

THE POST-WORLD WAR II AS AN EPOCH IN THE WESTERNIZATION OF JAPAN

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I. Prologue

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you very much for joining us. I am very pleased to be here and to deliver a lecture on the modernization of Japan.

First of all, I have to thank to professor Ümit Meriç Yazan, Director of the Sociology Research Center at Istanbul University. Secondly, I have to express thanks for my friend, Ahmet Cihan, Ph. D. , who came to Japan and studied at Yamagata University (a national university) for three years with me. He has made comparative studies between Turkey and Japan, especially regarding the differences in the process of modernization of both countries, including the present time.

I came to Istanbul two years ago when I was invited by professor Turan, Dean of Faculty of Economics, to give a lecture regarding the present situation of Japanese agriculture. At that time, I took a trip to Ankara, Cappadocia, Konya, Antalya and many other places with my friends. During the trips we were surprized very much and we were very much impressed by the greatness of Turkish History.

Of course, the Japanese know a little bit about the Turkish History, that is, especially know that Istanbul has been the most important and valuable city since ancient times. We understand the history of the silk road from China to Rome, because the Japanese imported and learned the Western culture through the silk road.

When professor Mehmet Genc came to Japan last year, we had a lucky chance to attend an interesting lecture regarding the history of silk road. This

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lecture was a very interesting one for most of the Japanese attenders including me.

II. Key Points in The Case of Thinking About The Modernization of A Nation

The starting point of the modernization in Japan was The Meiji Ishin (Restoration) in 1868. Thinking about the process of introduction of modernization, we have to think about the historical background, and we should carefully pay attention to the manners and customs, life styles, the habit of thinking of our nation. Especially when we begin to consider the modernization of a nation, it is very important to reflect on whether the modernization will harmonize with the social, cultural and traditional history of the nation or not.

I think that Japan has realized the success story in the world compared with other developing countries. Namely, Japan is a country where the tradition and the modernization has admirably been harmonized.

III. The Process of The Modernization in Japan

1. Items Newly Introduced and Disappearing Items on The Process of The Modernization

When we think of the process of the civilization and enlightenment in Japan, it should be noted that the social institution of the "Samurai Society" was abolished, and consequently the life styles of Japanese remarkably changed in comparison with the Edo Era (the period between the second half of 15th century and 1868). The Edo Era was dominated by the Tokugawa Shogunate (Tokugawa-ke, Tokugawa Dynasty in English) around three-hundred years. A lot of traditional circumstances and regional cultures of Japan rapidly disappeared after the Meiji Restoration, because the Japanese government (the Meiji government) blindly introduced many kinds of the European method of thinking, technique, materials, academic items and so on.

In spite of such kind of revolutionary changes, however, the fundamental culture and circumstances of Japan continue to exist without any important change. Unfortunately, the reason why Japan could keep this social situation, is not made clear even by the Japanese.

2. A View Point Regarding Japanese Culture

A Turkish anthropologist, professor Gyubenc, an excellent expert on the Japanese culture, indicates in his book that the Japanese culture is likely to be

"the trunk of a big tree," because the Japanese culture has been accumulated every year like the annual rings of a big tree. The Japanese culture and tradition have been kept and accumulated inside of the big tree. As the time goes on, the new elements are added to this annual rings. This tree continues to grow up still now. The opinion regarding the Japanese culture is a very interesting point of view even for the Japanese, and I fundamentally can say "yes" to his point of view.

3. Edo Era as The Background of Meiji Era and Japan

Secondly, when we are thinking or talking about the modernization process of Japan, I have to indicate the background history of the Meiji Era, which is the Edo Era. During the Era the Japanese society had developed very much in the agricultural sector and the industrial sector. But the latter was the low skilled and small scale handcrafts compared with the modern industries which were introduced after the Meiji Restoration. In the Edo Era the Japanese regional society was dominated by the Tokugawa-Shogunate (the biggest dynasty of that time), and was divided into many relatively small feudal clans.

The retainers of the Tokugawa-Shogunate dominated these clans for three hundred years. However, these retainers tired and challenged to grow up and to promote the regional productivity, especially of agriculture. Namely, the regional economy had already developed to same extent even in the Edo Era. Talking about the modernization of Japan, this is a very important historical point of view.

IV. The Reason Why Japan was not thrown into The Colonialization

Thirdly, I have to point out that in spite of foreign military attack from U.S.A., France and U.K, and other countries, and in spite of the domestic political confusion between each clan, Japan never became a colonial island. This historical fact is the most important point of view. But the reason is not clearly defined why Japan did not become a colony of some countries at that time.

I can indicate, however, that the clan's alliance of Satsuma (present Kagoshima prefecture) and Choshu (present Yamaguchi prefecture) finally succeeded to turn over the Tokugawa's Institution (the feudal system) and to built up the New Era, that is, the Meiji Era by the Japanese themselves. The Japanese has never experienced falling down into a colonial island dominated by some foreign country.

It is a very interesting fact that until the Tokugawa-Shogunate abandoned the political power and the Restoration of the Imperial Rule (the Meiji govern-

ment) was realized, Japan had completely divided, into two sectors, namely the protective sector depending on the Tokugawa and the new alliance to overthrow the old institution. They fought all over the Japan. However, in spite of these political confusions all over the Japan, the new Allied Army never attacked the Edo Castle located in Edo (present Tokyo). The beautiful castle still now survives without being burned down.

We can pick up the following key persons working hard due to maintain a country of Japan: Yoshinobu Tokugawa(1837-1913) who was a last Shogun of the Tokugawa dynasty, Kaishu Katsu (1823-1899), Ryoma Sakamoto (1835-1867), Takamori Saigo (1827-1877), Shoin Yoshida (1830-1859), Kogoro Katsura (1847-1913), Toshimichi Okubo(1830-1878), Hirobumi Ito (1841-1909), Taisuke Itagaki (1837-1919), Shigenobu Okuma (1838-1922) and so on. Besides, we can never forget Yukichi Hukuzawa who was the representative scholar at that time.

Especially, Yukichi Hukuzawa who founded the famous first private school, that is, Keio-Gijyuku in 1858, continued to stress that Japan should catch up with the European countries through the introduction of the European culture and technics as soon as possible. His thoughts or ideas gave the very strong educational effects to every Japanese at that time. And it should be added that now the portrait of Hukuzawa is printed on ten thousand Japanese yen bill.

Hukuzawa said that people should never make the people upon the people, and that at the same time people should never make the people under the people. This is the most famous phrase stressed by Hukuzawa, since this phrase expresses the principle of his understanding of "democracy". This phrase means that every people is equal on the social status. Yukichi Hukuzawa stressed that Japan should take the way leading to Europeanization. In order to realize this thought, Japan should leave Asia. Later, Hukuzawa was criticized not only by Asian people but also by some Japanese because his thought made light of the Asian countries. I think, however, that his thought was correct at that time. Hukuzawa's thought exerted the remarkable strong effects upon many Japanese, exerted effects upon especially the forward-looking people. He educated and cultivated a lot of excellent people for the Japanese society in the politics, bureaucracy, academics and business sectors.

Incidentally, I would like to say the following critical point about the education system of Japan. The literacy rate of Japanese is almost 100% now. To grasp the historical origin of such high literacy rate of Japanese, we have to look carefully into the educational system of the Edo Era. In the Edo Era the public education was given for people in the form of "Terakoya." In this educational system the teachers were used to be Samurais or Buddhists. They taught the stu-

dents "Yomi, Kaki and Soroban in Japanese" which means "Reading, Writing and Arithmetic." In the higher grades the intelligent students learned foreign languages, such as Dutch, English and so on. Such historical background can be pointed out as one of the main reasons of the high level of Japanese education.

V. The Policy of Modernization of The Meiji Government

The Meiji government continued to restructure social system to build up the modernization of every sector because Japan keenly felt the disparity between Japan and European countries including U.S. First of all, the Meiji government promoted the strategic policy of "the National Enrichment and Security (Hukoku-kyohei-saku in Japanese)." Because the new government fully understood that Japanese army at that time was very weak in comparison to that of the foreign developed countries through the experiences of troubles between Japan and foreign countries since the middle of 19th century. Especially, the Japanese government underwent the strongest influence from Germany in adaptation of the military system. The young Japanese bureaucrats went to Germany, France and the United Kingdom and so on to study and finally to make the Japanese own army.

To build up the Japanese military system, the Meiji government established, for example, "Yahata-Seitetsu in Japanese (the first national steel company)" supported by the Meiji government in 1901. During the Meiji Era the two big wars broke out, that is, the first was the Sino-Japanese War (1894-95) and the second was the Russo-Japanese War (1904-05). Especially, the victory in the Russo-Japanese War led Japan grew into An Imperialistic Nation with the economic and military power. The Meiji government continued to establish a lot of economic, social and cultural new systems, one after another learning the institutions or systems of European countries.

Professor Kozo Uno who is one of the most famous economists in Japan, described such introduction of the system of the foreign policies promoted by the Meiji government as the "imported capitalism" in his famous book.

The Meiji Constitution was promulgated on February 11th, 1889. The first National Diet was also held, on the same day. The social movement promoting The Free Civil Rights (Jiyu-Minken-Undo in Japanese) occurred in the first half of the Meiji Era. This national movement was a very important one, because it provided the real starting point of the Japanese democracy.

However, talking about the modernization of Japan, we should never forget the social and political relationship between "The Shintoism and The Tenno-sei (system)" since the Meiji Era. Namely, in the process of the Japan's modern-

ization, the Shintoism was set up as the most important spiritual foundation for every Japanese. The Shintoism remained to live in the mind of most Japanese as the formal religion until the end of the World War II. It is a very important point that the Shintoism finally led Japanese into the aggressive war. By the Shintoism the Japanese Emperor was inscribed as "God." Every Japanese had to live for the "Tenno = God" and to die for him. After the World War II the thought was fundamentally abolished and became one of the religions.

VI. Restructuring after The World War II as The Process of Another Modernization in Japan

1. Historical Meaning of The World War II in The Japan's Modernization

Thinking of the process of the Japan's modernization, I hold that the restructuring of the post-world War II was another important historical epoch. The every restructuring policy just after The World War II, however, was not carried out by the Japanese government but promoted by the G.H.Q. (General Headquarters) of the occupational force.

The World War II was an unfortunate war for the Japanese, because Japan could not resolve the contradictions within Japan herself. Japan instead, chose the way into the aggressive war to resolve her own problems and contradictions. Japan tried to dominate Asian countries under the Japanese colonial rule. Now the Japanese government apologizes to Asian countries for the invasion and cruelty done by the Japanese army during the War.

2. Main Policies of Restructuring just after The World War II

As I have mentioned above, the restructuring of the post-World War II was fundamentally promoted under the leadership of the G.H.Q., though the Japanese government wanted the restructuring policies for the G.H.Q. from the Japanese government's point of view. The following I think, were the most important restructuring policies.

The first was the "Zaibatsu-Kaitai" (the dissolution of the "Zaibatsu" system) which consisted of great family trusts like Mitsui Mitsubishi, Sumitomo and Yasuda and so on. This Zaibatsu system contrived to get the huge returns through the aggressive war into Asian countries without any effort towards their domestic development. The eighty-three Zaibatsu-related companies were finally dissolved by the G.H.Q. The reason why the G.H.Q. did this radical policy was to prevent the rearmament of Japan in the near future.

The second was the abolition of the old landownership since the Meiji Era. The landownership before the World War II continued to exploit from the tenants (peasants). The G.H.Q. believed that the poverty of rural society drove Japan into the aggressive wars in Asia. As the agricultural productivity of tenants was not so high under the landownership, their household's economies were not enough in spite of big family type. Most Japanese, then, thought that to dissolve such people's poverty the spread of land by the aggressive war into the Asian countries was the most effective strategy. The thought was supported by the "Zaibatu," the right wing's politicians and the Japanese army.

Consequently the G.H.Q. thought that the fundamental restructuring of the rural society under the old landownership was the most important policy to prevent the rearmament of Japan and aggressive war. The thought of the G.H.Q. was promptly realized as the Agrarian Reform (Nochi-Kaikou in Japanese). It was begun in 1945 and took around five years to achieve the goals. As a result, the old landownership was abolished and the establishment of the owner farmer system (Jisakuno-Sosetsu in Japanese) was newly established. It is widely known that the latter policy has the foundation of the current agriculture of Japan.

These two big restructuring policies just after the post-World War II were the key policies to realize the democratization of the Japanese economy.

Thirdly, we are able to indicate that the promulgation of the New Constitution of Japan and along with this Constitution a lot of related-laws were revised one after another. Besides, the movement of the Labor Union was also permitted formally. The Tenno-sei (emperor system) which recognized The Tenno as the "God" changed completely and the Tenno was prescribed as a symbol of Nation in the new Constitution. The Tenno was completely cut off from the politics. The series of restructuring policies fundamentally changed the old constitution since the Meiji Era.

Fourthly, the new education system and the guarantee to the freedom of speech and the learning were the epoch-making incidents in the Japanese history since the Meiji Era. Every Japanese became to be able to criticize the government and politics and to express his criticism freely.

VII. Epilogue

The Japanese economy had recovered the productivity in every sector until the pre-War level by around 1950. The Japanese economy rushed into the high economic growth period since 1960. Although the Japanese economy excessively promoted the economic growth by the inflation style, it is now suffering from the very long recession after the collapse of "Bubble Economy" in 1991.

However, the challenge of Japan for the modernization and the democracy is not yet finished. I believe that Japan has to continue to challenge to realize the true modernization and the genuine democracy on the higher level.

Thank you very much for joining us today.

ABSTRACT

The starting point of the modernization in Japan was The Meiji Ishin (Restoration) in 1868. Thinking about the process of introduction of modernization, we have to think about the historical background, and we should carefully pay attention to the manners and customs, life styles, the habit of thinking of our nation. Especially when we begin to consider the modernization of a nation, it is very important to reflect on whether the modernization and the social, cultural and traditional history of the nation will harmonize or not. I think that Japan has realized the success story in the world comparing with the other developing countries.

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