

# Two Types of Japanese in Modern Japan

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[1] Japan experienced two defeats since the mid-nineteenth century: the first was internal was called Boshin Year's War, and the second was World War II. Maybe it is not correct to call Boshin (1868) a defeat. However, it was the war fought between the eastern and western halves of Japan. In consequence, the eastern side was defeated. Therefore, from the viewpoint of the east, they could call themselves the defeated side.

[2] The reason why we are concerned about these two defeats is that the marked difference between the two can explain the two types of Japanese in modern times. In the internal war of 1868, the side of the Kyoto court won the victory and those local lords of northeastern Japan around Aizu Province that resisted were punished severely for the sake of demonstration, the last Shogun was replaced and made to move to Shizuoka Province, the place of his origin. There were former subjects that moved to Shizuoka where they were not paid salary at all.

[3] The Tokugawa family founded a university which was of rather modest size for fear that they might provoke the new central Government. However, a remarkable phenomenon took place. When a few ancient subjects attempted the creation of the new university, recruiting professors from among those who

used to be at the University founded by the old government in Tokyo (Center for the Study of Books imported from western countries). Here gathered those excellent professors who did not like to serve the new Government headed by Satsuma and Chōshū. They were excellent in that they mastered not only Chinese classics but also Western sciences, some having been abroad already.

[4] The central government of Satsuma and Chōshū (SC Government) was afraid that this university would be the center of anti-government activity and tried to undermine it. One way was to invite the influential professors to the imperial University in Tōkyō. Amane Nishi, the rector, was one of those who accepted the invitation. But, as there were some who would not do so, the Government decided to incorporate this university into the Ministry of the Army by order, and forced them to move to Tōkyō.

There was a man named Kōtei Nakane among the professors. He was a professor at the University of the old government. He mastered Chinese literature, Dutch philosophy, drawing, and harp music.

He fought the Boshin War for the cause of the ex-government. He disappeared for a while when Tokugawa lost.

[5] Then, after two years, he was recruited into the Ministry of Armed Forces as a high-ranking officer with the obligation of writing a comprehensive geography for military strategy. When it was accomplished, a general named Torio criticized him saying that he was too much in favor of the defeated side. Nakane resigned in anger in 18...

[6] He served for a publisher as an adviser after he resigned the Ministry, and tried to avoid serving the Government. After he lost his wife and son, he resigned as publisher, gave away all of his properties including his house and his books to his kindred, and went out to wander round in the nature of all Japan that he loved so much. After ten years, he came back from his wandering in nature, and appeared in Okitsu in Shizuoka. He visited his friends and disciples and declared that he would die after 10 days, and left a testament.

[7] There was a man named Joden Ōtsuki who was at his bedside. He was one that went his own way. He was a son of an established scholar. His father was secretary for the Lord of Sendai, who was a leader of six province that fought against the central government. His father went to jail without a trial and was confined for five years. He served at the Ministry of Education as an historian. When his father was released after five years, he resigned from the ministry and would never serve the government again until he died in 1931. He lived on editing a series of literature of the Edo period.

[8] Let me introduce to you another person named Kyoko Yamanaka, who used to be a samurai. He was born in Yotsuya in 18.. His family belonged to a group of Ninja. He served in the inner-court for women (ooku). After the defeat of the shogun, he moved to Sizuoka following his former master. There he learned English. He became the first priest of the Canadian Methodist church. However, struggle for power in the church was severe, even in the church in formation. A man named

Nobuyasu Hiraiwa was skilled in going up the ladder of power and became the General Director in a short time, overtaking Kyoko easily. He was a man educated at the Imperial University of Tokyo.

[9] Kyōko Yamanaka was not a man for pyramids. He liked to pastor the local churches which he had founded. He collected folk lore in the provinces, although he was very much informed on folklore in Edo. However, Hiraiwa criticized Kyōko Yamanaka at the General Assembly of Methodist Church, saying we would not like to see a pastor neglect the work of God and indulge in gathering lore related to paganism. Kyoko resigned and took an appointment as librarian at the University which was founded by Methodist Church, until he died in 1928. He had a rich knowledge on valuable books of the Edo period. Around him gathered those people who like to study, but did not want to be part of the pyramid structure. They continued publishing a journal called "Shuko" between 1881 and 1942. The central members of this group were former subjects of the Shogunate and their sons.

[10] To give a few names, Wakaki Hayashi, a son of the chief of an army doctor who never worked in life; Norikazu Akamatsu, a son of a Navy Fonteroy, worked in minor company; Shogoro Tsuboi, a son of a doctor who served the Shogun, a professor of the Tokyo Imperial University; and Chikusei Mimura, a merchant. These people were grand connoisseurs of books and folk customs in Edo. They gathered together from time to time bringing books and valuable goods and enjoyed discussions, and exchanging information. The group was based on a

network principle, in contrast to the pyramid principle in Universities.

[11] There is an opinion saying that the university system in Japan based on the Western system, used as an authoritarian institution and serving the pyramid of power, is coming to a dead end. It encourages us to know that there existed a group showing the way out of the closed pyramid system called university. "Shuko" showed the example of teamwork that achieved a style of the study of cultural history on the basis of their own experience in a horizontal network in the pyramid society of Saccho. It was type of association that commonly existed in Edo period. It might have derived from the salons of *haikai* and *renga* in Muromachi period. Anyway, "Shuko" was a survival of this tradition.

[12] In the Edo period, this type of network was called "ko" or "renjū". However, this style mostly disappeared with the exception of associations of Haiku which are hierarchically and exclusively organized. The reason for its disappearance can be accounted for by the propagation of a system which reorganized people on a vertical principle (*tategata*) and cut people off from each other tied to their organization. During World War II, hierarchical structure was taken as normal, and came to be extended to other fields of activity such as culture and education.

[13] There used to exist liberal people called *tsū* or *dait्सū* (great *tsu*) around such a network as Shūko. They were products of urban culture that had a capacity to see things from the outside. Take, for example, a father and his son; Chingaku

and Kangetsu Awashima. Chingaku, the father and a painter, was adopted by a big merchant called Awashima Co. Ltd. as a son and led a life of ease painting as he liked. His works came to be much appreciated by the foreigners in the Meiji period and were rather high priced. In the year 187..., he started a group called *Chikuba-kai* (The Hobby Horse Society) meeting occasionally at a restaurant together with his friends to share their interests in toys and things about childhood. This was the group that would become a prototype of the *Ryūkōkai*, which Sazanami Iwaya, then a well-known author of children's literature, organized for the Mitsukoshi Department Store. Kangetsu Awashima, the son, became a big collector of toys.

[14] He never had the experience of going abroad. However, he collected a tremendous amount of information on folk culture abroad and stored it in his own way. Therefore, we might say that he mastered anthropology and ethnography earlier than any professor of the emerging anthropology of the day, and built a rich collection earlier than the National Museum of Ethnography.

There was a man name Simizu Seihū. He inherited a transportation company. Born in Kanda, Tokyo, and brought up there, he had a reputation of knowing best the folk toys and was nicknamed Dr. Toy. He was the author of six books on toys.

[15] There was a man named Shigejiro Okuyama with a nickname of Imo-Shige among professors and curators of a museum. His profession was vendor of roasted potatoes. He was fond of archaeology and used to help at excavations. He finally became the owner of a secondhand book shop.

Those were not the defeated, but the ones who did not care to be on the side of the winner. They had a profound attachment to Edo culture, and did not like the crude way of control by Saccho. It is mysterious that they could have such a network with such wide range. That they shared good taste on things of Edo can supply one explanation. Those people thought that individual taste was more important than the pyramid. Kyoko Yamanaka was typical of them.

[16] We have already stated that the system that the Saccho was trying to formulate was one in which people were connected both hierarchically and horizontally. It was the *Dokokai* that offered people the art of being connected in a horizontal way. the *Dokokai* (the association) was organized in the Tokugawa Period mainly among those who were fascinated by natural history. Here were salons of Chinese poetry where superior poets of *kanji* poems gathered. In the twenties, it was Nagai Kafu who was associated with them.

The new Government was trying hard to encourage such sciences as chemistry and physics in contrast to the natural history supported by the old regime for the sake of the enhancement of local products, because they thought these two sciences showed the essential character of the new regime to be change and progress.

[17] However, there remained people who knew that natural history could open people's minds better than natural science to nature around them. Those were the people that knew that toys in folk culture, by connecting people with their environment made of wood, water, soil, string, springs etc, opened them to

a much wider world. *Shūko* (gathering antiquity) was the association of such people.

[18] There was a kind of play for boys called *tate banko* (building paper house) that disappeared during Meiji period. *Tate Banko* was a kind of competition. During the season of autumn festivals it used to be held in many fair-grounds around shrines here and there. There used to be shops for *tate banko*. *Banko* is a play where boys cut out the painted part of a building or a house or a theater sometimes. Boys played the game of cutting and composing a miniature building following the arranged course. The one who went through the whole course won. Everyone came to know each other, even those who live in remote areas. It was in such a way that horizontal networks of play took shape.

[19] There is a possibility that there was man to whom the experience of having played in miniature building (*Tate Banko*) did not forget it. Girls had a parallel play called *Kisekae Ningyō*. The girls played with a cut-out board of dolls for which they could make several changes. However, it remained still unlike boy's play which in the way they worked. It is interesting that boys enjoyed the game that made them act in a horizontal network without knowing it. It meant that the alternative of such play of transgressing a frontier was typical of Meiji and Taisho Japan.

[20] In the initial part of this talk, I pointed out that the way to confront the fact of defeat formed two different ways of living in modern Japan. One was that of people who did not allow

the fact of defeat to convince them of assimilation into the winners' side, and instead were people:

- 1) who belonged to some kind of pyramid, not necessarily that of Sacchō, but realized their own life style in a network which could be horizontal; or
- 2) who never belonged to pyramid of power and sought a free life-style (Kangetsu and Chingaku Awashima); or
- 3) who abandoned the everyday life of pyramid and lived outside it (Kōtei Nakane and Jyoden Ōtsuki).

[21] Then what happened to those who won and those who were absorbed by those who won? It can be summarized in the following way:

- 1) The Japanese who won constructed a society based on meritocracy centering on *Tenno* (the Emperor) with a principle of enriching the country and strengthening its army. They came to be concerned with elevating their own status and ignoring others' right. It is regrettable that the same type of attitude was extended to people of surrounding countries. And not only to people, they dared to exploit nature without limit.
- 2) This type of Japanese developed the attitude of showing that the stronger could sacrifice the weaker, abandoning the way of life that the Japanese had developed; that is that man can live better in harmony with nature.

[22] Finally the Japanese lost World War II. This second defeat was different from the first one. Unlike the first one in which half the Japanese lost, all the Japanese lost in the second one. The first experience of defeat had created people who tried to seek a way to transcend the winner spiritually in their

resistance to the pyramidization, pursuing their own lifestyles. They existed outside the imposed system. After the second defeat, however, nothing of this kind took place. One of the reasons was that the ideology of democracy was hard to resist. Also, it was accompanied by materialism with a human-centered inclination. For most Japanese, materialistic American civilization flowing with images of cars and urban life came to be the aspiration.

[23] There was nothing to resist to democracy. They simply tried to identify themselves with the democratic winner. They should have separated democracy and material prosperity. They are now coming to realize the negative side of man-centered materialism. There is nowadays much on-going discussion claiming that the destruction by environmental pollution was derived from excessive emphasis on industrial interests and the loss of affection for nature.

What about the problem of acceptance of democracy while conserving a hierarchical structure almost intact? The Japanese should have abolished the pyramidal structure, and should have denied monopoly of power and information by the government, in order to achieve democracy. The political vacuum was presenting the chance to do so.

[24] However, as is well known, this did not take place. This was because the Japanese were successful in having both co-exist. The Japanese like democracy, but they had come to like hierarchy as well. The influence of Saccho went into recess in the 20th century. However, the meritocratic and pyramidal type of society that they fabricated remained intact. Therefore,

the superior bureaucrats remain as ever playing the main role. They firmly believe that the society should be under their control. The official is to be respected, people are mean and low. It is therefore official that should lead, protect and regulate people. The people should have abandoned a country that was controlled by such bureaucrats.

[25] That is the reason I pay respect to those ancestors of overseas Japanese that abandoned Japan once, irrespective of reason. To be clear, to send people overseas for the Japanese government before the war meant abandoning them. It meant for those who went, to abandon the country called Japan. The Japan fabricated by Sacchō came to the edge of cliff as far as to say it cannot help being abandoned. There are two ways of abandoning a country: one is to step aside from the dominating system like those defeated while remaining inside. They became the abandoned, stepping once out of the system and being forgotten out of their own choice. The pyramidal system that the majority chose to remain in is coming to be confronted with a serious crisis.

[26] Now, what is the way left to today's Japanese? We came to know that there were two ways of living for Japanese defeated after the Boshin Civil War. And now, we know the way of identifying with the winner is running the risk of bankruptcy. We know that the way of keeping a distance from the winner has been effective. It is only recently that this second way has come to be known. Many of those ancestors who left Japan were those who could not find a way in that pyramidal society. I was born in Hokkaido. My father migrated there with his

mother when his father from Tottori Province died in the Russo-Japanese War. This explains why I am rather critical of the Sacchō way of controlling the county.

[27] It is well known that Takenobu Enomoto fought against the Central Government in Hakodate. Later, he became a high-ranking official. It was in 1847 that he sent a Japanese colony to Mexico and New Caledonia.

[28] Those that migrated outside the country share a common viewpoint with the domestic exiles in that they take Japan out of the context that it belonged to and transplant it. We have stated that one efficient way to ameliorate the situation is to formulate a horizontal network against the vertical structure. Those who stay outside Japan have dialogue with heterogeneous cultures and make a contribution to diversifying the image of Japan.

Ideally we are living in a world without frontiers. It is not so important to have a clearly defended frontier for the sake of having identity. Formation of a network which includes Japanese, Brazilian, Koreans, Chinese, Philipinos and all the world is the way for the Brazilian identity to be part of the Japanese, and Japanese to be part of Brazil. It is in such a way that one culture becomes the sender of original information of the culture. To achieve this, the role of overseas Japanese is much more important than those who stay inside Japan and try to control the world with information and wealth. In conclusion, we can say that the spiritual ancestors of overseas Japanese are those defeated in the Boshin Civil War and stepped outside the ongoing system.

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