

# THE ROLE OF MARXISM IN JAPAN

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## I. MARXISM IN THE MEIJI PERIOD

It was at the beginning of the twentieth century that there emerged among the Japanese men who accepted the thought of Marx, and that Marxism first took root in Japan. But Marxism did not extend its roots in Japanese society unhampered. Its growth in Japan was a complicated, circuitous process fraught with hardships. And the role that Marxism has played in the modern history of Japan, the balance sheet of its contributions to Japanese politics and culture, has been conditioned by that process of complications and vicissitudes.

Japanese capitalism proceeded to develop at a rapid pace after the Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895), but when serious social inequality resulted from this capitalistic development, intellectuals appeared who, fixing their attention on this consequence and seeking a means to establish social justice, were deeply interested in socialism. In 1897 an Association for the Study of Socialism (Shakai-shugi kenkyūkai 社會主義研究會) with the objectives of studying "the principles of socialism and the advisability of their application in Japan" was established by Murai Tomoyoshi 村井知至, Abe Isoo 安部磯雄, Kinoshita Naoe (Shōkō) 木下尚江, Katayama Sen 片山潛, Kōtoku Denjirō (Shūsui) 幸徳傳次郎 and others, and study of various trends in Western socialism was begun. The members of the society were democrats but as yet not socialists. All were Christian Humanists except Kōtoku who was a spokesman of the left wing in the Popular Rights Movement. In the same year Takano Fusatarō 高野房太郎, Katayama Sen and others formed the Association for the Establishment of Labour Unions (Rōdō kumiai kiseikai 勞働組合期成會) under whose guidance a succession of unions was established and the labour movement begun. The standpoint of Takano and Katayama, however, was that of Reformism, and they aimed only at fostering industrial progress and harmony between capital and labour through labour unions; under their leadership the unions possessed no radical character. In 1900, however,

the government, in order to put all mass activities under police control, enacted and put into effect the Chian keisatsu hō 治安警察法 (Public Safety and Police Law) and "destroyed" the infant unions "as if shattering something with a hammer."<sup>1</sup> In the early part of 1900, slightly prior to the enforcement of the Public Safety and Police Law, the Association for the Study of Socialism in addition to adding new members, among them Sakai Toshihiko (Kosen) 堺利彦, and revising its name to the Socialist Society (Shakai-shugi kyōkai 社會主義協會), changed its character and became a group "with the objective of putting socialism into practice in Japan." This indicates that those who had gathered in the Association for the Study of Socialism had begun to swing to the Socialist viewpoint, but does not mean that they had as yet definitely become socialists. It was with the enactment of the Public Safety and Police Law that they clearly assumed the posture of socialists. That law was a great shock to the members of the Socialist Society. To these men, deeply concerned with the wretched circumstances of the workers and seeking the abolition of social inequality, this law seemed to close off any prospect for the resolution of these problems. Pressed to decide on a yes or no position towards a state and society which barred the possibility of democratic reform, they had to elect to take the position of socialists in order to stand up to the authority of the state. In other words, the democratic intellectuals who made up the Socialist Society, rather than having arrived at the standpoint of socialism through the internal evolution of their democratic thought, became "premature" socialists through the force of circumstance.

In this manner, with the year 1900 marking the epoch, the Socialist Movement was begun, and in 1901 the Shakai minshutō 社會民主黨 (Social Democratic Party) was formed by a group of members of the Socialist Society. But this party was banned and forced to dissolve as soon as it was formed. The Public Safety and Police Law impelled the inception of the Socialist Movement but at the same time tore away the Movement's legal rights to political activity. Thus at the outset, the Socialist Movement, unable to develop a base in an organized mass movement, was compelled to confine itself to propaganda and enlightenment activities as a social thought movement comprised of but a few intellectuals. But despite such difficult conditions, from 1901 onward these few socialist intellectuals continued to vigorously expand their activities in such ways

1. Ōkōchi Kazuo 大河内一男, "Nihon no shakai-shugi" 日本の社會主義, in Ōkōchi ed., *Shakai-shugi* 社會主義 (Socialism), Gendai Nihon shisō taikai 現代日本思想大系 (Outline of Japanese Modern Thoughts), Vol. 15, Tokyo, Chikuma-shobō, 1963, p. 14.

as co-operating with the democrats, speaking out publicly in opposition to the approaching war with Russia (1904-1905), and grappling with the problem of universal suffrage. And they did not cease their courageous cries of opposition to the war until its end.

In the thought of the Meiji socialists flowed currents of various socialist trends. They adopted these various socialist trends in seeking to elucidate the facts of social inequality and in order to overcome the "gap between rich and poor" which destroys the harmony between man and nature. And in their socialist thought Marxism played an important role. Kōtoku and Sakai, in particular, became Marxists through developing their own thought. Of course, theirs was a Marxism informed with Positivism and Economism, under the influence of the Second International, and they accepted only such aspects of the thought of Marx as the theory of surplus value, the class struggle thesis, and the materialist view of history (as understood in Economism). In the Japan of those times the intellectual conditions for grasping Marxism in its over-all living unity did not exist.

With the capture of the masses by the "young" and "vivid" (to borrow Lenin's phrases) capitalism of a Japan victorious in its war with Russia and with the beginning of the accommodation of the people on their own accord to the *Tennōsei* 天皇制 (Emperor System) state, the socialists found themselves isolated from the mass of the people. The socialist group had bifurcated into Marxists and Christian Socialists, and in the face of the isolation of the socialists, the Christian Socialists ended up severing completely their connexion with the Movement. Under such conditions, when the government adopted a somewhat more conciliatory policy, the Marxian socialists formed the Nihon Shakaitō 日本社會黨 (Japan Socialist Party) in 1906, but this party in its Second Convention in the following year confronted a serious crisis of disintegration arising from a division of opinion regarding the tactical question of "parliamentary policy" or "direct action." Kōtoku Denjirō, who had watched the 1905 Russian revolution closely, advocated "direct action," on the model of the Socialist Revolutionaries in Russia. But by no means was he here abandoning Marxism and opposing the Second International. Rather, perceiving clearly that the parliamentary emphasis policy of the mainstream of the Second International was a degeneration into Reformism, he insisted on "direct action" for the sake of accomplishing the revolution.<sup>2</sup> As against Katayama Sen who had forgotten the revolution

<sup>2</sup> Refer to Asukai Masamichi 飛鳥井雅道, "Meiji shakai-shugi no kiketsu" 明治社會主義の歸結 (Consequences of the Socialism in the Meiji Era), *Shisō* 思想, No. 524 (Feb., 1963).

and fallen into Reformism, Kōtoku urged the alternative of revolution to reform. In opposition to this, the Katayama faction, confusing Socialism with Reformism and shot through to the last degree with legalism, insisted that the party should adopt the "parliamentary policy." The majority of the Japan Socialist Party, beginning with Sakai Toshihiko, supported Kōtoku's "direct action" thesis. The younger generation of socialists who supported Kōtoku, confused his "direct action" thesis with anarchism, and Kōtoku could not present any theoretical distinction between the two to dispel this confusion but was himself inclined towards anarchism. In 1910, he was engulfed in the *Taigyaku jiken* 大逆事件 (Great Treason Case) and was executed in the following year.

As a result of the Great Treason Case the Meiji Socialist Movement ended its ten-year history in the depths of a wretched defeat. Katayama, who had confused Reformism with Socialism and had preached an extremely idealistic, optimistic view, took refuge in America in obscurity. Because Katayama perceived the labour union movement as inherently "socialist," when the Yūaikai 友愛會 (Friendly Society) was formed under the sponsorship of the business world, he was not only unable to gain influence in it, but was at a loss as to what to do to gain influence. In this manner the Socialist Movement collapsed and the socialists, scattered as they were, had to endure a harsh "winter era" in obscurity. But the younger generation of socialists who inherited Kōtoku's revolutionary feelings, came more and more to regard anarchism and the revolutionary spirit in the same light, and anarchism penetrated deeply among the socialists. In this period, those who, while having inherited Kōtoku's revolutionary spirit—and consequently having been influenced by anarchism—held fast to the Marxist standpoint were Sakai Toshihiko and the younger Yamakawa Hitoshi 山川均 only. The Marxism that had taken root in Japan in 1900 barely escaped extinction thanks to Sakai and Yamakawa.

Thus the Marxian Socialism of the Meiji era, after having momentarily burned brightly in Kōtoku Denjirō, its torchbearer, left but a legacy of anarchism and itself struggled on in the midst of ruin. This was a consequence of the fact that Meiji socialism was not formed through the internal evolution of democratic thought but was, so to speak, a "premature" socialism established under the force of circumstance. Those who accepted Marxism were unable to analyse Japanese society and the existence of the Japanese from the standpoint of Marxism, and hence were unable to shed light on Japanese society and culture and the outlook for change therein. Or rather, because the Marxian socialists, as a result of their being, so to speak, in the position of outsiders, perceived Japan's

modernization as a development external to and unconnected with themselves, they did not sense the necessity of scientifically analysing the whole of reality. Not only did the Marxian socialists not leave behind them any creative work of their own, but they were unable to join in the efforts of the middle-class intellectuals who were, from the position of insiders, directing criticism against the modernization of Japan and who shared a common tendency in this regard with the Marxian socialists; these facts probably bore on the Marxian socialists' inability to avoid becoming isolated from the popular temper of the times in the period after the Russo-Japanese War.

## II. THE TAISHŌ DEMOCRACY MOVEMENT AND MARXISM

That Meiji socialism as represented by Kōtoku Denjirō proceeded along the path towards ruin was the effect of the socialists' isolation from the masses due to the masses' increasingly affirmative attitude towards the public order of the Emperor System state after the Russo-Japanese War.

From the Meiji Restoration (1868) onward, the country's leaders strove to provide the Emperor System with the status of an absolute monarch endowed with political and spiritual authority, and in 1889 the structure of the Emperor System state was established. Simultaneously, however, the Meiji leaders faced the urgent necessity of channelling the energy of the people and accelerating the modernization of Japan. Accordingly, in establishing the structure of the state, the drafters of the Constitution had to systematically accommodate two contradictory objectives: maintaining real, absolute control of the powers of the state by means of the symbol of the Emperor; and guaranteeing to all of the people rights to freedom of action. This problem was resolved in two ways: first, by substituting for the religious doctrine of equality before God and the democratic doctrine of equality before the law, the doctrine of *ikkun bammin* 一君萬民 or "one ruler and the whole people" in which all of the people were to be equal before the Emperor as an absolute being, making the Emperor the final arbiter of the rights and responsibilities of the people; and second, by enabling every subject to achieve any status whatsoever, except that of Emperor, on the basis of ability. In this way the structure of the Emperor System state was both a system which ruled not only the actions of the people but the inner reaches of their spirits as well, and at the same time a system in which the powers of the Emperor were completely divided and delegated

to those in charge of the apparatus of the state. In this sense it was an ambiguous system of constitutional monarchy as well, in which the power and authority of the Emperor were symbolic and limited by constitution and laws. However, in so far as spiritual authority and political power are inseparably joined in the Emperor, and politics and ethics, public and private, are diffusely united in the Emperor, laws acquire the force of moral imperatives, while the will of authority is made a moral imperative and thrust upon the people as possessing, in itself, legal significance.

In such a system, where the state arrogates to itself the possession of all substantial values (goodness, truth, etc.), the authorities of the state are unable to recognize formally and universally valid standards that apply to themselves as well. The reverse side of the state's intervention in all of the private spheres of the life of the people is that the state itself comes to be permeated with private interests, and the activities of the state depart from the universal ethical standards which transcend it.

Thus the Emperor System state, in spite of possessing aspects of constitutional monarchy, precluded the functioning of a universal conscience as the mediating agency of the personal liberties of the people and obstructed the attainment by the individual of the modern citizen's self-consciousness as the bearer of political responsibilities of the state. The masses, who had previously been excluded from the concept of the state, were blocked from the path of developing a modern national consciousness through the destruction of traditional social consciousness, and were impregnated with the notion of the national entity (*kokutai* 國體); as a result, the state came to appear as the direct extension of the interests of the family and village. Under such a system the social and economic confrontations of the capitalists and the workers, and of the landlords and the tenants, appeared only as private disputes, and were always transformed and mitigated by the system. In addition, the masses came to project the self on to the state and to find psychological compensation in the external expansion of the state for the restriction of their liberties as citizens. In this way, through the victory in the Russo-Japanese War, the masses moved towards accepting nationalism, and an attitude of worship of the Emperor as the centre of the world and history took deep root among them. In a sense this was the period of the Emperor System state's consummation.

Needless to say, the making of the Emperor into an absolute being conflicted with rational thought. The Emperor System state was therefore

all the more careful to devise preventive measures against criticism, and scepticism, regarding the Emperor. The Great Treason Case engraved in the hearts of the people the fearfulness of the oppression of anti-system outsiders. However, the affair showed the limits of the Emperor System that had tried to win the assent of the people. The consummation of the Emperor System simultaneously exposed its limits.

After the Great Treason Case, the latent schism and irresponsibility of the ruling group became clear to the masses of the people, a movement for defending the constitutionalism developed, and the cabinet was toppled by a popular movement (1913). This movement, from the middle of the First World War, took the form of a social thought movement of democracy (*Mimpon-shugi* 民本主義) and evolved in the post-war period into a second movement for defending the constitutionalism and for universal suffrage. The Taishō period was an era in which Japanese society and culture stood at a crucial juncture of conversion.

Standing at the centre of the *Mimpon-shugi* movement was Yoshino Sakuzō 吉野作造 who tried to resolve the conflict between the absolutist, autocratic trends of state power and the energy of the people by making thoroughly effective the constitutional monarchy aspects of the Emperor System state. When, in the *Mimpon-shugi* movement, political science began to separate from the "Emperor System state science," economics also began to become independent of state science. When the state, in the name of the Emperor, laid claim to the possession of the substantive values of truth, virtue, and beauty, scholarship, especially history and social science, could not exist so long as it depended on the values of the "national entity" (*kokutai*) and, under the Emperor System, it was difficult for historians and social scientists even to adopt the double truth theory<sup>8</sup> that had been adopted in the late Middle Ages in Europe. Hitherto scholarship had been nothing but state science which served the authority of the state. The driving forces behind this process of conversion of scholarly consciousness under the *Mimpon-shugi* movement were the activities of the Marxists, Yamakawa Hitoshi and Sakai Toshihiko. Rousing themselves from the obscurity of the "winter period" and

<sup>8</sup> The theory of double truth emerged among philosophers in Western Europe of the 13th and 14th centuries as a means for resolving the opposition and contradiction between the rational cognition of nature and the explanation of nature as presented in the theology of the Church. For instance, according to the philosophy of Aristotle which had been widely accepted through the translations and commentaries of Averroës (1126-1198), time and the cosmos are limitless and eternal, but according to Church theology both time and the cosmos are limited. Philosophers accepted simultaneously these two contradictory conclusions as truth.

“raising a banner” of sharp criticism of the bourgeois limits of *Mimpon-shugi* thought as well as of compromise with power, they aroused widespread interest in Marxism among intellectuals and spurred social science to independence of state science. For example, the humanistic economist, Kawakami Hajime 河上肇, under the pressure of the criticisms of Sakai *et al.*, came to be sympathetic to Marxian economics. The younger intellectuals who had gathered at the feet of Yoshino and Kawakami likewise approached Marxism, which penetrated even to the rostrums of the universities.

The Russian Revolution stimulated greatly the growth of the Socialist Movement, creating many new socialist groups. Yamakawa and Sakai watched the Russian revolutionary movement and Lenin’s activities via reports from the Japanese socialist group in America, centring around Katayama Sen, and they took a line supporting Bolshevism and exerted themselves in proselytizing Marxism. In 1919, the labour movement, again under the stimulus of the Russian Revolution as well as that of the Rice Riots, showed an epochal advance with the leftist swing of Yūaikai, which had been established with anti-socialism aims and labour-management co-operation. At this time it was anarcho-syndicalism with Ōsugi Sakae 大杉榮 at the core, which held the reins of leadership in the labour movement; but at the height of anarcho-syndicalism’s potency the influence of Bolshevism increased and the struggle between the two factions for leadership in the labour movement became acute (1921). Through this struggle Japanese Marxism began to depart from the influence of anarchism that dated back to Kōtoku Denjirō. In 1921 Yamakawa wrote a famous treatise entitled “Musan kaikyū undō no hōkō tenkan” 無産階級運動の方向轉換 (The Change in the Direction of the Proletarian Movement), in which he summarized the experience of the Japanese socialist movement, accurately assessing its weaknesses, and emphasizing the necessity for a political struggle which would “confront bourgeois politics with proletarian politics.” This treatise had a great influence on the socialist and labour movements, and swiftly drove anarcho-syndicalism into decline. The article was published immediately after the establishment of the Japan Communist Party, but though Yamakawa was a leading member of the party, the article was not based on a resolution of the party but was Yamakawa’s own individual effort to give to the policy adopted by the third plenary assembly of the Comintern a definite form fitting the circumstances of Japan. It was aimed at Marxists who were still isolated from the masses of the people and adhered to a sectarian character, and showed the line which



would overcome the previous deficiencies of the movement. It sought to embody a policy of political struggle and the proletarianization of the movement in Japan by Japanese Marxists themselves, on the model of the international Communist movement. In this sense the article was highly significant as having set Japanese Marxism on the road towards overcoming the deficiencies of Meiji Marxism and achieving concrete development.

Yamakawa went on through a meticulous analysis of the political situation of the times, to pursue the question of the possibility of a legal party as a special form of a "united front" of workers and peasants and to develop the thesis of a "single proletarian party," establishing an organizational theory known as "Yamakawa-ism." Around that time the Japan Communist Party disbanded due to organizational flaws (1924). The Communist Party had been hastily formed, based on a group of the members of the Japanese representatives to the Far East People's Convention, held in 1922 at Moscow, at the instigation of the Comintern, which viewed seriously Japanese imperialism's war of intervention in the Soviet Revolution. Thus the Japan Communist Party was not born amidst a mass struggle but was created by "sectarian methods,"<sup>4</sup> from the *potpourri* of several socialist groups with those still under the influence of anarchism as the nucleus. Yamakawa and Sakai had joined reluctantly at the urging of younger men "carried away by the delusion that the revolution was imminent in Japan too."<sup>5</sup> Thus the Communist Party, lacking organic cohesion with the masses, accepting the principles of communism in extremely idealistic fashion, failing to extricate itself from the limits of a social thought group chiefly concerned with the propagation of those principles, and unable internally to achieve ideological and organizational unity, was confined to "a conspiratorial existence"<sup>6</sup> dragging its policies about and thrusting them upon the mass groups from the outside. The inevitability of the party's dissolution lay in such defects as these. Eventually the party was rehabilitated at the urging of the Comintern (1926), but neither Yamakawa nor Sakai joined again.

Around the time when the rehabilitation of the Japan Communist

4 Watanabe Masanosuke 渡邊政之輔, "Waga kuni musan kaikyū undō no hatten to tōmen no mondai" 我國無産階級運動の發展と當面の問題 (The Development and Urgent Problems of the Proletariat Class Movement in Japan), *Marukusu-shugi* マルクス主義, Feb., 1928, p. 19.

5 Arahata Kansō 荒畑寒村, *Sa no memmen* 左の面々 (A Profile of the Left-wing), Tokyo, Hayakawa-shobō, 1951, p. 171.

6 Shinobu Seizaburō 信夫清三郎, *Taishō seiji shi* 大正政治史 (Political History of the Taishō Era), Vol. 3, Tokyo, Nihonhyōron-shinsha, 1964, p. 1020.

Party was proceeding, Fukumoto Kazuo 福本和夫, who had been doing research on Karl Korsch, Georg Lukács, and Rosa Luxemburg in addition to studying Lenin's organizational theory as a foreign student in Germany and France, returned to Japan bringing a new interpretation of Marxism which strongly attracted younger intellectuals, especially college students. In no time, Fukumoto stepped into the status of the leading Marxist theoretician, his organizational theory was accepted by the reconstructed Communist Party as its guiding theory, and he became one of the top leaders of the party. With Fukumoto the Marxism of Japan's Communist Party came into existence, but none the less the defects that had plagued the party prior to dissolution were intensified by Fukumoto-ism rather than overcome.

### III. THE JAPAN COMMUNIST PARTY AND MARXISM

Fukumoto educed from Lenin's *What Is To Be Done?* the proposition that "it is necessary to divide before uniting"; and, perceiving this to be the "Marxist principle of the uniting of the proletariat," emphasized the necessity of a "theoretical struggle" and advocated that differences of opinion be introduced into organizational disputes in order to form a group which preserved the authenticity of "class consciousness." This approach accorded to the proletariat the status that the "absolute spirit" held in Hegel's philosophy, and regarded the materialist dialectic method as a mode of the self-consciousness of the proletariat; the approach was the consequence of a strongly dogmatic position based on a view of class consciousness which assumed that possessing the materialist dialectic method was symptomatic of holding the position of the revolutionary proletariat. Fukumoto's "theoretical struggle" aimed at the elimination of Yamakawa-ism. By taking Fukumoto-ism as its guiding theory, the Communist Party cut itself off from the historical experience of Japan's socialist movement and held fast to the sectarian predisposition which Yamakawa had been trying to overcome. Moreover, just when, with the advent of universal manhood suffrage, the political concentration of the progressive forces had become an urgent problem, the party, through the "divide-unite" thesis, brought serious disunity into the midst of all the mass organizations with democratic tendencies. In 1927 the Comintern released a "Thesis relating to Japan" which assigned to the Communist Party the duty of overthrowing the "monarchy," and criticized both Yamakawa-ism and Fukumoto-ism. It censured Fukumoto-ism particularly severely for making the party into "a group of personalities

with a Marxist outlook'"; and for isolating it from the masses. The party abandoned Fukumoto-ism and accepted the Comintern's Theses unconditionally, though not as a criticism of its sectarian predispositions but as a matter regarding tactics. Leaving unchanged the dogmatic intellectual basis that underlay its sectarianism, the party made the authority of the Comintern absolute, and intensified its characteristic demeanor in accepting the Comintern's interpretations as law. Thereafter as well, the Communist Party's autistic tendencies towards sectarianism and dogmatism continued to increase, unabated and unchanged. Thus due to these tendencies the Communist Party, rather than promoting the democratic movement after 1910, ended up acting as a faction retarding and disorganizing the movement, carrying out a role impeding the possibility of resolving the crisis of Japanese society in a progressive direction. Isolated from the masses and under unsparing oppression, the party eventually was driven into a state of near annihilation.

However, the "theoretical struggle" of Fukumoto-ism, despite all its faults, demonstrated to the Japanese intellectual world at large that Marxism was a single general system possessing internal unity, and was of major significance in paving the way for renovation in Japanese culture and scholarship. After 1910, the appreciation of Western scholarship and thought among Japanese intellectuals advanced remarkably, and their intellectual life became increasingly Westernized. But under the Emperor System it was nearly impossible to establish modern scholarship and to carry out rational thought, and so the education of the intellectuals was without roots in reality. Moreover, the very Western scholarship itself upon which the intellectuals depended had become compartmentalized and specialized since the end of the nineteenth century and had lost sight of reality in its entirety. Consequently, in the midst of the social upheavals after the end of the Taishō period, the young intellectuals became sensitized to the estrangement from reality of their intellectual life and, feeling strongly the necessity to revolutionize scholarship and culture and to link these with real problems, they directed their interest towards Marxism. However, Marxism in the form represented by Yamakawa had yet to show clearly any methodological basis for revolutionizing culture and scholarship. It was in such a situation that Fukumoto made his appearance. And it was through Fukumoto's attacks against the Yamakawa group that Marxism first came to be understood as a method for grasping social reality in its over-all activity, and as a system established on the internal unity of theory and practice. The theory and methodology of Marxism which Fukumoto set forth were

therefore all the more deeply attractive, in scholarly terms, to the younger intellectuals. They found in Marxism a philosophy which permitted the internal linking of scholarship and culture with reality. Through the "theoretical struggle," not only did those who were already Marxists deepen their understanding of Marxism, but many younger intellectuals and students either were converted to or strongly influenced by Marxism, whose influence spread through every sphere of culture, from philosophy and the natural sciences to literature and art. And, in this process, Soviet Marxism was eagerly absorbed, understanding of its system and methods was diffused, and the level of that understanding was raised.

As the methodological understanding of Marxism advanced, from about 1917 onward, the Marxists began to attempt scientific analysis of the structure of Japanese capitalism and the revolutionary process in the Meiji Restoration, and thence to move towards trying to grasp Japan's modern society in its entirety. This move was intimately connected with the clarification of various practical questions relating to revolutionary strategy about which the Communist Party, ever since its reconstruction, had been debating with the Rōnōha 勞農派 (Worker-Farmer faction) centred around Yamakawa Hitoshi. It first began among the Marxists of the Communist Party and developed through their debate with the "Worker-Farmer faction." Then, when the party accepted the "'27 Theses" and elevated the overthrow of the Emperor System to the forefront of its objectives, the understanding in over-all terms of the Emperor System state from its economic basis became of even greater practical significance. The research results of the Marxists of the Communist Party were published in *Nihon shihon-shugi hattatsushi kōza* 日本資本主義發達史講座 (Lectures on the History of the Development of Japanese Capitalism) (1923-33) and with their publication the controversy broadened between the "Worker-Farmer faction" and the Kōzaha 講座派 (Lectures faction), over the interpretation in the *Lectures* which viewed "semi-feudalism" as the foundation of the Emperor System. (The Japan Communist Party had been destroyed in 1933.) This dispute continued until its suspension was compelled by the oppression of 1937. While no sufficiently accurate over-all view of modern Japanese society was developed even through this long-continued dispute, in contrast to the "Worker-Farmer faction" which, in the fashion of Economism, interpreted the development of Japanese capitalism in terms of the commodity circulation process and evinced no general view of Japanese society, the Communist Party and the "Lectures faction" focused on the structure

of the Emperor System state, and strove more fully than the Worker-Farmer faction to attain an over-all conception of the relationships between the basis and superstructure of Japanese society. Hence the Communist Party's interpretation of the character of modern Japanese society and history was much more pervasive among the intellectuals than that of the Worker-Farmer faction.

It was in this manner, beginning with the efforts of the Marxists to gain an over-all view of society, that "social science" developed in Japan. The Emperor System was a ruling structure supported by a general ideology with a powerful though irrational unity. Consequently, to attain a scientific grasp of Japanese society under the Emperor System state was possible only when one assumed a position fundamentally denying the Emperor System, a position based on Marxism as a coherent ideology having both system and method. That in Japan a social science which conceived of society in scientific terms could be established was due precisely to Marxism and the Communist Party. It is on this account that the term "social science" has come to mean Marxism.

From 1927 on Marxism, under the leadership and influence of the Communist Party, again advanced into philosophy, literature, and all spheres of scholarship and culture, making an enormous impact on the Japanese intellectual world, an impact deeply engraved in the souls of the intellectuals. The intellectual world of Japan owing its beginnings to Marxism more than anything else, learned to utilize Marxism not only to apprehend social reality in such separate categories as economics, law, politics, and ethics, but also to provide a method to grasp reality in all its inner relationships. Moreover, this was a method which demanded social responsibility on the part of the intellectuals. The Marxists, insisting on the "class character" of all scholarship and culture and expounding the view that only from the position of the proletariat was an over-all grasp of reality possible and the truth and universality of scholarship and culture guaranteed, insisted, to the intellectuals, that the "spirit of party" was essential for those who engaged in scholarship and culture. Faced with this challenge from Marxism, the intellectuals could not help but become aware of the interrelationships of scholarship and culture with society and politics. Those most affected by the impact of Marxism were the men of letters. It was without the patronage of the state, nay rather with an attitude of contempt for the facts of politics and economics, that they developed their characteristic beliefs and attitudes. Being profoundly affected, they had to pursue the responsibility of literature to social reality. The philosophers, too, who concentrated

their attention on the inner world, came to direct their reflections towards history and society, and to pursue the logic of human existence in the midst of historical reality. In this manner, it was through Marxism that even those who opposed the Marxist standpoint first learned the personal responsibility of man towards ideas, and that liberals became aware of their liberalism. So, it was through this impact of Marxism that the intellectual world of Japan was able to attain an inner understanding of modern Western culture and that it was able to break through the provincialism of Japanese culture and come to a realization of itself in the midst of world history.

However, the Marxism which had made such an impact on the intellectual world was adopted by the Marxists themselves in an extremely idealistic manner. It was a philosophy through which the revolutionary intellectuals sought an escape from the consciousness of their daily existence; its theory was deified because of its connexion with the authority of the Comintern; and as Marxism was a general system, its theory was apt to be identified with reality. It was not something which, proceeding via an analysis of the essence of the phenomena that Japan's intellectuals and masses perceived, arrived at a concrete understanding of the phenomena. It was, rather, the same method of thought prevalent in the Communist Party since Fukumoto-ism of defining phenomena from given "essential" concepts and principles. Consequently, to believe that the decisions of the Comintern and the party did not accord with the reality one perceived was considered "counter-revolutionary." The compliance of scientists and men of letters with the Party's political policies was demanded in the name of "partisanship" and "the priority of politics," and their creative activities were repressed. As a result, the Marxists sensed a rift between theory and their actual experience, in order to repair which they had no choice but to repress themselves.

The Marxists had regarded even martyrdom as necessary for the showdown with the Emperor System. However, after 1934, when the party had become isolated from the masses—which had begun to be organized on the side of nationalism after the dissolution under severe oppression of the democratic movement that had dated from the 1910's—large numbers of Marxists appeared who, harbouring misgivings about confronting the Emperor System without the support of the masses, were converted away from Marxism. This stemmed from the fact that they had adopted Marxism as an escape from the exigencies of their daily life and that the gap between theory and experience was merely

papered over rather than mended. Those converts who were strongly aware of their estrangement from the masses became nationalists, and those who recognized the weakness of their own independent thought became existentialists. Existentialism in Japan came into being as a result of these "conversions." And the "converts" were left with deep scars on their consciences.

Despite the conversions of a great many party members, the Communist Party remained thoroughly unconverted and maintained its opposition to the Emperor System. And so those intellectuals who sought liberty and progress commonly looked to the impersonal party as to the polestar in order to determine their position in the midst of the march of Fascism. The Party, by the purity and constancy of its faith in Marxism, continued to possess an authority for the younger intellectuals in particular, like that of the Emperor for the masses. That even after the signing of the Japanese-German anti-Comintern Pact, Japan's intellectuals continued to harbour deep antagonism towards Nazi Germany, was not simply because their educational-cultural background was Western and liberal, but also because they saw the Soviet Union as the nation which had abandoned the capitalism that was the cause of war. This bespeaks the fact that many of the intellectuals were strongly influenced by Marxism.

#### IV. MARXISM AFTER THE WAR

From the latter part of the nineteen-twenties Marxism, despite fierce oppression, diffused widely among the intellectuals, and in fact provided the battleground between the irrationality of the Emperor System and human liberty. Thus in this period, Marxism, through its confrontation with the Emperor System, brought about the creation of "social science" in Japan and furnished the Japanese intellectual world with a foothold for achieving the spirit of rationality under Fascism and the semi-wartime system. It taught the intellectuals the consciousness of personal responsibility and a critical viewpoint of authority, and served as the catalytic agent for their development of the recognition of liberty and human rights. I have explained above how Japanese Marxism caused intellectuals to take the path of co-operation in the war of Fascism and imperialism by driving many Communist Party members to convert and engendering distrust of theory due to its dogmatic predispositions. But, notwithstanding that fact, it was Marxism too that caused many intellectuals, especially the non-communist progressives and those who developed

intellectually in the 1930's, to come to an awareness of the modern spirit. What moulded the spirit of reason and the basis of personal responsibility and criticism of authority in Japan was not liberalism but Marxism.

However, Japanese Marxism, as the only direct opponent of the absolutism of the Emperor System, assumed a pronounced character of a proselytizing rationalism much like that of the age of the Enlightenment. Not only had Marxism in Japan been accepted idealistically as dogma, but its "Dialectical materialism" thesis was a compromise between a formally interpreted dialectical method and a metaphysical materialist theory, and was shot through with naturalism unmediated by humanism. The methodological basis for grasping an over-all view of Japan's modern society and its historical process, whether that of the politician "Lecture faction" or that of the economist "Worker-Farmer faction" was a naturalist materialism unmediated by humanism. Hence Japanese social science was confined to external analysis of the economic foundation of the Emperor System state or its ruling apparatus, and a grasp of the ideas and culture that infused the various groups of the people as human beings living under the Emperor System was beyond its reach. Even the Marxist philosophers who made the criticism of ideas and culture their work, did not avail themselves of the opportunity to overcome historically formed culture and ethics by criticizing the inner aspects of these things or to seek an orientation which would revolutionize them, but were confined to laying emphasis on pointing out Japanese culture's "feudalistic" and "ideological" character, and counterposing thereto a concept of the "people" (*jimmin* 人民) deduced from "the laws of historical development of society" and understood as in naturalism. In this regard, Japanese Marxist thought actually stopped at the level of enlightened "understanding" (*Verstand*) without attaining dialectical "reason" (*Vernunft*).

When in 1945 the Second World War ended due to the collapse of Japanese imperialism, and the fifteen-year era of war and Fascism was brought to a halt by the Allied Occupation of Japan, the Communist Party for the first time obtained legal status and emerged from imprisonment to present itself before the people. The thought and activities of the Marxists, proscribed since 1937, resumed once more.

With the collapse of the Emperor System, the view of history that had held sway since Meiji times also collapsed. In order to reconstruct the social order from politics and economics to daily life, it was necessary to restore truth to the whole modern history of Japan since the Meiji



Restoration, and the only thinkers able to present an over-all view of modern Japanese history responding to that need were the Marxists, especially those of the Communist Party. Moreover, because Marxism had been the sole system of thought to stand against the Emperor System, it alone held authority as a science for many intellectuals. And the Communist Party, due to its indomitable courage and firm constancy in having fought uncompromisingly against the power of the Emperor system, was seen as endowed with high moral authority. Consequently it was Marxism that, in the post-defeat period, played the greatest role in the formation, in the minds of a wide number of intellectuals, of a mental order capable of supporting of post-war reconstruction. Thus pre-war Marxism surged back to life and swept flood-like among the younger generation that, having been educated in ultra-nationalism during the war, had lost its spiritual supports in the defeat. They adopted Marxism as the dry earth absorbs water. And because the restoration of truth in history was central to reconstruction of the collapsed spiritual order, history occupied the central place in Marxist intellectual activity.

As a result of the defeat the various social and political conditions that had impeded the democratization of Japan were abolished at the hands of the Occupation. The Emperor's status as an absolute being was denied, the principle of popular sovereignty was established, and fundamental human rights and demilitarization were enunciated in the new Constitution. With these steps plus land reform and the dissolution of the *zaibatsu*, the premodern social system of Japan was basically eradicated. These were the very reforms that the Marxists had made their objectives. The Japan Communist Party believed that these reforms, based on the "Potsdam Declaration" in which the U. S. S. R. had participated, fulfilled most of the objectives set forth in the "1932 Theses" (Theses Relating to Conditions in Japan and the Mission of the Japan Communist Party) drafted by the Comintern; and regarding the Occupation's policies as a victory for the Party, it co-operated in the execution of the reforms. It was the JCP alone among the political groups of Japan which co-operated honestly with the American Occupation's policies and voluntarily promoted the post-war democratic reforms; and, in the view of the Occupation, among the Japanese it was the Communist Party alone that could be relied upon. The Party thought that co-operation with the Occupation would insure the accomplishment of the revolution. But when the "cold war" intensified and America's policy towards Japan switched, the Party, which was trying to accomplish the revolution with the backing of the Occupation's authority, fell under

harsh oppression from the Occupation and was sharply denounced by the Cominform as well.

Faced with the censure of the Cominform, the JCP, while swelling with internal disputes, further strengthened the dogmatic, sectarian predilections dating from "Fukumoto-ism." The reforms of the Occupation did not, of course, mean a victory for the Communist Party. The Party should have assumed political responsibility before the people for its having failed to prevent Fascism and the war, and should have rectified its character. But on the contrary, in taking both the defeat and the Occupation's policies as a party victory, it stood pat in its old ways. A doctrinaire approach in which Marxism was taken as dogma and phenomena were defined from given "essences" was the style of thought of the JCP. But in this mode of thought, in order that all phenomena be explained as variant manifestations of given "essences," the opportunity of acquiring the science to be found in Marxism is lost, and the self-deception of confounding science with faith is born. Thus, because the stronger the oppression of the authorities, the greater become the demands for strengthening organizational solidarity and partisanship, the more the systematic nature of theory becomes an end in itself, and the more politics become inseparable from a "world view"; political moves adapted to specific circumstances become rationalized as the necessary consequences of the "world view" without any scientific analysis of the actual circumstances or the validity of the tactics; any criticism or scepticism of party decisions comes to be regarded as class betrayal, and hence the deification of the party and of theory becomes all the more intensified. This tendency was an international phenomenon under Stalinism but appeared in extreme form in the JCP due to its mentality of orthodoxy under the Emperor System. The JCP, in the midst of the Cominform's criticisms, denied the significance of the post-war democratic reforms that it had itself impelled; and in the very period when Japanese capitalism, freed from premodern elements, began to develop anew, the party closed its eyes to this fact, appealed to the people for a struggle against "feudalistic things," and organized a totally unrealistic "armed struggle." In addition, the activities of the Communist intellectuals were made to comply with these policies. As a result, the JCP became isolated from the people and, after 1950, began to lose the position of leadership and authority that it had come to occupy in the post-war intellectual world.

After the Second World War those who produced the most fruitful results were the intellectuals who, having been deeply influenced by Marxism in the 1930's, had experienced its ebb tide, and had undergone

their intellectual and moral formation therefrom. Through the stimulus of Marxism they became aware of the inhumanity of the Emperor System state and sought a society that would protect the freedom of modern men and insure the independence of intellect and personal liberty. They took Marxism not as dogma but as science, and in studying its methods, perceived clearly the flaws of Japanese Marxism as naturalism unmediated by humanism. Thus they paid close attention to inner processes of man, including his irrational aspects, that Marxism up through the war had ignored; and they understood social reality as the behavioural processes of living men, including their mental processes. They strove to elevate social science to a science dealing specifically with men, carefully studied various modern currents of thought in addition to Marxism, and in analysing the consciousness of the masses which supported the Emperor System, sought the chance to revolutionize that consciousness from within. Along with aiming at establishing and effectuating a democratic morality, they sought to create a new society surpassing that of capitalism, in which human principles could be realized. And they opened new horizons to social science by criticizing both the mentality of the Emperor System in which cultural and moral values were not independent of political values, as well as the politicism of the Communist Party which subordinated cultural and moral values to political ones and evaluated them from the sole vantage point of political tactics. In contrast to the "Marxism as a whole system" approach which tended to deny, in the name of a "world view," the relative autonomy between science and art, these intellectuals made that autonomy complete and clarified the aspects of opposition between science and art. This was of major significance in effectuating the modernization of Japanese scholarship and culture and in awakening intellectuals to the bases of moral universality and personal responsibility in a democratic society. The appearance of independent, democratic intellectuals who, while deeply sympathetic to Marxism and permeated with criticism of authority, were also constructively critical of the Communist Party's movements, was a major event in the intellectual history of Japan.

Despite their individual differences, the activities of these thinkers possessed a common character in such ways as the making scientific of social science, the conceptualization of post-war Japanese intellectual circumstances in specific terms, the movement towards revolutionizing traditional thought by clarifying the bases of moral values in modern society, and the sharp criticism of politics and society. They comprised an influential trend of thought that came, after 1950, to be more influential than Marxism among

a wide number of intellectuals. To make a comparison of Marxism with Catholicism, however, these thinkers were, so to speak, Protestants. Their thought could not have been created without Marxism. In a Japan that admitted no transcendent, universal figure other than the Emperor, for these thinkers to thoroughly attain modernity in scholarship, culture and morality would have been impossible had they not kept Marxism alive in the deepest recesses of their hearts and minds, and premised their social cognition upon it.

The Marxists termed this school of thought "modernism," and attacked it as petty bourgeois ideology. In denying that these thinkers had a more realistic grasp than the Marxists of the conditions of post-war Japan, Marxism in fact impoverished itself.

Even after the twentieth Plenary Convention of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the JCP persisted in its obvolute character of Stalinism overlain with mentality of the Emperor System. The party abandoned the "armed struggle" in 1955, but when revolutionary strategy again became an urgent question and an over-all view of post-war Japanese capitalist society became an issue, a serious dispute developed in the party over how existing circumstances should be analysed and what the Party's character should be, and many party member intellectuals who sought reformation of Marxism either resigned or were expelled from the party. Thus with the polycentralization of the international Communist movement, the polycentralization of Japanese Communism began as well. Moreover, the Sino-Soviet dispute, in a complex manner, aggravated the dispute between the Japan Socialist Party, with its nucleus of Worker-Farmer faction Marxism, and the leadership of Sōhyō 総評 on the one side and the Communist Party on the other. The organizations of the entire democratic mass movement were exposed to dispute and schism. The orthodox Marxists belittled democracy as a bourgeois thing to be overcome by socialism, and regarded the truth of socialism as self-evident because of the existence of the Soviet Union. Hence they made no intellectual, philosophical study of democracy or socialism, interpreted man and society only in a naturalistic sense, and neglected efforts to shape the national popular will by making an issue of intellectual and moral reform. Moreover, just when Japanese capitalism began to make enormous strides forward the orthodox Marxists called for an "anti-feudal struggle," and even after 1955, when it came to mobilizing the national masses in political struggle, they appealed to only the sensitive private interests of the masses. As a result, after 1960, when Japanese capitalism had achieved a high level of economic growth, the masses became

all the more immersed in their private interests, and the various democratic movements which had manifested a greater increase among the nation's masses than at any other time since the end of the war, were faced with a crisis of disintegration. So in the present, in which democracy has become an empty promise under high-growth capitalism and in which human alienation is deepening, Japanese Marxism has become rigid and unable to appeal to the people, including the intellectuals, by showing the concrete means to conquer their alienation.

Thus Japanese Marxism, through its confrontation with the Emperor System, brought about the establishment of social science, awakened the spirit of reason among the intellectuals and played a major catalytic role accounting for the moulding of the self as a modern man on the part of a wide number of intellectuals and for the determination on their part of a democratic perspective. Without the growth of Marxism in the 1920's, Japan's intellectual world probably would have been unable to surmount its provincialism. On the other hand, however, the Marxists though standing at the forefront of Japan's democratic movement, unceasingly repeated errors, in political practice, leading to the movement's disintegration and collapse. Hence, while Japan is one of the capitalist states in which Marxian thought has been most widely diffused, it is at the same time one in which Marxism today confronts a crisis of loss of ideological leadership.

Whether Japanese Marxism can overcome this tragic circumstance and play the role of leading and bringing to fulfilment the renovation of Japanese culture and society probably depends on whether it can, by mediating its enlightened naturalism with humanism and thoroughly reforming its character, overcome the crisis it faces today and acquire the open-mindedness and practical capability to resolve the complex problems of modern society.