

Daisuke Furuya

A Historiography in Modern Japan: the laborious quest for identity

1 Introduction

The development of modern Japan might surprise Europeans. Like other Asian countries, Japan retained the feudal system until the mid-19th century, establishing itself as a great economical power by the end of the 20th century. But, at the outset of this article, we must confirm that, in forming the modern society, the Japanese experienced two historical conversions. The first was the Meiji Restoration in 1868. Since that date, Japan has denied its traditional society and promoted industrialization and modernization. This was the process of “westernization” to which Japan was urgently exposed in the context of the imperialist expansion by the Western powers. This process of urgent westernization in Japan involved a lot of historical problems. It followed upon the unequal development within the Japanese society and the imperialist invasion of Asian neighbours. The result of such distorted westernization was the defeat in WWII, which was the second conversion for the Japanese. After 1945, reforms by the GHQ¹ swept away not only the old social systems but also the national identity, which had its roots in the Meiji Restoration. Post-war Japan was thus required to build a democratic society and rebuild its national identity, so as to be suitable for democracy.²

In other words, we can say that these two conversions each constituted a time of crisis for the Japanese, obliging them to modify their own identity. Generally speaking, when the Japanese met such crises, they were keen to import methods and values from the West. So westernization served not only to “modernize” Japanese society by appropriating western ways, but at the same time to “westernize” Japanese values. Academism was also influenced by western values. For example, when trying to identify themselves, Japanese historians have used the concept of “Asia”. But the name “Asia” was originally created as a standard of cultural identification by Europeans in the dichotomy between “Europe” and “non-Europe”, when Europeans compared their culture to others. This dichotomy influenced Japanese historians who were tormented by the backwardness of their nation. Most of them interpreted the dichotomy as a confrontation between “the developed Europe” and “the undeveloped Asia”. In terms of such a dichotomy, Japanese historians have tried to identify themselves. Some recognized Japan as a member

DAISUKE FURUYA

of “the stagnant Asia”; others argued the peculiarity of Japan, which was different from other Asian countries. In this way, historiography in modern Japan reflects the path of a people in search of its identity. We must understand such mental circumstances, when we comprehend the complicated path of historical studies in modern Japan.

In this article I am not going to examine whether Japan after the Meiji Restoration succeeded in building a modern society or whether Japan after 1945 succeeded in establishing a democratic society. I will give my attention to the attitudes of Japanese historians who tried to find the ideals required to rebuild their identity after the Japanese identity crisis. In such a context, we can observe the ideologies of historians more clearly. I will therefore explain historiography in modern Japan, attending mainly to such problems as how historians identified problems of Japanese history and how they corresponded to them.

2 The Appropriation of the Traditional Historical Writing by the Meiji Government

Japan had developed its own culture in the East Asian cultural area where China had played a central role. From ancient times, Japanese had been keen to absorb the Chinese culture. Since *Kojiki* (Records of Ancient Matters) and *Nihon Shoki* (Chronicles of Japan) were written in the 8th century, a lot of histories containing myths of imperial dynasty have been described in the Chinese way of writing history.³ The Chinese tradition was dependent on Confucianism. It focused mainly on the history of a dynasty. It explained the rise and fall of a social order in which emperors placed themselves at the centre by using the metaphor that the emperor, who was imagined to be the only virtuous man, was “father” and his society was “family”. Through the concept that society was constructed around the only virtuous personality, history was recognized as describing political practice from a moralistic view. Thus in Japan, as in China and Korea, the traditional writing of history provided a historical example with which to practise moralistic politics.

The traditional way survived after the collapse of Tokugawa Shogunate. This was because the Meiji government wanted to appropriate it in order to explain the legitimacy of integrating Japan around the imperial power. The traditional conception of history in which the emperor had a main role suited the purposes of the Meiji government. The government tried to construct the view of modern Japan as a patriarchy by comparing the Emperor to a patriarch and Japanese society to a “family”.⁴ That is to say, the Meiji government utilized the traditional view of history in order to exploit national resources for building the modern state.

In 1872 the reform of the educational system provided for the teaching of history in higher elementary schools and lower junior high schools. From the first, not only Japanese and Chinese history but also Western history was to be taught according to the ideas shown in the *Goseimon* (Charter Oath) of 1868. In this

A HISTORIOGRAPHY IN MODERN JAPAN: THE LABORIOUS QUEST FOR IDENTITY

Charter, in which the Meiji government took Western powers into consideration, to discuss anything in public was considered important. The Meiji government therefore decided to teach World History, in which especially the histories of Western powers played important roles. But the general plan on elementary education in 1881 stipulated that it was necessary to cultivate loyalty to the Emperor Meiji and patriotism. And then in 1890, *Kyoiku Chokugo* (Imperial Rescript on Education), the most important ordinance on education before 1945, clearly stated that loyalty and patriotism, based on the spirit of Confucianism, should be fortified. And in 1891 the general plan for elementary education declared that the purpose of historical education was to cultivate the patriotism of the Japanese nation and to explain the original polity of Japan. Such historical education to promote loyalty and patriotism was continued until the reform of the education system after 1945.⁵

This trend was reinforced by the rise of nationalism after the Russo-Japanese War (1904-05). Most Japanese were convinced that victories of the Sino-Japanese War (1894-95) and the Russo-Japanese War were due to the success of modernization by the Meiji government. Among public opinion, the nationalist view on the polity of imperial Japan was widespread. This view, *Kokutai ron*, emphasized that the national polity of Japan, which the virtuous Emperor guided, was superior to that of any other nation, and that the success of modernization could be ascribed to this superiority. While the nationalistic atmosphere spread in the Japanese society, some conservative historians led by Kiyoshi Hiraizumi (1895-1984), a professor at Tokyo Imperial University since 1935, constructed *Kokoku shikan* (the historical view of the Imperial Japan). They considered the history of imperial Japan to be the development of a sacred polity by the gods, arguing that a polity of such superiority should be spread universally abroad. This view was established with the support of the military from the mid-1930s and the ideology was used to justify the imperialistic expansion of Japan to Asia.⁶

3 The Formation of Positivistic Historical Studies in Japan

In this way, the traditional view of history based on Confucianism was appropriated by the Meiji government in order to build the concept of the nation state. Some historians, who believed that the imperial polity of Japan was superior, tried to find the national identity by invoking traditional historiography. However, imperial Japan held a double-standard structure based not only on tradition but also on modernity. The most important problem for Meiji Japan was to reform the old social system by importing Western civilization and forming a modern state on European lines. This double standard had cast a long shadow over Japanese intellectuals who worried whether they ought to belong to "Asia" or "Europe". This was the first serious crisis of Japanese identity. Most intellectuals admitted that the Meiji Restoration should break off the retrograde traditions of Japan and

DAISUKE FURUYA

encourage the realization of a modern civilization by referring to the West. In comparison, Japan, like other Asian countries, was totally backward. Modern historical studies in Japan were established by giving up the traditional perspective of Japanese history and importing Western methodology.⁷

In 1877, the first faculty to study history was founded at Tokyo University.⁸ This was the history department at the Faculty of Letters which took a leading role in historical studies in modern Japan. Ludwig Riess (1861-1928), a pupil of L. Ranke, was called from the German Empire to the Faculty of Letters at the request of the Meiji government. He introduced Rankean positivism to Japanese academic historical studies. Prior to 1901 the history department had been divided into the departments of Japanese history, Western history, and Eastern history, and historical studies had been developed separately by these three disciplines. In 1889 *Shigaku Kai* (The Historical Society of Japan) was founded and *Shigaku Zasshi* (Historical Journal) was first published. *Shigaku Kai* and *Shigaku Zasshi* had played major roles in academic historical studies in Japan. Indeed, modern historical studies were founded by such academic institutions based on the Rankean methodology of positivism. But their ultimate purpose was to educate the elites that the government needed; scholarship had no influence on public opinion. Moreover the threefold division into Western, Japanese and Eastern History instilled the awareness that Western history had a superior value in world history.

On the other hand, some private historians like Yukichi Fukuzawa (1834-1901) and Ukichi Taguchi (1855-1905) argued the history of civilization from an enlightening perspective by referring to works by F. P. G. Guizot or H. T. Buckle.⁹ Since Fukuzawa introduced Western history to the Japanese in the late 1860s to the mid-1870s, some people had tried to understand the history of Japan from a more universal point of view. They believed that Western civilization should be realized in Meiji Japan. Since the opening of Japan in the mid-19th century, the Japanese had begun to modernize and westernize their society, recognizing that a discussion of the historical view of civilization might point the way to catching up with the Western powers. One view took the direction which tried to search for similarities between Japan and Western countries. *Datsua ron* (the Vision to transcend Japan from Asia) became the most famous argument by private historians. Before the Sino-Japanese War, *Koa ron* (the Vision to develop Asia) was the main current among public opinion. Some Japanese pointed out the homogenous identity between Japan and Korea or China and tried to discover how to compete with Western powers in the cooperation with Asian people. On the other hand, Fukuzawa emphasized that only Japan should improve the power to compete with Western countries by westernization of Japanese society. Originally he wanted to find a universal way to develop civilization through the study of Western history and a suitable way to reform the traditional Japanese society. But his arguments on *Datsua ron* were mistaken for an ideology to justify Japanese imperia-

lism in the context of the discourse of *Kokutai ron*, which argued the case for superiority.¹⁰

As nationalistic views gained popularity among the general public, they were criticized for not subjecting the origin of the imperial system to scholarly examination. An example was the scandal which occurred in 1892 over the work of Kunitake Kume (1839-1931), professor at the Faculty of Letters at Tokyo University. In his paper "*Shinto ha Saiten no Kozoku*" (Shinto is an Old Custom for the Festival) Kume argued that Shinto was one of the traditional customs from ancient Japan and it was a mistake to interpret it as the sacred religion. He was criticized by Shinto circles and relieved of his position.¹¹ In 1911 a controversy over the legitimacy of the Japanese dynasty broke out. When a history textbook was revised in 1910, the new draft described that after the fall of the Kamakura Shogunate in the mid-14th century the Japanese dynasty had been divided into a North dynasty and South dynasty. The government criticized this description because it contradicted a formulation in the Constitution of Imperial Japan of 1889 that the imperial dynasty had 'an unbroken line'. The government requested to rewrite that only the South dynasty had legitimacy and that it was the origin of the Emperor Meiji. After this scandal, whenever textbooks were revised, the nationalistic view was strengthened and parts describing Japan as "the sacred nation" were increased.

In the mid-1930s when Japanese imperialism attempted to invade East Asia, the government tried to sweep away democratic and liberal ideologies in order to mobilize people for total war. The Japanese government oppressed not only the left wing but also some academic scholars who wanted to make clear the reality of the imperial power. Two examples of this were: the 1935 scandal over the discussion to place the imperial power in the organs of state; and the 1942 scandal over works by Sokichi Tsuda (1873-1961). The former scandal was the dispute over how the imperial power should be treated in the Constitution of 1889. In the Taisho period (1912-1926),¹² the atmosphere freely to discuss political and social problems, called "*Taisho Demokurash* (the democracy in the Taisho period)", improved temporarily. Some scholars of constitutional law, among whom Tatsukichi Minobe (1873-1948) was a leading figure, emphasized that the imperial power should be restricted within the Constitution, although they admitted the supreme sovereignty of the Emperor.¹³ But as the movement of Japanese fascism arose in the beginning of the 1930s, their theory was criticized by the right wing and in 1935 they were debarred from their academic careers. The latter scandal was the dispute about some works by Tsuda. He studied culture and society in ancient Japan by stringent criticism of historical material and threw light on the actual situation in ancient Japan. But his work to clarify the origins of the imperial system was criticized by the right wing and the government and in 1942 he was arrested.¹⁴

DAISUKE FURUYA

4 The Debate on Japanese Capitalism as the Origin of Postwar Historical Studies

As regards historical studies in Japan before WWII, we can say that the methodology based on positivism was only borrowed from the West. Most historians could not argue their own views because of the atmosphere of blockade under the authoritarian powers.¹⁵ However, some scholars tried courageously to analyse Japanese history in a scientific and rational way and to argue their own points of view. The most impressive example was the debate on Japanese capitalism by the Marxist scholars from the end of the 1920s to the mid-1930s. The controversy was recognized as the most important event in the development of academic studies in Japan prior to WWII. In the fields of economy and history, scholars discussed a lot of problems such as the peculiarity of Japanese capitalism; the class-system of imperial Japan; the meaning of the Meiji Restoration and the strategy of revolution in Japan.¹⁶

In the inter-war period, ideas about social reform or revolution, for example, the new historical school of Germany, were introduced to Japanese scholars. The Russian Revolution in 1917 and the foundation of the Communist International in 1919 also had a great impact on the Japanese intelligentsia. The Communist Party of Japan was founded illegally in 1922. The Japanese intelligentsia was attracted not by the Communist Party but by the prospect of Marxism as a sophisticated systematic methodology. In Japanese scholarship, the atmosphere to analyse social policies from a more deterministic view of stages of development thrived in the light of the growing democratic mood in the Taisho period.¹⁷ In this atmosphere, the Japanese became aware of social problems brought about by the rapid modernization in the Meiji period (1868-1912). From the 1920s to the 1930s, some scholars, who were influenced by such thoughts, recognized that such an ideology in the Meiji period as the simple development of civilization was so illogical that it neglected social problems. They held the objective to integrate the ideal image of a utopia with the practical policy of widespread social reform. Using a sophisticated and scientific method of historical analysis, they tried to examine political change from the Meiji Restoration to the construction of the imperial state and the economic development from the Tokugawa period (1603-1867) to the Taisho period. They were convinced that, if history were explained correctly, they could find a suitable way to solve the social contradictions of capitalism. Marxism had a strong influence on academic fields. Moreover it served to connect academic studies of history with civil opinions on history.¹⁸

The controversy over Japanese capitalism and the Japanese invasion of Manchuria both took place during the Great Depression. This was a period in which Japan met the crisis of Japanese capitalism, war and Japanese fascism. Marxists discussed how to find a way out of this crisis. Eitaro Noro (1900-1934), a famous economist influenced by the Communist Party, recognized that they should ana-

lyze all aspects of Japanese society. In 1932-1933 he published "*Nihon Shihonshugi Hattatsu-shi Koza*" (the 7-volume series of *Developmental History of the Japanese Capitalism*) in collaboration with Moritaro Yamada (1897-1980), Goro Hani (1901-1983) and others. This series was the most remarkable publication of social studies in Japan before WWII. The scholars who took part in "*Koza*", who were called "*Koza-ha*" (the Lectures faction), emphasized not only the backwardness of Japan but also the peculiar symbiosis of the imperial system, the hasty industrialization and the poverty-stricken agriculture, which made up the Japanese characteristics of capitalism. On the contrary, the group in opposition to *Koza-ha* was called "*Rono-ha*" (the "Labour-Farmer" faction). They argued the modernity of the Japanese economy, the universal crisis of world capitalism in the inter-war period and hence the inevitable socialist revolution to come.

The first issue in this controversy focused on the definition of landed property in Japan. *Koza-ha* emphasized that rent paid by a tenant farmer was a feudal rent because it exploited surplus labour. *Rono-ha*, on the other hand, argued that such rent was essentially modern because in the contract between landowner and tenant farmer land was commercialised and there was no feudal compulsion in Japan. The second issue focused on the analyses of Japanese capitalism in "*Nihon Shihonshugi Bunseki*" (Analysis of Japanese Capitalism) published in 1934 by Moritaro Yamada, the most important ideologue of *Koza-ha*.¹⁹ Yamada emphasized the significance of the historical process in the formation of the national economy. The peculiarities of a nation's economy were determined by its history. He did not neglect the international conditions of a nation's development, but he was more interested in the comparative study of a national type of social structure in which an agrarian basis, he believed, was definitive, in order to find the proper strategy of revolution. The third issue focused on the historical meaning of the Meiji Restoration. *Koza-ha* did not think that the Meiji Restoration had been the bourgeois revolution but had served to establish absolutism in Japan. The Restoration had founded the centralized state structure around the imperial power and the semi-feudal landowner class had still survived owing to the absence of land reform. *Rono-ha*, however, argued that the Meiji Restoration had been the bourgeois revolution because the material fundamentals of the feudal class had been completely removed by the Restoration reforms and the Meiji government had been eager to promote capitalism.²⁰

This debate was undoubtedly brought to an end because of oppression by the government. In 1936 some scholars belonging to *Koza-ha* were arrested and in 1937-38 scholars of *Rono-ha* were rounded up. However, when we consider historiography in Japan, this controversy has important significance. Although academic historical studies before WWII had been developed by borrowing Western methodology, in this debate Japanese scholars began to analyse the historical development of Japan by scientific methods and presented their original and systema-

DAISUKE FURUYA

tic views. And scholars not only argued each special subject, they also indicated the possibility of academic studies to keep an eye on political practices concerning the future of Japan. This debate profoundly influenced the young generation who were to play an important role in the development of social sciences after WWII. Among young students who were affected by the opinions of *Koza-ha* were: Hisao Otsuka (1907-1996) who developed the comparative study of economic history; Masao Maruyama (1914-1996) who studied political thought in modern Japan; Takeyoshi Kawashima (1909-1992) who studied the sociology of law in Japan; Kazuo Okochi (1905-1984) who studied social policies and others. All of these became main figures of the historical and social-science studies after 1945. Some historians founded societies for cooperative study during this debate. For example, some scholars at the department of history at Tokyo Imperial University founded *Rekishigaku Kenkyukai* (the Society of Historical Studies) in 1931. They criticized the authoritarianism of *Shigaku Kai* and aimed to study history from the view of progressivism and modernism. However, even the fundamental awareness toward Japanese history of *Koza-ha* was still based on the recognition that Japan had been stagnant and undeveloped in comparison to the West. Their self-identification depended on the dichotomy between “the backward Japan” and “the developed West”.²¹

5 Historical Studies in Postwar-Japan

By the end of the 1930s Japan was under the rule of militarism and fascism. Marxist studies were oppressed by the arrest and ejection of scholars. However, during the Fifteen Years War, some young scholars cultivated a more sophisticated method of historical study based on historical and social-science research that had been highly developed in the West.²² The end of the Fifteen Years War in 1945 saw the liberation of Japan from imperialism and militarism. This situation compelled Japanese scholarship to adopt a new historical perspective. Although it had been modernized superficially, Japan unpardonably committed itself to militarism and invasion in Asia up until 1945. In post-war studies, scholars of every generation felt that the Japanese “nation” should civilize itself again. Until 1960, when the US-Japan Security Treaty was revised, scholarship was coloured by the idealistic atmosphere of trying to build a democratic society in Post-war Japan. The theoretical mainstays in this period were Marxism and Modernism. Sometimes Marxist confronted Modernist, sometimes vice versa; but both of these criticized the “dogmatic” orthodox school of Marxism and the US-guided alliance of the West. They endeavoured to stand on their own feet by creating original visions of post-war Japan. These were commonly based on a criticism of the “pre-modern” character of Japan and the intent to realize a modern democratic society.²³

Marxists that belonged not to the orthodox school but to the revived *Koza-ha* in the 1920s argued the necessity of the democratic revolution as a preface to the

A HISTORIOGRAPHY IN MODERN JAPAN: THE LABORIOUS QUEST FOR IDENTITY

communist society in Japan. Since the intensification of the Cold War in the late 1940s, their ideal of a cosmopolitan democracy had been discouraged. From the beginning of the 1950s, they were interested in problems of “nation” instead of universal problems of “world history”.²⁴ Their interest in the “nation” was promoted in the context of the controversy about the peace-treaty of Japan. Marxists were apprehensive about a separate peace with the US, because they thought that, after concluding the treaty, Japan would be put into the Western alliance and be subordinate to the US. The Japan Communist Party, which had influenced political movements and the intellectual sphere at the very end of the 1940s, argued that a separate peace with the US meant subordination to “US Imperialism”. The success of the socialist revolution in China in 1949 encouraged such arguments in Japan. Referring to the Chinese revolution, Marxists aimed at realizing both national liberation and a democratic revolution. Historical studies about “the Japanese nation” were developed by Marxist historians who organized *Rekishigaku Kenkyukai*. Their studies were based on the simple view that Japan was also a member of “undeveloped and oppressed Asia”. Therefore such historical studies and discussions refrained from investigating the invasion of Asia or the responsibility for war-crimes by the Japanese military before 1945. Some studies on the social structures of Asia contributed to deepen the historical awareness of Asian “backwardness” in post-war Japan. But by the 1950s, communist China alone was the subject of historical studies by Marxists, and they had hardly studied the history of any other Asian country such as Korea. In this way, historians in post-war Japan have left a lot of problems that originated from the Fifteen Years War, like the problem about Koreans living in Japan or about compensation.²⁵

On the other hand, Modernists, who were also inspired by the perception of *Koza-ha*, promoted “citizens” who had a modern mind, referring to the ideal pattern of modern European society. One of most important modernist historians was Hisao Otsuka, who studied the process of building modern capitalism in Europe. Otsuka influenced not only historians who studied the Western countries, but also historians who studied Asia or Japan.²⁶ Otsuka regarded the internal development of the ideal pattern of modernity as important. Especially he emphasized that a democratic and modern personality, which had been realized in modern Europe, should be constructed in post-war Japan. The other main figure among modernist historians was Masao Maruyama. He argued that, since the Meiji Restoration, Japan had only imported and borrowed the political and cultural apparatus of Europe which had been judged as suitable values for reformation from above by the state power. Thus the state power had developed into the only decision-making authority and consequently “ultra-nationalism” ruled in pre-war Japan.²⁷ The concept of “modern” maintained by Otsuka or Maruyama was purely an abstracted, idealized pattern originating from “Western Civilization”. Modernist historians tried to investigate historical problems of modern Ja-

DAISUKE FURUYA

pan by comparing them to such an ideal standard of modernity. So we can say that Modernists in post-war Japan held a view similar to some liberal historians in the Meiji and Taisho periods, like Fukuzawa. That is, the identity which the modernists tried to find depended deeply on an awareness of the inferiority of Japan.²⁸

In this way, both Marxism and Modernism were the main currents of historical studies in post-war Japan. The ideological bases or interests of the Modernists were certainly different from those of the Marxists. Modernist historians had criticized the “dogmatic” view of Marxism or its methodology only in respect of the social structure. However, most of Modernist historians were also influenced from the perspective of *Koza-ha*. The methodological attitude of studies by Marxist and Modernist historians was common to both: connecting the ideal perspective of universal history with the practical object of Japanese politics. They had studied history in order to indicate the ideal visions of the reformation of post-war Japanese society, and both had resisted the conservatism which had tried to revive the historical perspective in the period of militarism. They felt that their main task was to enlighten Japanese people to realize a modernized, democratic society. Generally speaking, historians recognized that the path of modern Japan since the Meiji Restoration was a complete distortion, and such warped history was broken off in 1945. They denounced the historical view before 1945 like *Kokoku shikan* as an unsophisticated, un-modernized view. At the same time, they tried to construct a new historical vision for post-war Japan that would develop the democratic society and place Japanese history into “the universal development of history”. In such a way, both Marxist and Modernist historians had held in common quite idealistic and universal views of history, aware as they were of the “backward” Japan and the “developed” West. They criticized the Japanese society before 1945 and urged the necessity for a modern democratic society, referring to the Western civilization. But, on the other side, such recognition by historians depended on the awareness that Japan had been a victim of backwardness like other Asian countries. By this awareness, historical studies in post-war Japan were pigeonholed to reflect on Japanese military conduct.²⁹

In about 1952, the peace treaty which had been concluded at San Francisco in 1951 went into effect. After that, the general trend of popular thinking and scholarship was divided into two factions: the conservatives, who accepted the military alliance by the Japan-US Security Treaty which had been concluded at the same time of the peace treaty; and the reformists, who represented the mass movement for democracy. This bipolarization of the Japanese society resulted in forming “the regime of 1955”, in which the Liberal Democratic Party remained in power until 1993. Since the mid-1950s, de-Stalinization had given Marxists a shock. Moreover, some historians criticized Marxist methodology in the controversy over the Showa period after 1955, because Marxist studies could not clarify the real image of people.³⁰ The mood of discouragement in post-war scholarship, which had

aimed at universal modern development based on Western standards, was reflected in this criticism of Marxism. In the international context that Asian and African countries had been independent since the mid-1950s, historians like Bokuro Eguchi (1911-1989) or Senroku Uehara (1899-1975) began to re-examine the historical perspective based on Western civilization and realized that Japanese history should be understood in the East Asian context³¹. When Japanese historians began to deny the “Western” historical view, efforts to quest for identity by post-war historical studies entered a new stage.

6 The Transition of Historical Studies and the Revival of Conservatism

After the campaign against the Japan-US Security Treaty in 1960, Japan achieved high economic growth. In 1964, when the Olympic Games were held in Tokyo, Japan was admitted to the OECD and became one of the advanced nations. Though there are still a lot of problems caused by contemporary capitalism, Japan has retained its stature as an economic power until today. After the 1960s, conservatism was gradually encouraged again. Conservatives tried to set a high valuation on the social basement of Japan which could attain economic development. This trend was reinforced with the theory of modernization from US scholars like Edwin Reischauer. They, who stood by the historical vision of *Kokoku Shikan*, argued that there had been modernity in the traditional society of Japan and in particular the authoritarian state system had encouraged rapid social progress.³² On the other hand, Marxism and Modernism, which had condemned the Japanese tradition as backward, did not accept the theory of modernization, but tried to re-examine modern Japanese history in the context of East Asian history. Among liberal historians, both the Korean War and the Vietnamese War were considered to be flagrant contradictions in World history. Accordingly, such historians thought that they could recognize the problems of world history if they made clear the historical problems of East Asia. For example, at the general meeting of *Rekishigaku Kenkyukai* in 1963, Marxist historians discussed “the re-examination of the historical image of East Asia” as the main subject of the conference.³³ This showed a group of historians who had taken the post-war, Marxist, historical studies and found a new theme in the studies of Asian history. Moreover, since 1965, when Japan concluded the treaty with Korea, not only socialist China but also Korea were recognized as subjects for Japanese historians. In this way, Japanese historians found “neighbours” and studied the history of “neighbours” in order to investigate their own history from the viewpoint of others.

In the 1960s, the radical leftist movement consisting mainly of students criticized all existing ideologies and systems in post-war Japan. The young scholars of this generation discussed the attitudes and methodology of post-war historical studies. They denied such a historical view as that national history might be deci-

DAISUKE FURUYA

ded by the pattern of social structure based on production capacity.³⁴ The modernist view of Otsuka, who attached importance to the self-development of manufacturing capacity, was especially criticized. Though the leftist movement of Japan ruined itself in the beginning of the 1970s, most historians realized that no grand theories, such as the simple development of Western civilization or the dialectical development of history, could apply to the real world. They required a new frame of thought in place of Marxism and Modernism. Structuralism and post-structuralism were introduced and became popular as the standard-bearers of new thought.³⁵ The awareness of issues was totally transformed into an interest in social detail by a fundamental re-examination of modernity. The paradigm of Japanese historians lost the grand plot to achieve modernity. Historians gave up analyzing the social-economical structure with the practical intention of reforming politics or society. Instead, they were keen to excavate areas or problems which post-war historians had bypassed. They identified newly-found themes: religion, gender, discrimination, the environment, crime and so on.³⁶ However, such studies generated confusion. The influence of historians on public opinion had been lost rapidly because people were not interested in the studies of detailed history on which historians focused their attention.

Nowadays most historians, who were influenced by structuralism and experienced the leftist movement or university dispute from the end of 1960s to the beginning of 1970s, study the history of society or the history of mentality. They feel misgivings about the loss of influence of historical studies, yet they know not how to regain it. Japanese historians use the new perspective to recognise their "Asian neighbours" and they try to study Japanese history in the context of East Asia,³⁷ but they cannot identify themselves. Even today, some historians think that Japan needs to construct an independent mind because civilian society is not realized in the Japanese society.³⁸ This recognition is similar to modernist historians like Otsuka or Maruyama. Such historians emphasized that Japan needed to cultivate a Japanese identity by themselves, and tried to search for the ideal individual model by referring to modern European society. They argued that the middle-class model in modern Europe should be an ideal model for the Japanese: the free and independent person. They were not aware, however, that in order to cultivate this free and individual personality, a process of compulsion would be required. Historians of today also seem to meet the same problem of self-identification. Moreover they have faced more severe problems about the images of both "Asia" and "Japan", since they found Asians as "neighbours" in the field of historical studies. Historians are required to study some fields which post-war historical studies have not touched. They investigate not only war crimes by Japanese military in Asia, but also political, economical and social relationships between "Asia" and "Japan" from Ancient to Modern times. As such studies are deepened, historical problems of "neighbours" are recognised as specifically "Japanese" problems,

because historians show that many Asian elements consist of Japanese society and culture. For example, Chinese or Koreans living in Japan, whom historical studies have neglected, are realized as important participants in Japanese society. The myth of “Japan as the single nation state” has been completely deflated by such studies. Japan is therefore required to answer not only for war compensation for Asia but also for the new “Japanese” image.

In the wake of this chaos of historical studies, some conservative ideologies have regained influence on public opinion since the 1970s.³⁹ They think highly of the traditional systems of Japan like the group-oriented society or the management system of a company which has achieved high economic growth.⁴⁰ Their arguments depend on the apprehensions to the Japanese society in which people are more and more selfish and uninterested in social problems. On the one hand, conservatives criticize Modernism or the free-economy theory; on the other, they rate highly the traditional values of Japanese culture. To be sure, Japanese people today enjoy a high-consumption society and have become more conservative. But at the same time they want to reform corrupt political structure and moral decay. New right-wing groups or revisionists advocating the new nationalism have appeared since the 1990s.⁴¹ Especially the group of “*Jiyushugi Shikan*” (the liberalist view of history) led by Nobukatsu Fujioka, the professor of the Faculty of Education, Tokyo University, is a serious problem.⁴² After the end of the cold war in Asia, many detailed historical cases have been unearthed by historians. One example is the problem of the Japanese Army compelling Asian women to sex slavery during the Fifteen Years War. Japan faces compensation for war crimes. For conservatives, the discovery of war criminals from imperial Japan is a blow to Japanese pride. Against such a situation, the Fujioka group argues that the historical perception in post-war Japan, denying traditional values before 1945, is self-tormenting and that Japanese self-respect must be recovered. Supported by conservative mass media and by a circle of teachers calling for the rigorous education of traditional ethics, the group is trying to write new history textbooks based on conservative morals. In this process they neglect and distort such historical facts as the sex slaves in WWII and the 1937 massacre in Nanjing. In 2001, the draft of their textbook was given official approval by the Ministry of Education and Science; the published version became a bestseller.⁴³ Korea and China criticize the textbook. This case shows us that, while searching for a Japanese identity connected with East Asian history, scholars of today can cultivate such perilous views of history.

7 Conclusions

Since the Meiji Restoration, the main issue for Japan has been to bring about a modern society. Visions of the ideal society varied greatly according to the standpoints of the Japanese. Before 1945, traditional historical writings were utilized by

DAISUKE FURUYA

the authoritarian government in order to establish a patriarchal state. On the other hand, scholars and private historians, who were aware of “the backwardness of Japan”, studied history by referring to the “developed West”. They were seemed to believe to progress the Western civilization universally. The end of the Fifteen Years War compelled the Japanese to rethink their ideal vision of society. Marxists and Modernists alike condemned the traditional values that pre-war Japan had appropriated in order to invade the Asian countries. They were also conscious of “the backwardness”, proposing a western-style image of identity and a break with Japanese tradition. Historians in post-war Japan tried to enlighten the Japanese people so as to let every citizen establish an independent personality as a basis for democracy. However, they emphasized the discontinuity between the pre-war and post-war society so much that the Japanese avoided responsibility for the Fifteen Years War and suppressed the memory of it for about fifty years. After the 1970s, when historical studies were influenced by structuralism, scholars tried to utilize their professional knowledge gradually to salvage these memories. The thaw came after the end of the Showa period and the Cold War.

Raising awareness of the issues which post-war historians held in common was based on the determination to break the status quo and to study history for the advancement of modern society. Such historians had a great influence on scholarship. The decline of post-war historical studies thus brought many problems: trivial research topics; a lack of dynamic synthesis of historical studies; no practical assertions to public opinion and so on. On the other hand, conservative history, which had little influence after 1945 because of the hegemony of liberal studies in post-war Japan, had an increasing effect on Japanese society once high economic growth had been achieved. And after the complete collapse of the Marxist paradigm in the 1990s, conservatives have had an increasingly powerful voice within public opinion.

The role of present historical studies in Japan is to concretise the Japanese quest for identity. In Japan today, the problem of cultivating one's personality is still significant. In recent years the moral hazard of being Japanese and the crisis of Japanese democracy can be seen as tragic. These phenomena illustrate that the Japanese cannot be cultivated as civilized individuals. The problem is held in common both by historians after the Meiji Restoration like Fukuzawa and post-war historians like Otsuka or Maruyama. But the ideal image of the modern personality is different from the image of individuals idealized by post-war studies. Japan has already rushed into the new age where every borderline comes to have smaller and smaller meaning. Present-day Japanese historians seem to have freed themselves from the dichotomy of “Japan” and “Europe”, which had constrained their colleagues since the Meiji period. Most of them understand that the Japanese identity should be cultivated in the context of Asia, and the task of finding this new identity is now under way.

Notes

- 1 GHQ (General Headquarters of the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers) was founded as an advisory body for the Japanese government in 1945. It played a definitive role in some reforms in Japan after WWII until its abolition in 1952, when Japan concluded the peace treaty with US.
- 2 M. B. Jansen, "Introduction", in M. B. Jansen (ed.), *The Cambridge history of Japan: The nineteenth century*, vol.5, (Cambridge & New York, 1989); P. Duus, "Introduction" in P. Duus (ed.), *The Cambridge history of Japan: The twentieth century*, vol.6, (Cambridge & New York, 1988).
- 3 I. Umehara, "Asuka Nara jidai no rekishishiso" [The thought of history in the Asuka and Nara periods], in Nihon shisoshi kenkyukai [The society for the study of Japanese thought] (ed.), *Nihon niokeru rekishishiso no tenkai* (Tokyo, 1965), pp.33-36; M. Shibata, "Heian jidaizenki no rekishishiso" [The thought of history in the early part of the Heian period], in *Nihon niokeru rekishishiso no tenkai*, pp.63-66.
- 4 S. Yamamuro, "Meijikokka no seido to rinen" [Organization and ideology in the Meiji state], in *Iwanami-koza Nihon-tsushi* [Iwanami lectures on the history of Japan], vol.17, (Tokyo, 1994), pp.143-145.
- 5 S. Ienaga, "Taisho Showa no rekishishiso" [Historical thinking in the Taisho and Showa periods], in *Nihon niokeru rekishishiso no tenkai*, pp.275-277; H. Sato, "Kindai Nihon no kyoikunaiyouseisaku to sono Ajjianinshiki" [The policy of education and the perception of Asia in Modern Japan], in H. Sato & T. Yamamoto (eds.), *Nihon no kingendaishi to rekishikyoku* [Modern history and the history of education in Japan], (Tokyo, 1996), pp.173-175.
- 6 Ienaga, *op. cit.*, pp.285-288.
- 7 C. Gluck, "Sengoshigaku no metahisutori" [The meta-history on the postwar historical studies], in *Iwanami-Koza Nihon-Tsusi*, supp.vol. 1, (Tokyo, 1995), pp5f.; Yun Koncha, "Sengo rekishigaku no Ajiakan" [The image of Asia in the postwar historical studies], in *Iwanami-Koza Nihon-Tsusi*, supp.vol. 1, pp.249-251.
- 8 Tokyo University was founded as the first national university in 1877. It changed its name to the Imperial University in 1886 but was renamed Tokyo Imperial University in 1897, when Kyoto Imperial University was founded. It has been called Tokyo University since 1947, when the new university system was introduced after WWII.
- 9 Ozawa, *op. cit.*, pp.248-261; Jansen, *op. cit.*, pp.38-40; K. Kondo, "The Modernist Inheritance in Japanese Historical Studies: Fukuzawa, Marxists and Otsuka", in G. Daniel & C. Tsuzuki (eds.), *The history of Anglo-Japanese Relations 1600-2000: Social and Cultural Perspectives*, (London, 2001).
- 10 C. Blacker, *The Japanese Enlightenment: A Study of the Writings of Fukuzawa Yukichi* (Cambridge, 1964).
- 11 Kondo, *op. cit.*
- 12 Japanese has used special era names ("Gengo") since 645. Since 1868, eras have been named after the emperors, indicating the respective period of reign.
- 13 P. Duus & I. Scheiner, "Socialism, liberalism, and Marxism, 1901-1931" in *The Cambridge history of Japan: The twentieth century*, vol.6, pp.675-678.

DAISUKE FURUYA

- 14 Ienaga, *op. cit.*, pp.280-283.; T. Najita & H. D. Harootunian, "Japanese revolt against the West: political and cultural criticism in the twentieth century", in *The Cambridge history of Japan: The twentieth century*, vol.6, pp.736.
- 15 Ienaga, *op.cit.*, pp.277-279.
- 16 Kondo, *op.cit.*; Jansen, *op.cit.*, pp.41f.
- 17 Duus & Scheiner, *op.cit.*, pp.673-681.
- 18 Gluck, *op.cit.*, pp.6f; Ienaga, *op.cit.*, pp.283-285.
- 19 M. Yamada, *Nihon Shihonshugi Bunseki* [*Analysis of Japanese Capitalism*], (Tokyo, 1934, 2nd ed. 1949).
- 20 N. Jensen, 'The debate over Japanese capitalism', in I.Nish (ed.), *Contemporary European Writing on Japan* (Ashford, 1988).
- 21 Yun, *op.cit.*, p.252.
- 22 Japanese historians put together the war in China since the Manchurian Incident in 1931 and the Pacific War (1941-1945) and call them "the Fifteen Years War".
- 23 Gruck, *op.cit.*, p.7; Yun, *op.cit.*, pp.252f.
- 24 S. Ishimoda, *Rekisho to minzoku no hakken* [The discovery of history and nation], (Tokyo, 1952)
- 25 Yun, *op.cit.*, pp.253ff.
- 26 *Otsuka Hisao Chosakushu* [Hisao Otsuka's complete works], 13 vols (Tokyo, 1969-86).
- 27 *Maruyama Masao Shu* [Masao Maruyama's works], 17 vols (Tokyo, 1995-97); M. Maruyama, *Thoughts and Behaviour in Modern Japanese Politics*, edited by I. Morris (Oxford, 1963).
- 28 Kondo, *op.cit.*
- 29 Yun, *op.cit.*, p.262.
- 30 cf. S. Toyama, S. Imai, A. Fujiwara, *Showashi* [The history of the Showa period], (Tokyo, 1955); S. Toyama, *Sengo no rekishigaku to rekishiishiki* [Historical studies and historical consciousness in the post-war period], (Tokyo, 1968).
- 31 B. Eguchi, *Teikokushugi to minzoku* [Imperialism and Nation], (Tokyo, 1954); S. Uehara, *Sekaishizo no shinkeisei* [The new construction of the image of world history], (Tokyo, 1955); Idem, *Sekaishi niokeru gendai no Ajia* [Modern Asia in world history], (Tokyo, 1961).
- 32 Yun, *op.cit.*, p.266.
- 33 *Ibid*, p.267.
- 34 Y. Yasumaru, "Gendai no Shisojyokyo" [The situation of thought in the present-day], in *Iwanami-koza Nihon-tsushi*, vol.20, (Tokyo, 1995).
- 35 *Ibid.*, p.295.
- 36 Gluck, *op.cit.*, p.8.
- 37 e.g. S. Oe (ed.), *Iwanami-koza Kindainihon to shokuminchi* [Iwanami lectures: the modern Japan and colonies], 8 vols, (Tokyo, 1992-1993); Y. Arai, M. Ishii, S. Murai (eds.), *Ajia nonakano Nihonshi* [A new history of Japan in Asia], 6 vols, (Tokyo, 1992-1993); Y. Mizoguchi, T. Hamashita, N. Hiraishi, H. Miyajima (eds.), *Ajia kara kangaueru* [Series Asian perspectives], 7 vols, (Tokyo, 1993-1994).
- 38 Yasumaru, *op.cit.*, pp.318f.

A HISTORIOGRAPHY IN MODERN JAPAN: THE LABORIOUS QUEST FOR IDENTITY

- 39 *Ibid.*, p.294
- 40 e.g. Y. Murakami, S. Kumon, S. Sato, *Bunmei toshiteno ieshakai* [The family society as a civilization], (Tokyo, 1979); Y. Murakami, *Hankoten no seijikeizaigakuyoko* [The outline of the political economics against the classical school], (Tokyo, 1994); M. Yamazaki, *Yawarakai kojinsbugi no tanjo* [The birth of flexible individualism], (Tokyo, 1984).
- 41 e.g. I. Ozawa, *Nihon kaizo keikaku* [The program to revamp Japan], (Tokyo, 1993)
- 42 In 1994 the Fujioka group founded "*Jiyushugi Shikan Kenkyukai*" (the Association for the Advancement of a Liberalist View of History). In 1997 they and their supporters organized "*Atarashii rekishikyokasho wo tsukuru kai*" (the Association for Writing the New Textbook of History).
- 43 K. Nishio, *Shihanbon: Atarashii rekishikyokasho* [The new textbook of history (the version for public sales)], (Tokyo, 2001)