normalization, but these visits were not criticized by either China or Korea. Considering that it was during the mid 1980s that the Yasukuni Problem drew attention as an international issue, it can be reasonably inferred that some change in Japan's domestic situation, not in its international relationships, was behind the emergence of this problem.

As discussed in this paper, Japanese economic growth reached its peak around 1970, and the desire of Japanese people to overcome poverty was met and the political efforts focusing on economic policies yielded successful results. In other words, in Japan, secular interests were generally satisfied around that point in time. Furthermore, probably at this stage, people renewed their awareness of the eyes of the war dead, which they had forgotten until then. No doubt, the prosperity of postwar Japan is attributable to the hard work of the Japanese people, but it is also undeniable that this prosperity was built on the sacrifice of the people who lost their lives in war. Hence, we may say that people who survived the war became aware of their feeling of indebtedness toward the war dead. This change in the public view of the world added fuel to the movement to restore the status of Yasukuni Shrine as a public institution, which had been before led by the bereaved families. In fact, the bill designed to place Yasukuni Shrine under state protection was submitted to the Diet five times from 1969 to 1974, and the number of signatures collected from among the general public who supported the bill amounted to as many as 20 million. However, this bill was defeated in the Diet after all, because the mass media, which began to take an opposition stance concerning the Yasukuni Problem, launched a concerted campaign against the passing of the bill.

After the 1970s, a major change took place in the Japanese mass media as well. In the prewar days, mass media supported the Imperial Regime and promoted a pro-war propaganda campaign, but after defeat in the war, they embraced 'postwar democracy' and began to criticize the prewar national system. In this sense, the mass media have been consistently critical to the prewar national system since the end of the war, which, however, does not mean that they have always taken a critical view concerning the Yasukuni Shrine. In fact, when Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru paid an official visit to Yasukuni Shrine after signing the San Francisco Peace Treaty in 1951, the mass media reported this incident favorably, rather than criticizing it.

Around 1970, however, the presence of ex-activists in the student movements began to increase within the mass media industry. Though they experienced failure in left-

wing movements, they, as intellectual elites, were employed by large companies upon graduation from university, though such companies were the targets of their criticism in their movements. While content with being company employees, they could not entirely throw off the communist ideals that they embraced in their university days, and began to advocate idealistic pacifism from a viewpoint of moderate communists. After the 1970s, this generation came to play a central role not only in the mass media industry, but also in the entire Japanese society, and became a major opposition voice concerning the Yasukuni Problem. As one might now understand, the Yasukuni Problem, too, was largely affected by the change in political thought that took place around 1970.

Conclusion

In 1995, a terrorist attack was committed by members of the Aum Shinrikyo, which was seen as one of the new-new religious groups. This incident was interpreted as an exposure of the 'negative aspect' of the new religious phenomenon to the public, and the popularity of the new spirituality culture receded accordingly. However, starting from the early 2000s, the new spirituality culture has drawn growing attention anew, against which warnings are given in the light of the negative aspects. However, it seems difficult to cope effectively with the situation without understanding the background to the emergence of the new-new religions as discussed in this paper.

The Yasukuni Problem has grown to be an international issue since the mid 1980s and garnered increasing support from the general public in the wake of the globalization process that began in the 1990s. This growth of public support is backed up by the nationalism arising from the tides of internationalization and globalization. In a sense, this can be viewed as a movement to restore the Japanese national identity by filling the emptiness of values lost upon defeat in the war with Japanese values, or as an effort to create what may be termed a middle-size narrative or Japanese narrative, with the aim of restoring the political subjects in the international political arena where mere pursuit of small narratives is no longer sufficient to ensure national survival. However, the supporters of Japanese nationalism concurrently recognize the importance of the US-Japan Security Treaty, and this makes their stance complex and contradictory, due to their mixed attitude toward the American values that filled the sense of emptiness of the Japanese values lost after the war. As well, these supporters call for the amendment of Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution, but have been unable to answer the questions of how they will address, in their philosophy, the praying for peace by the Japanese people since the end of the war, and of how they will take into consideration this praying and the eyes of foreigners who died in the war in order to persuade international society of the public status of Yasukuni Shrine.

On the other hand, those who engage in protests against Yasukuni Shrine also hold a contradictory view in that they insist on unarmed neutrality while paying little heed to military issues. The pacifism advocated by them may well be termed 'pacifism as an ideology' for its departure from reality; this cannot be discussed in the same context as that of the praying for peace.

Regardless, it remains to be seen how the praying for peace by the Japanese people since the end of the war should be communicated to today's international society. To

answer this question, it will be necessary to shed renewed light on the religious nature inherent in Japanese culture.

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Фуџимото Рјуџи

ПОЛИТИЧКА МИСАО И РЕЛИГИЈА У ПОСЛЕРАТНОМ ЈАПАНУ: СА ПОСЕБНИМ АКЦЕНТОМ НА ПРОМЕНЕ У КАСНИМ 70-ТИМ

Резиме

Ово поглавље, у светлу политичке мисли, разматра порекло појаве нове религијске свести која данас превладава у јапанском друштву. Када бацимо општи поглед на политичку мисао у послератном Јапану, фокусирајући се на угао гледања на свет углавном присутан код јапанског народа, те ставове интелектуалаца, евидентно је да је развој политичке мисли до око 1970. године био усмерен ка тежњи Јапанаца економском расту, молитвама за мир, као и симпатијама према комунизму међу интелектуалцима и пацифизам за који су се они залагали. Међутим, ова политичка мисао постала је мање распрострањена 1970-их. Сматра се да је разлог томе била чињеница да је Јапан постигао свој основни циљ остваривањем економског раста коме је тежио од пораза у рату, а то је довело до постмодерне ситуације која више није била објашњива у оквирима модерних учења, попут егзистенцијализма и марксизама. Нову ситуацију карактерисала је перцепција материјалних добара као знакова и опадање традиционалне „величанствене нарације“. Даље, постмодерна ситуација ставила је већи акценат на унутрашњост наших душа, него на реалност, и сматра се да је као таква одиграла одређену улогу у појави такзованих нових-нових религија и „нове културе духовности“ које траже контакт са облашћу несекуларног. Поред тога, како је интерес у световним стварима, као што су економски захтеви, био задовољен, људи су постали свесни „очију палих у рату“, који су неко време после рата били заборављени. Свест о овоме подстакла је проблем у вези са Јасукунијем. Сходно томе, вероватно је да су промене у политичкој мисли око 1970-их иза оба ова религијска питања.

Кључне речи: молитве за мир, пацифизам, осећање празнине, проблем Јасукуни, нове-нове јапанске религије, нова духовна култура, постмодерна ситуација.

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