The Foundations of Japanese Morality: Consciousness Regulated by Social Norms

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Abstract

At presents, we are facing gigantic problems such as climate change, human rights, and the pandemic. Thus, communication beyond the differences of races, cultures, religions and nations is necessary. Especially, it is important for the Japanese people to become aware of their own worth and communicate with the foreign people in order to prove their presence in the global society. The aim of this research is to consider the Japanese worth and focus on the Japanese ethics based on social norms, i.e. seken. By a convenient means, ethics based on seken are called "Japanese morals" in this research. The foundations of Japanese morals are explained and analyzed based on the studies of two Japanese scholars, Masao Maruyama and Shuichi Kato. Moreover, the previous studies on seken had been summarized and some similarities among them had been highlighted. On observing the analysis, three essential elements of the seken have been found out. First, there are no individuals, because seken is not equal in a society that consists of individuals. Second, people in seken tend to prioritize emotion over reason. Third, seken is the consciousness to consider an issue from the viewpoint of the present and to judges it without problem as a temporary measure. In the final part of this research, problems and solutions of the Japanese morals have been discussed.

Introduction

A decade ago, the Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami struck on March 11, 2011, severely damaging the Fukushima Daichi Nuclear Power Plant. Many people around the world were surprised that Japanese victims of the disaster, despite their despair, maintained order even in disaster-stricken areas. Although they lost family members and their homes, they did not panic and calmly gathered in rows to receive rations and water. Foreigners who watched the disaster unfold on TV might have wondered what drove the Japanese victims to adopt such orderly behavior, especially when more than 70 percent of the Japanese population is non-religious. How then does the consciousness of values arise?

In 2020, many people died as the COVID‑19 pandemic caused suffering around the world. Some foreign governments have imposed curfews and fines, such as Germany and France. However, the Japanese government did not impose regulations, but rather *requested* people not to venture outdoors after 8 p.m., for example. Up to now, requests have worked effectively to constrain the spread of COVID‑19 in Japan. According to Professor Shinya Yamanaka, Nobel Prize winner for medicine, there is no reason that the spread of the disease cannot be curbed. He ventured to attribute this to "factor X," which he identified as *seken*, which works as consciousness of norms in Japanese society.[1]

The word *seken* is used in *seken-tei*（decency）as well as in the term for "read the atmosphere." It is important for most Japanese people to make decisions based on evaluations by their neighbors and members of society, rather than a god or religion. In this study, such morals, which work to inform decision-making, are defined as "Japanese morals" for the sake of convenience.

The purpose of this study is to clarify the foundation of Japanese morals, identify the kinds of problems Japanese morals contain, and suggest ways to handle them in the future.

1.　Foundation of Japanese morals

1.1　A theory of *Koso*（"old layer"）by Masao Maruyama

What is the origin of Japanese morals that manifest in typical Japanese behavior and attitudes, such as politeness, even during disasters, or sensitivity to the atmosphere? The scholar Masao Maruyama（1914-1996）delved deeply into studying the origins of Japanese thoughts. He was a significant intellectual in Japan after World War II. His theory of *koso*, the "old layer," published in 1960s, has been described as a "prototype" of Japanese culture.[2]

Maruyama also said that this prototype had a common change pattern for every period. Whether one's intentions were good or bad depended on the consensus of a particular community. In his view, good and evil were not universal values.

I start my research on theories of Japanese morals with an analysis of Maruyama's theory of the old layer. Documents of his lectures are available from Tokyo University（1964-1967）and comprise three parts: consciousness of history, consciousness of ethics, and consciousness of politics. I aim to integrate these three aspects and reorganize their structure. First, I explain the meaning of "the prototype." Second, I distinguish three elements of the prototype: pure sentiment, collective utilitarianism, and present centralism. Third, I explain Maruyama's thoughts about the Japanese view of ethics.

1.1.1　Prototype

Maruyama said, "Prototype is a primitive form of a mode of social relationships and political conduct. Additionally, it is a mindset and consciousness of values in myths and ancient stories." [3] The prototype is laid in the deepest layer of the Japanese mental structure.[4]

From a historical viewpoint, Japanese culture and thought have adopted foreign cultures. One accepted culture after another has accumulated, with new layers and old ones affecting each other. As a result, Japan's value system and

way of thinking have gradually evolved and penetrated to the roots of the culture. Through this process, the old layer has formed over hundreds of years. Thus, it moves beyond current ages. The Japanese people are unconsciously influenced by the old layer. As Maruyama stated, the old layer is characterized by weak ability for transcendental thinking, such as metaphysical thinking.[5]

However, it has the advantages of pragmatic thinking and suitability. Maruyama's concept of the prototype is one of restricting and purifying something of value as well as the process of eliminating the influence of foreign religions（Buddhism and Confucianism）and analyzing the ideas of Shintoism and folklore.[6]

1.1.2 Features of the prototype

1.1.2.1 Pure heart

One of the features of the prototype is purity of heart. In Japanese classical literature, such as *Kojiki* and *Nihonshoki*, we can find the expression *kiyoki-kokoro* (purity of heart).[7]

In Maruyama's saying, *kokoro* means "spirit," a concept integrated with mind, heart, and will. If the motivation of an action comes from an individual's pure heart, then the action would be highly regarded even if it were illegal. This purity of heart is connected to interests in real responses to a person's community. In other words, an action that comes from a person's pure heart is permissible, even if it is unreasonable.[8]

In my opinion, purity can restrict the function of utilitarianism in a community. The criterion of utilitarianism depends on whether something is good or bad for the well-being of the community. However, if purity were connected with utilitarianism, social rules by nature in the community could not function. In other words, pure heart in particular human relationships or groups takes advantage of ethical norms, such as what should be done.[9]

1.1.2.2 Collective utilitarianism

Simply, collective utilitarianism is a norm that one sees as good or evil, that is, whether it would produce benefits or suffering for a community.[10]

The issue is the size of a community. A community of members is assumed able to make good or bad decisions, because they know each other and are able to connect around common issues.[11] Therefore, whether it is good or bad for a community to have a relatively small number of members is a norm that hardly exists as an absolute criterion beyond the community.[12]

In other words, politics takes precedence over religion and culture in terms of value judgments. In particular, pragmatic value judgments work very well in the world of politics. This is the reason that Maruyama attributes to the few conflicts in Japan based on universal values（i.e., religious war）.[13]

1.1.2.3 Present centralism

Maruyama described the idea of time in the prototype as follows.[14] The main point is the lack of subjectivity, such as a god that could intervene. There is no absolute being in the consciousness of time in the prototype. "Time is changing continuously."[15] The Japanese people see time as a process of naturally running time. As for them, that is "history". According to Maruyama, such historical consciousness is related to a weak tradition of idealism.[16]

This means that the prototype has neither idealism nor metaphysics. Then, Japanese people could not develop a way of thinking for intervention and analyzing objects. In addition, they could not have a progressive viewpoint for storing values of past time with application to present issues. In other words, there is a connection between the present and past in the Japanese mind,[17] but it is not an idea that follows from past to present. "Past is past, present is present."[18]

Each is essentially separate in essence. As a result, Japanese people have not developed an attitude toward learning from the past.

Furthermore, Maruyama described *Yo no naka no nariyuki*（turn in the

world）as Japanese consciousness of time, or optimism by which purity of heart increases. This means that people are able to cope with their problems positively, even if the present situation is temporarily disastrous. Then, they decide to proceed on their path. Such time consciousness appears optimistic on the surface. However, it does not mean affirming the meaning of one's whole life, but rather life in that moment. In that way, it is possible to accept death easily, if one chooses a world after death as the next moment.[19]

1.1.3 Views of good and evil

A norm depends on whether something is good or bad for a community, especially a particular group. According to Maruyama, optimistic becoming in present centralism is "good" in general. A "bad" thing works against such becoming.[20] The meaning of optimistic becoming is natural becoming, which "is the same as increasing." This is the unsophisticated glory of creation and expansion（＝propagation）in the Japanese subconscious.[21]

From the perspective of Japanese religious consciousness, in which there is no transcendental being, Gods both good and evil are revealed in supernatural conduct. For example, the god *Nahobi* was incarnated to purify *kegare*（pollution）. *Nahobi* is used to cure disease. Japanese tend to consider good and evil as expressed in a mutual function. In other words, good and evil are not intrinsic in gods.[22] Maruyama suggested that the realization of good and evil depends on their functions.

1.2 Theory of Japanese culture by Shuichi Kato

It is necessary to consider, in a discussion of the origins of Japanese morals, Shuichi Kato（1919-2008）in addition to Maruyama. He had broad knowledge from ancient literature, culture, and arts to modern thinking and politics, and was considered an intellectual giant in modern Japan. He spent long periods abroad in foreign countries, such as France.[23]

He was an unusual thinker who could discuss Japanese culture and thinking from both Western and Japanese perspectives. I published my thesis concerning his theory of Japanese culture, and introduce a summary as follows.[24]

His first work on Japanese culture was *Zasshu Bunka* (*Hybrid Culture*, 1955).[25] He later published many works. His representative works are *Introduction of History of Japanese literature* (I), (II)," (1975, 1980), which describe ancient to modern Japanese cultures. When he was 88 years old, he wrote the book *Time and Space in Japanese Culture* (2007).

It is difficult to summarize his broad critique of Japanese culture. However, briefly, his view of culture is partialism in time and space. He explained not only partialism but also present centralism. Even in present centralism, we find the tendency to emphasize a part, reducing the present "now" to a stream of history. A feature of collectivism is that it limits a particular space where one stands "here." Human relationships are the only criterion. These features originate from partialism.

According to Maruyama and Kato, Japanese morals are not based on metaphysical idealism and their function is realistic and pragmatic; they are a feature of Japanese consciousness of values. Their origin is a view of ethics without an absolute being that transcends human beings, like God in Judaism and Christianity. In ethics, it is good to maintain balance among human relationships and to remain in harmony with each other. Both Maruyama and Kato agree on this point.

Above all, Japanese morals are founded on a way of thinking that consists of present centered time consciousness and space consciousness limited within a community.

2. Theory of *seken*

The thinking in Maruyama's and Kato's theories goes deep to the roots of Japanese morals. Practically, it reveals social phenomena among human

relationships, or "representative" public opinion through mass communication. Generally, this is people's consciousness of *seken*. It also refers to *seken-tei*, which refers to a sense of "others" in Japanese society.[26]

Collectivism, in Maruyama's and Kato's views has the characteristic of burying the being of self in a group. In other words, the self must not be conspicuous in a group, and should not stand out among others. Collectivism forces people to follow a particular way, obeying the consensus that informs *seken*. Before considering issues in terms of the consciousness of *seken* in today's global society, we must draw attention to the original meaning of *seken*. It seems that *seken* could widely influence the framework to decide what Japanese is, that is, the meaning of the existence of being Japanese.

Originally, *seken*（世間）was a translated word, *loka*, from Sanskrit, and a technical word in Buddhism.[27] *Yo*（世）means "changing and moving"（遷流）or "gradually changing through perpetual disruption and remaking." In summary, *yo* has the characteristic of uncertainty. According to Watsuji, a great scholar of ethics, *ken*（間）refers to space and human relationships. Space is dynamic and full of life.[28]

Humans can freely create anything in space. Moreover, Watsuji explained, "*seken* refers to human society whose feature is changing, moving, and locality. Alternatively, it is the existence of human beings as historical, natural, and social."[29] He did not analyze the difference between *seken* and society in this context. However, some other studies highlight this because of the different meaning of existence as human beings. This is the reason for the difference between *seken* and society.[30]

I expand the point into representative strands of previous research in the following subsections.

2.1 Previous research of theories of *seken*

Many scholars consider the following previous research on *seken* to be

valuable: *Nihonjin no Nakamaishiki* (*Japanese Group Feeling*) by Toshinao Yoneyama (1976), *Sekentei no Kohzou* (*Structure of Appearances*) by Tadashi Inoue (1977), and *Seken towa Nanika* (*What is Seken?*) by Kinya Abe (1992). Others are *Seken no Genshougaku* (*Phenomenology of Seken*) by Naoki Sato (2001) and *Tanin wo Yurusenai Saru: IT seken ni tunagareta Gendaijin* (*Monkey, Unforgiving Others*) by Nobuo Masataka (2006). Other works whose main themes are not *seken* but provide useful hints about it are as follows: *Ningen no Gaku toshiteno Rinrigaku* (*Ethics as a Science of Human Beings*) by Tetsuro Watsuji (1934), *Tateshakai no Ningenkankei* (Japanese Society) by Chie Nakane(1967), and *Amae no Kouzou* (The Anatomy of Dependence) by Takeo Doi (1971). Moreover, the following studies are valuable: *Kuuki no Kenkyuh* (*Study on Air*) by Shichihei Yamamoto(1977) and *Sairei to Seken* (*Ritual and Seken*) by Kunio Yanagida (1922). In this study, I introduce studies by Yoneyama (1976), Inoue (1977), Abe (1992), and briefly, Sato (2001) and Masataka (2006).

Yoneyama stated that his motive for publishing his book was related to two people: Kunio Yanagida and Chie Nakane. Yoneyama was inspired by Yanagida's statement that, "I have to research for 'friends' from now on." Yoneyama wanted to consider Yanagida's new trail of research.[31] Another motivation was hearing Nakane say in a study group that she wanted to research why members in a group were able to keep their youthful vitality. Yanagida is a great folklorist, and Nakane is a famous sociologist. They were interested in "human relationship" as friends and as groups as a topic for their studies. Yoneyama noticed *nakama* (company) was a key word. He also researched the words for "acquaintance," "company," and "brothers." His main theme was the human relationships among the Japanese people. And, his unique point was that *seken* was not a necessary feature of Japanese consciousness.[32]

However it seems that his research is meaningful to analyze the structure of

seken. In his study, through a vertical axis, human relationships are divided into two groups: one large and one small. Through a transverse axis, the relationships are divided into two groups: blood relatives and other. This division created four groups: 1. large-blood, 2. large-other, 3. small-blood, and 4. small-other. According to Yoneyama's definition, group 1 consists of brothers, group 2 of *seken*, group 3 of family, and group 4 of company. As the classification indicates, *seken* works against group 3, that is, the small-blood group of family against the large-other group of *seken*. Yoneyama suggests that company, in the small-other group, are located between the family and *seken*. To his mind, most bonding relationships in Japanese society, such as wedding ceremonies and funerals, belong to group 4, company.[33]

Maruyama gave *nareai*（collusion）as an example of a negative dimension of a company. If it develops into an organization by itself, it becomes the "octopus pot model," that is, an isolated relationship. Then, the organization has a poor transverse relationship and the members do not communicate with each other well.[34]

Yoneyama also refers to leadership in a group as a company. If people have maintained their relationship as a group for a long time, a highly recognized person emerges among them. One may notice leadership in a company in Japanese human relationships.[35]

Inoue's study of *Sekentei no Kouzo*（*Structure of Appearance*）more comprehensively explains the essence of *seken* than Yoneyama's study does. As the title suggests through the word "appearance," the study deeply analyzes the meaning and structure of *seken*. Tetsuro Watsuji briefly referred to the original meaning of *seken*. Inoue explained the origin, features, and changes in the meaning in detail. From this point of view, Inoue's study might be the first study of *seken*. However, the analysis of the original meaning of *seken* by Watsuji largely contributed to Inoue's explanation. Inoue identified *seken* as a technical Buddhist word,（in the world）. Then, it changed its meaning to a Japanese peculiarity.[36]

Gradually, *seken* came to express one's relationship with others in the world.

One of the interesting points in Inoue's study is the fact that *seken* not only meant narrow human relationships among the general masses, but also *seken-banashi*（stories of *seken*）, which was regarded as a valuable story about taking a break from ordinary life by a trip to new countries.[37] *Seken* refers to departure from narrow life space and acquiring unknown and broad information in the world. Inoue suggested that this tendency was related to the popularity of travel in the later Edo age（18th century）. From this viewpoint, one may say that the meanings of *seken* have complicated dimensions, including both narrowness and broadness. Considering of narrow *seken*, human relationships, such as those with family and relatives（i.e., home）, play an important role.[38]

Family in itself is distinguished from *seken*, but the social status of a family among Samurai families was strictly classified. The relationship in family ranking is said to be narrow *seken*. Family ranking is constructed from the pyramid organization of Samurai families. The *tennoh*（emperor）, considered the head of all families, is at the top of the organization. This structure functioned as a view of Japan as a nation of family from the Edo to Meiji periods（17th-19th centuries）.[39]

Inoue refers to the difference between inside and outside（*uchi to soto*）by Watsuji's statement of the structure of *seken*. One of the features of *uchi* is a whole relationship, such as a family, in which individuals cannot be distinguished. Meanwhile, Inoue said, *soto*（outside）is *seken*.[40] Japanese people take care of how are perceived. They often control their conduct and decide what to do based on this viewpoint. On the contrary, *uchi*（inside）in *seken* is strongly apt to be closed to observation from the outside. We can see *seken* as having an ambivalent character from the inside and outside perspectives.[41]

From the viewpoint of *seken* structure, in Inoue's theory, the relationship between *uchi* and *soto* is developed as a structure of *miuchi-seken-tanin*（family-*seken*-others）. He criticized Yoneyama's theory of a *nakama*（company）-*seken* relationship. In addition, he placed *seken* in the middle of three concentric circles.

The central position of the circle dominates the world of *miuchi* (family). That relationship is characterized as *amae* (reliance on others) with no individuality. The outermost circle is the world of others. There is a distance from each other. However, it is necessary to take care of others' feelings. Naturally, people in general do not have to take care of *sekentei* (appearance).

Meanwhile, world *seken* occurs between others and family. In that space, there are no close people, like in a family or company. It refers to people who are strangers. In the middle position is a "reference group," which forms the basis of people's conduct.[42] This group has two categories: narrow *seken* and large *seken*. Inoue did not define the categories, but narrow *seken* might be a human relationship in the workplace and daily life. Large *seken* could be a network through social media.

A famous book on *seken* in Japan is *What is Seken?* by Kinya Abe (1995). Originally, Abe was an expert in the field of history for Medieval Germany. He was interested in the difference in relationships between European and Japanese, and he studied in Europe for 2 years in the 1970s.[43]

He referred to the fact that Amane Nishi translated "society" into *shakai* in Japanese around 1877 in the Meiji period. Thereafter, the word *kojin* in Japanese, translated as "individual," appeared around 1884. Abe pointed out that the concept *shakai* (society) without *kojin* (individual) emerged in Japan from 1877 to 1884. The Japanese situation was entirely different from that of European society, which is composed of individuals.[44]

According to Abe's definition, *seken* is a circle of relationships to connect with individuals.[45] Although there are no rules or articles of association in the circle, individuals strongly connect with each other. Abe suggested that the definition is a working hypothesis for analyzing the features of *seken*. He explained two rules of its features. The first is the "order of young and old," which means that age is respected above youth. The second rule is "donation and reciprocity," which means that, among equal human relationships, one should return the

same valuable thing to a person who first gave a gift.[46] In addition to these rules, Abe observed that competition should be avoided in *seken* as much as possible. If one keeps to the rules of *seken*, one can obtain a suitable position later. He also suggested that the group or organization to which one belongs is more important than individual ability and character. The important issue is where a person is in relation to *seken*. As Abe pointed out, the Japanese tend to prefer stability with familiar people than a competitive society.[47]

It is possible to understand each other without explanation through common practice among the relationships in *seken*. This is so-called "non-verbal intelligence." To quote Abe, "*seken* is an accumulation of non-verbal intelligence."[48] This leads us further to consider the assertion of will by an individual. This topic is not common in Japan, although it is common in Europe. From the viewpoint of *seken*, there is a very vague role for the individual in Japan. In *seken*, a person first considers the influence of his or her group. A person's reasonable judgment of what it is right or wrong is the second consideration. The primary rule is to follow the dictates of *seken*. *Seken*, which consists of non-autonomous individuals, is not a concept that applies to European society.

Another study by Naoki Sato, *Phenomenology of Seken*（2001）analyzed the method, structure, history, climate, and psychological, juristical, and criminal phenomena of *seken*. Sato wrote two chapters explaining its structure and addressed Abe as a theme. Although his work was strongly informed by Abe's work, Sato newly discussed the structure of *seken* by categorizing its elements as: 1. donation and reciprocity, 2. status, 3. non-existence of individuals, 4. enchantment, 5. exclusion, and 6. authority.

In terms of the first element, donation and reciprocity, Abe explained various Japanese customs, such as *ochuhgen*（summer present）and *oseibo*（a year-end present）. The donation–reciprocity relationship is spread through these customs throughout Japan. Originally, such a custom was used not only in Japan but also in every part of the world. According to Abe's explanation, the propagation of

Christianity eliminated customs during the 11th and 12th centuries in Europe.[49]

The donation–reciprocity relationship in Japan emerges within a community, and rarely from outside.[50]

One of the reasons is that donations to strangers are based on individualism derived from Protestantism; and therefore, a relationship in *seken* cannot apply to donations to strangers.[51] Abe suggested that Japanese customs have retained the Medieval element of European relationships.[52] In terms of the second element, status, the order from young to old is an active rule in *seken*. Thus, older people should be respected more than younger people. For example, this rule applies in school life. Higher and lower grades determine classes of *senpai* (higher grade) and *kohhai* (lower grade).[53] from young to old is an active rule in *seken*. Consciousness of grades is very important in students' lives, especially in school club activities. Abe presented another example. In the case of a marathon tournament that one can enter individually, the group to which one belongs is important for creating a list of participants.[54] Even if one enters the marathon individually, it may be necessary for a promoter to take special care of participants without the means to pay (their *seken* is related to the tournament by finance). Belonging is an indicator of *seken* appearing to give status.

The third element, non-existence of individuals, implies that there are no individuals in *seken*. To quote Abe, "common consciousness of time" is a principle of *seken*. He described an individual in Western countries as living in their own time. However, Japanese people live in *seken*, whose time is common for everyone. This gives rise to such greetings as *kongotomo yoroshiku onegaishimasu* (thanking you in anticipation).[55] In Japan, the culpability of a parent who murders their child while committing suicide is assessed in an extremely light way. The reason is apparently that a mother does not recognize her child as a person who has his or her own individual personality. As a result, she may consider that her child cannot live without her, as the parent–child connection has a common time consciousness.[56]

When it comes to the element fourth, enchantment, most Japanese are apt to avoid an unlucky day（*yakubi*）when selecting a celebration day, like a wedding ceremony. In general, Japanese people feel mildly safe by removing unlucky days without scientific basis. This feeling is the conventional wisdom of *seken*. Its formal definition contains an element of courtesy and uninteresting behavior. For example, a speech at a tournament or graduation ceremony signals a kind of rite of passage.[57] The fifth element, exclusion, appears to distinguish between *uchi*（inside）and *soto*（outside）in *seken*. A human relationship inside of *seken* is called *miuchi*（family）, which is filled with feelings of cooperation.[58] However, feelings against others outside of *seken* are very cool, and they are often ignored.

To demonstrate the sixth element, authority, I use the example of *kuhki*（air）by Shichihei Yamamoto. He referred to the fact that the suicide attack by the battleship Yamato was finally determined by the atmosphere created by senior officers on the ship. The authority to take a decision comes from neither political power nor violence. It is derived from the air in *seken*. You Henmi described it as follows: "political parties, officials, and ordinary people avoid hard battle and they make the boundary of their interests unclear. Then, their issues ferment through half-hearted discussions. It is totalitarianism like hyphae."[59] Such an air is *seken* and the attitude following the air is *shikataganai*（I have no choice）. *Seken* has the power to make people unconsciously obey the atmosphere around them. Each individual assertion is less important than unspoken atmosphere in the situation.

The book, *Tanin wo Yurusenai Saru*（*Intolerant Monkey*）(2006) by Nobuo Masataka sounded an alarm bell to present society on the way in which the world of *seken* is spreading in internet society. Masataka, a primate researcher, pointed out in his book *Keitai wo Motta Saru*（*Monkey with Cellphone*）that the conduct of modern human beings is becoming similar to monkeys. The feature is communication to establish their connections.[60] In 1997, more than 15 percent of households in Japan 1997 had internet access. The usage of internet services

was extended and by 2006, e-mail communication by cellphone outpaced e-mail by PC.[61] Human relationships have spread widely by e-mail communication and Social Network Service（SNS）since the late 1990s. It seems that this tendency is grew in 2020 during the COVID‑19 pandemic. Masataka adopted the term IT *seken* to portray human relationships in the internet society. The content of communication in general does not matter for confirming connections with others.[62] It is enough simply to enquire about the existence of the other and the possibility of continuing communication. Therefore, it is not necessary to construct long sentences. Short messages by SNS are sufficient for confirmation.

However, it is not certain that one can recognize who another really is. This is because, in IT *seken*, "a simple combination of alphabet and number becomes another personality as for a receiver."[63] IT *seken* contains the conditions for criminal activity, such as scam mails. In this respect, far *seken* is an old style of *seken* that has been developed using internet technology. As a result, there is greater anonymity without identification than before. Furthermore, other people can get access to one's private information, although it is not possible to recognize another who is far and anonymous. Google, Amazon, Facebook, and Apple（GAFA）are typical examples of a network service that stores huge amounts of private information and integrates it as "big data." Then, the information is transferred to other services. From the perspective of technology, it is possible to integrate people's private data nationally, like China today. In the 21st century, *seken* has expanded from small private relationships to a global internet society, embodied in IT *seken*, beyond the workplace and community.

2.2 Features of the theory of *seken*

More than 40 years have passed since Yoneyama's research in 1976. During that time, the form of *seken* widely changed from a village community to the internet society. However, IT *seken* has retained the feature of narrow *seken,* by which its members find themselves as "company" for each other in the internet

society. Therefore, in this study, I aim to establish common features of *seken* that are have remained unchanged across time, analyzing previous studies and the results of research on Japanese morals. I consider there to be three main features of *seken*.

First, there are no individuals in *seken*, because *seken* is not equal to a society that consists of individuals. In general, the premise of a society is the existence of individuals, but Kato suggested that an individual is "highly integrated"[64] into a community as *seken*. Collectivism, as Maruyama and Kato pointed out, is the foundation of Japanese morality. At the same time, it seems that the "absence of individuals," as Sato stated, is a condition in which a deceased individual in a group holds on to his or her significance by a kind of totalitarian power. In this situation, people are totally dominated by the atmosphere and do not try to resist it. This condition promptly restricts their behavior. Shichihei Yamamoto described the situation as a kind of religion (*Nihon-kyo*).[65] The fact that Japanese maintained order even during disasters shows a typical example of the pressure to conform with others in *seken,* so as not to stand out conspicuously.

The second main point is that people in *seken* tend to prioritize emotion over reason. Beauty and purity are more important what is true. To receive others' interest and sympathy, conduct that comes from a "pure heart" is a top priority. The urge to forgive, having meant no harm is convincing, even if a crime was committed. In this case, one cannot divide one's conduct and personality. The two are confused, and are not objectively judged. Generally, it is valuable to consider that another person did his or her best even if no results were produced. While not a valid reason in a professional sport's society, it is a reasonable instrumentality in *seken*. Maruyama found that *Kiyokiakakikokoro* (purity of heart) was deeply related to Japanese morals. This is a view of value in which the purity of one's emotions takes precedence over reason. For example, if a *senpai* (senior) who is close to me instructs a *kohhai* (junior), the latter has to obey

the senior's words without question. This conversation shows the "formation of a binomial connecting expression."[66] The expression represents a human relationship in which agreement with emotion is better than explanation with reason. This is a world of *seken* in which "high text communication"[67] functions widely. In human relationships, there is the basis to develop the idea of *sontaku* (conjecture).

Third, a feature of *seken* is a lack of historical consciousness enabling one to overlook things from the past, present, and future. In other words, *seken* is "present centralism," in the words of Maruyama and Kato. *Seken* is the consciousness to consider an issue from the viewpoint of the present and to judges it without problem as a temporary measure. In this thinking, one cannot make a long-term plan and take no responsibility for it. A lack of historical consciousness is an example of conduct not based on historical discussion. *Seken* is structured based on many people's consciousness, and is influenced by mass media information. People tend to pass along news with previously high value. Naturally, past evidence that is not attractive to viewers is not often sent. As a result, some politicians consider that people in *seken* gradually forget all matters. They do not respond to matters. In *seken*, it is difficult to develop a sense of truth and universal values. Norms are limited within a *seken* relationship. Originally, historical consciousness from Western countries was necessary for a transcendental viewpoint beyond a human relationship. However, Japanese "historical" consciousness remains within the frame of *seken*. This is illustrated by the old saying in Japan, that nobody remembers a rumor after 75 days. Memory flows like water and then disappears.

I considering the three above-mentioned features of *seken* to be a foundation of Japanese morals, remaining in Japanese consciousness even in a global society in the future. The *seken* of the internet society also has these features. To consider what will happen in the future, in this study, I consider the problems of Japanese morals from a *seken* viewpoint.

3.   Problems related to Japanese morals

Seken consists of time consciousness, which is based on present centralism, and of space consciousness, which is based on a norm within a community. Moreover, as age progresses, the meaning of *seken* has broadened from a particular group to an internet society.

As mentioned above, *seken* has three features at all times: non-existence of an individual; priority of emotion; and lack of historical consciousness. These features of *seken* cause problems in today's global society as follows.

First, the problem of the non-existence of an individual weakens the consciousness of human rights. It seems that modern individualism (i.e., the Western meaning of the individual) is not established in *seken* based on Japanese morals. Therefore, the values of freedom and equality, which are the basis of consciousness of human rights in Western countries, are acquired on the surface in Japan, but its roots cannot be absorbed. In fact, Western culture had to be "ingested"[68] and "purified"[69] in Japanese schools during World War II. Schools were allowed to adopt modern technology, but Western values, such as individualism, equality, and democracy, were excluded from education.

From a technical perspective, it is easy to assert one's own opinions in an internet society. By contrast, autonomous individuals are not easily established in Japanese society. It is necessary for a citizen who has respect for others, sympathy, and the norms of order and freedom of expression to grow their imagination for invisible others and trust in justice and truth. In my opinion, citizenship education is the premise of an autonomous individual. In Japanese school education, a kind of collective education is currently carried out (e.g., the pursuit of group beauty in a school sports festival). Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, ICT has become widely used in schools. If the learning process is improved by developing an individual curriculum, then it would provide a good opportunity for students to grow their consciousness as individuals.

The second point is the priority of emotion over reason. This feature is often

seen in the text of *Manyoh-shuh* (*Collection of Ten Thousand Leaves*) and *The Tale of Genji*, which describes the richness of Japanese sentiment in tradition. In fact, the dualistic worldview, which consists of emotion and reason, was found in the doctrines of Zhu Xi, even in the Edo era. In the Meiji era, from the end of the 19th century to the beginning of the 20th century, Souseki Natsume, a great novelist, described a kind of dilemma at the beginning of his book, *Kusamakura* (*The Three-Cornered World*). He said, "Approach everything rationally, and you become harsh. Pole a long in the stream of emotions, and you will be swept away by the current".[70] Natsume was against *seken* among Japanese people at the time. He wrote books that focused on individuals. The main character in his book felt anxious about whether to choose a lifestyle of individual autonomy or collective relativism in *seken*. Anxiety was reflected in Natsume's experience of studying in England as a lonely life. In addition, the scholars Sato and Hoshiba noted that an element of incantation and reservation of a primitive worldview as features of *seken*. In this respect, it seems that a feature of ancient people has been retained in Japanese people's consciousness. Why does emotion supersede reason in Japanese society? Why is important decision-making influenced more by emotional motivation than by rational explanation? Apparently, the Japanese people did not have metaphysics before to explain existence as separate from a particular person. Furthermore, they neither revered a universal truth nor trusted it.[71] From another viewpoint, pragmatic judgment might work in the choice[72] between emotional motivation or rational explanation. In fact, rational explanation with difficult conversation costs are higher than emotional motivation. As a result, it is easy to obey others' desires without persuasion.

The third feature is a lack of historical consciousness. One of the characteristics of time consciousness of Japanese is the attitude that one concentrates only on an issue at hand. In addition, one not only does not have long-term perspectives but also never learns experiences of examples of the past. Maruyama pointed out that history for Japanese people means time

consciousness, which is understood alongside the present.[73] For example, it is optimistic to hope that something good happens by enduring the present situation. Such consciousness might come from trust in nature, which is a different concept from the meaning of Western countries. In this optimism, there is no presupposition rather than negation of an absolute being, like monotheism. Another reason for the lack of historical consciousness is the uniqueness of the Japanese language. In this regard, Hajime Nakamura, a great thinker of Japanese thought, refers to the fact that the Japanese language is not suitable for developing logical thinking because of the lack of relative pronouns in the original.[74] The role of relative pronouns is to add explanatory content after providing a word. In other words, it develops a word further. Apparently, one can understand the structure that is developed. Not all relative pronouns have this characteristic. In the Japanese language, we often omit the subject. Thus, who performs an action is vague. Therefore, there is no subject, the responsible person, for an action. This is one reason that Japanese people do not take responsibility for their conduct in a group. The origin is to be found in the Japanese language.

It is possible that such features of the Japanese language widely influenced the formation of Japanese consciousness. It is impossible to set an objective viewpoint for historical consciousness within oneself. One cannot analyze oneself as an object without the standpoint of another. If Japanese people keep thinking about history as points of view of "now" and "here," which are focused on the present, then they cannot objectively recognize orders of incidents and a cause-and-effect relationship. Karl Jaspers (1883-1969), one of the architects of existentialism and who learned Eastern philosophy, advocated a theory of modes of the encompassing (*Das Umgreifende*), which could analyze subject–object relations that moved beyond the dualistic epistemology of Descartes.[75] He adopted his theory alongside European traditional philosophy, with a premise of "transcendence" (*transzendenz*). His theoretical framework more

or less transcends his own existence and that of the world. However, as Kato, Maruyama, and Hoshiba mentioned,[76] the Japanese way of thinking cannot move past the framework of *seken*. Exceptions are the schools of Kamakura Buddhism, such as Jodo-shu and Jodo-shinshu. The Japanese way of thinking is a horizontal extension of the world. There is no point of view to transcend time and space and to overlook human history.

We can regard these problems as being caused by a lack of historical consciousness in Japanese society overall. It is easy to understand how Japanese people lack a sense of learning from past evidence and putting it to practical use in the future, given the failure of political plans that need long-term perspectives. Tactics without strategy is something tangible to imagine; it is a simple and temporary measure. This is the same view as that of *seken*.

4.   Solving the problems of Japanese morals

In terms of the individual, to quote Abe, "Japanese people individually pretend to act, using their public face and hiding their own minds. In the process of pretending, their individuality is formed both outside and inside."[77]

In addition, he suggested that Japanese individuals appear vague in the eyes of Westerners. This is because the individuality of European people started in a relationship with an absolute god in the process of self-forming.[78] The meaning of an individual in Japanese is so "vague" that Japanese people cannot understand what the difference between *seken* and society. According to Abe, even Natsume could not do it.[79] Previous studies have analyzed the structure of *seken* and its differences from society. The four features of groups in Yoneyama's research, the concentric circle model of Inoue, and the six elements of Sato deepen understanding of structure. However, one of the definite differences is, to quote Sato, the lack of an individual in *seken*. As Abe said, human beings regard themselves as separate to God. As long as the view of human beings is basically unchangeable, I think the features of *seken* always increase and remain

unchanged forever. As Maruyama pointed out, the *basso ostinato*（repetitive bass line）might still be ringing in this century.

For example, people in an IT *seken* have a means to communicate with each other tremendously fast. In reality, their main content is not rational discussion, but emotional chatting to maintain their relationships. It is possible that communication only by texting short messages instead of face-to-face communication sometimes leads to personal attacks and malicious slander. If the feature of collectivism in *seken* functions negatively in an internet society, it may lead to cyberbullying and chaos. In general, anonymity in cyberspace plays a role in hiding the existence of a sender among groups in a *seken*. It is very difficult to recognize the existence of an individual, even in a community like a village. In an internet society, the situation becomes worse when seeing a person as an individual. What expresses the "personality" of a sender is an "item," such as a handle name, avatar, or account number. In today's internet society, human relationships are exchanged by connecting accounts to each other.

Internet society can be regarded as one dimension of global society. If this is true, the issue for Japanese morals is how internet morality is established in today's society. In other words, how is "an individual" developed in IT *seken*? To come to grips with the problem, it is necessary to overcome the aforementioned features of *seken*（lack of an individual, priority of emotion, and lack of historical consciousness）in today's internet society. In summary, in terms of lack of an individual and priority of emotion, Japanese people need to emerge from collectivism, whose tendencies are highly anonymous, and an emotional community.

4.1 Breakaway from collectivism

Collectivism is evident in internet society not only in Japan, but also globally. In the election for the U.S. president in 2020, Republican backers who enthusiastically supported the incumbent candidate, Donald Trump, were agitated by Trump's emotional messages on Twitter and aggressively

attacked Democratic supporters. Here, I wish to avoid a sociological analysis, but point out that his attitude has the feature of negating objective analysis and taking advantage of subjective emotion. Its feature might be the same as *Kuhki* (atmosphere), which is led by collectivism based on Japanese morals.

In 2015, a large demonstration occurred in Tokyo. The main organizer was a youth group, SEALDs.[80] They demonstrated against the Bills to revise national security policies.[81] On the contrary, there was no big demonstration when ex-Prime Minister Abe urged all regions in Japan to close schools, and most complied with this request. Since the Edo period, that is, the 17th century, Japanese virtue has been pliable to the demands of authority without questions. If a person expresses his or her own opinion, he or she is afraid that others would criticize not only himself or herself, but also his or her family. Such anxiety about sekentei (appearances) functions well, causing many people to moderate their opinions and restrain themselves from conspicuous behavior. As the saying goes, "Anyone who stands out will be forced to conform." Such consciousness is a typical example of Japanese morals, which seek harmony with neighbors and refraining from causing anybody trouble. This is a golden law for Japanese people. In practice, it would be difficult for Japanese people with such consciousness to become autonomous individuals, like European people who are trained with intercultural abilities and can be tough with foreigners. In fact, Japan's historical and cultural background is completely different. In Japanese society, even Christian churches could become "Japanized," as Shichihei Yamamoto said.[82] This means that a church changes into *seken* as a community, like a village.

It is possible that someone may try not to be conspicuous to protect himself or herself from *seken*. By contrast, Tetsu Nakamura, who was killed by terrorists in Afghanistan in 2019, had been engaged in humanitarian activities abroad for a long time, such as digging wells. It did not matter how his efforts could directly contribute to the Japanese national benefit. When he was killed, the mass media

focused on this issue widely. His attitude was to work honestly and steadily to realize world peace by holding lectures and publishing books. His small actions gave great hope to Afghanistan. If people are only divided by six degrees of separation,"[83] then such small actions is the practice of neighborly love.

I think his practice provides a big clue about how Japanese morals should function. In fact, collectivism brings political and emotional pressure to members of a particular community where the pressure works with the intention of the main person among the members. In such a closed space, an individual's free opinion may be easily dismissed. To avoid this, his or her individual opinion should be limited and he or she should not seek to assert his or her own mind. As a result, there were no individuals in a community. It expands horizons to separate from a group and broaden one's view. One example is Nakamura's experience of extending his view to a foreign country.

However, it is easy to connect with people in other countries through the internet. One method is connection through language. Japanese morals are tied to the Japanese language. English is used to communicate with the wider world. For Japanese people, it is costly and time-consuming to send their messages in English although it is worthwhile to do so. The most important thing is to write a simple message. Training helps us recognize what message to write for readers around the world. The consciousness develops the imagination of others with different values to that of Japanese culture. In my opinion, one of the advantages of learning a foreign language is to build such imagination.

An effective way to transcend collectivism in the Japanese language is to make connections with others by learning a foreign language, as it is possible in an internet society to access others around the world. Although learning a foreign language is not easy for Japanese people, it is expected that changes in language use could radically shift the way of thinking into a change of consciousness（e.g., clarifying a subject in a sentence provides the chance for an individual to exist in a group）.

4.2 Development of historical consciousness

The next topic concerns how historical consciousness develops. Japanese time consciousness, as explained by Maruyama and Kato, is meant to understand history in the line of the present. Something is good because it is good now. This attitude comes from not learning from the past and having an optimistic outlook about the future. As a result, solving a problem seems to be improvisation in daily life. The Japanese climate has long been unstable, and prone to natural disasters. Long-term measures to deal with for typhoons and floods every year are needed for public work, including highly developed technology. "Historical consciousness" has long been aroused, developing a sense of *mujohkan* (a view of life as transient and empty).[84] A typical example is the Bushido moral code of samurai warriors, which recognized death as a virtue.

Today, we can forecast natural disasters using various technological methods, such as weather satellites. By accumulating and analyzing past data, a preventive measure for disasters in the future develops. Furthermore, a huge amount of information can be looked up conveniently via the internet. Nowadays, it is impossible for cyberspace to erase information, even a bad memory ("forgive and forget" was an old saying in Japan). In fact, when private records concerning crime are available into cyberspace, it is impossible to delete them. Therefore, the "right to be forgotten" could be issued in the present. The internet is said to help modern people function positively. Some exceptions are the challenging "right to be forgotten,"[85] information dominance by GAFA, and national control of information, among others. The main difference between Japanese and Western historical consciousness is that today's Japanese secular society is not based on the background of European modern individualism, which was based on a worldview of Christianity.

There are various ways of setting existence beyond time so that people can transcend time consciousness. For example, Nietzsche (1844-1900) used the concept of the *Übermensch* (overman)[86] as existence instead of God

in Christianity. Hans Küng advocated "a Global Ethic"[87] at the Parliament of the World's Religions in 1993. In Japan, where, as mentioned, about 70 percent of people identify as non-religious, it is difficult to find "an absolute and transcendental point of origin" that can transcend *seken* and serve as a condition to establish a modern individual.

Generally, Japanese people might be "developed independently,"[88] especially in the industrial field. One of the reasons could be the fact that they are not free from the values of *seken* when they communicate with each other with emotion and raise their sympathy. However, it is not sufficient for them to hold empathy in common. To do so, they need not only a particular private emotion or human relationships, but also rational judgment and ethics concerned with universal values for human beings. A common value for human beings is much greater than the value of *seken*, such as the binomial relationship "you and I." In Western countries, it took a long time to form common values through the tradition of conversation and criticism. In this respect, Japanese people could not acquire common values through emotional conversation in *seken*. In fact, the principles of the French Revolution, liberty, equality, and fraternity, or the Universal Declaration of Human Rights[89] are examples of values that go beyond religion. These are intelligent assets of human beings in the world. The real meaning of knowing the history of modern people is to reveal evidence in history for accruing assets. The will for peace is also an asset. Moreover, the Doomsday Clock,[90] which is counting down the destruction of humankind, could motivate the development of a common consciousness of human beings. Greta Thunberg[91] has received support from people around the world. Setting up the Sustainable Development Goals[92] seeks future-oriented action that moves beyond modern individualism. Many of the world's problems are not solved by the present-oriented mind, like the thought "now is good, everything is good."

The idea of what should be done for the future is historical consciousness. If we do not set up an absolute being, it might be possible to build historical

consciousness partly by establishing future-oriented goals.

5. Conclusion

Nowadays, people of the world, including Japanese, are able to build human relationships in cyberspace beyond the frame of *seken*. This environment, where an individual person can willingly assert himself or herself, might play an important role in overcoming collectivism. However, affairs in cyberspace, such as chatting with friends and cyberbullying, are similar to affairs based on Japanese morals. Furthermore, they could be emphasized by negative moral elements.

I consider the formation of world standard morals in Japanese society to be the way forward. Probably, historical consciousness could first be aroused, by recognizing oneself as an "earthling." What should we do for the future of humankind? Hopefully, historical consciousness could be developed by being a goal in the heart of each person and by making connections with the common mission.

Notes

[1] https://www.covid19-yamanaka.com/cont1/74.html（2021.06.22）

[2] Maruyama pointed out in his lecture, *Japanese History of Political Thoughts* in 1964, that Japanese culture consists of a dual structure: tenacious sustainability and abrupt changeability. He referred to *basso ostinato* in *Some Aspects of Moral Consciousness in Japan*, p.141.

[3] Ibid., p.41.

[4] Maruyama Masao: *Maruyama Masao Kogiroku dai7satu Nihonseijisisoshi* 1967, Tokyodaigaku Shuppankai, 1998（Maruyama, 1998b）, p.49.

[5] Ibid., p.68.

[6] Ibid., p.50.

[7] Yamaori Tetsuo: *"Hitori" no Tetsugaku*, Shincho-sha, 2017 (Yamaori, 2017), p.203. Yamaori suggested that *kokoro* could not be translated from Japanese into a foreign language because of it uniqueness.

[8] Maruyama Masao: *Maruyama Masao Kogiroku dai4satu Nihonseijisisoshi* 1964, Tokyodaigaku Shuppankai（Maruyama, 1998a）, p.60.

9   Maruyama 1998b, pp.65-66.

10 Maruyama 1998a, p.59.

11 Ibid., p.76. Maruyama described such a community as "a particular experienced group,"
    or a "political movement based on the particularity of a social unit."

12 Maruyama Masao: *Maruyama Masao Kogiroku dai6satu Nihonseijisisoshi* 1966,
    Tokyodaigaku Shuppankai (Maruyama, 2000), p.29.

13 Ibid., p.39.

14 Maruyama, 1998b, pp. 82-83. Maruyama paraphrased the idea of time as follows.
    1. History is a flow that is oriented on the present and runs endlessly from past to future.
    2. There is neither "eternity" nor "absolute being." Nothing is beyond time. Eternity is
       just endless continuity in time.
    3. The present time is a result of becoming in the past and manifestation of the past.
    4. Time is seen as what it is for the first time because past time in itself is unlimited
       becoming.
    5. The future is launched and flows from the present time with the potential energy of
       past time.

15 Maruyama, 1998a, p.71.

16 Ibid.

17 Maruyama, 1998b, p.82.

18 Ibid., p.72.

19 Maruyama, 2000, p.38.

20 Maruyama, 1998a, p.63.

21 Maruyama, 2000, p.32.

22 Maruyama, 1998b, p.67.

23 He went to France as a student sent abroad by the French government, 32 at first
    (1951-1955). Thereafter, in 1960, he became an associate professor at British Colombia
    University in Canada. Later, in 1969, he became professor of Berlin Free University. He
    was a guest professor at many universities where he gave lectures (e.g., Yale University,
    1974; Geneva University, 1978; University of Cambridge, Venice, 1983; Princeton, 1987;
    Peking, 1994). cf., Ebisaka Takeshi: *Kato Shuichi-21Seiki wo tou*, Iwanami-shoten,   2013.

24 cf., Fukaya, Jun: A Study on the Morality of Non-Transcendental Thinking in Today's
    Global Society: Focusing on the Theory of Japanese Culture by Shuichi Kato*, Seinan
    Gakuin University Studies of Human Sciences*, Vol.16, No.2, 2021.

25 cf., Kato Shuichi: *Nihonbunka no Zasshusei*, Shiso, 6gatsu-go, 1955, pp.635-647.

26 When we regard "others" as a concept in relation to oneself, "oneself" in Japanese
    consciousness differs from an individual whose meaning of self is contained in modern
    individualism. Therefore, the word "others" is can be thought of with quotation marks in
    this paper.

27 Inoue Tadashi: "*Seken-tei" no Kozo*, Nihon Hososhuppankyokai, 1977, p.16.
    It is said that the concept of *seken* first came with the introduction of Buddhism to Japan
    in around the 6th century.

28 Watsuji Tetsuro, *Ningen no gaku tositeno Rinrigaku*, Iwanami-Shoten, 1991, p.28.

29 Ibid., p.31.

30 Recent studies are as follows. Kan Norikiyo: *Taisekenkankeikaramita Nihongogno Sekenteki omoteugen nituite*, Seikei Daigaku bungakubukiyo, No.53. 2018. pp.125–135; Ryuh Kiyosi and Ohhashi Makoto: *"Seken" ni kaansuru ichikousatu*, *Tokushima Daigaku Kyouyoukyouikuin, Gengobunkakenkyu*, Vol.17, 2009, pp.83–102; Kobayashi Shuichi: *"Seken" no Sisen*, *Toyodaaigaku Shakaiaigakubu Kiyo*, Vol.46, No.1, 2008, pp.181-201. Masuden Mariko: *"Seken" toiu gainenwo Nihongo gakushusha ni douosieruka*, Kumamoto Daigaku Ryugakusei Center Kiyo, Vol.7, 2003, pp.1-28.

31 Yoneyama Toshinao: *Nihonjin no Nakamaaisiki*, Kodansha, 1976, p.195.

32 Ibid., pp.14-15. He describes the attention of appearance as "What will Mrs. Grundy zay?" in English. This is called Grundyism. Mrs. Grundy is the name of a woman in the novel *Speed the Plough*, by Thomas Morton in 1798. cf. Thomas Morton: *Speed the Plough, A Comedy, In Five Acts; As Performed At the Theatre Royal,* Convent Garden. BiblioBaazaar, 2008, p.13.

33 Ibid., pp.40-41.

34 Ibid., p.107. cf., Maruyama Masao: *Nihon no Siso*, Iwanami-shohten, 1987, p.129.

35 Ibid., p.73.   Yoneyama pointed out that Nakane did not sufficiently analyze "a relationship of higher and lower in a horizontal group."

36 Ibid., p.18.

37 Ibid., p.50.

38 Ibid., pp.58-59.

39 "The ideology on the view of family nation would give suitable norms to order "*seken*" among the mass of the people in modern age." (Yoneyama 1976, p.62)

40 Ibid., p.76.

41 Ibid., p.81.

42 Ibid., p.91.

43 Abe Kinya: *"Seken" ron Josetsu*, Asahi-Shinbunsha, 1999, p.232.

44 Ibid., pp.12–13.

45 Abe Kinya: *"Seken" toha Nanika*, Kodansha, 1995, p.16.

46 Ibid., p.17.

47 Ibid., pp.22–23.

48 Ibid., p.27.

49 Sato Naoki: *"Seken" no Genshogaku*, Seikyu-sha, 2001, p.45.

50 Ibid., p.49.

51 Ibid.

52 Ibid., p.103.

53 Ibid., p.51.

54 Ibid., p.54.

55 Ibid., pp.54-55.

56 Ibid., pp.57-58.

57 Ibid., p.76.

58 Ibid., p.78.

59 Ibid., p.82.

60 Hidaka Nobuo: *Keitai wo motta Saru*, Chuoukouron-shinsha, 2007, pp.60, 67.

61 Hidaka Nobuo: *Tanin wo Yurusenai Saru*, Kodansha, 2006, p.34.

62 Ibid., p.17.

63 Ibid., p.155.

64 Kato Shuichi: "*Nihon*," Gendaishiso, 7gatu rinjizoukan Soutokushu, Kato Shuichi, Aodo-sha, Vol.37, No.9, pp.28-41 (Kato, 2009b), pp.37-38.

65 cf., Yamamoto reported that Christian Jews become members of the Christian branch of Judaism. In the same way, he said that Japanese Christians become members of the Christian branch of Nihonism (cf., *The Japanese and the Jews,* by Isaiah Ben-Daasan (transl. Richard L. Gage), John Weatherhill, New York, Tokyo, 1985, p.109). Later, Sadao Asami criticized the grounds of Yamamoto's argument.

66 Nishitani Koshuke: *Iwayuru "Nihonkyo" ni tsuite*, Tohokugaakuindaigaku Kirisutokyo Bunka Kenkyujo Kiyo, No.17, 1999, pp.41-73, 69.

67 Edward T. Hall: *Beyond Culture*, Anchor Books, 1989 (1st ed.1977). Hall (1914-2009) classified language communication as high-context communication and low-context communication in his book *Beyond Culture* published in 1977. He classified the Japanese language as high-context communication, because of its origins using kanji, Chinese writing characters.

68 Monbu-sho: *Kokutai no Hongi*, Kokuritu Kokkaitoshokan dejitarukorekushon, 1937, p.97.

69 Ibid., p.3.

70 Natsume Soseki: *Kusamakura*, Shincho-sha, 1982, p.5. (transl. Aklan Turney, Peter Owen Limited, 2008, p.7)

71 Maruyama, 1998a, p.71. On Japanese historical consciousness, Maruyama said, "Only idealism and metaphysics bring out ideas that have so-called free structure in time and control against human beings in natural time. Therefore, the idealism of a subject working for history as a human outside of time and controlling it can hardly be conceived in a prototype of Japanese thinking."

72 Kenso Kikuzawa explained the process of decision-making by the Japanese military for the attack on the battleship Yamato as follows: "Officers estimated, do not say anything is better." This judgment was "rational" in the aspect of bargaining. Kenso Kikuzawa: *Organization Rationally Failing;* Yuhjiiroh Nonaka et al.: *Essence of Failure,* Diamond-sha, 2014, Chapter 11. cf. Jun Fukaya: "*Religion" of Reading Air, and Christians: Reconsideration of "Nihonkyo"* by Shichihei Yamamoto, Seinan Gakuin University Studies of Human Sciences, Vol.14. No.1, 2018, pp.54-55.

73 Maruyama, 1998a, p.71.

74 Nakamura Hajime: *Nihonjin no Siihouhou: Toyojin no SiihouhouIII*, Nakamura Hajime Senshu, vol.3 (ketteiban), Shunshu-sha, 1997, p.373.

75 cf., Karl Jaspers, *Von der Wahrheit*, R. Piper & Co., München, Zürich, 1983, S.217. It is

described in German as "das Eine."

[76] cf., Kato Shuichi: *Nihon sono Kokoro to Katachi*, Jiburi, Library, Tokumaa-shoten, 2009, p.187. Ibid., p.192. cf., Maruyama, 1998b, pp.82‑83. Hoshiba Tasuo: *"NihonBunkaron" wo Koete*, Kadensha, 2019, p.36.

[77] Abe, 1995, p.30.

[78] Ibid.

[79] Ibid., p.202.

[80] https://news.yahoo.co.jp/articles/ (last accessed December 3, 2020).

[81] On May 14h, 2015, the government decided at a cabinet meeting to endorse a number of bills: the Self-Defense Forces Act, the Act on the Peace and Independence of Japan and Maintenance of the Nation and the People's Security in Armed Attack Situations etc., the Act on Measures to Ensure the Peace and Security of Japan in Perilous Situations in Areas Surrounding Japan, and the Act on Cooperation with United Nations Peacekeeping Operations and Other Operations. (https://www.nichibenren.or.jp/document/statement/year/2015/15054 html) (2021.06.28)

[82] Izaya Bendasasn: *Nihonjin to Yudayajin*, Kadokawa-shoten,1990, pp.117, 119.

[83] Stanley Miligram, a psychologist at Yale University, proved the "six degrees of separation" in 1976 (although his so-called "small-world" experiment was limited to the U.S.). In other words, the connection between two absolute strangers is only six people.

[84] Maruyama, 1998a, pp.67‑68. Maruyama explained as follows: "A standpoint of history for Japanese people is said to be always positively living the present moment, riding on continuously changing time. However, this is not meant to be an affirmation of life. Then, it could become an affirmation for the world of the dead in the next moment by accepting the Buddhistic view of life as something transient and empty."

[85] The "right to be forgotten" means, from the perspective of protection of widespread information on the internet, that "an individual can seek to delete his/her private information or not to be published." cf., Hiroshi Miyashita, "*Right to Be Forgotten*," Ronza, 2016. 24,https://webronza.asahi.com/national/articles/2016081000003.html?page=1 (last accessed February 17, 2021). cf., Toshitada Nihonmatsu, "*Right to Be Forgotten,*" Olke Library No.45, 2017, pp.16‑19, https://www.oike-law.gr.jp/wp-content/uploads/OL45-07.nihonmatus.pdf (last accessed February 17, 2021).

[86] Nietzsche regarded the overman as a typical ideal man rather than a god. It is an expression based on strong power of living. His concept of eternal return (*ewig wiederkehren*) is grounded in this concept. cf. *Tetsugaku-jiten*. Hiroshi Simonaka (ed.), *Heibon-sha*, 1992, p.947, Nietsche, *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, transl. Hidehiro Hikami, Iwanami-Shoten, 1988, p.14.

[87] Hans Küng advocated for the Declaration Toward a Global Ethic in the Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago in 1993. Later, he mainly managed *Stiftung Weltethos für interkulturelle und interreligiöse Forschung* (The Global Ethic Foundation).

[88] *Garapagosu-ka* ("to develop independently of the outside world") is a relatively new word coined in around 2007; it criticizes Japan's inward-looking industrial approach. Because

Japanese products, including unique multi-functional products and services, are far from global standards, Japanese industries have been passive about overseas expansion, mergers and acquisitions, and securing exclusive markets. The origin of the word is the Galápagos Islands where animals have evolved independently in the ecosystem (Hideki Ohsako, *Chiezo*, Asahishinbun-shuppan, 2010), https://kotobank.jp/word/ ガラパゴス 化 -188972 (last accessed February 17, 2021).

[89] The Universal Declaration of Human Rights sets out the rights to human freedom, dignity, and equality. Furthermore, it prohibits discrimination, giving all people the right to be recognized as equal before the law, the right to freedom of movement, residence, and so on. cf., https//.www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/udhr/1b.oo1.html (last accessed February 17, 2021).

[90] According to the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, the "doomsday clock" is set at "100 seconds to midnight," the closest it has ever been, because the existential risks confronting humanity today call for quick and comprehensive action https://thebulletin. org./doomsday-clock/ (last accessed February 17, 2021).

[91] Thunberg called for Sweden's parliament to adopt a climate change policy, organized a movement of school strikes on Fridays.

[92] The Japanese index of SDGs adopted by the UN summit in September 2015 is available at https://www.mofa.jo.jp/mofaj/gaiko/oda/sdgs/statistics/index.html (last accessed February 17, 2021).

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