A CURRENT JAPANESE INTERPRETATION OF MAX WEBER

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The author tries to clarify some characteristics in the context of the intellectual history of Japan with regard to how and what aspects of Max Weber's theories have been introduced by Japanese social scientists. Max Weber's influence on Japan is so great that it is impossible to discuss the whole of it. Accordingly, in this article, the author refers only to a few social scientists who are notable from the viewpoint of some important problems, such as "overcoming modernity," etc. Some aspects which are peculiar to the interpretation of Weber's theories on Oriental society in Japan are dealt with in relation to the author's interests in the last part of this article.

I

It seems, as I will mention later in this article, that one cannot find in Weber what might be called a theory of Asian society. In other words, Weber never took up societies in Asia with the idea of applying to them a specific category of Asian society which might help in discerning their characteristics. For example, according to Weber, Chinese and Indian society have the common feature of identifying the social order with the natural order, and they are, in this respect, differentiated from Occidental societies. These two Asian societies are, at the same time, in sharp contrast with each other in that Chinese society is value-oriented to acceptance of the world (*Weltbejahung*) whereas Indian society to rejection of the world (*Weltablehnung*). In point of rejection of the world, however, the Occidental tradition of Christianity also has it in common with the Indian tradition, though it falls under the subcategory of control of the world (*Weltkontrol*) which is differentiated from the Indian sense of escape from the world (*Weltflucht*). It therefore in no way seems pertinent in the light of the Weberian method to set forth a sweeping argument about Weber's views of Eastern societies. As Weber made clear in his Introduction to *The Sociology of Religion*, it is well known that his central concern was to explain why modern capitalism developed in the Occident and there alone. Such a concern logically led him to place emphasis on the analysis of how that difference arose between Occident and non-Occident, an area which may be taken as the Orient in the broad sense. This, however, does not mean that the Orient in this sense or the non-Occident is a homogeneous unit. According to Weber's method, it is impossible to explain by a sequence of cause and effect in the univocal sense, why

modern capitalism could develop only in the Occident. The question must be answered multilaterally by taking into account a variety of types in ideas (*Ideen*), social strata (*sozial Schichten*) and state of interests (*Interessenlage*) and also the combination of these types. Thus, in some Asian societies, there are those elements which, in typification from a certain point of view, fall under the same type as found in Occidental societies. On the other hand, certain Asian societies, in some aspects, were not necessarily precluded from the possibility of developing in the same way as Occidental societies. In this light, it will be unquestionable that Weber, not only himself being opposed to economic determinism, such as that of Kautzky, was not such a cultural or religious determinist as he was often unjustifiably misunderstood and criticized to be. The way of taking Asian societies as a unified entity and enumerating its "essential" characteristics can never be reconciled with Weber's method.

Thus, instead of trying to pursue what may be the characteristics of Weber's theory of Oriental societies, I would seek here to throw light on characteristics of the manner in which Weber's theory, including his theory of Oriental societies, has been understood in Japan, a society located in a part of Asia, in comparison with the way of understanding Weber in Occidental societies. What are the particular concerns which the Japanese social scientists have had in adopting the Weberian theory? What characteristics have consequently been brought about in the Japanese understanding of Weber? If there are such characteristics at all, what have been the socio-historical conditions of Japan to which they are related?

In discussing studies of Weber in Japan, mention must be made first of all of the great popularity Weber enjoys among Japanese social scientists. One hundred years since his birth and less than fifty years since his death, the number of monographs and articles on Weber written in Japan is nearly one thousand. Looking at this massive list of documents, I am surprised to find how small is the proportion that I have read, and brought to fear if I am really qualified to make comments on studies of Weber in Japan. Perhaps, what I can expect to do may be to cite a few characteristics in a limited field of studies of Weber in the country.[1] Fortunately I was given an oppor-

1 In discussing the studies on Max Weber in Japan, the author has to dedicate much space and energy to a good number of social scientists and their works covering more than half a century. Such professors as K. Ōkōchi, Y. Deguchi, H. Aoyama, T. Toda (Economics), S. Uehara, K. Sera, S. Masuda, Y. Horigome (Historical Science), K. Odaka, E. Andō, Y. Uchida, R. Takeda, A. Baba, Y. Atoji (Sociology) are well-known for their disregard of the differences among the scientific disciplines employed in their work, and for producing some careful developments of his thesis and/or profound critical comments on him. However, it is impossible and might be unnecessary to deal with each of the works in detail in a paper of this length and it is also a task beyond the ability of the present writer. In this paper specific attention has been drawn to the limited number of social scientists only in relation to some characteristics of the intellectual climate in each historical stage; in other words, with respect to the character of the times as expressed in the slogan "overcoming modernity." From this limited

tunity of playing my part as one of the chairmen at a symposium to celebrate the centenary of Weber's birth, where more than two hundred experts from various fields of study got together for a two-day discussion. The impressions on this occasion helped me great deal to get a bird's-eye view of Japanese studies of Weber today. Before I can turn to the characteristics of these studies, however, I may very briefly present a historical perspective of Weberian studies in the context of the Japanese intellectual climate.

Up until the early 1930's, about ten years after Weber's death, Japan experienced a stage where the introduction of the Weberian theory was more important than anything else. The method of "interpretative or understanding sociology" (*verstehende Soziologie*), the theory of freedom from value-judgment and Weber's theory of ideal-types were among the first that were brought to attention. They provided a stimulus which led the Japanese social scientists who had been strongly influenced by German *Staatswissenschaften* to move from the position of state policy in the direction of liberating social science. Conversely, it may also be said that, now that the Japanese social scientists had been so oriented, Weber's thesis of freedom from value-judgment was so readily brought to their attention. Still, the Japanese image of Weber at that time was little more than that of an extraordinarily erudite Neo-Kantian scholar.

In the latter half of the 1930's, when Japan stepped into a stage called fascist or militarist, Japanese studies of Weber began to attain a special meaning in the intellectual climate of the time. As typical of the characteristics of that stage of Japan, I may cite a slogan fashionable in those years, "overcoming modernity." This slogan had a twofold implication. In one aspect, it was to mobilize "anti-Western" sentiments among the masses by taking the "modernity" to be surmounted as "Western modernity." These sentiments comprised diversified factors ranging from the question of policy such as opposition to the invasion of "Western imperialism" in Asia to such a sentimental one as the yellow race's antipathy towards the white races. Varied as they were, these factors had the common feature of "anti-West" and were intermixed. As Professor R. Bendix[2] points out, Japan was characterized by much greater homogeneity internally, namely in terms of culture, religion and region than Germany, where the development of capitalism was likewise late, so that she reacted highly sensitively to the increase of heterogeneity attendant upon urbanization. There was a strong tendency often to regard any menace to internal homogeneity as an evil brought about by the Western impact. These sentiments became further intensified by Japan's isolation in world affairs, e.g. in the League of Nations. The other aspect of

point of view, some characteristics in the understanding of Max Weber's world of thought might be made clear and at the same time some important points in studies of Max Weber remain untouched. In this respect the author must apologize to the reader and the numerous students of Max Weber in Japan.

2 Reinhard Bendix, *Nation Building and Citizenship,* New York & London, John Wiley & Sons, 1964, p. 179.

the implication, which is closely related to the aspect already mentioned, was the tendency to disapprove of modern elements in Japan, namely, liberalism, parliamentarism, constitutionalism, etc., as well as the social phenomena resulting from urbanization. Politically, this tendency comprised those elements which sought to weaken the parliament and political parties. Intellectually, it was to reject modern thought from the West, which had already exerted influence on Japan, by labelling it as anti-Japanese, or destructive of the fundamental character of the national régime. Further, it went so romantic as to find a menace to the Japanese tradition in the consequences of urbanization. To the intellectual climate of the time, typified by the slogan with such an implication, Weber's theory had also a twofold meaning. First, modern capitalism, its spirit and the modern state relevant thereto of which Weber gave a typical image, were by far more rational than the traditional form of domination, the pre-capitalist human relations and the ethos prevailing therein, and in Japan, what was at stake was, far from overcoming modernity, to create modern social relations. Second, the Japanese character which the exponents of "overcoming modernity" praised should be regarded as a deterrent in the way of increasing rationalism, as Weber was keen enough to point out in his *The Sociology of Religion*, Volume I (especially in the chapter on "Confucianism and Taoism"). To put this in another way, the results of Weber's analysis of Oriental societies and the types of domination he described in his *Economy and Society* eventually provided for Japanese social scientists a very effective weapon for use in critically analysing their own society. The process in which Japanese fascism was losing rationality and growing more vandalic brought about the effect of impressing the Japanese social scientists, who were, though not many in number, worthy of the name, with the correctness of Weber's theory. At a time when Weber's theory was censured as "dead science" by Othmar Spann in his fatherland, it gave encouragement to Japanese social scientists. At that time, one of them, Tadashi Fukutake, quoting Spann's above words, declared that Weber's theory was alive and would not perish in the future, thereby pointing out the importance of Weber's method of "freedom from value-judgment" (*Wertfreiheit*). Indeed, in protecting the independence of studies in the face of increasing suppression from fascism, the Japanese social scientists were provided with the best possible base for their methodology by the method of freedom from value-judgment.

With regard to "overcoming modernity," mention must be made of the relationship between the Weberian theory and Marxism in Japan. It is of course after the war that Marxism, fully and candidly expressed, gained importance as a systematic methodology. In this sense, I will have to go back to it when I discuss the circumstances following the war. It must be remembered here, however, that, even before the war, especially before it was suppressed by political power at the "fascist" stage, Marxism had a strong influence among the intellectuals. The influence of Marxism is referred to in connexion with "overcoming modernity" in the sense that, to the Marxists,

Western modernity of course meant bourgeois society, the overcoming of which was considered to be the major task of Marxism. Of course, the Japanese Marxists, especially members of the Japan Communist Party and, after their suppression, their intellectual successors, stood for the theory of two-stage revolution, an idea that what Japan needed immediately was a bourgeois-democratic revolution, not a socialist revolution which would only come into question as the second stage after the first had run its course. So long as they took this position, these Marxists had a target to attain, at least for the immediate future, in common with those who believed in the Weberian theory and sought to achieve Western modernity in Japan. The position of all-out disapproval for the Emperor system among the Marxists had affinity with the Weberians' downright criticism of those factors which prevented rationalism from growing in Oriental societies. Also the fact that both Marxists and Weberians suffered repression physically and psychologically from the political power of the Emperor system provided a real motivation for greater affinity between them. At the same time, the Marxists' motivations to end bourgeois society and their opposition to the "invasion of Asia by the Western imperialist powers" eventually had the effect of creating a kind of affinity between them and the exponents of the slogan of "overcoming modernity." Though equally upholding that slogan, the ultra-nationalists laid emphasis on aspects highly particular to Japan, while the Marxists were oriented towards the universalist idea of "liberation of mankind." This major difference cannot be overlooked at all. Some Marxists, however, used the phraseology of "overcoming modernity" which was warranted at that time and no more than the "language of slaves" which they felt forced to use to avoid suppression, in an attempt at giving expression to their opposition to what they defined as the aggression of the modern imperialism of the West, and to their Marxist proposition of overcoming bourgeois society in the direction leading to socialism. Others among them defected and sought to justify the Pacific War as the process of "overcoming modernity" serving the double purpose of the Asian nations' revolt against Western imperialism and the proletarian way of overcoming bourgeois society. In either of these cases, the Weberian point of view had some elements coming into conflict with the Marxist point of view. In this respect, the pseudo-Marxists or defected Marxists were to be brought into affinity with the ultra-nationalistic exponents of the idea of "overcoming modernity." It seemed to the defected Marxists that both German fascism and Soviet socialism represented an example of Western bourgeois modernity which had been overcome along the way of historical progress. In this context of thought, the German-Soviet Treaty of Non-aggression was regarded by them as providing substantial grounds for their idea. In the period prior to the war, genuine Marxists were put into jail, deprived of any opportunity of having their voices heard in society, and many others were forced into silence. Yet, as the fascist domination gathered strength, it was getting difficult for them even to remain silent until finally they had to prove constantly their loyalty to Japan by

some positive action. Now many of them sought to reconcile their theoretical satisfaction with the practical need to survive by shaking hands with the ultra-nationalistic exponents of the idea of "overcoming modernity" in jointly demanding that modern-Western (bourgeois) society be overcome. Therefore, until the post-war period when Marxism was granted citizenship in the intellectual world of this country, the problem of Weber versus Marx was still to unfold itself on a full scale.

II

The changes which took place in the intellectual climate of Japan following the defeat in war, first of all, took the form of reaction to what prevailed during the war with the slogan of "overcoming modernity" as its most representative feature. They were accelerated under the circumstances of occupation. The consequences of the lost war and occupation diffused the dichotomy of values between the feudal (pre-modern) and the modern. This was often identified with the dichotomy of values between the Western and the Japanese (traditional). It was now regarded as an impending need to create modern-Western social relations in defiance of the feudal or pre-modern Japanese tradition. The social scientists also found themselves in such a general atmosphere, but for them the question was not an easy one. Their concern was how they could analyse effectively the Japanese fascist system whose liquidation was an urgent need at that time. What an effective analysis meant here was that it could give a satisfactory answer to the questions of how the Japanese fascist system was able to dominate, why this process could not be checked, and why the pre-war Emperor system could enjoy so strong a unifying influence as would often pry into individual minds and stir up loyalty among the people. The Emperor's political prerogatives and the privileged organs surrounding the Throne, such as the Privy Council, House of Peers, etc., were abolished. The armed services were also abolished. The *zaibatsu* were dissolved. The large-scale landlordism was discontinued as the result of the land reform. Then, could it be expected that these changes would bring about Western modernity in Japan? Those political organs as well as the economic organs were so explicitly defective in Japan before the defeat that criticism was naturally concentrated on them. When this old machinery was destroyed, however, doubt grew strong as to whether the "revolution by law" based solely on the occupation policy could overcome the defects traditionally inherent in Japanese society. Consequently the social scientists began to direct stronger concern at the social relations and behaviour patterns which had supported and provided the social ground for the old structure and which had not been greatly changed even through the post-war "revolution by law." It was against this background of increasing concern that the name of Weber began to be found more often in the post-war works of Japanese social scientists. In going into the depth of characteristic features of Japanese society with an eye to critical analysis, it seemed

for the Japanese social scientists that the methods which Weber used for his analysis of Asian societies and one which he displayed in his *Economy and Society*, especially in his discussion on patrimonialism, would provide an effective weapon for them.

Mention must be made of three Japanese social scientists who were to play an important role in post-war Japan in making Weber's name familiar to almost all students of the social sciences and creating the tendency to understand Weber not in terms of the alternative to Marx but of the unification of the two. For not only was Weber's name made broadly known in Japan by these social scientists, but Japanese interpretations of him began to take a definite and characteristic shape through their original works. These social scientists are Hisao Ōtsuka, specializing in English economic history, Masao Maruyama in political science, and Takeyoshi Kawashima in the sociology of law. Although there are quite a few other names worth mentioning, for instance, in the field of sociology, there may be no gainsaying among the Japanese intellectuals that at least these three are indispensable to any discussion on social science of post-war Japan. Each of these three is different from the others in speciality, and Weber's influence upon them varies both in quantity and quality. Nevertheless the Weberian theory invariably provided one of the most important components for the core of their thought. The first of them, Ōtsuka came to attain his unique views in the field of his speciality, English economic history through perusing Weber's "The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism" and other works, along with various works of Marx, particularly his *Capital* (e. g., Volume I, Chapter 24). Although it is impossible now for me to give a brief and accurate account of Ōtsuka's views, I may point out a few characteristic features. Firstly, he sought to combine the Weberian theory of types with the Marxian theory of stages of development for the purpose of the most effective use of it in historical analysis. His idea of the pattern of development was an offshoot of such application of the theory of types. Secondly, he brought Marx's materialist view of history farther away from mere economic determinism in the narrow sense (Marx himself was not an economic determinist in this sense) and located it in the Weberian perspective of both interests (*Interessen*) and ideas (*Ideen*), thereby emphasizing the importance of ethos. It is true that he learned from Weber's "The Protestant Ethic" how emphasis should be laid on ethos, but his originality lies in the fact that he related it to Marx's theory of local communities. That is, he took note of the relationship between the most basic structure of social relations or communities and ethos. Thirdly, Ōtsuka always had, behind his analysis of European economic history, a strong motivation, namely, his concern in criticism of Japanese society, as seen in his occasional writings. In fact, even when he is writing on Europe, it is possible to read his criticism of Japanese society between the lines, though he of course does not deliberately intend to have his writing read in that way. Such motivation behind Ōtsuka shows that his position is similar in an aspect to that of Weber who was once

criticized as a case of Anglomania and who kept to his own mind his criticism of the circumstances of Germany after Lutheranism, when he, Weber, highly appreciated the role of religious sects in America in his "Protestant Sects and the Spirit of Capitalism" which he prepared after his visit to America in 1904.

During the war Masao Maruyama analysed the history of political thought in Japan under Tokugawa feudalism, under the influence of Weber's "Confucianism and Taoism," Hegel's *Philosophy of World History*, G. Lukács' *History and Class Consciousness*, and Marx's various works. His motivation here was intellectual resistance to the trend of the times as represented by the slogan of "overcoming modernity." In his method of unifying Marx's and Hegel's views of historical development and Weber's theory of types, Maruyama had something in common with Ōtsuka. Further, after the war, when the method of institutional criticism directed against the privileged political machinery lost validity as this machinery became extinct, Maruyama conducted studies in the psychology and behaviour of Japanese fascism which were taken by many Japanese intellectuals as extremely interesting. Here, too, like Ōtsuka who took note of the importance of ethos, Maruyama sought to bring to light the relationship between consciousness and society, multilaterally and out of his consistent concern, just as Weber did in his own fashion. If I may summarize Maruyama's consistent concern without a fear of over-simplification, it may be called an attempt at throwing light on what were the characteristics of those factors which prevented rationalism from growing in Japan. Since some of his important works have been translated into English,[3] it will be more useful for interested readers to refer directly to the book rather than trouble themselves with the details which I might be able to add here.

In the case of Kawashima, one of the pioneers in the study of the sociology of law in Japan, too, the influence of both Weber and Marx is remarkable. Attempting at clarifying the relations between law and social structure under the influence of Marx's *Capital* and *German Ideology*, Kawashima sought to inquire into the "familistic structure of Japanese society" by means of Weber's analysis of patrimonialism and "Sociology of Law" (Rechts Soziologie) as seen in *Economy and Society*.[4] At the same time, his *Theory of the Law of Property* shows that his discussion of the economic basis of the modern law of ownership was influenced by Marx and his analysis of legal consciousness by Weber, and that he sought to bring to light the characteristics of the modern law of ownership through unifying these two systems of thought.

3 Masao Maruyama, *Thought and Behaviour in Modern Japanese Politics*, London, Cambridge University Press, 1963. For a review of this book, see Ronald P. Dore in *New Left Review*, May-June, 1964.

4 These studies resulted in the publication of the well-known work: "*Nihon Shakai no Kazoku-teki Kōsei* (The Familistic Structure of Japanese Society), Tokyo, Gakusei-shobō, 1948.

None of these three social scientists is regarded in Japan as a Marxist. In spite of more important names who may come into discussion in so far as the influence of Marxism itself is concerned, I have taken up the three among others of similar trait, because there has been a greater tendency in Japan than in the West for Weber and Marx to mean a combination of methods rather than a choice between them, though no doubt they were sometimes alternative. The motivation underlying their adoption of the common method of combining Weber and Marx was their problem-consciousness as to how critically and effectively they could analyse Japan's traditional society. It is also noted that the method common to the three was characterized by a tendency to make effective the use of Weber with regard to the problem of historical development and by the greater attention they sought to pay to the problem of consciousness or ethos than Marxists did in their past studies. These three social scientists could develop such problem-consciousness and method out of their personal experience of Japanese fascism or, in other words, out of their sense of scholarly requirement for themselves to give an answer to the question of how such a system of fascism could come into being and dominate in Japan. It is therefore not fortuitous that their original studies had a strong influence on their contemporary social scientists or those of the present generations who could not yet become estranged from their personal experience of Japanese fascism in some way or other.

Emphasizing the strong relationship between Weber and Marx in the minds of the three mentioned above and other Japanese social scientists, Kazuhiko Sumiya from the same field has said that today we should talk about Marx-Weber instead of Max Weber and went so far as to bring such a tendency in Japan into contrast with the tendency in the United States to understand Weber in line with Parsons. The strong tendency towards the combination of Marx and Weber has never eliminated the problem of choosing between Marx and Weber for Japanese social scientists. It is obvious to all eyes that Weber is appreciably different from Marx in method and the underlying problem-consciousness. Those who were strongly influenced by Weber, including the three mentioned above, were criticized as "modernists" by Marxists. For these critics, the Weberians uphold bourgeois society as the supreme goal to attain while such society should be overcome in the course of movement towards socialism. Another criticism by Marxists is that the Weberians have underrated the importance of foundation (*Unterbau*) in materialism by laying emphasis on ethos or consciousness. It is not necessary to discuss here whether or not these criticisms are justifiable. Also since the phenomenon which Daniel Bell called "the end of ideology"[5] has begun to be generally recognized, Marxists' criticisms of Weberians are now weaker than they were before. Nevertheless the fact remains unchanged that, in combining the methods of Weber and Marx, incongruous factors in the two systems pose a difficult problem to solve. In other words, this is the problem

5 Daniel Bell, *The End of Ideology*, Grencoe, Ill., Free Press, 1960.

that if one seeks to rid oneself of Marx's monolithic monism in favour of a pluralist point of view, one might lose sight of the main characteristic of Marxism which concerns total and structural analysis of society. To see the same problem from Weber's side, the method of assuming various types from a variety of viewpoints may well lead into the danger of reducing one's study to the job of, in Weber's own phraseology, a "soulless specialist" which counts for nothing, as he once foresaw, and referred to as tragic. The requirements to free ourselves from monolithic monism and, at the same time, to grasp an understanding of society as a whole, leave to us, so to speak, a permanent *aporia*. I for one am of the opinion that we can expect to see social science develop from the unlimited efforts we make to solve the problem while always keeping in mind the tension between these two requirements.

While Marxists' criticisms of Weberians, or at least those Japanese social scientists who are strongly influenced by Weber, are waning, there is another tendency which is recently growing among critics of Weberians. Here the criticism originates in the sense of dissatisfaction that the Weberians are modernists or Occidentalists and excessively critical of the Japanese tradition. The Weberians are attacked by their critics because of their "theory of absence" with which they emphasize the absence from Japan of something that the West has had. This newly growing tendency is derived from the recent economic prosperity of Japan and the subsequent national confidence, aspiration for national prestige or at least popular feelings for regaining national identity which were remarkably weakened at the end of the war. These critics, who are still to accomplish sophisticated kinds of work in the field of social science, have a colouring of anti-intellectualism and only represent, for the present, a trend mainly among their colleagues and some historians. Because of their social basis as mentioned before, however, their future influence will be worth noticing. Strangely, the recent tendency among American scholars studying Japan to reassess Japan's "success" in quick modernization as an exception among non-Occidental societies has the effect of encouraging the critics of Weberians or Occidentalists who make efforts to emphasize the significance of tradition particular to Japan and to make a positive reassessment of Japan's past, including World War II. It is therefore presumable that such a new tendency in the criticism of Weberians may appear also among the Japanese social scientists who are generally susceptible to a new trend of social science in the West, as seen in the precedent that the ideology of Nazism was utilized to denounce liberalism and other ideas originating in the West during the fascist domination of Japan. In that case, a theory may be unfolded by placing more emphasis on the aspect of technology in society than on social structure or ethos which Weberians emphasize, a tendency among American social scientists who reassess Japan. Also in that case, a certain romantic factor in the motivations of those who seek to make a favourable reassessment of Japan's past may consequently be hidden under a highly sophisticated theorization of technology.

III

In the foregoing, I have roughly traced historical changes in the understanding of Weber in Japan in relation with the intellectual climate in the country. In the following, I may summarize some characteristics of the understanding of Weber in Japan. In trying to put my discussion in proper order, I must confess that, without reading as much as 10 per cent of the studies on Weber which have appeared so far, I have no other choice than that of giving a very brief survey. In fact, following the same line of thought as the three Japanese social scientists mentioned above who were influenced by Weber, I admit that my discussion will be inevitably centred around the ideas of the three. Further, the views expressed at the symposium to celebrate the centenary of Weber's birth, including many social scientists from the generations younger than the three, have provided important material for my consideration of the Japanese understanding of Weber. I am not confident, however, that my following characterization would be applicable to the majority of Japanese studies on Weber.

Firstly, mention may be made of a motivational approach which accentuates the Japanese understanding of Weber. For instance, Frau Weber's life of her husband has been translated into Japanese along with many works by him, and is read broadly among the Japanese intellectuals, who are substantially concerned in the historical background to, and the intentions of, Weber's works. Underlying their concern is perhaps their sympathy for Weber's ardent passion for the question of how to achieve greater rationality, including social structure and ethos, in Germany which had fallen behind other countries in modernization. In this sense, the image of Weber in Japan seems quite different from that in Germany where they seek to understand him against the historical background and regard him as a "Nationalist" who held controversial political opinions or occasionally as a chauvinistic imperialist. As far as I know, this seems to be proved by the atmosphere at the German Congress of Sociology[6] of 1964 held at Heidelberg and devoted to the theme of "Max Weber and Contemporary Sociology." This difference of emphasis between Japan and Germany is perhaps attributable partially to the distance between the two countries or to the fact that we in Japan are of course not so sensitive to the influence of the Weberian theory in Germany as the Germans are, nor need we be so. Also it is partially because of the role the Weberian theory played at the "fascist" stage in Japan.

Not a few Western, particularly American, scholars studying Japan relate Japanese intellectuals' strong concern in motivations of study, and the importance to Japanese social scientists of "problem-consciousness," a phrase which is difficult to translate into English, to their critical ideological position in relation to Japanese society or the Japanese government, and say that the Japanese social scientists are more critical of their own government or society than they need to be. Instead of arguing whether or not Japanese social

6 "Letter from Heidelberg: Storm over Max Weber," "*Encounter*, Aug., 1964, pp. 57–59.

scientists are really more critical than they need to be, I may simply point out that such an attitude had its own historical reason. In brief, it originates in their reflections on the great difficulty for them of defending their standing of objectivity amid their experience of fascism. Japanese fascism was not only such that it sought to control social science by means of physical force. It was characterized by a strong tendency that social scientists themselves were unwittingly incorporated into the value system of fascism by the overwhelming power of national consensus. This explains why, in understanding the idea of freedom from value (*Wertfreiheit*) which was introduced into Japan earliest among Weber's other theses, emphasis was eventually laid on the effort to reveal the value premise of the social scientist which is often hidden or left unconscious by himself. To achieve *freedom from value*, in Weber's sense, does not mean to lose value-judgment at all. As a matter of fact, it is impossible to lose value-judgment. If one claims that he has lost it, then actually one is unconscious of it, and dangerously has a misconception that one does not have it. On the contrary, *freedom from value* means that the social scientist is conscious of his own idea of value or value-judgment as much as possible and for himself controls the results of analysis obtaining from such value-judgment. Thus, while retaining values themselves, he gets rid of wishful thinking or any bias deriving from value-judgment in order to secure analysis free from values. In brief, Weber's idea of *freedom from value* is not to exclude the problem of values from the arena of social science. On the contrary, for Weber, the problem of value holds great importance in the following two senses. First, in setting up a problem or a viewpoint, a value standpoint is needed in the first place. Rather it is important to make free choice of the value standpoint needed to set up a viewpoint, to bring it into consciousness and to call it into question once again. The second concerns the meaning of values as an object of analysis. As seen already, while Weber had certain factors in common with Marx in that he recognized the situation of interests (*Interessenlage*) to be a propelling power of history, he, at the same time, emphasized the importance of idea, value or what he called the world image (*Weltbild*) which he thought determined the direction in which interests make history advance. This was the very reason that Weber was led to prepare that voluminous work, *The Sociology of Religion.* We have already noticed in the Japanese understanding of Weber the tendency to emphasize his strong concern in value as shown in *The Sociology of Religion.*

An example of the Japanese understanding of Weber's *freedom from value* and its strong influence on Japanese social scientists is the sense of discord felt among many of them concerning the recent studies of modernization based on the behavioral approach in the United States. As the behavioral approach, developing fast in the United States, has been extended to the field of comparative study, efforts have been made to find out a common criterion for modernization beyond the ideological difference between the capitalist and the socialist systems. Consequently, attempts are made to determine the degree of modernization by such objective measurements, easy

to quantify, as per capita income, literacy rate, and degree of exposure to mass communication media. It is true that these attempts may produce by far more objective results than ideological criteria can. But many social scientists in Japan entertain apprehensions that such studies of modernization underrate the importance of values, in the two aspects corresponding to the two meanings I referred to above with regard to the importance of value for Weber. One of these aspects is that, while the sociological conditions easy to quantify as mentioned above apparently provide an important factor to make history advance, the problem of value which plays the significant role in determining the direction of historical development is also worthy of note as an object of social science. The other aspect is the problem of the self-consciousness of social scientists themselves with respect to value-judgment. In the event that comparison is made through quantification, many of the Japanese social scientists have misgivings about the extent to which sufficient self-examination is made concerning the tendency to mistake figures obtained therefrom as if they had no value premise at all. That is, a criterion for comparison depends precisely on the viewpoint subject to the student's value-judgment. If the figures obtained are taken, without giving heed to this point, to have nothing to do with value-judgment, then it means little more than unconscious dependence on a given value-judgment or, for instance, a value-judgment prevailing in society. If Japanese social scientists are criticized because they appear too critical of their own society, they will have to mention the tendency of policy science among American social scientists and say that they are too uncritical of their own society and the values predominant therein.

In respect to the importance of motivation and value, I will point out the second characteristic in the Japanese understanding of Weber, i.e., the importance attached to irrational moments in the understanding of Weber's idea of increasing rationality in society. The symposium to celebrate the centenary of Weber's birth held in Japan chose the historical meaning of Weber in such specific fields as sociology, jurisprudence and history, for its first-day session and the common subject of increasing rationality (*Rationalisierung*) for the second day. I cannot afford to dwell upon the details of discussion, but, compared with American studies of modernization, our method of grasping the idea of increasing rationality had certain discernible characteristics. If bold simplification is allowed, though this may involve some risk, it can be said that when secularization is referred to as a criterion of modernization, presupposed is a single-tracked view of progress based on a gradual decrease in irrational elements in inverse proportion to a gradual increase in rational elements. On the contrary, in understanding Weber's increasing rationality, we attach importance to different types of religious prophet or the role which charisma plays in the course of increasing rationality. Also in considering the emergence of modern states or the modern legal order, we lay stress on the role of the idea of natural law as a charismatic sanctification of the logos. Such a tendency has its own historical reasons. In the case of

Japan where there has been a strong Confucian tradition of what Weber called rationalism of order, while religion played a minor part, the theory of evolution was adopted with little resistance from religion, but, at the same time, it strongly tended to get fused with another type of rationalism, namely, Confucian rationalism. Opposition to the idea of natural law in Japan took the form of emphasizing the judgment that this idea was irrational. Against such a historical background, it will be seen that the tendency to emphasize the irrational elements was to play in the course of increasing rationalism in Japan has good historical reasons. Some behavioralists who are concerned in the American theory of modernization tend to connect the single-tracked view of progress as mentioned above with Weber's theory of types and thereby hold that modernization represents the process of development from traditional domination through charismatic domination to legal domination. When I referred to the tendency in Japan in regard to a historical understanding of Weber's theory of types, this was not in the sense of such a single-tracked interpretation. On the contrary, what I mean is that it can only provide an effective means of understanding history in motion if Weber's types are taken not merely as fixed and immovable patterns but as mutually conflicting and yet interchangeable factors. To cite an example, in Weber's theory, "the contrast between the emergency character of charismatic leadership and the everyday routine of legal and traditional domination also has implication for the problem of succession."[7] In interpreting the American party system, Weber used the two types, namely the charisma of the President and the management of party organization,[8] and could reach a dynamic understanding of the historical development of the party system because he perceived the counteraction of those two types and the transformation of the charisma into an everyday routine and vice versa. An understanding of Weber along the single-track of development from charismatic to legal domination would merely provide a poor analysis of the dynamic process of history.

Here a tendency in the United States has been brought into contrast with another tendency in Japan. This is not to make a general comparison of social science between the two countries. In American social science, we must single out for instance the name of Robert Bellah[9] who studies Japan precisely following Weber's problem-consciousness and with emphasis on the problem of the value system. I would therefore hastily add here that I have taken up *one* tendency among American social scientists just for contrast,

7 R. Bendix, *Max Weber: an Intellectual Portrait,* New York, Doubleday & Co., 1962, p. 301.

8 Max Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft,* 4 Aufl., Tübingen, T.C.B. Mohr, 1956, S. 768.

9 Robert N. Bellah, *Tokugawa Religion; the Values of Pre-Industrial Japan,* Grencoe, Ill., Free Press, 1957. For the author's acceptance of Masao Maruyama's criticism of his error in applying Weber's idea of 'inner-world asceticism' (*innerweltliche Askese*) to Japanese history, see, Bellah, "Reflections of the Protestant Ethic Analogy in Asia," *Journal of Social Issues,* XIX, 1963.

thereby bringing into relief characteristics in Japanese interpretations of Weber. The reader is requested to remember that a general characterization of American social science or a comprehensive study of interpretations of Weber among American social scientists[10] is excluded from the subject of this article.

IV

Finally, I will mention some characteristics of Japanese social scientists' understanding of Max Weber's studies in Asian societies. One of the characteristics is that they attach importance to cultural peculiarity, or value system in relation to social structure. As I have pointed out at first, Weber did not treat Asian societies as a coherent entity. When he posed the question of why modern capitalism developed only in the West, he was logically led to the method of analysis devised to make clear the difference between Occident and non-Occident. Here, however, he does not take a single-tracked view, and is not in agreement with the view seen in some behavioralist studies on underdeveloped or developing countries today, that these areas fall behind the West simply in the degree of development. These latter studies, which compare "the degree of development" by means of quantifiable elements, are prone to give heed to cultural differences. Of course, if the cultural uniqueness of each region of the world is solely emphasized, it will end in cultural relativism or a total defiance of the possibility of making comparison between cultures. We are thereupon led to think that Weber's method is very effective when he makes multilateral comparison by means of various types such as emissary and exemplary prophecies, and acceptance of the world or rejection of the world, while clarifying the cultural particularities of India, China and other areas against their historical background. Especially, as stated in a previous section, here special attention is paid to the matter of world image or value system which is heavily bearing upon how a specific course of historical development is chosen.[11] For example, Japan today is distinct from other Asian societies in terms of material achievements such as per capita income, or rather she stands close to Occidental

10 For American studies of Weber, reference must be made to Talcott Parsons, *The Structure of Social Action; a Study in Social Theory with Special Reference to a Group of Recent European Writers,* Grencoe, Ill., Free Press, 1949 and the subsequent works by the same author, the Introduction in Hans H. Gerth and C. Write Mills, *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology,* New York, Oxford University Press, 1946 and the Introduction in Max Rheinstein, *Max Weber on Law in Economy and Sociology,* Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1954, and Reinhard Bendix, *Max Weber: an Intellectual Portrait,* New York, Doubleday and Co., 1962. Interpretations of Weber appearing in those works are different from the tendency in American social science referred to in the text and show an excellent understanding of him, from which we Japanese social scientists have learned many things, with the sense of familiarity.

11 Gerth and Mills give a brilliant account of Weber's theory by defining this to be "the theory of ideas and interests." (Gerth and Mills, pp. 63–64.)

societies. If, however, emphasis is laid on the aspect of value system, there is no denying that she has similar elements to those found in other Asian societies. One example is the tendency to identify the natural order with the social order. This of course does not mean to say that Japanese society is on the whole similar to other Asian societies. As Weber avoided so doing, so we also decline to think of a conclusive unit of Asian society.

What should come second in the Japanese understanding of Weber's views of Asian societies is that he relates his theory of these societies to that of Occidental societies. This may be a logical requirement in the light of what I have repeated above: Weber was conscious of the problem of why modern capitalism developed only in the Occident. I have found a characteristic of the Japanese understanding of Weber in this point of relating Asian and Occidental societies, because of the manner in which these two areas are related in Japanese minds. More specifically, for social scientists living in an Asian society such as Japan and who regard Weber's analysis of Asian societies as highly suggestive, the problem of Asian societies does not mean other people's concern, though it may be an affair of a remote country for social scientists in the West. Japanese scientists feel that they must face it as the problem of their own society. For Weber, too, the problem of the Asian was something more than an object chosen out of his intellectual curiosity from a remote area. It was rather an object which he needed in educing factors to explain why modern capitalism developed in the West, and not in other areas. In Weber's eyes, therefore, the factors, which were disadvantageous to the development of capitalism in Asian societies were not alien to the West either. Yet he thought that such factors preventive to modern capitalism were overcome under certain historical conditions in the West. We, social scientists living in one of the Asian societies, are required to discover and analyse the conditions needed for overcoming those preventive factors. As stated above, however, Japan today is, in the relative sense or compared with other societies in Asia, a highly developed country and in this respect she at the same time shares various difficulties with modern Western capitalism. Japanese social scientists accordingly cannot be self-complacent with the idea that as Japan is Westernized more thoroughly, all her difficulties will be removed. Investigation must be made as to what factors should be encouraged to grow and what difficulties be avoided in Japanese society. In considering this problem, it is remembered that Weber was never optimistic about the modern West, particularly about its future. Weber took note of a bright side of the modern West, for instance, in the contrast of Confucianism and puritanism, the spontaneous growth of capitalism in England and also the positive role of religious sects and clubs in America, while, at the same time, emphasized the possibility of bureaucratization as one phase of rationalization, or a thorough organization of life in society leading to irrational autocracy by organization. When he says, "While puritan wanted to be a man with a calling, we are compelled to be one," Weber is fearful of a tendency in the West that "a soulless specialist"

becomes a dominant image of man. Here lies the reason why Japanese social scientists are required, in analysing their own society, to bring into question his theory not only of Oriental but also of Occidental societies. The situation must be more or less the same in other Asian societies, too.

One thing this writer would like to remember here is that, living in Germany, a country which came later into modernization than other Western societies, Weber started his studies out of profound reflections on the problems of his own society. Apparently this enabled him both to criticize the intellectual tradition and social structure of Germany following Lutheranism and take a critical insight into the trend of development with the typical examples of modern society in the West. This point is formulated into theory in Weber's own sociology of religion, and is called by a young Japanese social scientist, namely, Hiroshi Orihara, the Weberian theory on marginal areas. It is summarized in Weber's writing, when he says: "Rarely have entirely new religious conceptions originated in the respective centers of rational cultures." "To be sure this never occurred without the influence and impact of a neighboring rational civilization." For this reason Weber describes as follows: "... prerequisite to new religious conceptions is that man must not yet have unlearned how to face the course of the world with questions of his own. Precisely the man distant from the great culture centers has cause to do so when their influence begins to affect or threaten his central interests." Thus, Weber concludes as follows: "The possibility of questioning the meaning of the world presupposes the capacity to be astonished about the course of events."[12]

It is evident that Weber is not setting forth geographical determinism. What comes into question here is not merely whether or not a society is far away from the centre of culture but the process of creating distance in consciousness which takes place because the society is far away from the centre of rational culture, and which, when it begins to question the meaning of world affairs once again through experiencing cultural contact and re-examining both old tradition and newly experienced culture, helps to establish, in Weber's phraseology, the Archimedean point and to open the way for the possibility of originally determining its attitude towards the meaning of the world, free from established interpretations about the world. This process could take place also within the same area as seen in the case of the origin of "proletarian or pariah intellectualism" typified by Weber.

The theory to which Weber gave birth by bringing anew Western society into consideration, while living in a comparatively backward area among Western societies and deliberately placing himself at some distance from the West, has seemed indefinitely suggestive to Japanese social scientists who live in a country far away from the centre of the West, where Westernization is still going on fast, and requires them to ask fundamental questions once again about their tradition and the culture of Western society with a view

12 The translation of the quotations follow Hans H. Gerth and Don Mertindale trans. and eds., *Ancient Judaism,* Grencoe, Ill., Free Press, 1952.

to arriving at new interpretations of them. It is against such a background that Japanese interpretations of Weber came into being with those characteristics which I have set forth in the foregoing sections of this article. The efforts of these Japanese social scientists may not always have been fruitful in the past. It may be infinitely far off in the future that we can talk about success in our efforts. Even a modest fruit of such efforts, however, can be, as this writer sincerely hopes, reinterpreted, and progress made through interchange with social scientists in other societies.