

ACCULTURATION, MODERNIZATION,  
NATIONALISM: THE CASE OF  
MODERN JAPAN

The term acculturation was first used by American scholars in dealing with cultural changes in the American Indian society; however, I would like to use this term a bit more freely.

All peoples or races, as long as they live a collective life within a certain area, have their respective cultures. No matter how primitive a human group may be, it still has a culture. A man's living a life is synonymous with his having a culture. The phenomenon of a culture of a certain area being transformed by the influence of another culture—by the conscious or unconscious study of this other culture—this I would like to call "acculturation."

Acculturation does not take place in any or every culture. Generally speaking, this assimilation process occurs in the developmental process of civilization and proceeds from a developed culture to an underdeveloped culture. In that case, the word "developed" or "underdeveloped" does not necessarily mean "high" or "low" in terms of value; however, it is not deniable that man's civilization is endowed with direction-orientation from a stage of hunting and gathering to agricultural society,

and further to industrial society. Acculturation occurs in this flow of development.

Sometimes a society possessing a culture adopts and imitates an isolated and detached part of another culture—this is not acculturation but should be called “partial influence.” For example, developed countries in Europe in the beginning of the 19th century were fascinated by the *ukiyo-e* painting of Japan, which at that time was obviously an underdeveloped country. The latter impressionist painters, for instance, were greatly influenced by the vivid and fresh color sensation and the bold composition in the *ukiyo-e* painting. By this example alone we cannot possibly claim that acculturation by Japanese culture took its course in France. During the T’ang period in Chang’an, Tarim-basin culture was introduced and became popular. This, however, only means that the civilization of the West was suffixed to Chinese culture as an accessory. Acculturation indicates that which will bring about a thorough change to the whole system of a culture.

When we think of the case of Japan, she had already cultivated relations with China three centuries prior to the emergence of early states in her land. According to a popular account, Japanese culture, which is often likened to a sapling, is said to have grown to its full size by making use of the advanced Chinese culture as “fertilizer.” Naito Konan, arguing this view, pointed out that the relationship between these two cultures was that of mashed soy beans to *nigari* or bittern which is used to make *tofu*. Viscous and amorphous Japanese cultural elements, for the first time, according to Naito, became well-defined through contact with Chinese culture. I am a supporter of the Naito Theory.

The time difference in civilization between China and Japan is considered to be approximately 2000 years. The beginning of farming in China was about 4000 B.C. while the emergence of early states there was about 1500 B.C., a lapse of 2500 years. In Japan, farming did not begin until about 300 B.C. Since the emergence of early states in Japan is said to have been around A.D. 300, the time lapse is only 500-600 years, and the speed of development is very fast. “Catching up quickly”—this is the basic pattern of Japanese culture, and we must note that this pattern has been continuing up to the present. In these ancient

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times there must have occurred typical acculturation. It is regrettable to say that the actual conditions of this acculturation are difficult to clarify. Japan thereafter continued to make strenuous efforts in the study of Chinese culture as represented symbolically in her dispatch of envoys to T'ang China. Owing to her geographic condition of being an island state, Japan never experienced the compulsory acceptance of a culture by military conquest, contrary to the cases of the Korean and Indochina Peninsulas. Japan was always able to assimilate culture voluntarily until her military occupation in 1945 by the U.S. Despite the fact that Japan simulated every aspect of the Chinese system, she never introduced the punishment of castration: in spite of the fact that she studied Chinese literature, she discarded one of its characteristic concerns, politics, and studied only its aesthetic aspect—these points should be noted.

This form of rather mild and slow acculturation existed not only between China and Japan but also between neighboring cultures in all parts of the world. However, the processes of acculturation were intensified and accelerated beginning in A.D. 1500. The beginning of the age of European expansion was a turning point. Acculturation, rather than continuing in the form of the influence of an advanced culture over a less advanced culture, took the form of a strong impact vibrating from an influential culture to a less influential culture. Discussing the problem of power in the same breath with culture may be looked upon as profanity by some persons. However, as long as we consider culture as that which actually exists in the context of a collective body of human beings, not as an abstract idea, we cannot overlook its relations with power. The reason why French culture permeated throughout Europe in medieval times and during the eras under Louis XIV and Napoleon I was partly attributable to its attractiveness, but we should not forget that France was the strongest state in Europe in those days. In the 13th century, history witnessed the conquests of Genghis Khan, but there was no acculturation because these destructive acts were inflicted on a more advanced civilization by a less advanced civilization. If these Yuan conquerors pose any problem of acculturation it is that the Mongols and other conquerors of China experienced acculturation into Chinese culture, the culture of the conquered. This is because the Chinese people retained

higher cultural levels as compared to those of the Mongolian people.

The first wave of Western culture reached Japan in 1543 in the form of a drifting Portuguese vessel, followed shortly by the arrival of Catholic missionaries. At first the missionaries were welcomed by the Japanese people; however, many Christians died as martyrs upon the prohibition of evangelism. And in 1635, Japan enacted a law of isolation. After the Shimabara Rebellion in 1637, which recorded probably the largest scale massacre in Japanese history, Western culture was completely wiped out. The first wave seemed to have left no traces of its effects. In actuality, however, this wave had a most decisive effect on the history of Japan, that is, the firearms that the Portuguese brought into Japan enabled Oda Nobunaga and Toyotomi Hideyoshi to achieve the unification of Japan. The Tokugawa shogun, who succeeded these two generalissimos, created a period of peace extending over 250 years, which is indeed rare in world history. In compensating for its isolation from other parts of the world and the lag in its development, Japan succeeded in providing an environment in which her unique culture could mature and diffuse to its fullest potential.

The reason the European, who destroyed the Incan Empire ten years prior to the arrival of the Portuguese to Japan in 1543, did not invade Japan is that, basically, there was no great disparity between European and Japanese civilizations in terms of the degree of development. Perhaps Japan's geographic situation at the farthest point from Europe should also be considered a factor. Both Spain and Portugal at this time were agronomical, premodern states. Science and technology were not yet important factors in the societies and would have to wait another 300 years for the Industrial Revolution. As is clear from the fact that the Chinese were able to drive the Dutch out of their settlements in Formosa in 1661, the Europeans were not possessed of the power to conquer the old civilizations of the Far East. They succeeded, however, in colonizing North and South America, Africa, India, and Southeast Asia, and acculturation must have occurred in those areas.

All I can say in the way of general consideration is that where two cultures make contact, the stronger culture aptly exterminates the weaker culture rather than transforming the latter. The

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Tasmanians no longer exist on earth. In Mexico, during the time span of 78 years from 1519 to 1597, about three fourths of the population (from 11 million to 2.5 million) were decimated. If proper measures had not been taken, the aborigines of Australia or the Hottentots in Africa would have met the same destiny, if not complete extinction. In these cases, accuration could not possibly have occurred. The Ainu in Hokkaido can be said to be in the process of assimilation into Japanese society. Ainu culture may be said to have died out.

The Japanese people in the 19th century were not well informed of historic events. However, they were well aware of the fact that India and China were under pressure from the Westerners and that the outbreak of the Opium War in 1840 was the result of Great Britain's unwarrantable sale of opium to unwilling China. The arrival of the American fleet led by Commodore Perry heightened the sense of crisis on the part of the Japanese people. Japanese patriots, therefore, made attempts to oust the foreigners by winning the emperor over to their side. That movement was called the *son' no joi* or the movement of reverence for the emperor and expulsion of foreigners. The view of foreigners as *ebisu* or barbarians, needless to say, stemmed from Chinese culture. Confucius was able to state confidently: "Even if the barbarians of the East and North have their princely courts they are still inferior to China which has no princes at all." Chinese culture in the ancient time was that much advanced. I wonder if Japan in the middle of the 19th century, with the confidence of Confucius in her own culture, could have spoken in his spirit to Great Britain, Russia and America when all of them were pressing Japan to open her doors. In terms of relative competence, I feel it would have been utterly impossible for Japan at this time to be a Confucius. After learning a practical lesson from the battle fought between the Satsuma clan and Britain (1863) and other incidents, Japanese patriotic revolutionary factions converted at once to factions advocating the opening of the country. I would like to discuss the nature of this conversion in Japanese thinking later. In any event, Japan in 1868 opened her doors and planned for abrupt Westernization, thereby, a bold cultural revolution, unprecedented in world history, was to be worked out.

It is impossible for me to trace back the process of the *Meiji*

*Ishin* as time does not permit, and I do not see any necessity for that. I wish only to express my objection to those who use the term "restoration" when they transilate *Meiji Ishin* into English. The *Meiji Ishin* or the Meiji Revolution was no doubt a revolution. Only Japanese conservatives avoided calling the *Meiji Ishin* a revolution. Since the use of the term "revolution" was taboo in a nation-state wherein the emperor was in power, these conservatives emphasized the emperor's being restored to power in 1868 and used the term "restoration of imperial rule," that is, Meiji Restoration. I recall that I, as a middle-school student, got a good scolding from my teacher after using the term "Meiji Revolution." On the other hand, Marxists regard the *Meiji Ishin* as a mere shift of power from the shogunate to the emperor: they deny that the *Meiji Ishin* was a revolution, for there was no class struggle in which the ruled became rulers nor was exploitation by land owners lessened to any extent. Since they are basically committed to the idea that they must bring about a social revolution in the future, they cannot admit that a revolution was achieved by the *Meiji Ishin*. Owing to avoidance on the part of the right wing and the expectancy on the part of the left wing, the term "revolution" was shunned as a label for this great revolution of the Meiji era; instead, it was called the "restoration of imperial rule"—this I would judge an unwarranted use of the term.

I highly value the achievement of revolution in England, France, Russia, and China. In the *Meiji Ishin*, the ruler of Japan was not slain as was the case in those countries. Since I deem that the achievement of a great undertaking without slaying any man is desirable, I look upon the revolution of the Meiji era as one that by no means falls short of the great revolutions in these other countries. Though the revolutions in England and France attempted land reforms, the class of land owners remained intact. As for the abolition of the feudal status system, Japan was much more thorough in its execution. If we are able to call the "July Revolution" or the "February Revolution" in France "revolution," the *Meiji Ishin* ought by all means to be called a "revolution," more specifically a "bourgeois revolution of the underdeveloped country type." The reason I label the *Meiji Ishin* a "revolution of the underdeveloped country type" is that I would like to point out the distinction between a

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bourgeois revolution which is carried out after the bourgeoisie has attained a considerable maturity, and one that is initiated rather to enable the bourgeoisie to become mature. If there is anyone who, like Prof. Kohn, persists in saying, "It is regrettable that revolutions in underdeveloped countries are concerned only with independence and nationalism, contrary to the revolutions in Western Europe whose main goal was to insure individual liberties and civil rights," I must regard him as a man who lacks in correct understanding of developing countries. I wonder if Prof. Kohn is trying to say that a revolution should not be initiated in any area other than Europe. It is quite natural that in an underdeveloped country, which has lost its independence to a colonial power or is threatened by more advanced countries, her people seek after independence, unification, and economic growth. To insure success in their movement, support from the masses is of course indispensable; however, it is impractical to provide impetus to the movement through democratic discussion if the degree of maturity of the civilian society is insufficient. Guidance from on high becomes rather indispensable. The freedom of a nation naturally has preference to the freedom of an individual.

While the *Meiji Ishin*, is generally appraised highly in foreign lands, it is assessed lowly within the academic world of Japan. This is because, I feel, Japanese intellectuals tend to pass judgement on Japan's realities in reference to the Western standards. One view regards the *Meiji Ishin* as incomplete. A view of this sort stems from the lack of a correct understanding of the *Meiji Ishin*. Despite the fact that the *Meiji Ishin* was a bourgeois revolution, there are many who criticize that it was not achieved in the form of a socialistic revolution. I would like to suggest that the value of the *Meiji Ishin* lies in its thoroughness as a cultural rather than bourgeois or class revolution. For Japan, who had hitherto modeled after China as the highest cultural civilization and who wished now to rank with the powerful West, the cultural revolution of the Meiji era was an attempt to discard her conventional culture at one fell swoop and at the same time to assimilate the new culture of the West. Baelz, a German physician, recorded that Japanese intellectuals said, "We have no history, for our history is just about to begin." Another description is: "Two masters of classical Japanese

painting, Kano Hogai and Hashimoto Gaho were almost starving after the Meiji Ishin..." The word "starving" may sound exaggerated but this is not my expression. The word was used by one of the foremost Japanologists, Sir George Sansom. In the advanced countries in Europe there are many poor artists who are not recognized in spite of their having substantial abilities; nonrecognition is due to their novelty in ignoring tradition.

The attitude of the Japanese in the early Meiji era toward their traditional culture may seem to have been fickle and frivolous, if we look at it level-headedly; however, this is what I call a cultural revolution. China's revolutionary literary man, Lu Hsun, exclaimed: "Chinese youths! Refrain from reading Chinese classics as much as possible or not at all!" These words of his, I feel, may be incomprehensible to blessed Westerners who perhaps have never experienced the imperative for a cultural revolution. Then, you may ask, why didn't they preserve what was worthwhile in the society and improve or reform that which was not so worthy. This, however, cannot be a revolution. A revolution does not mean improvement of what already exists, but an attempt to overthrow at a stroke all that has been established.

In 1871, Emperor Meiji issued the following edict for the encouragement of a meat-diet, Western-style haircuts, and Western style clothes: "I now am firmly determined to change our way of clothing and our manners and establish a policy of militarism upheld by my forefathers. Lay to heart this appeal of mine!" Although he speaks of his "forefathers," his words in brief convey a message encouraging a switch from traditional *kimono* to Western-style clothes. What a childish and laughable attitude he assumed! We must bear in mind that what is called a revolution is inevitably attended by "overdoing." When I read this imperial edict, I am bound to recall the situation in present-day India. I do not know how they dress in their private lives, but high officers there always wear traditional attire in public places. And the women are clad in beautiful saris. I have often observed women in saris crossing unstable scaffolds carrying heavy packages on their backs at construction fields in New Delhi. It is admirable to maintain manners. However, I feel this will hamper modernization. India after her inde-



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pendence, in spite of her strenuous efforts, seems not to be successful in modernization efforts. One of the reasons is the lack of radical destroyers of tradition such as Mori Arinori of Japan. Mori was a minister of education, who was assassinated for lifting up a bamboo blind with the tip of his stick at the Grand Shrine of Ise, the most revered of all Japanese sacred places. Japan and India in modern times are indeed parallel. The former has a fear of unchangeability, whereas the latter has a fear of changeability.

Leaders of the early Meiji era often spoke of the "morality of the East and technology of the West" and of "Japanese spirit and Western learning." They meant that one should cultivate one's ability by learning after the West but retain the Japanese spirit to the end; but in reality, the leaders planned for abrupt Westernization. The slogans I cited could be considered as political ones, which were used to alleviate the shock to conventionalists. In the case of Japan, in the Meiji era, she intentionally and consciously planned for acculturation into the West on a national scale. What made this acculturation possible and led to its speedy progress was not a political demand for a powerful nation-state. It was rather the deep-rooted yearning of the Japanese for the West, which provided a continuing stimulus. The fervor of this yearning still continues with no sign of abating. At first it was obvious only among the upper stratum of the people and the intellectuals, but as Japan's modernization and economy progressed, acculturation gradually became popularized.

I would like to cite a study of standards of feminine beauty as an example of the Japanese people's acculturation toward the West. Preferences in these matters are most determined in the sphere of emotion rather than in the sphere of rational faculty.

In 1954, I made a survey of Japanese men's preferences in women.<sup>1</sup> First, I prepared seven still pictures of movie stars, who seemed to represent different steps in a shift from a conventional Japanese countenance to a modern, Western appearance. Then, I showed them to farmers in Japan's most backward areas and urban intellectuals in Kyoto and other cities and kept a quantitative record of their respective choices of women. Profes-

<sup>1</sup> *Europe*, nov. - dec. 1963.

essor Harold Lasswell praised this survey of mine. The tastes of Japanese men with respect to feminine beauty, as is clear from the results of my survey, are being Westernized. Lately, large *kombinat* or industrial complexes have been constructed in remote areas. The houses there, which were newly built by farmers who earned a large sum of money by selling their lands, are almost all in the Westernstyle. The number of intellectuals who cling to Japanese traditional beauty is rather decreasing. Choices of the masses in all aspects of food, clothing and shelter have obviously been Westernized. These are social phenomena that the aftermath of the Meiji cultural revolution has been effecting. Nowadays in European orchestras the number of Japanese string players is increasing. It has come to the point that Japanese youths win more prizes in international music competitions than youths from the advanced countries of music in Europe.

The Westernization policy of the Meiji government was strongly initiated by the upper-class but was also supported by the masses. One of the foremost thinkers of the Meiji era, Nakae Chomin (1847-1901), however, stood against the government. He was, in effect, a chief-of-staff in the "movement for democratic rights." He, too, agreed with the government's policy of Westernization. But Nakae, who was called the "Rousseau of the East," was critical of the government for its lack of enthusiasm in Westernizing the political system, that is, democratizing the government. His ultimate goal was "to realize a solemn, European-type island-state in the East."

Of course, such a policy registered opposition. However, the number of antagonists was few, and the way of thinking, that whatever came from the West was high-class, prevailed among the people. Acculturation in the Meiji era was synonymous with Westernization. Again, Westernization was synonymous with modernization.

Naturally, there are many views regarding modernization. In 1957, I wrote an article entitled "Tradition versus Modernization in Postwar Japan"<sup>2</sup> in which I cited six factors to measure the degree of modernization. They are: (1) democratization in government, (2) capitalism in economy, (3) factory

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Diogenes*, n. 40, 1962.

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production in industry, especially scientific and technological progress in industrialization, (4) compulsory education of the people, (5) independent national army, and (6) liberation from communal life in terms of consciousness and the maturity of individualism. These six factors may be insufficient as measures, but they are so closely related to one another that it is impossible to separate them. One's understanding of modernization varies according to one's emphasis on certain factors. I would like to explain them briefly.

(1) When we speak of democratization in government, the definition of democracy may become a point for discussion, but I would like to define it negatively as differing from autocracy by a privileged class of people such as the nobility. In this context, socialist countries such as the Soviet Union and China should be regarded naturally as countries of democracy. In this respect, leftists claim that Japan up until her defeat in 1945 was "semi-feudalistic and semi-modernistic." This definition of Japan stems from a political view which emphasizes the institution of the autocratic emperor and the parasitic land owner system. Judging from the dissolutions of the class system and the equalization of her people, however, Japan appears to have accomplished much more than classically democratic countries such as England and France. In terms of democratization in general social life, Japan seems to have surpassed the older democracies. In the case of Japan, a highly advanced mass society has been established, though it is not readily determined if Japan has succeeded in modernization or not as far as her democratization in government is concerned.

(2) The term "capitalism" may cause some misunderstanding. As the national capitalism of the Soviet Union is intended to be included, it would be preferable to define the term as "national concentration of capital." Japanese capitalism may seem to be inferior because it was not brought about from the lower layers of society as was the case in England, but was raised by the hand of the government. This course, however, was inevitable for a backward country. The degree of adherence between Japanese capitalism and the state has been considerable, but this tendency has become rather common in all world capitals.

(3) In the case of Japan, manufacturing developed considerably during the Tokugawa period, and progress in the division of labor worked advantageously for industrialization. One of the reasons that newly independent Asian countries are not too successful in industrialization may be that their long years under colonization by other powers prevented the development of any feudalistic tradition.

(4) What I must highlight in (4) and (5) is the complete abolition of the social class system in Japan. Today in England, children of the rich and children of the poor are still segregated from each other, and they attend different grade schools. Worthy of special mention is the fact that in the case of Japan no discriminatory measures have been adopted since the founding of the grade-school system. Primary education became compulsory in 1870 in England, and 1872 in Japan. Japan adopted a compulsory education system before the U.S. (in 1918). It would not be an over-statement to say that the Japanese are the most enthusiastic people in the world about education. Japanese grade schools are certainly not inferior and perhaps even superior to those in European countries, and during the Meiji era they were built even in remote and secluded places in the mountains. The principle of equality was absolute even in the army, and it was possible for the son of a farmer to become a general.

(6) Individualism did not grow during the Meiji era, and even today it has not fully developed. Individualism is one of the indices of modernization, but individualism is not a practical goal in any attempt at modernization. As a consequence of industrialization and the development of national education and when the standard of living has risen so that people no longer lead a hand-to-mouth existence, there possibly arises a new concern in the society advocating the dignity and freedom of the individual. Walter Prescott Webb,<sup>3</sup> an American scholar, proved that even in Europe the realization of individualism, democracy, and the principle of equality, though these may have been discussed from olden days as "ideas," had to wait until after A.D. 1500, that is, until after the Europeans became

<sup>3</sup> *The Great Frontier*, 1964.

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wealthy and powerful as a consequence of their expansion into the world. As they made headway in expansion, the rate of dividend for capital investment reached 10,000%: the density of population was 26 people per square mile, but it decreased to less than 5 people per square mile as they were able to use many lands at their free disposal. It is said of liberalism that it could not possibly have developed without such a materialistic base. And once an industrial society develops too highly, the freedom of the individual becomes rather difficult to secure. According to Webb, the advanced countries of the world have already reached this point. He says, "The individual is curbed on all sides by corporations, or government agencies, or labor unions, or associations, and the chief choice left to him is a choice of which curbs he shall submit to." To Japan, which was a poor, underdeveloped country, planning for modernization with an aim to achieving individualism seems to have been impractical.

Let us think once more of what modernization means. We must have some criteria to make an objective judgment, and can not merely rely on the subjectivity of the individual critic. Would it not be possible to define modernization as being synonymous with industrialization? The other five indices I cited previously may be subsumed under the concept of industrialization. The process of industrializing should not be the exclusive property of a privileged class but should be supported by the whole people. The abolition of the social class system and the diffusion of education become inevitable prerequisites. And if we agree with the British economist, Joan Robinson, that a socialistic revolution is the most effective means for the underdeveloped country to catch up with the developed country, then the democratization of government and the national concentration of capital are also required for the promotion of industrialization. If modernization is synonymous with a higher degree of industrialization, however, moderns may wonder if modernization can be the ultimate goal of mankind. A higher degree of industrialization might only accelerate the tempo of human life and destroy our peace of mind, or it might result in the spread of pollution which endangers the existence of mankind. Yet, we cannot doubt that modernization will elevate our standard of living and will promote materialistic happiness.

When the history of the whole world runs along with the stream of industrialization, it is not feasible for an individual country or race to place herself outside its influence. There no longer exists any unknown and isolated land; even primitive, uncivilized races are forced into a monetary economy and are compelled to purchase industrial products. For survival, industrialization is unavoidable. Leaders of the *Meiji Ishin* and many of their contemporary Japanese appear to have recognized this. This way of thinking was suitable for that particular era, and their attempt at modernization, though it inevitably brought about some distortions, can be said to have been successful on the whole.

What are the reasons for the success of Japan's modernization, which today arouses considerable attention on the part of the world? I am not neglecting the efforts made by our predecessors, but I suppose it would be better to cite luck as the primary reason. In other words, Japan's geographic and historic conditions in 1868 worked favorably for her. In the next place, I consider the fact that Japan remained an independent country to be quite significant, nationalistic or independence movements in colonial lands inevitably end in confrontation with the colonial ruler. This ruler or the enemy is likely to be modern and capitalistic. The leaders of the movement against the ruler will inevitably invoke tradition and make it the symbol and inspiration of their resistance. They are likely to have anti-modern and anti-capital sentiments. The attitude assumed by Mahatma Gandhi must have been useful in the fight for India's independence, but it is not suited to her modernization. On the contrary, this attitude contradicts modernization in nature.

In contrast to these colonized lands, Japan developed as an independent state. Therefore, her people did not possess an intractable attachment to her own tradition, and repulsion or opposition to Westernization or modernization was hardly observable. This fact must be related to the existence of Dutch learning or Western learning in Japan during her period of national isolation. Although Christianity was banned, people still made efforts to know things Western by learning the Dutch language. The eighth shogun encouraged Dutch learning. Of course, their pursuit of learning was immature and insufficient. They, for instance, were able to comprehend fully Napoleon's

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military genius but at the same time they regarded the French Revolution as an incident in which thieves rose in revolt and killed the king and they did not understand what "freedom, equality and fraternity" meant. As compared to China where almost no western learning was fostered, Japan kept in touch with world affairs, and this certainly facilitated her modernization.

The difference in attitude between China and Japan toward Western culture had been revealed in their reactions when Catholic missionaries first introduced European culture in the 16th century. At that time both Chinese and Japanese people had faith in themselves and had never been obsequious to the Europeans. Sir George Sansom summarizes: "The Japanese in any respect never felt inferior to the European while the Chinese never hesitated to boast that they, in every respect, felt superior to the Europeans."<sup>4</sup> This confidence of the Chinese in their own culture remains unchanged up to the present. Their attitude is praiseworthy, but this is one of the causes for China's lagging behind Japan in their efforts at modernization. As I mentioned at the beginning, Japan, which had been a backward state, relatively speaking, from ancient times, had the curiosity to inquire into foreign cultures and was open-minded to them while China, a state possessing the most advanced culture in the East, was strongly attached to her tradition. Those pioneers who attempted to modernize China at the end of the Ching dynasty toiled in vain; China became a semicolonial state; the ruling class turned compradors. Because of these conditions, China's inner contradictions became extreme, and men like the aforementioned Lu Hsun had to cry out for severance from tradition. This led to a union of nationalism and a radical, social revolution, and further to the inevitable occurrence of the Great Cultural Revolution by Mao Tse-tung. I grant full understanding to China's attitude toward Western culture. This does not mean, however, that I agree with Takeuchi Yoshimi that modernization which proceeds without resistance is degeneration. He is right in his criticism of the "superficiality" of Japan's modernization since the Meiji era; however, if Takeuchi's sort of overly rigid idealism were to be too strictly upheld, the doors to modernization might

<sup>4</sup> *The Western World and Japan*, 1950.

be closed for many African and Asian nations other than China.

As even more important than Dutch learning for the success of Japan's modernization, we must take special notice of the diffusion of education resulting from the period of 250 years of peace. In the middle of the Tokugawa period, education at private schools called *terakoya* or temple schools became popular. Professor R.P. Dore of England surmises that the literacy rate around the year 1868 was 43% for men and 15% for women.<sup>5</sup> No statistical records regarding literacy at the time of the French Revolution are available, but the number of French people who were able to sign their names when they got married is estimated at 47% for men and 27% for women.<sup>6</sup> This signifies only that they were able to write their names; therefore literacy in France would seem to have been lower than in Japan at the time of the Meiji Revolution. At the time of the Russian Revolution in 1917, the literacy rate was 20%; literacy at the time of the Chinese Revolution in 1949 was just about the same; and literacy in India at the juncture of her independence was approximately 10%. It is obvious that the fact of literacy contributed to minimizing bloodshed in the Meiji Revolution and facilitated modernization efforts thereafter.

Despite the blessing of the favorable conditions mentioned so far, the strongest driving force behind Japan's successful modernization was certainly nationalism. Lafcadio Hearn (Koizumi Yakumo) said: "No matter how hard psychologists try to make such generalizations as 'the Japanese lack individuality' or 'Japanese individuality has certain limitations,' there is no question but that Japan as a nation-state has a much stronger individuality than Western nations." His statement should be said to have accurately pointed out the efficiency of Japanese nationalism as well as its uniqueness.

As we know, it was from the 19th century that people began to use the term "nationalism." In the French language the term was first used in 1812. The term "patriotism" had been long in use. This latter term signifies the attachment of a group to their area of residence and their desire to love and protect that area. Although patriotic sentiment has been witnessed in all

<sup>5</sup> *Education in Tokugawa Japan*, 1965.

<sup>6</sup> F. Brunot, *Histoire de la langue française*, t. 7.



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parts of the world from ancient times, nationalism in the sense of the extension of the individual's awareness over the whole sphere of influence called a "nation" and the turning of a people's sense of solidarity into a large source of energy is a modern idea originating in the French Revolution. The rise of absolute monarchism and the bourgeoisie was the basis for the emergence of nationalism in Western Europe. Patriotism transformed qualitatively keeping pace with the abolition of the system of social classification and with popular acceptance of the idea (as a result of the French Revolution) that sovereignty rests with the people. The number of people who had a sense of identification with the nation dramatically increased. They sought the independence, integration and development of the state as well as their own civil freedoms. Thus nationalism, which places loyalty to the state above other loyalties, was born. Nationalism tends not to deepen class consciousness but to dissolve it; however, historically, at least in the West, nationalism was inspired by the rise of the bourgeoisie and grew side by side with capitalism.

Japan, before the Meiji Revolution, was under a feudalism, which rested on the *bakuban* system consisting of a shogunate government and about three hundred clans whose lords were called *daimyo*. Some historians distinguish the Japanese nationalism which emerged from feudalism as immature in development and have affixed the label of "pre-nationalism" to it. I feel it is not necessary to make any such distinction. A homogeneous race referred to as the Japanese, live on three islands and their national culture spread throughout the islands. Their industry had already reached the stage of manufacturing. They were using a standard Japanese warrantable in all parts of the country, though dialects were still in use. The way of agriculture was the same throughout the country. The national unity of the Japanese seemed to have been greater than that in France before the great revolution. In France in those days, Southern France differed from Northern France in her way of agronomy. As for law, Southern France adopted a civil law while Northern France applied common or customary law. Throughout the country the system of *octroi* or toll-houses was instituted. Contrary to the situation in France, Japan matured to the point where people began to feel that a division of the country into

clans was unnatural: She gave birth to nationalism, taking the opportunity of heightening the sense of crisis caused by the impact of the West.

If I state that Japanese nationalism came into being naturally, this would be inaccurate. The leaders who led the Meiji Revolution to success attempted to form a nationally united front by consciously fashioning a new imperial system from the material of the tradition of the imperial household that had continued for over 1,000 years. Although time does not permit me to discuss in detail this unique political and social system referred to as the Japanese imperial system, I would like to draw your attention to the following point: Since the emperor was the commander-in-chief of the Japanese military and the pivotal figure of Japanese militarism until 1945, he is often subject to ill criticism. I feel that in certain respects he is liable to criticism; however, when we think of the imperial system, we must look not only at its political aspect but at its efficacy as the core of Japanese modernization. The extent of this efficacy is revealed when we consider that the U.S. occupation forces in 1945 utilized this system and succeeded in the maintenance of public peace and order.

Noting the presence of a unique political institution referred to as the imperial system and also noting that civil freedom found it difficult to grow in spite of the marked progress of modernization, it becomes clear that the nationalism of Japan is different from that which developed in the West. In Europe a universalism grounded in the unification of the Roman Empire and the hegemony of the Catholic Church is said to have been in existence long before the formation of nation-states. Even when these nation-states confronted one another, they were only particulars within the context of a new universalism based on natural law and enlightenment thought, and they still shared international solidarity. In contrast, though Japan established a nation-state by integrating three hundred feudal clans, her people still retained intense clan consciousness and in effect had become one so-called great clan. Japan was conscious only of competitive or power relations when she looked toward other nations, that is, toward other "clans" of the world, and she lacked awareness that Japan was a member of any international society.

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The culture of the Japanese, who as a homogeneous race existed in isolation from the rest of the world for 2,000 years, was highly developed, but her culture did not enjoy any opportunity of diffusing into foreign lands. Hence, it was impossible for Japanese culture to give birth to universalism. If one chooses to depreciate Japanese nationalism because it did not provide the soil on which universalism grows, I am afraid he will have to deny every nationalism except the one in Europe. Asian and African races with the exception of the Chinese race might be said to have been historically prohibited from bringing universalism into existence. Europeans have expanded into the world beginning in A.D. 1500, and they have controlled the world since then. Because of this historical fact, Europeans are considered to have a tendency to press their thought upon others in the name of the sole universalism of the world. Their thought, however, seems to be losing some of its appeal in the West itself. Discussion of other areas of the world in reference to Western standards is not necessarily proper.

A thought is inevitably subject to transformation as it spreads from its birthplace to other places. I am afraid that the classic nationalism of the Western style could not possibly survive. Whether it is good or bad, Japanese nationalism should be regarded as a forerunner of a transformed type of nationalism. Nationalism of the Soviet Union and China appear to be of the same genre. Marxism calls for the dissolution of the state after the fulfillment of a revolution, but an obvious fact is that nationalism persists in the Soviet Union and China and displays its efficacy extensively. It is natural that Asian and African nations who have newly become independent will aim at modernization for the promotion of their people's happiness; however, nationalism is an indispensable tool to attain success in this venture. Speaking frankly, the reason that nationalism seems not to be displaying its full potential in these nations may be due to the lack of revolutionary thoroughness. The Meiji revolution is said to have been incomplete in terms of the achievement of a social revolution; however, I am of the view that a sense of liberation produced by complete abolition of the feudal status system contributed to increasing the strength of nationalism. The leftist school says that the Meiji government solely produced a large number of subjects who were sub-

missive, faithful, and servile to authority—but such a doctrine cannot sufficiently explain the rapid achievement of modernization in the case of Japan.

Of course, I do not approve of Japanese nationalism one hundred percent. I see a number of defects in it, but I will point out only one defect here. This defect is the fickleness and frivolity of the Japanese people of which Nakae Chomin was so critical. This characteristic of the Japanese is most concretely and precisely revealed in the fact that modern Japanese people readily change their minds or course of action. A typical example is found in the case of those 19th century patriots who clamorously appealed for “reverence of imperial rule and expulsion of barbarians” and then suddenly did an about face and advocated the opening of the country. Japan first adopted the French military system, but suddenly converted to the Prussian system when Napoleon III was imprisoned as a result of the Franco-Prussian War. Professor Keiichi Sakuda, a sociologist, explains this saying, “In Japanese society, there has been a deep-rooted tradition which requires people to adapt themselves to a given situation as fate and harmonize themselves with it.” Such a tradition facilitates their flexibility. Japanese society—a closed, stable society formed by a homogeneous race—was not well suited to foster logic and rhetoric and to bring abstract, theoretical thinking into being. Without devotion to the principle, the attitude which encourages a man to persist in his own choice is rarely cultivated. Thereupon, what comes to be the basic thought, or rather the basic sentiment, is that the essential thing is to live life. Man should live life according to the given situation—this naturalistic way of thinking is fundamental; therefore, when there is no abstract idea to restrict such a way of thinking, or an abstract idea is weak in influence, natural vitalism with adaptability as its chief virtue has constituted the main current. However, it is dubious that such a current can be dominant as hitherto, Japanese society is changing enormously.