

Decolonialization and assumption of war responsibility

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Kato Norihiro's discussion of post-defeat Japan

One book that earned journalistic acclaim and triggered a controversy in Japanese intellectual fora from 1997 to 1998 was *Discussing Post-Defeat Japan* by literary critic Kato Norihiro (1998). In problematizing the basic mode of being of postwar Japan, Kato uses the idea of 'twistedness' as the key to understanding what he calls 'post-defeat' Japanese society. While war-defeated Japan has had this 'twistedness' built into its core, he argues, the Japanese society has ignored it and been behaving as though it did not exist.

Kato observes that since the Asian-Pacific war, which Japan fought, was condemned as an unjust war of aggression, those Japanese who sacrificed their lives, believing in the cause of the state, died meaningless deaths. With the meaning of the war thus denied by external circumstances, those who survived could not maintain the continuity of their wartime identity, nor could they deny it and break from it by their own choice. Kato calls this suspended identity a 'twist'. Here he uses 'twistedness' in personal terms to describe the ambivalent state of mind of many Japanese individuals.

However, he uses the same word to characterize postwar Japanese state and society. The postwar Japanese state is plagued by a twist because it has avoided consistent and responsible evaluation of the war. On the one hand, the Japanese government has time and again apologized to its Asian neighbours for 'acts of aggression'. But, on the other, government leaders and politicians periodically came out with blatant statements justifying what Japan did to its neighbours. Kato finds in this double-talk a 'twistedness' embedded in Japanese state and society. Kato's logic, which mixes up the personal and state levels, is extremely confusing.

In the context of state and society, Kato argues that Japanese society has perpetuated its schizophrenic duality as it has refused to admit the presence of this twistedness. Japan is, as it were, Dr Jekyll when it apologizes to its Asian neighbours for aggression, but it is at once Mr Hyde when it justifies and glorifies its past and makes excuses for its conduct.

Given this, he suggests, the priority task for the Japanese is first to admit the presence of the 'twistedness' and, on that basis, overcome this split personality by absorbing Mr Hyde into Dr Jekyll. Only then can 'we' re-emerge as a single nation that can qualify as a body able to apologize to others.

As a necessary step toward the reconstitution of this 'we', Kato proposes that Japan proceed through a particular national procedure – the mourning of the three million Japanese war dead. We will be constituted as a 'we' only after we, as a nation,

have paid tribute to our war dead. Only then can we apologize as Japanese to our Asian neighbours for having killed twenty million of them.

Anticipating the criticism that his proposal is but another attempt to revive Japanese nationalism, Kato disavows nationalism. He is simply proposing that 'we take upon ourselves' a 'national frame', rather than the constitution of a nationalistic Japanese community. If we abandon the task of becoming a nation, he reasons, we cannot make ourselves 'more open' to others, nor can we dream of going beyond the nation state.

Disavowals notwithstanding, Kato's reasoning follows a typical nationalist pattern; he proposes to reconstitute a nation with a single identity analogous to an individual. When Kato expresses his eagerness to let the 'we' stand up, he no doubt has in mind a single national community that subsumes individuals – an imagined community filled with shared national emotions that will be crystallized in national mourning rituals.

Until some time ago, I used to think that it would be necessary for us to recover our national consciousness as Japanese nationals in order to constitute a body that could fulfil the unsettled colonial and war responsibilities of the Japanese Empire. Japan as a nation, I thought, should be the body to apologize to, and compensate, the Asian people who were invaded and colonized by Japan. In this essay, I will re-examine my position by critical reference to Kato's proposition.

In connection with this, I would like to emphasize that Japan, in the postwar state reconstruction process, has ignored the settlement of its historical legacies of colonialism. I mean the decolonialization proper, including, but not reduced to, the settlement of war responsibilities in the narrow sense. This essay is intended to discuss the two related topics in a single context – the question of subjects for the assumption of war responsibility and the problem of decolonialization in postwar Japan.

The problem of decolonialization

Kang Sanjun (1998), who teaches social and cultural studies at Tokyo University, points out that Japan's official postwar national history has excluded, and made invisible, the colonized people who were once subjects of the Japanese Empire. Worse still, it has forgotten the process that led to their exclusion from its society in the postwar period. In this context, he quotes the following passage from historian Mitani Taichiro, who teaches political and diplomatic history of modern Japan at Tokyo University.

In the Japanese case, the decolonialization process as such, as distinguished from demilitarization, had a relatively small impact on the domestic course of affairs. To put it in another way, decolonialization was reduced to demilitarization. Moreover, the Cold War deepened at the very moment when decolonialization was supposed to be carried out. With the shift in the occupation policy, the political and economic reconstruction of postwar Japan became reoriented toward satisfying the requirement of the Cold War. The Cold War also influenced the decolonialization processes of Japan's former colonies. Decolonialization there was frozen at a level that would not hamper Japan's role in the Cold War. Now that the Cold War is over, the unfulfilled task of Japan's decolonialization has re-surfaced for settlement. Mitani understands this as the second stage, so to speak, of Japan's decolonialization process (Mitani 1997).

Decolonialization primarily means the liberation and independence of former

colonies, but it also refers to the corresponding process of decolonialization of the colonial powers. Mitani mainly discusses this latter process, the process of Japan 'liquidating its empire and Japan freeing itself of its empire' (Mitani 1993). These are the tasks Japan ought to have carried out as its own responsibility. In reality, however, by accepting the Potsdam Declaration that unilaterally set Japan's new territorial boundaries, the defeated Japan accepted decolonialization passively 'as a given and as the obvious'. With its colonial empire 'automatically disappearing' as the result of its defeat, Japan proper 'did not engage itself in decolonialization processes'. The Japanese people accordingly failed to take decolonialization seriously. Decolonialization, Mitani observes, was considered 'synonymous with, or a mere extension of, demilitarization and democratization'.

Granted these objective circumstances that left Japan insensitive to the issue of decolonialization, Mitani should have paid more attention to the fact that precisely because of this insensitivity, the pre-war imperial consciousness was not liquidated, but survived in postwar Japanese society.

Generally, Mitani's account is merely descriptive, and fails to problematize precisely who should carry out the process of decolonialization. I am not satisfied with the third-person stance that permeates Mitani's discourse. By attributing the decolonialization process in the 1990s solely to the end of the Cold War, Mitani totally misses the significance of people's movements in bringing it into focus. He fails to appreciate the people's movements which, since the 1970s, have ignited decolonialization processes everywhere. I have in mind, for instance, the indigenous peoples who raised voices of condemnation against their conquest and colonial domination, and the worldwide women's movement that identified the common roots of patriarchal and colonial domination. He also fails to mention the responsibility the Japanese government must fulfil for decolonialization.

It is true, as Mitani points out, that in the early postwar period there were no people's movements, nor serious social thinking, that pursued the task of decolonialization itself, as distinguished from demilitarization. There certainly were serious schools of thought and movements that sought to eradicate militarism and criticized the emperor system as the root of Japanese fascism, but they developed solely in the context of demilitarization. The central policy choice of the postwar Japanese state was to allow itself to be fully integrated with the postwar US hegemonic system, with a view to securing impunity for Emperor Hirohito for his war responsibilities and preventing Japanese people from being attracted to communism. The Cold War soon broke out, effectively and conveniently helping postwar Japan to bury the tasks of decolonialization. In this setting, not only did Japan not apologize to the peoples it had colonized, it also failed to assume responsibility for the damage done.

The Japanese people's understanding of Japan changed in the postwar period. Before 1945 the self-image of Japan was one of a vast, outstretched Empire. After 1945, it shrank, along with Japan's territory. The new understanding is that, since antiquity, Japan has been a natural community, integral to the Japanese archipelago. With their eyes bandaged by this myth of 'we, the natural historical community' and by their consciousness as war victims, the postwar Japanese struck their imperial past from their mind. By the same token, they could not imagine that they had to settle the consequences of modern Japan with other peoples – peoples Japan colonized and

otherwise victimized. This is why Koreans frequently become frustrated and upset when they discuss history with Japanese, finding in them little sense of national responsibility for what Japan did to the Koreans in the past. This lack of a sense of national responsibility can be attributed to the postwar construction of Japanese national history, where Japan's modern past was never properly grasped as a history of empire building and the eventual failure of this project and where, as Kang points out, the exclusion of Koreans and other former subjects of the Japanese Empire has been totally obliterated.¹

Rise of neo-nationalism

In the 1990s, following the end of the Cold War, the Gulf War, and the subsequent demise of the Soviet Union, strands of neo-nationalism sprang up and made considerable headway in Japanese society. Their ideological positions are wide-ranging, from the soft-peddalling style of Kato Norihiro, who advocates a guilt-free Japanese nation, to the extreme position of Ishihara Shintaro (now governor of Tokyo) who spouts anti-American rhetoric in a bid to attain Japanese hegemony in Asia. In spite of their differences, they are all historical revisionists who attack the 'postwar view of history' in one way or another.

The most eye-catching group of neo-nationalist intellectuals launched a campaign around 1996 against the 'postwar view of history'. They argue that the 'postwar view of history', which they claim dominates school textbooks, is a 'masochistic view of history' which sees only the vices and not the virtues of the Japanese nation (Fujioka 1996). They propose viewing modern Japanese history as a narrative of the state, with the people gallantly and assiduously working together to face the severe national ordeal. Proselytizing this view, they hold mass rallies and lobby local assemblies to pass petitions calling upon the Ministry of Education to erase from school textbooks any mention of the 'comfort women'. The dark side of history should not be taught, they claim, because children should be inspired with national pride. These campaigns have attracted significant numbers of the younger generation. In 1998, Kobayashi Yoshinori (1998), a popular cartoonist and one of the most conspicuous spokespersons of this campaign, published *Discussing the War* – a comic book! In this book, Kobayashi glorifies patriotism and attempts to justify Japan's imperialist wars, using this crude message, 'Will you go to war? Or do you stop being a Japanese?'. The book has sold half a million copies, the majority to young people, showing an ominous rise of nationalist feelings among the younger generation.

Alarmed by this historical revisionism, concerned intellectuals and activists have developed counter-arguments. Verbal battles first erupted between the neo-nationalists and critics over the 'comfort women' issue. It soon developed, however, into a broader debate on the Japanese government's attitude and policy toward the official system of sexual slavery. After repeated negations, the Japanese government was finally forced to admit the state involvement in organizing and running the system of military sexual slavery and, accordingly, had to admit its 'moral responsibility'. However it was, and still is, adamant in refusing to take legal responsibility for this, and on these grounds refuses to pay state reparations to the survivors. In an attempt to avoid taking legal state responsibility, it improvised an ambiguous scheme, the Asian Women's Fund (AWF), which would collect donations from citizens and pay

the survivors 'atonement money' out of this non-governmental fund. Survivors from Korea, the Philippines and elsewhere denounced the AWF as a gimmick, designed by the state to evade responsibility, and refused to receive this 'atonement money'. Groups and individuals working on the sexual slavery issue were split over whether the AWF should be seen as a deceptive government manoeuvre to evade state responsibility, or as a step forward, however small, toward redress for the survivors. Intense debate continues.

This debate soon developed from the pros and cons of the Asian Women's Fund to broader themes of what shouldering 'national war responsibility' meant. This debate was triggered by Ueno Chizuko (1997, 1998), who teaches sociology at Tokyo University. In her article 'Politics of memories' and book *Nationalism and Gender*, she offered a major challenge to the nationalistic discourse which she believed prevailed in the Japanese and Korean movements seeking redress for the 'comfort women'. In these writings, she criticized the notion that Japanese people, as members of the Japanese nation state, should assume responsibility for colonialism. At a symposium held by the Resource Center on Japan's War Responsibilities, Ueno was criticized by historian Yoshimi Yoshiaki, philosopher Takahashi Tetsuya, and two resident Korean intellectuals, writer/thinker Soh Kyonshik and historian Kim Puja. The proceedings of this symposium were published in a book, *Nationalism and the 'Comfort Women' Issue* (The Resource Center on Japan's War Responsibilities 1998).

Nationalism and feminism

In *Nationalism and Gender*, Ueno (1998) developed an interesting argument on the points we are discussing. Chapter 1, 'The nation state and gender', is a critique of the categories of the modern nation state and the nation from a gender perspective. The nation, Ueno argues, being defined right from its inception as a male association, is unable by definition to achieve gender equality within its framework. Since the modern nation state is constituted as a patriarchal one, women's participation riding on the state's strategy of nationalizing women can never lead to the liberation of women. Such participation only traps the women's liberation movement and leads it to compromise and failure. Exclusivity is ingrained in the category of the nation in the sense that a person at any point in time can belong to only one nation and no other. This category, forcing an individual either to be a member or a non-member, carries oppressive implications. To evade this trap of absorption into a single category of collectivity, a multiplicity of categories of affiliation, corresponding to the multiplicity of the individual identity, should be recognized.

I agree that the notion of monolithic collectivity should be rejected. Nevertheless, we have to live within it. Totally rejecting collectivity would mean relating to others only by difference and constantly fleeing from any involvement in relationships. This might be conceptually possible but, in practice, could lead to evasions of rightful responsibilities. It must be admitted, however, that any collectivity entails exclusivity. This is because any collectivity has to have its inside and outside. Recognizing this, it is necessary for us, in the context of social practice, to constitute a collectivity such as 'we', on an ad hoc basis, take it upon ourselves, and get it to interact with other collectivities which we also take upon ourselves.

But let me quote Ueno as she discusses the 'comfort women' issue (Chapter 2 of

her book). In December 1991, Kim Haksun and two other Korean former 'comfort women' filed a lawsuit in Japan, demanding an official apology and compensation from the Japanese government. This was a landmark event that brought the 'comfort women' issue to the attention of the Japanese public. Ueno sees in this a drastic paradigm shift. This shift occurred, Ueno argues, as the 'comfort women' issue, for the first time, came to be recognized as a case of a sexual crime committed by the Japanese military. 'This shift was brought about by the Korean women's movement as well as the democratization movement in the 1980s. Behind the Korean women's movement was the upsurge of the feminist movement throughout the world.'

It is true that the feminist movement was a major factor that brought the 'comfort women' issue to the front of stage. But I am afraid that by reducing the complex factors at work to one, she misses others that also worked to bring that issue to the surface. In particular, she misses the factor of renewed decolonialization processes in the 1990s.

Kim Puja (1988), who studies Korean modern history of education and gender, criticizes Ueno's discourse for having 'little concern for colonialism and a poor awareness that she herself is a concerned party, rather than an outsider'. Generalizing this point, she remarks that not only Ueno, but also Japanese women in general, 'have a tendency to construct the "comfort women" issue within the confines of a feminist discourse that is indifferent to national problems'. As evidence of this, she points out that although the 'comfort women' issue was already widely known in Japan in the 1970s, Japanese women did not make it an issue until the Korean women raised it in the 1990s. On this ground she urges the Japanese women's movement to re-examine its postwar history, reflecting on whether or not it was indifferent to Japan's colonialism and national issues. She wonders whether Japanese feminists, having lived as members of a ruling nation, have felt no need to face national issues seriously.

What is Ueno's position *vis-à-vis* criticisms along the lines of Kim Puja's argument? Ueno examines several existing paradigms that situate the 'comfort women' issue differently, and then criticizes and rejects each of them as one-sided.² Having done so, she proposes to 'place this issue in the context of comparative history and thereby make it understandable and resolvable'.

By comparative history, she no doubt means international comparative studies on the issues of sexual violence against women at war and in armed conflict situations. But I am not satisfied with this conclusion, as she is proposing merely to make academic this highly practical issue. While she admits that the 'comfort women' issue requires a comprehensive understanding of 'gender, class and nation', she in fact does not positively integrate the 'nation' aspect into her discourse. Rather, she carefully shuns the national factor, apparently wary of being dragged into nationalist discourses.

Ueno defines nationalism as the 'identification of the individual with the nation state'. According to her, expressions like 'I as a member of a nation that victimized other people' or simply the use of 'we' would in itself commit us to nationalism. Accordingly, when other people retrogressively condemn Japan for what it did to them, Ueno would say that she is not answerable. For by being answerable to what the Japanese state did, she would be identifying herself with the Japanese state or nation. The 'comfort women' issue involves only personal relationships between Ueno as an individual and the former 'comfort women', also as individuals.

Ueno herself is not making a plea for an abstraction of the individual. On the contrary, in her book's conclusion, she opposes recourse to 'such abstract universal agents like the "global citizen", "the individual", or "humanity" as a way of overcoming the exclusivity of the nation'. She points to the temptation of 'the concept of universal, cosmopolitan citizenship', saying that succumbing to it would lead to the fallacy that the individual can be free from any belonging and be allowed to behave as though the burdens of history did not exist. What constitutes 'me', she argues, is 'the diverse relationships in concert – gender, nationality, occupation, status, race, culture, ethnicity and so on – none of which I can flee from but none of which I can be reduced to'. What she refuses to accept is the privileging and essentializing of one over the others, and the logic of representation, allowing someone else to speak on behalf of 'me proper'.

Stating that 'me proper' cannot and should not be reduced to a single category is a declaration of the right to self-definition and self-representation. This is a feminist manifesto of refusal to be defined by others and of struggle against the oppression that forces women into the male-created discursive space. I support this position. But I am disappointed when she refers to the various relationships constituting 'me' only in negative terms, that is, merely as something 'I cannot flee from but cannot be reduced to'.

Ueno admits that as part of her historical and social relationships, she is involved in the relationships that make her 'a member of the Japanese nation'. Given her agreement on this, she should have positively defined what it means to her to shoulder responsibility as a member of the nation.

Subjectivity as 'Japanese'

In a forum on the theme of 'What did post-colonial thinking mean in Japan', carried by the journal *Space of Criticism* in 1996, Tomiyama Ichiro (1996), who teaches sociology at Osaka University, observes that 'before discussing post-coloniality, we must problematize the absence of any basic discussion about the processes of decolonialization and the abandonment of the responsibility for decolonialization in Japan'. Therefore, 'if belatedly, we need to discuss decolonialization processes now'. But to discuss the colonial responsibility, he pointed out, 'it is unavoidable that we call to the stage a certain very rigid body to assume the responsibility'. Here he has to ask how such a rigid body and the more open and flexible subjectivity discussed in the post-colonial discourse can be compatible. 'Here we face a very difficult problematic.' Tomiyama himself does not have an answer to this dilemma.

At the same symposium, Soh Kyonshik (1998), a writer teaching at Hosei University discussing the Japanese state's responsibility for reparation, names 'you, the Japanese' as the ones who bear the primary responsibility for changing the Japanese state. He points out that most of the former Zaibatsu corporations and major construction companies raked in enormous profits from the colonial rule and war, and that in the postwar period they rebuilt themselves on this basis. Japan's postwar prosperity was made possible by this fact. The tripartite complicity established in the past among the Japanese state, companies and people, has been carried over into the postwar period, and each Japanese is a beneficiary from this inherited structure of

privilege. This being the case, conniving at the state's evasion of responsibility for reparations to the victims is in itself a criminal act. He asks:

Isn't it the case that the Japanese have been clinging to their comfortable lives, more or less aware of this crime? Aren't the Japanese, as they live in this historical and current relationship as members of the Japanese state and nation, already responsible (for this crime)? When I urge you to take responsibility as Japanese, I mean exactly this.

(Soh 1998: 68).

In the face of the accusation that the Japanese as a whole are an accessory to this crime of cover-up, I take the stand that as long as I was born as a member of the colonizer nation state, and am still positioned in a historical situation where the decolonialization of Japan is not complete, I would provisionally take upon myself the definition of being a 'Japanese', the definition that is given to me by other people and that puts me into the national Japanese collective. I say 'provisionally' because I do not think I should remain forever passively defined and bound by this given relationality. Japanese colonial rule as viewed from the colonized peoples presents itself as nothing other than national oppression by the Japanese as a race. The colonized peoples thus take the Japanese race to task for their colonial responsibility. In the context of decolonialization, this identification of the nation state with the race is grounded in both imagery and reality.

Even so, it would be wrong for us to jump from an awareness of our historical colonizer state responsibility to identification with the Japanese nation. If we did so, we would be constructing ourselves in the image of the racially constituted Japanese as projected by the accusers. In that event, we would fall into the trap of the essentialist nationalist paradigm.

How far can individuals be responsible for the conduct of the nation state of which they are members? This should not be uniformly and sweepingly determined. The notion that every person who belongs to a nation state carries an exactly equal share of responsibility for what the state has done should be criticized as nationalistic, in the sense that the national identity is singled out as the essential category, overshadowing other categories of identities that individuals also take.

Moving back to Ueno, she sees in Soh Kyonshik's discourse a nationalist paradigm that fails to problematize sexual violence beyond national boundaries. Her concern centres on how feminism can be set free from the nationalist paradigm. But this has the potential of carrying her to the other extreme, by dismissing the national factor.

Oka Mari (1998), who teaches contemporary Arab Literature at Osaka Women's College, reacts to Ueno precisely on this weakness. Oka makes the point that feminism can overcome nationalism only when it is committed to the practice of squarely facing and disintegrating the national relationships people are already enmeshed in. But Ueno does not do so. In defending her right to select her own identity, Ueno refuses to respond to the question raised by others about her responsibility as a Japanese. Oka argues that the 'me' that is constituted and projected by others is to her an 'other' and, as such, is something that she cannot freely choose. 'I' therefore must encounter the 'me' as perceived by the eyes of others and try to answer the questions posed to that 'me'. This is the first step, she says, toward disintegrating

the asymmetrical colonial power relationships in which she enjoys a privileged position (Oka 1998: 236).

Oka's argument is fully correct as a normative one. But essentialism can easily penetrate Oka's 'me as other' as caught in the eyesight of others, and can fix the 'me' there. If I totally accept this categorical image of me projected by others and internalize it, this 'me as other' will force me to negate my life itself, because it will be structurally guilty of the exploitation of third-world people. We must free ourselves from the essentialist paradigm that posits a homogeneous collectivity. But on the other hand, the rejection of essentialism merely by opposing a 'me proper' (Ueno), which relates to others only by differences would erase the entire instance of responsibility – the instance at which an individual places a certain moral obligation upon him/herself in response to the calls of others. To the side asking for a response, this act of erasure would signify an exercise of privilege.

How then should this responsible subject be constructed?

First, the essentialized notion of the racially constructed Japanese should be turned down. It would leave little space for individuals who refuse to absolutize the state, endeavour to create relationships beyond national boundaries, and carry out decolonialization as the manifestation of their inner urge to be free and live a meaningful life. Any person exposed to the injustices of the Japanese state naturally feels righteous anger at the neglect of redress for the victims and the cover-up of the crimes by the Japanese state, and feels pain for the sufferings of the victims. Although this ethical feeling does not choose nationality, if the person is Japanese, the ethical pains felt must be more intense. This is a special, ethical feeling felt as a member of the collective that committed the crime. The 'comfort women' debate concerns precisely this point – the responsibility of being a member of a collective called the nation state.

It should be clear that the Japanese people have allowed the Japanese state and corporations to evade settlement of their colonial past for more than half a century. This is why the former 'comfort women' have to demand redress now. This fact defines the postwar responsibility which falls on the shoulders of those Japanese who had no direct war or colonial responsibility, including younger generations. If it is a crime, it is a crime of cover-up and concealment. Political theorist Muto Ichiyo (1998) discusses this matter in the light of the nature of the postwar Japanese state, which integrates within itself three mutually contradictory principles: the unbroken line of continuity from Japan's imperial past (most notably in the form of the retention of Hirohito as emperor), American free worldism and constitutional pacifism. Because of this peculiar formation (a twistedness in the statehood), the postwar Japanese state has been unable to break from its past, nor has it been able to openly justify it.

Now that this postwar state has entered into a historical process of disintegration and metamorphosis, the direction of reorganization of the postwar statehood is being contested. This is the most pressing task facing the residents and their communities on this archipelago. As Muto says, we will only be able to cease to be an accomplice to the crimes committed by the state – war, colonialization and cover-ups – when we have overcome the postwar Japanese state and transformed it into a political formation based on alternative principles. However, we take on this task not because we are named and urged to do so, but because we have an inner urge and sense of obligation to do so.

Tasks of *Kyosei*

Post-Second World War Asia, with the rise of national liberation movements, turned into an arena of West–East confrontation. In territories suffering from splits of nations, in particular, brute violence was exercised by the military and police against the opposition forces. Much blood was shed in the process. It is now time to recall these memories, to ask why the nation states, built through vast sacrifices of the people, came to betray the ideals they originally held high. In fact, it is time to call into question the state-centred paradigm of politics. As a concept for a new political philosophy, I have been talking about ‘co-vivality’, an English word coined from the Japanese word ‘*kyosei*’, literally ‘living together’.

The concept originated in Japanese movements against industrial pollution towards the end of the 1960s. At the beginning, it was used in slogans like ‘For a civilization where human beings and nature can “live together” (co-vive)’. In the 1970s, ‘the logic of co-vivality’ came into use in various movements against social discrimination, such as the women’s liberation movement and those of the Buraku people, disabled persons and ethnic minorities. Within these movements, the logic of co-vivality was used as a guideline to end discrimination against specific social groups. Co-vivial relationships meant relationships in which differences do not generate discrimination. From these specific usages came a broader meaning of co-vivality as the guiding principle of alternative political and social formation. Co-vivality was also introduced as a means of transforming the unequal relationships between people in the core and periphery, because under the existing structure which perpetuates inequality, differently positioned people in the world system are pushed into antagonistic positions and are prevented from living together in positive interaction and solidarity.

I have been engaged since the 1970s in activities for the recognition of the Ainu as an indigenous people, for the recovery of their indigenous rights. I have also participated in activities to overcome discrimination against Koreans in Japan. I discovered through this process that the movement for the resolution of these issues necessitated two lines of logic. One regards the responsibility of the nation and the state in the decolonialization process, a topic I have discussed earlier. The other concerns a new multi-ethnic and multi-cultural democracy. At first, activists did not clearly perceive the importance of the logic of new democracy, but this idea earned their recognition as the movement developed and as international solidarity deepened. International solidarity increasingly demonstrated the effectiveness of the strategy of criticizing and reforming the state policies and institutions of a country, through the combined mobilization of forces inside and outside the country. Conversely, the importance of decolonialization as the disintegration of the imperial consciousness and the liquidation of the negative legacies of colonialism began to be increasingly perceived in the midst of the move toward a co-vivial democracy, in which people could come together in solidarity beyond state and national borders.

I am aware, however, that people who are condemning the colonizer state and nation may immediately find themselves alarmed, and even upset, by my mention of co-vivality. Their wariness is legitimate. In fact, ‘Let us live together!’ has been a mainstream slogan in Japanese society since the mid-1980s, appropriated in advertise-

ments or as official catchphrases in order to cover up existing social antagonisms. Underneath this sleek phrase, we often find, tucked away, continuing, and even strengthened, discrimination, in new forms, against ethnic and other minorities.

Under these circumstances, it is important for people who have been discriminated against to keep guard against the easy use of the term. It is only in the midst of practices that actually transform the existing relationships that the idea of co-vivality can prove itself relevant. Conditions, or in fact procedures, that transform the existing antagonistic relationships into conditions of freedom should therefore be seriously sought.

This is exactly what Ri Takanori (1998), who teaches cultural studies at Tokyo University, seeks to do in his essay, 'Beyond the representation of a "better Japanese"'. Taking the 'comfort women' issue as a touchstone, Ri examines the common procedures that would be required to create a co-vivial relationship over this issue. Ri says that the notion of 'better Japanese' would not lead to such a relationship. Kato Norihiro's contention, according to Ri, is favourably received in Japan because Japanese people perceive in it the plausible message that 'we are capable of taking war responsibility, and so let us, Japanese, build a better Japan for ourselves'. The wish to be 'better Japanese' represents an emotional sharing exclusively among Japanese for the sake of the Japanese alone. This emotion, Ri points out, functions as a shield which prevents Japanese from reacting to others, and as a frame within which Japanese can be content with themselves to the exclusion of others. What then is the basis for co-vivial relationality? Ri's answers are implicit in a series of questions he asks:

Why are the former 'comfort women' accusing the Japanese of what was done to them more than 50 years ago? Is it not because they want to unlive the past at present, however imperfect an unliving it may be? Are not they demanding redress in clear and acceptable procedures, in the form of apology and compensation? Is it not because the procedural settlement is a kind of joint work (by them and the Japanese) in which their past relationship with the Japanese, which was simply abominable, could somehow be mediated to a present that is clearly distinct from the past? Isn't this the way they wish to be saved and healed? Even though they can never forget the past, are they not anxious to be able to relativize or even forgive it by building a new relationship (with Japanese) so that they can be saved? Is it not true that responding to this call will not only save their past but save their future by overcoming the absolute barrier between the assailant and the victim?

At the earlier mentioned symposium, Soh Kyunshik urged Japanese to develop a plan to create 'another Japan – a Japan different from the past Japan with its family-like cohesiveness with the Emperor at the top, and a Japan also different from the postwar Japan whose symbolic image was the family organized around the father working assiduously for company interests'. It is in the nuclear family image that Soh sees the core of postwar Japanese nationalism. Anxious to have another Korea, Soh invites those Japanese and Koreans who have plans for another Japan and another Korea to come together in solidarity. I fully support this idea.

Since 1989, I have joined like-minded people in a movement to envision and actuate another Japan and an alternative world. This movement is called the People's Plan 21. We felt that changing Japan could not be a task isolated from the regional and global context. It is a task integral to the transformation of the global system. I wish

that efforts to create 'another Japan' will be increasingly oriented toward deconstructing Japanese nationalism and will join forces with the people's movements in Asia and elsewhere, particularly with decolonialization movements in East Asia. Together, hopefully, we will see the emergence of a new paradigm that goes beyond the constraints of the nation state and nationalism everywhere.

Notes

1. Grasping the present as a new decolonialization stage in the historical context leads us to the task of critiquing and reorganizing the historical knowledge about pre-war and postwar Japan. As Tessa Morris-Suzuki (1998) points out, this problem has much in common with the issues debated on the global level about history and memory. Criticizing resurgence of nationalism on a global scale as a backlash against the collapse of the old paradigm that histories are automatically national histories, she emphasizes the need to go beyond histories centred on nation states and proposes that history be constituted as 'an ongoing dialogue between many memories and material traces of the past.'

Takashi Fujitani observes that, since the mid-1980s, the modes of being of the memories of the Holocaust, Hiroshima, the Battle of Okinawa, colonialism, slavery, Vietnam, the Conquest, the Nanking massacre, 'comfort women' and so on, have been highlighted. Public memories, he remarks, have been formed as plausible and value-laden memories as the result of conspiracies between various differential indicators such as nation, race, class, gender, and sex (retranslated from the Japanese text). Fujitani cautions all who do work in the area of memories to be fully aware of this. Arlette Farge self-critically observes that historians have not paid attention to the 'narrative of suffering' as the 'living abode of history'. She commends a new historiography that can bear the task of accepting the intruder called 'evoked sufferings'. This is an attempt to retell the histories by making public the suppressed memories – memories, for instance, of the women victimized by sexual violence at war (Farge 1998).

2. Ueno (1998: 104) identifies five paradigms that she says are used to discuss the 'comfort women' issue: the national shame (patriarchal) paradigm, wartime rape paradigm, prostitution paradigm, sexual slavery paradigm, and the emperor system paradigm.

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