

TRADITION VERSUS MODERNIZATION IN POSTWAR JAPAN

I

Serious intellectuals in Japan have been concerned with problems of tradition and modernization not only in the postwar period but at least as far back as the Meiji Restoration, although it is true that in each period the problems were viewed in different ways. The issue of tradition and modernization is not peculiar to Japan. However, there are sufficient reasons for the fact that this issue has been and is being conspicuously argued among the Japanese.

There are many instances in which underdeveloped countries have been subjugated by developed countries through invasion or colonialization, and forced to accept ways of life different from their own but this has not happened in Japan. Japan was obviously underdeveloped at the beginning of the Meiji Era (1868), but a unique and relatively well-integrated culture had been already developed and had penetrated into the common people

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quite deeply. Such a nation could absorb, in a *spontaneous* way, different cultures from outside and yet keep its own *political independence*. So that Japan has succeeded in modernizing itself and getting rid of its own underdevelopedness. Such an instance is unprecedented in world history. It has been quite natural that the Japanese have to seriously consider the problem of tradition and modernization.

Elements of modernization seem to be defined as (1) democracy in politics, (2) capitalism in economy, (3) a shift from handicraft to factory industry, accompanied by progress in science, technology and mechanization, (4) popular education, (5) emergence of national military forces, and (6) liberation of the people's consciousness from their community organization toward a developing individualism. Japan from the Meiji Restoration through World War II failed in the first and the last (which seem to be closely related to each other), while she was successful in the other elements. The degree of modernization can be measured differently depending on which element is given greater weight, but here I would like to pay attention to the fact of the speed of development of productivity—one of the most important factors of modernization. Before Japan's achievement of industrialization, no other country had ever industrialized as fast as Japan, and a half century later, only the USSR had achieved second place for a comparable speed of development. The problem of speed cannot be ignored when we consider problems of the modernization process.

On the other hand, compulsory education seems to be another important aspect in which Japan has shown an outstanding development in terms of its speed of popularization. The proportion of illiteracy in Japan is now lower than that of France, and we might be able to call Japan one of the most advanced countries of the world in this respect. (Just for comparison, Russia still had as high as 73% illiteracy in 1917, and China 80% in 1949 and India 83% even today.)

It is true that the rapid increase of productivity was tragic for women-laborers in the early stage of industrialization, and popular education to some extent had militaristic elements in prewar Japan. Nevertheless, it must be recognized that factory labor and compulsory education in one way or other forced

changes in the consciousness of the people along the lines of modernization. It is necessary to realize the positive effects of these two factors.

These changes or reforms in Japan since 1868 were "from above" and "double quick" as many people have said. It is so obvious that we need not argue the point. However, it seems an inescapable route for underdeveloped countries to have reforms "from above" when they seek reforms within a short period. All reforms in Russia, China, Turkey, or Egypt were "from above" in their nature, and in reality how can a nation's policy be decided by people at the "bottom" whose illiteracy is as high as 73% or 80%?

At any rate, the reforms in Japan were very rapid and because of this there were many difficulties. Japan underwent a process of reform within several decades which took advanced European countries several centuries to achieve. The difficulty of this rapidity is reflected in every aspect of thought and culture. The problem of tradition and modernization is one of them, in fact one of the most crucial problems. In European countries, this problem has been solved gradually, while in Japan it is urgent to solve the problem. No one could have had sufficient time to deepen the study of the problem as the changes had occurred more quickly than the people's thoughts, so that there has been no definite answer to this among Japanese intellectuals. Rather, we can find in the course of our history many indications of the seriousness and deep feelings felt by those who have struggled with this problem.

II

Even in postwar Japan the problem is still focused on the conflict between tradition and rapid modernization. It is obvious, however, that the nature of the problem has been transformed since World War II from that of prewar Japan. The matter is complicated more by the fact that the country was occupied by the United States Forces for 6 years and still remains under strong US influence even after the San Francisco Treaty in 1951.

The Meiji reform was achieved by independent people through their own efforts, although its rapidity created several

difficulties. On the other hand, the drastic changes after World War II had been created under the occupation by the foreign power when the people were forced to change their way of life through a series of reforms. This political setting is very different from conditions in prewar Japan, and it makes the present problem very complicated. It is by no means true to say that the reforms were all wrong. Policies such as the establishment of the new constitution, the acceleration of the labor movement, the punishment of militarist leaders and so forth aimed toward the democratic modernization of Japan, and have had considerable effect on the Japanese.

These forced reforms after the war were realized by the occupation authority and the Japanese, exhausted by the defeat and not trained to speak freely throughout the war, did not intend to oppose the postwar changes even though they maintained their opinions against them. These circumstances made the present problem more complicated than before.

However, we should not think that all the Japanese merely followed the forced changes. The changes after the war were established without any serious reaction. This was not because the Japanese had adhered to their traditional saying, "Kings have long arms," but because there were many Japanese who expressed their approval for the new policies. In fact there would not have been such smooth progress of the policies made by the occupation forces if there had not been any desire and preparation for the reforms among the Japanese.

By the way, we have to admit that there was some sort of failure of psychic functioning on the part of the Japanese as a result of defeat in the war and it produced several ridiculous things. For example, the Communist Party regarded the occupation forces as liberating forces. The Socialist Party tried to maintain lese majesty. The Conservative Party opposed land reform which prevented the shift of rural people to the left wing. These are extreme cases, but everyone had more or less some sort of misunderstanding of the situation.

Thus, there were abnormal circumstances because of the transition, but if the principles of the reforms were constant in the long run, the "abnormal" character could be absorbed into normal conditions. But the international relations in which

Japan was involved did not keep the principle constant. By the Korean War the principle was shifted tremendously. The axis of the shift is the interest of the United States and it has been maintained as a constant, and no one can blame American policy which ultimately aimed at her own interest. But the effect of changes in international relations did transform Japan from a sort of Asian Switzerland, a peaceful nation, to a rearmed state. There was a shift so that a man once purged as a war criminal could become prime minister. There was a great change in values during this period. And everybody has been forced to adjust himself to the new circumstances.

Japanese who once approved the occupation policy had to face a choice: whether to choose pro-American attitudes and follow the shift from being pacifists to approving rearmament, or to become more or less anti-American or anti-government. Thus, the Japanese are divided into three groups: (1) people who shifted their attitudes along with the changes of US policies so as to maintain their pro-American attitudes. (2) People who intended to maintain their original attitude toward the policy once created by the US and then abandoned by the above mentioned changes. And (3) people who intended to escape politics. (They consider themselves politically "neutral," but objectively they are supporting the pro-American government of Japan.) Besides them, (4) there were anti-reform, reactionary people. They seemed not to have regained their power over the press, but in society they are gradually regaining their status.

On the basis of this change in politics, nationalism has revived in Japan. The problem of tradition became a daily theme in the press, and each of the above four groups of people have revealed their attitudes on this problem.

The people belonging to the group (4) are by and large rightwing, and ultimately fascist. But their funds come from the capitalists who usually do not like anti-American attitudes. So that they can be anti-Russian but cannot be anti-American. However, if they want to be nationalist, they have to be more or less anti-American. Thus, although they are ultimately nationalist, they cannot connect themselves with nationalism directly for this reason. Therefore, they cannot systematize their theory about tradition and their opinion is still not persuasive.

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As America is a country which has no old tradition to be maintained, the pro-Americans of group (1) are mostly uninterested in the matter of tradition falling under US influence. But for the purpose of appealing to the mass and for the sake of camouflaging their reactionary policies, they often speak of maintaining traditions. However, the ultimate attitude of this group is a cosmopolitanism, so that they tend to admire things which are admired by foreigners. There are many such admirers of Japanese tradition as if it were a reversed attitude of the adoration of foreign countries.

Generally speaking, the intellectuals of Japan consider themselves to be liberals, but it does not mean they are active in the struggle for the preservation of freedom; it means rather that they are free from any kind of "ism." They consider any kind of "ism" as bound by certain norms. Especially in the case of *nationalism*, they have a strong feeling against it because there is the unforgettable experience which made people strongly bound to the nation during the war, and antipathy to nationalism is very strong. Because of the high literacy of the people of Japan, most Japanese have a similar attitude against nationalism, as do the intellectuals.

Group (3), the no-political-opinion people, have actually reacted against the impatient *modernist* who intended to clear off the burdens of tradition. However, they do not want to be *traditionalist*, and in fact they are not. They particularly oppose the tradition which is connected with ethnocentric behavior. They are ultimately cosmopolitan, and in this respect they are related to group (1). At present at least, they form a dominant attitude in Japan.

The problem of tradition shows its most complicated form in group (2). They feel a strong antipathy against nationalism as a form of fascism, but as they have strong desires to achieve complete independence for the nation, and as their feelings have been stimulated by the rise of nationalism in other Asian and African countries, (although their evaluation of such nationalism is very superficial) they have inclined toward a kind of nationalism. And as nationalism is always based upon a nation's self-confidence, naturally the evaluation of Japanese tradition became important to them.

Group (2) consists of the Marxists and bourgeois liberals. Their attitudes are the same on problems like keeping peace, or maintaining the new constitution of Japan, but they have been divided by other problems. The problem of tradition is one of the most serious dividing them. Some of the bourgeois liberals have begun to consider the problem of tradition. I belong to this group, so let me give my own reason why I have begun to consider tradition. First of all, I have found that I have been misunderstanding the revival of the "reverse course," and recognize that the path toward modernization is not straight, although I do not give up my optimistic point of view regarding progress. So I have become more realistic, and I find nationalism is the most important problem, and at the same time, I understand the point Einstein once made: "how relatively small, as compared with the powerful influence of tradition, is the influence of our conscious thought upon our conduct and conviction."¹ So I have decided to state plainly my own feeling of Japaneseness which has existed latently in myself, and to attach importance to the problem of tradition.

On the other hand, leftists attach importance on the maintaining of tradition for the political purpose of the complete independence of the nation, having learned that the policies of the USSR or China are putting emphasis on their traditions. There are some different opinions on this among leftists but I do not know about it in detail, and it is possible to suppose that this proposition has been raised by the Communist party and the leftist intellectuals have followed after them. Their opinions sometimes do not coincide with the opinions of the bourgeois liberals.

Thus, the problem of tradition has been discussed among the people of group (2) most seriously. Therefore, I would like to focus my discussion on this problem in order to treat with the general problem of tradition and modernization after World War II. It is convenient for me to deal with this because I know quite a good deal about the process of discussion to which I myself am committed, but more than that, I believe the general

¹ A. Einstein, *Out of My Later Years* (1950, The Philosophical Library, N. Y.), p. 133.

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problem can be developed from this in the future. There have been discussions among groups beside group (2), but they have taken each tradition in a fragmentary way, with no intention to generalize it into a theory. In the case of group (2) however, it seems to me that the problem has been discussed seriously along the lines of nationalism and in relation to the fate of the Japanese. This serious discussion does not always deal with the problem "rightly," but it at least would include "a possibility to have a theoretical disputation and a correction of errors as a result of it."

III

"Let us show that we Japanese have produced great works in order to awaken our national consciousness and to regain our national pride under the crisis of colonialization of culture" (*Nihon Bungaku Nius*, Bulletin of the Nihon Bungaku Kyokai [Society for Japanese Literature] N. 5), wrote Toshihiko Izu.

This proposal represents a basic attitude toward tradition retention among the postwar leftists in Japan, especially among the members of the Nihon Bungaku Kyokai. This policy concerning culture has probably been made along the lines of the united front of democracy for the liberation of the people by the Communist party. It would be necessary to urge national consciousness and to regain national pride, and sometimes it would also be necessary to consider the problem of culture in its relation to politics. And it is not a serious matter which party made the policy, if the policy is good. However, as far as the policy concerns culture, it should not be something understood only among a certain limited number of people within a group it must be able to persuade people. It is useless and dangerous to discuss the matter of culture only along a given political requirement. Of course it is not necessary that all critiques be in the form of academic articles and propaganda is quite welcome. But just using a given policy for each cultural problem mechanically is not a solution of the problem. The solution is to create new ways of thought through the contradiction between the principal conditions and the objective conditions. Mere effort to find out the reasons how to keep tradition A or tradition B without such a fundamental solution of the problem would not

have any power of persuasion for people and in its result the given political requirement would not be well realized either. Generally speaking, the theory of tradition-retention among leftists has had this weak point. Let us examine it in detail.

1. ILLOGICAL DOGMATISM

There have been many criticisms of my article on *Haiku*² in which I defined contemporary *Haik* as second class in the field of literature or art.

A leftist has criticized my article because the literature of this short-form poetry is; (a) found nowhere else in the world but Japan; (b) has a long tradition; and (c) people love it, except for some modernists. Is it not an anti-people attitude to criticize *Haiku* and to recommend giving it up? My answer is: The Emperor system of Japan has all of the three conditions, and you are trying to destroy it, but I would not blame you for it.

Another leftist has wrote an article that the evaluation of *Haiku* as a second class literature is useless as *Haiku* does not seem to cease even several years after the theory was presented in public. I answered: It is thirty years since Marxism has been imported into Japan but the revolution has not yet happened. But I would not like to become a snob-pragmatist and consider Marxism useless for this reason.

The matter of culture can never be solved only by formal logic. But some Marxists do not even follow formal logic in our accepted sense. Except for those who believe Marxism never makes any mistake, dogmatism does not help anything at all. The reason that such dogmatism has appealed to people is the indulgent Japanese sentiment which tends to preserve anything old. It is very welcome to get criticism against the tradition destroyers from the leftists' view, but I wish they were more logical. I am not trying to justify my own theory, but intend to point out that the theory of tradition is likely to provoke illogical discussion and leftists are not an exception to it, as may be noted from my personal example.

² "Daini-geizyutu" (second-rate art), published in *Sekai*, Nov. 1946.

2. CONSERVATIVE NATURE OF ANTI-MODERNISM

Marxists are considered as progressives, but the policy of tradition-retention has brought a conservatism into Marxism. One example: the opinion of *Kabuki*-retention by Mr. Tadayoshi Kondo.³ As I cannot show the process of argument between Mr. Kondo and myself, I will only mention my criticism of him.

No matter what the art-for-art school says, the influence on people's thought should be taken into consideration whenever a man who intends to change society discusses art and literature. *Kabuki* is based upon the ideology of feudalism. If anyone who always cites the bad effects of Western movies or of cartoons is generous about the feudalistic sentiments in *Kabuki*, he falls into contradiction. People like Mr. Kondo are very serious in rejecting feudalistic ideology in the field of politics, but they are very generous about the brutality of the murders in *Chijimiya-Shinsuke* which they interpret as "a severe tragedy of humanity," or allowing the cruelty of a teacher's murder of a pupil in order to keep the blood of his seignorial household in *Terakoya*, finding in that "a silent resistance against the enemy of humanity." It seems to me that this kind of attitude toward *Kabuki* is nothing more than that they are preconditioned to praise *Kabuki* and add some new forced interpretations to it. (If we use this method of interpretation all Westerns could be justified.)

I would like to point out that there is an attitude of cultural conservatism among so-called political progressives, who criticize things in the modern or contemporary period and praise things in the middle or ancient period. This tendency is well represented in the essay of Mr. Kondo. He praises *Kabuki*, but at the same time he looks upon modern plays in Japan as nationality-lost plays and evaluates all music, art, literature, etc., adopted from the West as miserable. His theory is based upon Takuboku Ishikawa's⁴ criticism against adoration of foreignism, but Ishikawa himself was seriously concerned about the problem of the contradiction between the will of westernization and nationalism, and finally approached socialism through this strug-

³ Professor of Japanese literature of the Tokugawa period, former president of Nihon Bungaku Kyokai.

⁴ Poet and critic (1885-1912); revolutionary romantic; he renovated *Tanka*.

gle. The subjective idealism which uses only what is convenient for itself would not make any contributions toward a well-balanced nationalism. Cultural criticism that ignores the meaning of the modernity of Japan must end up as subjective preaching and cannot obtain any power of persuasion. It is an irony of history that the Marxist theory of tradition-retention tends to be like the reactionary theory of "the conquest of modernity"⁵ in prewar Japan. We have to say that these leftist critics have some sort of ultimate antipathy against modernity.

3. THE CONTRADICTION OF IMITATION OF USSR AND CHINA

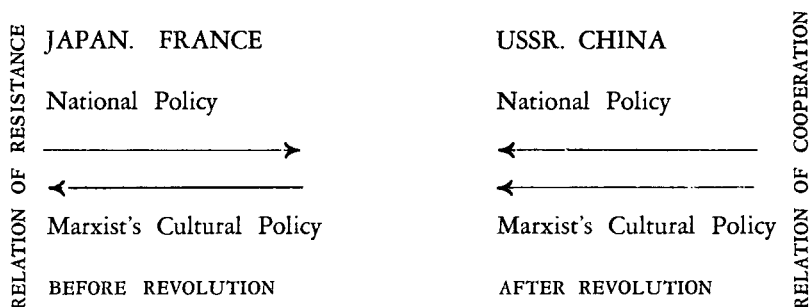
For the argument about *Kabuki* mentioned above, Lenin's policy on art was submitted as a basis for the argument. That is, the critics brought out the fact that Lenin had permitted the playing of bourgeois plots like *Carmen* and other operas just after the revolution in 1919. It is all right to evaluate the policy of Lenin, but it is a miscalculation to compare it with the leftists' policy to maintain *Kabuki* at the period of the crisis of democracy. Because the allocation of authority is completely reversed in the case of Japan.

Most of the leftist's theory of traditional culture-retention is based upon the model taken from the USSR and China. This theory has rapidly become popular after Mr. Hiroshi Minami, professor of psychology, who visited these countries first after the war in 1952 and reported that in both countries the traditional arts like Russian ballet or Chinese classic drama had been widely performed with the support of the government. However, as the following chart shows, this theory is very inconsistent unless the leftists in Japan have given up their intention of revolution. Needless to say, the national regimes of Russia and China are different from those of Japan or France. In socialist nations both the national and cultural policies have the same direction and they are cooperative, whereas in capitalist nations the cultural policies of leftists are naturally

⁵ The review *Bungakukai* (Literary World) organized a symposium of writers and philosophers concerning the problem of "the conquest of modernity" and published the discussion in 1942. Most of the participants violently attacked science and modernity and demanded a return to national tradition.

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opposed to the national policy. If a leftist says that we have to protect traditional art in a nation before the revolution with the argument that a nation after the revolution is doing so, this means that he has given up his intention of revolution, or he believes that he can accept a reformist definition of the revolution as already completed in 1868. I am not blaming these attitudes, but merely saying that it is a contradiction if leftists adopt the ideas of nations in which the revolution has been achieved.



No revolutionists in Russia or China had considered maintaining or protecting ballet or classical drama before the revolution. For example, Lu Hsun said that young Chinese should read Chinese classics as little as possible, or should not read them entirely. And it is reported that Ts'ai Yuan-p'ei once said "Although old matters of China are important it is not necessary to consider them. Even if they should be dispersed, we can collect them after the revolution. So we should devote ourselves to the revolution." Mao T'se-tung in his process of revolution did not care much about how to maintain the traditional arts of Mei Lan-fang or Ch'eng Yen-ch'iu although he was thinking of adopting Roman letters in place of Chinese characters. After the achievement of the revolution they are now trying to take up their old tradition, having confidence in the rapid advance of social reforms, They are supporting the Chinese classical drama which is the people's favorite, as a symbol of joy in the achievement of the revolution. At the same time, modern dramas are also being eagerly performed and have become popular. And the technique of the modern drama is now having an influence on Chinese classical drama.

Moreover, the traditional drama is not being played as it was before the revolution. The plots are all revised according to the educational purpose. Whether the revision is good or not, this is only possible because the national authority is controlling the plot entirely. The authority does not consider if it is profitable or not, but cares if it is useful or not. This situation is completely different from that of the Japanese *Kabuki*. Do the leftists who support *Kabuki*-retention know it?

In the USSR and in China presidents and deans of universities are all appointed by the higher authority, and all school texts are made uniform by the government. There are no labor strikes at all. Sometimes we find opinions favorable toward the imitation of these things. To intend to imitate the tradition-retention of the socialist countries without any consideration of the differences of the institutions is just the same as these opinions.

This is not only a problem of art. Generally speaking, the cultural standard of Russia or China before their revolutions was much lower than that of contemporary Japan. Of course there were Gorki or Lu Hsung, but their high standard of culture did not penetrate to the common people whose literacy was quite low. Even if we leave out the problem of the difference in national institutions, it is not practical to imitate cultural policies in the USSR or China because of their different cultural backgrounds.

4. STERILITY OF THE THEORY OF "KOKUMIN BUNGAKU"

Mr. Yoshimi Takeuchi and Mr. Yoshizo Kawamori have raised the problem at first that it is necessary to have a "kokumin bungaku" (national literature) which would concern itself with fundamental national problems and thus contribute to the reform movement in Japan, and which can appeal to all people in common. Underlying this idea they have had in mind the fact that modern literature in Japan is accustomed to being separated in two: a pure literature or a literature of the writers' world which is written only for intellectuals who like literature, and a popular literature beloved among the people. This idea of "kokumin bungaku" is widely accepted by journalists not

because journalism is frivolity, but because the concept is quite right and many people have been interested in it. However, despite the general sympathetic support for this idea, there has been no fruitful result from it, at least until now.

Generally speaking it is possible to say that the solution of the question is included in the question itself. If the question is scientific, the obtained answer will be scientific. If it is moralistic, the answer moralistic. What I want to say here is that though all great questions are supported by a moral basis, the definition of the contents of the question itself should always be objective. Otherwise we cannot obtain the result. It is obvious that the problem of the "kokumin bungaku" is based upon a national concern, but the term "nation" (kokumin) was ambiguous from the beginning of the argument. There is no measure, and nobody ever concerned himself with the question of what part of the nation in Japan is the "nation." So that when Takeuchi says "people want to be liberated as a nation and they want to change themselves for this purpose," his concept of people who did not have any feeling of crisis was neglected. As a result, the problem of the quantity of readers has been considered lightly, and such literature as Kaizan Nakazato⁶ or Eiji Yoshikawa⁷ are put aside from the problem.

Moreover, when this problem is handed to the leftists, the viewpoint which Mr. Takeuchi intended—that literature be autonomous—is completely denied, and the "kokumin bungaku" became almost synonymous with the leftist's "democratic literature." When Mr. Seidai Toma⁸ said that a "kokumin bungaku" can be created only "on the standpoint of the union of labor and farmers under the leadership of the proletariat," the original idea completely disappeared from the discussion. We recognize the *raison d'être* of leftist literature. But the starting point of the argument of "kokumin bungaku" was originally where we considered such literature to be no longer everyone's literature at

⁶ Forerunner of contemporary popular literature; *Daibosatsu-toge* (1913-1944) is Japan's longest novel and probably the world's.

⁷ Leading author of popular literature; *Miyamoto Musasi* became the most popular during this war.

⁸ Historian, specializing in Japanese history.

present. This confusion comes from the lack of definition of "nation."

On discussing this problem, the problem of tradition is naturally raised, but there has been no new opinion regarding it. For example, the Nihon Bungaku Kyokai once took up the topic of problems of "kokumin bungaku" in the general meeting of 1954, but only studies on ancient and mediaeval literature like *Azumauta* of "Mannyoushu," Saikaku, etc., using the conventional methods were reported. If we seriously needed to create a "kokumin bungaku" we should have analyzed modern writers like Roka Tokutomi⁹, Soseki Natsume,¹⁰ K. Nakazato, Yutaka Kikuchi,¹¹ E. Yoshikawa which has appealed to the people since the Meiji Period in spite of their differences in artistic values or ideologies, and common elements in these writings should be pointed out. But this kind of work has never been tried by anyone. If this kind of trial had been made during the discussion, we could have obtained a knowledge as to how writers could grasp the basic personality of the Japanese and the result could have been helpful not only for writers of the "kokumin bungaku" but also writers in general. This kind of development has been barred from the beginning by a way of thinking that considers quantity as vulgar. Therefore, there has been no reflection on the fact that movies are a much more powerful means of appealing to people than literature.

In brief, by the lack of scientific attitude in observing reality, the discussion of a "kokumin bungaku" has become no more than a moralistic-political chorus apart from the original idea. I think this is a very unfortunate thing. Indeed, while this argument attracted many critics, many best sellers which denied or ignored fundamental national problems came out continuously and overwhelmingly, giving a negative answer to such a movement.

⁹ Romantic writer (1868-1927); author of *Hototogisu*, the most popular novel in the Meiji era.

¹⁰ Greatest representative of modern Japanese literature (1867-1916); novels: *I am a cat*, *After that*, *Mind*, etc.

¹¹ Novelist and founder of the review *Bungei Syunzyu* (1888-1948).

IV

I have spent much space criticizing the opinions of others, and although the reader may estimate what I think of the problem, I will sum it up briefly.

To clarify the term "tradition" is an indispensable premise to the problem, although the study of a "term" would not do much to solve the problem. I tried this several years ago, but it was completely neglected by the critics.

The term "dento" is not indigenously Japanese. It was invented as a translation for the term "tradition" in English or in French. The term means in its ultimate sense "something transmitted" within a society. But taking this content, the term would mean that everything in the world is "tradition." However, while "custom" is "something transmitted" unconsciously, the term "tradition" implies a judgement about the value of the transmitted element, according to Seligman's *Encyclopedia of Social Science*. Therefore tradition has an intermediate meaning between unconscious custom and ideas which can be stated as a proposition. The term has an intermediate nature. In Japanese the term "tradition" puts more weight on the side of custom and in Western languages more on the side of ideas. In the case of Japanese, the meaning became more obscure than in Western usage.

Let us examine some real usages of the term in Japan.

"... As I was elected city assemblyman, I will try to meet your expectations, by keeping the *good traditions*, seeking the security of citizens and..." (A speech of a city assemblyman of Kyoto in 1951.)

"... We farmers wish to transfer our land that has been lasted for three hundred and fifty years from our ancestors to our children as our *tradition*..." (Speech by Mr. Aoki at the special committee for the Sunagawa Problem in the Upper House in 1955.)

These are ordinary usages of the term "tradition." The content of the transmitted thing is not important in the context, and they put more emphasis on the fact of their attachment to the things which have lasted long. We cannot reject this as sentimentalism, but at the same time we should not affirm or

use this feeling to maintain anything simply because it is old. No improvement or reforms could be made by doing so.

Einstein said, after the sentence quoted before, that "it would be foolish to despise tradition. But with our growing self-consciousness and increasing intelligence we must begin to control tradition and assume a critical attitude toward it, if human relations are ever to change for the better." This seems very true. On the process of modernization of Japan after the Meiji, the control of tradition has been relatively successful. It is not necessary to say that if one still dares to stress tradition at the present moment a critical attitude toward it is inevitable. If people support an attitude of maintaining anything old, without any discrimination, this will lead merely to support of a revivalism of feudalistic sentiments and old morals. A selection of traditional things is necessary.

Despite the fact that the term tradition has been so frequently used, contemporary Japanese are not, if we adopt David Riesman's terms, "tradition directed" but "other directed." That is, the ways of thinking or of action are no longer restricted by tradition. People are only interested in tradition because they feel ashamed if they do not know the traditional art everybody talks about. This is nothing but "conformity behavior." In this case, foreigners are included among the people to whom one has to conform. Once a famous foreigner admires *Kabuki*, Japanese think they should admire it too. It would not be effective to discuss "tradition" without recognition of this circumstance in postwar Japan.

Nobody can start anything from zero, and all human actions need the support of the accumulated past. Yet even though there were a good tradition, it would be useless if it were not utilized at present. To have a good tradition means to create something on the basis of the tradition. Unfortunately the arguments on tradition in postwar Japan put the emphasis more on the maintenance of old tradition unrelated with our contemporary life. For example, though many people referred to the beauty of the old scroll of *Genji*, none of them has ever paid attention to the fact that the same downward angle was effectively utilized by K. Yoshimura, a movie director, in his *Genji* which was awarded a prize in camera technique at the Inter-

national Motion Picture Festival held in Venice. Let me suggest another example. When K. Mizoguchi, another movie director, produced *Ugetsu Monogatari* based on a work of Ueda Akinari, a novelist of the Tokugawa period, a famous scholar in Japanese classics, finding some unavoidable modifications in the movie, commented that the movie had spoiled the tradition. He obviously did not realize that the movie might make the name of Ueda Akinari familiar to the common people and to foreigners who would be interested in reading the original novel. I believe that these movies are a more valuable means of maintaining tradition than the scholastic slogan of tradition-retention.

There was a fashion among leftist intellectuals to trace back the origins of traditional arts as the people's creation for the purpose of defending old traditions at certain moments in the past. It seemed an important aspect. But they should have explained at the same time, why traditions originating in the people were taken up by the ruling class, and lost their "popular" quality.

Many traditional arts such as *Noh*, *Kabuki*, or *Sumo* were once rejected at the beginning of Meiji under the policy of radical modernization (westernization) of the new government. And after two decades, when the new government was fairly settled in power, these traditional arts were revived and re-developed under the protection of powerful bureaucrats. These arts are thus revived ones along the lines of modernization of Japan, and most of what we see as traditional arts have been more or less re-arranged through modernization. Therefore, whenever we speak of tradition it is inevitable to see the relation of it to modernization and the period of Modern Japan. But discussion of tradition after World War II sought to ignore this point. The reason is this. Since Japanese leftists or progressives are so eager to look for social progress, they undervalue the Meiji period for its insufficient socio-intellectual modernization. And they take an antagonistic position against "absolutists" of the Meiji government. Therefore, they consciously separate traditional arts from the Meiji era or from the modernization of Japan, and situate them exclusively in ancient or mediaeval contexts, and furthermore want to maintain them in contemporary Japan in which modernization has been ceaseless since the

Meiji era. So their argument easily tends to take the form of a moralistic idealism.

Therefore, the question of tradition in Japan today is closely related with the question of evaluation of Japanese modernization since the Meiji era. I share in common with the leftists the conviction that we must be confident in our own culture and that we must take responsibility for history, but my opinion with regard to tradition differs from theirs in this respect. I do not want to discuss my evaluation of the Meiji period here, I merely want to say that tradition does not belong to the past, and that tradition can be inherited only when contemporaries take a progressive attitude looking into the future from the present. I also have enough optimism to believe that the true tradition which is worth being transmitted will be transmitted, even if its retention is not vocalized.

I recently saw a movie on the construction of the hydroelectric power plant in the Kurobe Valley. A plant which produces a quarter of a million kilowatts of electricity is now going to be built, making a long tunnel through the Japanese Alps, and constructing a huge dam in the valley. It is the second largest plant of this kind in the world. I have been very much impressed by seeing people who devote themselves to this work wearing the *happi* (traditional laborer's coat). I felt that here I saw a symbolic suggestion of the problem of tradition and modernization. The *happi* or *bachimaki* (cloth head band) can be displayed in the museum of folk arts in the West, but they are also used at the scene of new creative activity in the country today.

I do not want to spend much of my efforts on maintaining traditions that have been transmitted without any relation to modernization. The beauties of old Japan which Hearn or Moraes admired will gradually disappear. We have to inherit, however, the rationality of Hakuseki Arai,¹² the energetic efforts of Norinaga Motoori,¹³ and the intelligence and courage of our grandfathers who achieved the Meiji Revolution.

¹² Statesman and encyclopedic scholar (1657-1725); first scientific historian of Japan; he wrote an excellent autobiography half a century before J.-J. Rousseau.

¹³ Philologist who studied Japanese classics with positivistic method (1730-1801).