

Memory and Reconciliation in Japanese History

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I. The issue presented

In its long history, Japan's most catastrophic era was the Asia-Pacific War in 1931-1945, which ended with the atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. My topic here is Japan's recovery from the aftereffects and trauma of the War, including its reconciliation with other countries involved in this War that Japanese leaders initiated.

Former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi said the following at a press conference on January 4, 2006:

When the Prime Minister of one nation worships at Yasukuni Shrine as an individual citizen for the purpose of mourning for the war dead, I cannot understand the criticism from Japanese people. I also cannot understand the criticism from intellectuals and journalists who do not like it when politics interferes with the freedom of thought. Furthermore I cannot understand the intervention of foreign governments in problems of the heart, and their stance of trying to turn this situation into a diplomatic issue. The freedom of the heart is protected by our Constitution, and cannot be violated by anyone.

It is highly problematic that Mr Koizumi, in his official role as Prime Minister, appeals to the Japanese Constitution for the purpose of defending his right to worship at Yasukuni Shrine as a private individual. He then builds a high wall around himself and closes his ears to all criticism. However, it cannot be denied that this "problem of the heart," which entails commemoration of the war dead by the Prime Minister before the shrine, lies within the realm of human religious activity. Unfortunately, participation by public officials in such religious activities has blurred distinctions between "official" (公), "private" (私) and "public" (公共). It is necessary for us to consider, therefore, the meaning of public spirituality in the postmodern world.

As long as Japanese insist on commemorating their nation's war dead at Yasukuni Shrine, we cannot become fully reconciled with other nations who view this shrine as the symbol of Japanese militarism centered on the Emperor. Japan's present Constitution stipulates that the Emperor is merely a symbol of the nation, based on the general will of the people. Sovereignty no longer rests

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with the Emperor but resides with the people of the nation. Today, the Japanese people must reconsider the source and meaning of national sovereignty.

Because Yasukuni Shrine owes its history and significance to Japan's militaristic and Emperor-centered past, it is incompatible with the present Japanese Constitution. Given these strong historical connections with the Japanese military and Emperor system, it is difficult to justify Koizumi's commemoration of all victims of World War II at Yasukuni Shrine.

2. Memory and identity

The situation around Yasukuni becomes more complex if we probe beneath the political dimension, because memory is deeply connected with the problem of identity regardless of whether it is personal or collective. For some conservative groups, the formation of modern Japan begins principally with the Meiji Restoration in 1868 instead of August 15, 1945, the end of World War II. These groups wish to re-center the identity of the modern state in the Emperor. How conservatives and liberals remember modern Japan's beginning is significant because these memories shape identities that sometimes hinder the formation of a civil society, which guarantees the rights of individual citizens. Among conservatives, it can also lead to backlashes against modernization, such as the backlash represented in Koizumi's worship at Yasukuni Shrine. I call this situation in Japan today "Yasukuni fundamentalism." The purpose of the present paper is to propose a way to overcome Yasukuni fundamentalism by showing how the philosophy of "Wa" thought can contribute to the process of reconciliation.

Memory à la Yasukuni started from the period of the civil war leading to the Meiji Restoration, which was followed and strengthened by the Imperial invasions of and wars with other nations in Asia. The dead soldiers in the civil wars on the side of the winners, i.e., the side of Emperor Meiji, were commemorated as heroic deities in Yasukuni Shrine. The policy was always the same during the Imperial wars in modern Japan up to the Asia-Pacific War: only the spirits of Imperial fallen soldiers were consecrated as deities in this shrine to the exclusion of enemy soldiers. This way of commemoration was different from previous civil wars, when all victims, including enemies, had been commemorated. Memory à la Yasukuni Shrine was an unprecedented invention by the Meiji Government in the new age of Western and Eastern imperialism. In Yasukuni Shrine, the nation now had a spiritual center for its militaristic state centered on the Emperor.

There were two functions of Yasukuni Shrine. One function was to honor the fallen soldiers by bestowing on them the status of heroic deities, or national gods. In some sense, apart from its religious meaning, this had much in common with 20th century Western nationalism. The other function was to offer the nation a place of mourning for its grief work over the massive number of deaths in the wars. Through commemoration of the war dead, the shrine was meant to facilitate healing from the nation's suffering the pains of war. The latter is related to religious activity or public spirituality, which was absorbed totally in Shinto, exclusively in Shinto ways of worship, because it was regulated as the state religion in Imperial Japan. In this sense, Yasukuni Shrine was the holy place for the subjects of the Emperor, who was viewed as sacred or even as a living god.

The postwar Constitution, however, declares "separation of Church and State." In the liberal interpretation of articles 20 and 89 of the Constitution, according to which religions and public spirituality are excluded from civil and public life, the activities of Yasukuni Shrine should be kept separated from governmental activities. In the late 1960s, conservative politicians and citizen groups initiated a movement to grant official status to Yasukuni Shrine for purposes of national commemoration. The terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, pushed the Japanese Government to send its Self Defense Force abroad for the first time since World War II. With the heightened

possibility of future fallen soldiers, conservatives will inevitably renew their emphasis on Yasukuni Shrine and pressure government officials to hold Yasukuni-style commemorations.

On the other hand, addressing the question of public spirituality in the liberal camp after the War has been a taboo of sorts because of its reaction to State Shinto. The separation of Church (Shrine) and State in the Constitution seems to be the strong foundation for this taboo. When the conservative camp argues that Yasukuni Shrine should play a central role in Japan's national identity, the liberal camp opposes it with arguments based on the Constitution. Though people need a public space for spiritual commemoration of the War, the liberal camp treats commemoration as a matter of private concern and eschews any expression of public spirituality in the public square. This stems in part from the latter's fear that Yasukuni might become the only public place for remembering World War II and the victims of war at home and abroad. In fact, Prime Minister Koizumi exploited public spirituality expressed through commemoration of war victims in order to unify the nation and restore its old national identity.

The easiest way for the Japanese nationalists to shape Japan's national identity is to exploit Yasukuni Shrine in the name of commemoration. Their attempts to do so have increased tension with neighboring countries, sparked protests in China and Korea, and thus reinforced Yasukuni Shrine's significance as a symbol of Japanese nationalism. The Prime Minister and his cabinet's acts of worshipping at Yasukuni Shrine, which are creating a deep split between Japan's conservatives and liberals, reflect a type of religious fundamentalism that can be found around world.

If we view this worship at Yasukuni Shrine in light of recent trends of religious fundamentalism, especially Islamic fundamentalism and American Christian fundamentalism, we can see that it shares characteristics of binding national identity together with religion through the remembrance of the forefathers. It may be possible to improve diplomacy and avoid strong confrontation with neighboring countries by removing the A-class criminals from the lists of heroic deities enshrined at Yasukuni. But even if this were to happen, the rise of a new nationalism, where the identity of the formation of modern Japan is connected with religious fundamentalism, would continue to be a problematic issue in Japan today. If conservative political leaders view this new nationalism as necessary for the purpose of preparing for the next war, because of its history Yasukuni Shrine will be the most suitable facility for helping them achieve their goals. This is all it would take for *Volkgeist* to move in a fanatic direction in this context. This is surely a dangerous direction. It is necessary, therefore, to "soften" fundamentalist nationalism, that is, to develop *Wa*-thought that is applicable in this situation.

When we compare the cases of Germany and Japan, which were both defeated in World War II, we see significant differences in how they approached the problems of responsibility for the War and the postwar period. In addition to the aspects of memory and identity, the spiritual context is also different. My paper emphasizes this spiritual difference between European and Asian history for the purpose of promoting reconciliation and peace in East Asia.

3. Apology and forgiveness

It is important to distinguish, as Karl Jaspers did, the political guilt of citizens and politicians from criminal responsibility under the jurisdiction of a court and, hence, from the criminal proceedings governing the course of trial. Political guilt results from the fact that citizens belong to the political body in the name of which the crimes were committed. In this sense, it can be termed collective on the condition of not being criminalized: the notion of criminal people must be explicitly rejected. As for the treatment after a war, they are parceled between punitive sanctions, which are pronounced by courts of justice in the name of a policy of purification, and long-term obligations for

reparations assumed by the state that has been established through new power relations. But more important than punishment – and even reparations – is the word of justice that establishes the public responsibilities of each of the protagonists and that designates the respective places of aggressor and victim in a relation of appropriate distance. This “word of justice” refers to political apologies, and furthermore, it includes actions or gestures by political leaders intended to remedy diseased memories that cannot be transformed into institutions (Ricoeur 2004: 477). The gesture of German Chancellor Brandt’s kneeling down in front of the Warsaw ghetto in 1970 was one of these actions. These actions soften the national emotions on the side of the victims.

These political actions reflect a moral dimension far more than a legal dimension, with demands from the victims for an apology. This can be seen in the apologies by Japanese political leaders for Japan’s past aggression and invasions, such as former Prime Minister Murayama’s speech on August 15, 1995; the Koizumi speech in Jakarta in May of 2005; and the Koizumi statement on August 15, 2005. It was expected that the victims who suffered traumatic emotions would be healed by political actions such as Brandt’s.

It is interesting that Ricoeur discusses the problem of forgiveness in the last chapter of his work, *Memory, History, Forgetting*. After long discussions of these delicate politico-philosophical arguments, he boldly speaks about the question of forgiveness for unpardonable acts. His argument goes further into the realm of the spiritual dimension and beyond the normal moral dimension. Ricoeur (2004: 467) declares that “there is” forgiveness:

The “there is” of the voice of forgiveness says this in its own way. This is why I will speak of this voice as a voice from above. It is from above, in the way that the admission of fault proceeds from the unfathomable depths of selfhood. It is a silent voice but not a mute one. Silent, because there is no clamor of what rages; not mute, because not deprived of speech . . . There is forgiveness as there is joy, as there is wisdom, extravagance, love. Love, precisely. Forgiveness belongs to the same family.

Following this, Ricoeur refers to I Corinthians 13 in the New Testament, which lifts up the theme that “Love forgives everything.” This penetrates into the spiritual dimension, probably with expressions analogous to the spirit of “Jin” in Confucianism, “Mercy” (Jihi) in Buddhism, and “Han” in Korean thought.

We cannot reach this deeper level when we live only in the institutional world (I will call it World 3). Of course the institutional world is important inasmuch as we live in the Japanese nation and in the international politico-human community. But the institutional world is not all; we also live in worlds with spiritual dimensions (I will call it World 4). The spiritual world, or World 4, cannot be reduced to World 3 in my public philosophy of Emergent Hermeneutics. (World 1 refers to the natural world, while World 2 refers to the social world.)

Whether international or domestic, crimes at the juridical level should be judged in a proper manner within the institutional “official” world, but the statement that “there is” forgiveness will ennoble a truly sound consolation for public human life, even if her or his particular faith is private. It is also valid in relation to the Yasukuni issue and the A-class criminals. But it is also something that enters deeply into the heart and that needs to be resolved in the “private” realm for each person. Without this “private” life, we cannot actually live in a meaningful way in this world. Unfortunately, philosophical arguments of this type are very weak in Japan, where people cannot distinguish between the “private” and “official” in their thinking, and the result is confusion on the issue of Yasukuni Shrine. We need a public philosophy that will mediate between the “private” and “official.” The important thing here is that the mediators should not be politicians acting on behalf of the national state. Instead, the acts of mediation should be performed by citizens themselves. Citizens are the people who will play the crucial role in reconciliation.

4. From forgiveness to reconciliation

(1) *My personal experience*

I myself, a Japanese citizen, had an experience of this type of reconciliation with neighbors in Korea. While studying the history of Christianity in Korea, I became interested in the rapid growth of the Korean Christian Church from the perspective of comparative philosophy. Even though they are both Northeast Asia countries, Japan and Korea reacted in quite different ways to the Christian religion propagated from the West in the 19th century. I visited Korea in 1985 in order to meet several people who could tell me about life in Korea during the Japanese colonial period. One person I met was the son of Rev. Ki-Chul Chu, a well known “militant against Japan” in colonial Korea. He was a Christian martyr who chose death over worshipping at Japanese shrines. After several imprisonments and tortures, he was poisoned in Pyongyang. I met his son, Yong-Hae Chu, who was 59 years old at that time. He told me the following:

I was eight years old when my father moved to San-Jyonhyon Church in Pyongyang. He was a tender father, but severe when it came to struggling for the faith. The year after we moved there, a policeman took him from our home. For the next seven years of my school days, I could rarely see my father except when I could visit him in prison. The schoolmaster ordered me not to come to school until my father worshipped at the Shinto shrine as proof of being a loyal subject of the Japanese Emperor. In all, I had to change schools seven times, and I suffered much bullying.

I could not forget his gentle, smiling face. His father was poisoned to death in 1944 after resisting dreadful torture. This tragic news arrived to him when he was in Pusan. Finally he said to me:

Since I was banned from going to school, I was working in an orphan’s home. On the very same day of the liberation on August 15th in 1945, I immediately went to the shrine nearby in order to destroy it with an ax.

A few years after our meeting, he passed away. Today, his younger brother Kwang-Cho Chu regularly visits Japan and speaks to certain Japanese citizen group with his message of reconciliation between Korea and Japan.

(2) *Citizen movements for reconciliation*

Mr Takashi Nagase, who is a Buddhist, together with other Japanese citizens, such as Prof. Tsuyoshi Amemiya of Aoyama Gakuin University and Prof. Kazuaki Saito of the International Christian University, launched a commemoration service for the fallen soldiers of the British Commonwealth in 1995 with the support of concerned university students and friends. It is held every year on the first Saturday in August at the British Commonwealth Cemetery in Kanagawa Prefecture, and it includes several citizen groups. Some two thousand prisoners of war, who died in Japan after being forced to work on the Thai-Burma Railroad near Thailand or were captured in other areas of the Asian-Pacific War, are buried there. Mr Nagase once worked as military interpreter in South-East Asia with the Japanese Imperial Army, and he later became involved in this citizen movement out of a sense of his war responsibility for Japan’s military aggression. He personally went to Thailand more than 120 times for the purpose of making apologies and reconciliation, as well as for building a temple for atonement.

Many people from Korea and China were brought to Japan during the War and died here. In commemoration of them, many Japanese grassroots citizen groups and students are studying the

real history and working to construct memorial places for reconciliation at the civil level. These citizen groups are working for this purpose today in many local towns, negotiating with administrative officers in the municipal governments.

Apart from official history written by the governmental side, studying history from the perspective of the people in East Asia is important for reconciliation at the citizen level. We must distinguish between what we should and should not forget. We must forget the Yasukuni ideology that calls for sacrificing oneself for the sake of the state. This is something that should be put behind us. But we must remember the past War and the victims of that War. At the same time, we need to face the past scars of war as experienced by people with different perspectives. Whether in government or the private sector, we must listen to all individuals regardless of who they are.

In order to overcome the trauma of the War, grief work, including special commemorative events, is necessary for individuals and groups of people who carry scars as victims of war. There should be many places for commemoration – not only a single, unique place – and they should be open to groups with different customs and diverse spiritual traditions. They should also be kept free from partial treatment by any particular religious organization, whether a Shinto shrine, Buddhist temple, Christian church, or any other group. In the spirit of pluralism and multiculturalism, the government must not force its own official ideology on the different groups using these spaces, even if the facilities are built with municipal funding. If citizens from all countries join together in the spirit of mutual respect, they can act as mediators and establish commemorative events that will serve all citizens, something that is currently impossible at Yasukuni Shrine.

The Cenotaph in London is one example of a public space for commemoration that reflects the spirit of multiculturalism. The ceremonies held there on Remembrance Day every November 11 include not only those for Christians, but also those for Hindus, Muslims, and Buddhists. Another example is Arlington National Cemetery in the United States, where the graves may be engraved with the symbols of each individual's religious faith.

5. No distinction between the enemy and “our side”

Most commemoration facilities, including those named above, are in principle limited to the memory of fallen soldiers within certain nation-states, excluding the “enemies” in the wars. This is not the case at the Peace Monument (平和の礎: the Stones of Peace) erected in 1995 in Okinawa, Japan's southernmost island. All those who died in the 1945 battle of Okinawa are commemorated there, and the name of each individual is engraved on the stone monument. In their commemoration, they make no distinctions between soldiers and civilians, or between Japanese and Americans. Their aim is to commemorate all those who died there because of the War without offering any single interpretation of the significance of their deaths. This surely marks a great progress in the history of war commemoration, but some critics still point out one unsatisfactory dimension. While the Peace Monument names all of the victims equally, it does not clarify who was responsible for causing the War. The persons who initiated the War must be held responsible for what happened during and after the War. On this issue, the *Neue Wache* in Germany will serve as a good illustration.

Germany was one of the Axis countries in World War II, which resulted in some 40 million deaths in Europe alone. Compared with Japan, Germany has dealt with the question of war responsibility in a much more open and honest manner, including strong repudiation of Nazism. This led to the construction of the central commemoration facility in Berlin called *Neue Wache* in 1993, after the unification of East and West Germany. The following sentences are found on the panel attached to the facility:

Neue Wache is the place commemorating the victims of the War and rule of violence. We mourn for all nations who suffered from the War. We mourn for the persecuted people and citizens who died. We mourn for the fallen soldiers in world wars . . . for the men and women who died in the resistance to the rule of violence. We honor all those who gave their lives instead of compromising their consciences.

By taking into account these models, Japanese citizens should prepare a forum for the commemoration of the War in the public arena beginning at the grass roots level. This can become an alternative to Yasukuni Shrine. While recognizing the Unknown Cemetery at Chidoriga-fuchi as one of the candidates, I would like to propose the following war memorial facility.

1. The following preface of the Japanese Constitution should be engraved: “We are determined not to have a war by governmental action in the future.” Expressions of responsibility for the past War by government leaders such as the Murayama speech on August 15, 1995, the Koizumi speech in Jakarta in May of 2005, and the Koizumi statement on August 15, 2005, should be written.
2. All victims of the Asian-Pacific War, which was initiated by Japan, should be commemorated.
3. This should be a place of public memory for the past War, and a place of prayer for future peace and a world without war.
4. All religious and non-religious groups, national or international, can gather in this place according to their diverse practices and cultural expressions. The costs of construction, maintenance, management, etc., should be funded with taxes paid by the Japanese people, but the Japanese Government should keep an equal distance from all groups.

This will be a place where any religious or ideological group can come for the purpose of reconciliation and peace. And it will be a place exhibiting diversity and pluralism, reflecting a symbolic idea of harmony, or *Wa*-thought.

6. *Wa*-thought and peace

The relation between *Wa* (和), a traditional Northeast Asian or Japanese term, and public reconciliation and peace is the topic to which I shall now turn. The Japanese word *Wa* means gentle, soft, harmony, peace, reconciliation, addition, etc.

In Japanese history, *Wa* was sometimes considered to be “the same,” or monistic assimilation. *Wa*, however, does not necessarily mean “the same” or “assimilation.” Though *Wa* has had many meanings in Japanese history, including peace and reconciliation in particular, pluralism and harmony in diversity have always been essentially important. “*Wa shite douzezu*” (和而不同) in *The Analects of Confucius* means “harmonize but not assimilate.” In fact, the Japanese peacefully (in some sense) accepted foreign thoughts, religions, and values in multiple layers during different periods throughout Japan’s history.

From Western history, too, we can find an idea similar to *Wa*-thought in the early modern era. For instance, “the public” in Western Europe also has a history in which the term, in some sense, meant “people” or “citizens” instead of “the sovereign state.” I will formulate it as a “deconstruction of sovereignty” in order to connect this problem to the people’s reconciliation and peace.

(1) *From Western history*

The mainstream of Western political thought over the past three hundred and fifty years or so is one of unidirectional uniformity and exclusivity. The state is the exclusive agent of political authority

and power with homogeneous people who are allowed to have basic freedom. Society is composed of individuals as the only carriers of political rights. State power is derived from popular sovereignty as a total sum of the individual will, accompanying a decision-making system of parliamentary majority rule. Under the uniform sovereignty, homogeneous nation-states and free competition in the market economy are realized.

State sovereignty through Jean Bodin, Thomas Hobbes, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau has given the framework for the modern nation-state, enabling the people to protect individual freedom in top-down style by focusing the power into one point. The beginning of the 21st century, however, shows diverse global affairs crossing the border of states that are insoluble within one nation-state, including the problems of refugees and immigrants, and these have serious effects on civil lives.

The logic of power, the sovereignty in modern states, and the idea of homogeneous nation-states become invalid. A new civil society, a new concept of the “public” should be discovered as a framework for the 21st century. This is indeed true for Japan because Japan experienced modernization under the strong leadership of the government first among non-Western countries in the Meiji era and then in the post-World War II period.

The new concept of the public will propose division of power, rather than centralized power systems. This is also seen in Japan today as a trend of reform from the center to local areas, from the official to “people,” where “people” means for-profit corporations and/or non-profit organizations (NPO/NGO). These structural reforms from a homogeneous society to a pluralistic and multi-layered one are essential for thinking about happiness in our global 21st century.

In the early modern age, Jean Bodin published *La Republique* (1576) and then Johannes Althusius (1557–1638) published *Politica* (1603) at Groningen in the Netherlands.

Against Bodin, Althusius proposed a different world-view based on multidirectional pluralism and diversity. According to this view and tradition, states are important agents of political authority and power, but not exclusive ones. They share power with other forms of organized social life such as smaller territorial communities, as well as with organized interests, social movements, etc. Consequently, society is not merely composed of autonomous individuals as exclusive carriers of political rights. Instead, these rights are attributed both to individuals and social collectivities, which are formed by these individuals and which recursively shape individual identities and aspirations. From this counter-tradition emerges a model of pluralized multilevel governance based on consent rather than majority rule, on cultural diversity rather than homogeneity, and on social solidarity rather than competition.

There are three basic points in his thought. These are summarized as social contract, co-sovereignty, and federalism (Althusius 1995; Hüglin 1991, 1999). Althusius’ political thought has its background in his peculiar historical context. The Christian world of the Middle Ages gradually collapsed into the early modern situation through religious wars, resulting in the Westphalia system of absolutistic states. Late in the medieval era, there were several diverse communities comprised of families, guilds, churches, colleges, cities, and estates, and these generally existed in well-balanced form. Strong state sovereignty was not yet visible there. Thus, there are no distinctions between “official” (=公) and “private” (=私), because states would have occupied the “official” after the Westphalia system while leaving non-state matters to the “private.”

The basic concept of Althusius is in “consociation” (*consociatio*), which is interpreted variously as referring to family, village, city, province, empire, guild, college, church, and other corporate groups. The consociation is the organization of human life, communicating to each other through social contract in daily lives.

(2) Deconstruction of sovereignty – sphere sovereignty

It seems curious to use the term “civil society” in regard to Althusius’ social theory, which was written two hundred years before the French Revolution. This gap of interpretation comes from the idea of “individualism.” If we assume that civil society is supported by individualism, then we must conclude that there was no room for civil society in the time of Althusius. If we understand civil society as based on social contract and popular sovereignty, however, then we can identify Althusius as the progenitor of the theory of civil society.

Althusius took the term “*consociatio*” from Cicero. By using this word, he defined politics in the following way:

Politics is the art of consociating (*consociandi*) men for the purpose of establishing, cultivating and conserving social life among them. Whence it is called “symbiotics.” The subject matter of politics is therefore consociation (*consociatio*), in which the symbiotes pledge themselves, each to the other, by an explicit or tacit agreement, to the mutual communication of whatever is useful and necessary for the harmonious exercise of social life. The end of political “symbiotic” man is holy, just, comfortable, and happy symbiosis, a life lacking nothing either necessary or useful.

(Politica, I.1)

“Harmonious exercise” simply means *Wa*-thought. Politics is defined as connecting people (consociation), or living together (symbiosis), which is also an origin of reconciliation and peace.

Althusius could use the common ethical climate in early modern Europe, i.e., Christian religion. Our global world today cannot use this as the consensus. Pluralism in religions is manifest and requires caring about other people for the sake of global peace and reconciliation.

The events after September 11, 2001, have shown the clash between different religions and people groups, the north and the south, the rich and the poor, etc. In order to solve these global issues, we should look for ethics taking otherness seriously. Sometimes nationalism and common religion in a nation are connected to each other, amplifying the difficulties of the problem to be solved, for example, such as the “Yasukuni problem” in Japan.

How shall we learn from Althusius in the 21st century in order to care for “others”? By pushing his idea of co-sovereignty a further step, I would like to propose a concept of “sphere sovereignty.”¹

Sphere sovereignty implies plural spheres beforehand. Different spheres proclaim their autonomies from others and, therefore, are independent from each other. “Sphere” is similar to “consociation” proposed by Althusius, but it is a community or a network more deeply based on the needs of people’s lives. It will be voluntarily formed and, therefore, should include today’s NPOs and NGOs as important constituents (Inagaki 2004: 73).

At the same time, different spheres ought to be related to each other through dialogue and mutual communication. Tolerance, gentleness, and harmonious exercise that reflect “*Wa*-thought” are important keywords here.

Among spheres, we need rules and promises, or contracts, in a wider sense that lead to civil laws. Civil laws and self-government are the center of future civil society, which will eventually lead to the national government. From this viewpoint, article 13 of the Japanese Constitution can be read anew: All of the people shall be respected as individuals. Their right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness shall, to the extent that it does not interfere with the public welfare, be the supreme consideration in legislation and in other governmental affairs.

In case that “sphere” concerns land, when the larger sphere comprehends the smaller one and, hence, the latter needs aid from the former, it is called “subsidiarity.”

Recent studies show that the idea of subsidiarity came from Althusius' political thought. Though he did not use the term "subsidiarity," he often referred to *subsidia vitae* (needs of life), which comes from the Latin word *subsidium*, meaning "aid" or "help."

The principle of subsidiarity is entrenched in Article 3b of the Maastricht Treaty in the European Union. Recent Japanese reformers of local government sometimes argue this principle in various documents. Subsidiarity implies, in a rather vague way, governance at multiple levels and solidarity with other groups. But I would suggest that "sphere sovereignty" and "subsidiarity" constitute a pair of concepts, where the former means autonomy or self-governance and the latter means interdependence. In harmonious governance of our social life in the future, we first need sphere sovereignty and next subsidiarity. My claim is also that sphere sovereignty is suitably applicable to the activities in NPO/NGO on voluntary bases. In Japan today, how partnerships between NPO/NGO sectors and local government can exist is an acute issue for the formation of healthy civil society.

At the global level, the corporation of UNESCO and other international organizations are important to realize sphere sovereignty and subsidiarity for the formation of international civil societies.

(3) Reconciliation and *Wa*-thought

Reconciliation is sometimes thought of as relating to private matters, but personal or private reconciliation is not the topic of this paper. Let us distinguish between three levels of reconciliation: private (私), official (公), and public (公共). Private reconciliation is that of family, a religious group, or other so-called intimate sphere. Official reconciliation is making external peace through the state or the government by providing security and safety from war, famine, poverty, etc. In the future, the state should be a welfare instrument instead of a power instrument. Public reconciliation covers broad spheres in people's lives in civil society according to their needs, including mutual communication or mediating from the private to the official. The civil society is different from the state in the sense that people's civic virtue and spirituality are more important than laws.

When people enjoy private peace within intimate spheres, their selves are merely natural or innate selves. Provided that they should move from the private sphere to the public one, however, they will make contact with other people who do not share the same values. Because customs, religion, and life-styles are different, they should be tolerant to each other there in order to keep good human relations with civic virtues. In order to develop tolerance, one of the important human virtues, there must be change within themselves. They should convert their selves from natural selves to new ones that value tolerance. I suggest that they need to experience a "renaissance." It could be identified with the spiritual experience called *μετάνοια* that most of the world's great religions have taught. That public sphere will allow these religions to act freely to the extent that they do not interfere with public welfare. Sphere sovereignty in each religious group should be recommended to foster tolerance as a public ethos in addition to *Wa*-thought, in which communication through dialogue is the most important method for maintaining the public sphere.

Wa, in its traditional form in Northeast Asia, may be considered again in the 21st century. *The Analects of Confucius* (論語) argues that *Wa* is different from assimilation – 君子和而不同、小人同而不和 – creating harmony through dialogue. The Confucian text *The Proprieties* (禮記) and the Japanese Shotoku Taishi (574–622) stated that "*Wa* is most respectable virtue" (以和為貴).

A Korean thinker, Soku-Hon Ham (1901–1989), often referred to "people" as the seed of society aiming at public revolution. To explain *Wa*, he quotes the Confucian text *The Golden Mean* (中庸):

How may we reach to *Wa*? The answer is to keep moderation. Moderation is heaven's mid-way, and *Wa* is heaven's good virtue. . . . *Wa* is movement to heaven, generating *Ki*, spirit, and circulating blood. . . . This leads to revolution, namely, the revolution full of hot blood, but truly bloodless revolution.

Soku-Hon Ham's concept of "people" reflects citizens experiencing "renaissance." I think his revolution with *Wa*-thought is a way to fulfill public reconciliation and peace in our civil societies.

Note

1. Originally "sphere sovereignty" is the terminology used by Abraham Kuyper (1837–1920), a Dutch theologian and politician as the term "sovereiniteit in eigen kring." I wish to use this word in a more extended meaning to express the 21st century global and pluralistic situation (Kuyper 1880: 11).

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