

social group (and also a 'paternalistic' state) has earned the people's loyalty and commitment.

A special attention, however, should be paid here to the fact that this nation has achieved successfully two overall 'revolutionary' social changes in the modern period; the Meiji Restoration and Democratization after World War II, from 'above.' In the former case, it was the Meiji government mainly consisting of the relatively 'unfortunate' classes in the preceding regime such as lower ranked *Samurai* and the rising merchant class that took the initiative to change. Their crisis-consciousness to the state of the nation (surrounded by the Western colonial powers) was also the driving force to change the society (to modernize the nation as quickly as possible; *fukoku-kyohei* = to enrich the country and establish the strong army). Thus nationalism performed a critical role in this social change. In the latter case, the Allied Occupation Forces (mainly Americans) were the principal agent of social change. And without their supreme power there would not have been such a radical democratization of the nation. Bitterly wounded by surrendering to the Allied Forces, even though the framework was set by Americans (The 1947 Constitution), the postwar political leaders were firmly determined to restore the nation and mobilized human as well as material resources to do so, this time in a peaceful way. People worked hard, but they were not necessarily motivated by their personal goals alone. Confucian values like seniority order, priority of the group, working ethics and 'pure' thrift remained vivid, and some of these values were institutionalized in the organizational structures of many social organizations. This accumulated to the point that by the end of 1960s Japan's economic status in terms of GNP recovered only to second after the United States with the top sales of TV in the world market. One could argue that some Confucian values also existed (and exist) in other Asian countries, too. Certainly this idea has led some scholars to argue that the recent economic development in the NICs (South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, and others) is partly caused (or at least, facilitated) by the Confucian ethics shared among these countries. Then, why couldn't they have modernized their countries sooner?

From the above argument, I would like to point out that so far radical social changes in this nation were not necessarily initiated by the people, from below, but rather by the top, foreign or Japanese, from above, or by the external conditions which, in many cases, were beyond the control of the Japanese themselves. The Meiji Restoration was led by the self-conscious elite who was fully aware of the national crisis. The postwar Democratization was initiated by Americans, who aimed at demilitarizing Japan and re-creating it as a peace-loving democratic state. In neither case, at least as far as people at large were concerned, social changes were caused by the internal necessity and guided by the specific values or philosophy, except by those that were imposed (or offered) from the 'outside.' It seems to me that the contemporary 'ambiguity' has something to do with these historical experiences on the part of the Japanese people. I'll return to the subject later in this essay.

2) Japanese version of the 'affluent society'

As Japan entered into the second stage, —the Age of Harvest—, sociologists began to introduce such concepts and theories as 'mass society,' 'affluent society,' and 'post-industrial society' from the Western sociology. With the preconditions of the affluent society fully realized, those theories could explain some basic social phenomena which were taking place in this period in Japan. Generally speaking, people tended to prefer non-material to material things. Consumption shifted from 'instrumental' to 'consummatory' (or 'expressive'). People demanded more refinement and sophistication in goods and services. Young professional women, who frequently traveled abroad, snapped up prestigious brand goods. More people engaged in 'leisure activities.' As listed in the attached chronology, it was in 1983 that Tokyo Disneyland opened. Then, came the problem, 'affluence for what?'

Again, the initiative came from the 'outside.' This time it came from the industry. Mainly gaining from the export of the 'made-in-Japan,' businesses invested the money to the tertiary industry, which succeeded in evoking massive consumption in this field. In addition to the 'made-in-Japan' material goods which saturated the domestic market, people began to pay for dining out, attending concerts (often played by foreigners), visiting museums, taking cultural classes, and traveling overseas. For example, Japanese foreign travel, of which more than eighty percent is sightseeing, increased in number of travelers from 663,000 in 1970 to 10,997,000 in 1990. Eventually, it hit record-high of 15,298,000 in 1995. On the other hand, many local