

II. Postwar Japan Responsibility

Japanese Neo-Nationalism

A Critique of Katō Norihiro's "After the Defeat" Discourse

I. Introduction

Here I take as my theme the discourse of Katō Norihiro. Although Katō is a literary critic and not a historian, the publication of his *Haisengo ron* [*After the defeat*] (Kōdansha, 1997) nevertheless established him as one of the central figures of the “historian’s debate” in Japan. This book had its beginnings in an essay of the same name published in the January 1995 issue of the literary arts journal *Gunzō* that was written at the end of 1994—in other words, on the eve of the fiftieth anniversary of the end of World War II. I immediately published a criticism of this essay in the March 1995 issue of the same journal, thereby opening up a debate in which many others have since come to participate. It has been suggested that this discussion be called the “debate on the historical subject.” Regardless of the suitability of this name, however, it seems undeniable that the debate has become one of the focal points of both the history and nationalism debates taking place in Japan today. Since I myself am one of the participants in these debates, it would be senseless on my part to attempt to provide an “objective” or “neutral” commentary thereon. Instead I would like to offer a critical analysis of Katō’s discourse, which I shall for convenience’ sake refer to in the following as “After the Defeat.”

II. The Notion of Postwar Japan's "Personality Split"

Let us examine the basic claims of "After the Defeat" in due order.

According to Katō, Japan's defeat in World War II brought about a "personality split" in the postwar. This "personality split" refers to the opposition between the reformists and the conservatives, or those who support Japan's postwar Constitution and those who seek to revise it. The reformists represent an "outward-looking self," one that depends upon such foreign universal ideas as those contained in the Constitution, as for example democracy and human rights. In contrast to this, the conservatives are an "inward-looking self," grounded upon such traditional values as the homeland, the emperor, and the purity of the Japanese ethnos. Thus the postwar Japanese "self" is split or doubled into one that is "outward-looking" and one that is "inward-looking."

From the outset, we can discern here a highly suspect premise. Everything proceeds as if "Japan" were originally a single personality. What splits or doubles the nation's originally indivisible unity of personality is the unprecedented catastrophe and traumatic experience of the defeat. Yet on what authority can Japan's conservatives and reformists be seen as a split of what was originally one "personality," particularly when the U.S. Republican and Democratic parties and the British Conservative and Labour parties are equally seen as an opposition of two "personalities"? Katō fails to examine these essential contradictions or oppositions, for he assumes that there exists beneath them an underlying national oneness. Here already we can glimpse a typically nationalist desire to restore such oneness.

Yet Katō would not concede as much, for he believes that this national personality split must be rigorously eliminated in order for the Japanese to apologize to the Asian war victims as a unified "national subject." Katō seems to think that the nation must first become a unified subject in order to fulfill its responsibility. In the postwar period, however, Japan has been divided both *by* and *about* the defeat. For Katō, this is precisely why it remains unable to offer a true apology to the Asian victims.

Now what exactly is meant by this notion of postwar Japan's "per-

sonality split”? Exactly what kind of split has the country suffered both by and about the defeat? Generally speaking, Katō raises three points here.

III. The Problem of the “Forced Constitution”

First, Katō discusses the issue of Japan’s postwar Constitution, and particularly Article Nine.

Since its enactment in 1946, Article Nine of the present Constitution has consistently been the target of intense debate. It stipulates that war must be renounced as a “means by which to settle international disputes,” that Japan must to that end not maintain an army, and that the “nation’s right of belligerency” is refused. In their defense of this war renunciation clause as the centerpiece of postwar Japanese pacifism, the reformists have formed the “Constitution protection camp,” whereas the conservatives, who view the article as originally forced upon Japan by the U.S. Occupation forces, are known as the “Constitution revision camp” in their constant desire to have it repealed. A paradox thus emerges in which it is the reformists who wish to “conserve” Article Nine while the conservatives are more “reformist” in their efforts to “revise” or repeal it.

Now Katō, if he is to be believed, seems to support Article Nine. Nevertheless, he disagrees with the reformists (the Constitution protection camp) in their efforts to safeguard this article. Here he sides with the conservatives in his claim that the Constitution cannot be “ours” insofar as it was originally forced upon Japan. Katō writes that this peace Constitution, which forbids the use of arms, was enforced in the context of America’s overwhelming military strength. For him, this represents one of the major “distortions” of postwar Japan, and he harshly criticizes the Constitution protection camp for its “self-deception” in failing to confront this “distortion.” In order to eliminate this “distortion,” which marks the very beginning of postwar Japan, Katō proposes that the Constitution be “re-chosen” by means of a plebiscite. Even if this plebiscite were to result in the repeal of the war renunciation clause, as he states, it would produce

the positive outcome of making the Constitution “ours” or “our own” for the first time since the war.

Here I cannot enter into a historical or theoretical discussion of the Constitution and Article Nine, but such a discussion would be unnecessary. Rather I shall restrict myself to pointing out the basic problems of Katō’s argument.

First, Katō abhors the Constitution’s impurity of origins as it was “enforced” by the Occupation forces, a point on which he dwells at length. His thinking falls into a fundamentalism here in insisting that all discussion of this matter is futile if the Japanese people do not now purely “subjectively” re-choose the Constitution from scratch. Although Katō himself supports the Constitution, he nevertheless finds it to be a case of “self-deception” to depend upon it insofar as it remains “enforced.” He claims that it is nonsense to speak about peace in this regard, but here his words seem indistinguishable from a mere “emotional outpouring” which ignores any question of real politics.

More concretely, Katō’s argument ignores, or at least makes light of, the role played by the Constitution these past fifty years in its tension with the logic of Japan’s military safety and security, as embodied in the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty framework. On the one hand, Katō supports the Constitution: “In fact, we have single-handedly just managed to hold onto this forced Constitution despite being at the mercy of various international forces.” And again, “This Constitution was forced upon us. In these past fifty years, however, we have made its ideas our own and somehow decided to hold onto it... allowing it to take root after our own fashion.” Nevertheless, he ridicules the Constitution protection camp for its “theory of assimilating the Constitution’s forced character,” as this runs counter to his own view that the Constitution be substantively “re-chosen.” He insists that the Constitution “is not ours” insofar as its original “stain” is not wiped absolutely clean by means of a plebiscite.

Such fundamentalism can most clearly be seen when Katō encounters *present* issues of real politics. Today the principles of the peace Constitution are being flagrantly violated by such pacts as the New Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation, according to which

Japan must virtually automatically help the United States in times of war. Katō claims to support the peace Constitution and yet is unable to defend it without “self-deception.” In response to those who call for the vigorous employment of its principles, Katō argues that the Constitution is not “ours” insofar as it is not re-chosen by plebiscite. He has only ridicule and scorn for people who criticize real politics in the name of “our” Constitution, for such behavior is mere “self-deception.” As Mamiya Yōsuke correctly points out, Katō places himself on the “far side of both the Constitution protection and Constitution revision camps.” From these heights he refuses in advance all concrete political judgments, thereby “making himself a politically irresponsible subject” (Mamiya Yōsuke, “Chishikijin nashonarizumu no shinri to seiri” [The body and soul of intellectual’s nationalism], in *Dōjidai ron* [On contemporary matters] (Iwanami Shoten)).

Second, Katō’s notion that the Constitution be “re-chosen from scratch” appears as a kind of “philosophy of pure subjectivity” in which all trace of the other is dispelled from the origins of the “national subject.” Abhorring its impurity of origins in being originally “enforced” by the U.S. Occupation forces, Katō writes that “*our choosing of the Constitution must take priority over its content*” (*Kanōsei toshite no sengo igo* [The post postwar as possibility] (Iwanami Shoten, p. 237; italics Takahashi)). Or again: “It is only correct for a nation to have a Constitution that it has chosen itself, even if it be a bad one, than for it to have a good Constitution that it has not so chosen” (*ibid.*, p. 254). While such statements may appear to be “correct” in a formalistic sense, they are not at all self-evident when seen in the context of concrete historical situations.

For example, would Katō see as “correct” a proposal to “revise” the Constitution along the lines of fascism? Would he view as superior a militarist Constitution “chosen by ourselves” over the present peace Constitution, which “we have somehow decided to hold onto these past fifty years” despite its being “enforced” by the Occupation army? Such preference for a “bad” Constitution purely chosen by “us Japanese” over a “good” Constitution that bears traces of the other represents, in fact, a pure nationalism that remains indifferent to the Constitution’s actual content. Or rather, *what makes this nationalism*

so pure is this very indifference to content.

The erasure of the trace of the other is not equivalent to mere abstract manner of thought. Katō's discussion of the Constitution proceeds as if everything began with the Occupation and the defeat were strictly a defeat by the United States. What is thus overlooked is the broader historical context in which the war renunciation clause was imposed upon Japan. For example, the text of this article appears after the final exhibit at the Beijing War Memorial against Japanese Aggression. This cannot simply be written off as an instance of China's "anti-Japanese" policy. While there is indeed here a political intent to benefit China's "national interest," people nonetheless visit the memorial out of a resolve to never again allow an invasion that was overcome only at the cost of some twenty million casualties and billions of dollars in damages. Although it is certainly true that the war renunciation clause stemmed from an initiative by the U.S. Occupation authorities, it must not be forgotten that this clause was imposed upon Japan because of the enormous destruction and countless sacrifices in Asia brought about by its own war of invasion. Despite Japan's postwar military build-up under the terms of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty, we can see from this standpoint that the "enforcement" of this clause has for the past half-century effectively released Asia from the threat of Japan's excessive remilitarization. In the postwar period, the memory of this "enforced" renunciation of war has long been a source of resentment against the United States and a hotbed of anti-U.S. nationalism. However, if we could deliver this historicity up to a relation with Asia as well as rigorously overcome the subordination to the logic of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty, the memory of that "enforcement" might break out of the closed cycle of resentment and nationalism so as to become an indispensable starting point in the process of building peace in East Asia and the world.

IV. The emperor's War Responsibility

Katō's second point concerns the Shōwa Emperor's war responsibility.

The Shōwa Emperor was, in the words of the Meiji Constitution, the “sovereign overseer,” i.e., head of state; he was the “supreme commander,” or the highest in charge, of the former army. It was in his name that Japan’s “imperial subjects” waged war and carried out the invasion of Asia. Thus the emperor’s war responsibility was already fully laid out, domestically as well as internationally, on a legal, political, and moral level.

With the onset of the Cold War, however, the emperor was cleared of all responsibility at the 1948 Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal as part of the, so to speak, “political cooperation” between the U.S. Occupation forces and Japan’s leadership clique. Ever since, there has been little public discussion of this question. Particularly symbolic in this regard was a press conference held in 1995 to mark the occasion of the Socialist Party chairman, Murayama Tomiichi, becoming head of the Socialist-Conservative coalition government. Despite the fact that the Socialists had throughout the postwar period occupied the political center of the reformist faction (the Constitution protection camp), Murayama remarked at this press conference that the Shōwa Emperor bore “no responsibility” for the war. It is in fact rare even among reformist politicians to openly acknowledge this responsibility, although it must be said that such acknowledgment might well endanger both one’s political and actual life. As such, it appears somewhat simplistic for Katō to view this issue as yet another example of postwar Japan’s “personality split,” as if the conservatives’ denial of the emperor’s war responsibility could be directly opposed to the reformists’ affirmation of it.

Yet Katō himself acknowledges this responsibility. This is certainly true, and so why was I originally critical of him on this point? As he writes in his original article, “The emperor is responsible for his subjects, and above all for those soldiers of our nation who died in his name. While we the Japanese people bear responsibility for the twenty million Asian dead, the emperor cannot escape partial responsibility for the three million of our nation who died” (*Gunzō*, January 1995, p. 285).

Here Katō determines the emperor’s responsibility as “responsibility for his subjects,” and especially “for those soldiers of our nation

who died in his name.” This is mistaken. Clearly the Japanese people bear responsibility for the Asian victims, just as the emperor bears responsibility for those “subjects” and “dead soldiers” who were mobilized and suffered in his name. Yet why does Katō say nothing of the emperor’s responsibility for the Asian victims? Weren’t all Asians killed by the “Imperial Army” (as the Japanese army was then called) sacrificed “in the name of” the emperor? The Japanese authorities at this time referred to the so-called “comfort women” as “gifts for the Imperial Army soldiers,” and this explains why those women who have survived and come out seek the emperor’s apology.

Katō’s silence here is certainly no accident. It is fully consistent with his discussion of the emperor’s war responsibility solely in terms of “moral responsibility.” As he writes, “What words should we address in the postwar to the Shōwa Emperor, who died without fulfilling his moral responsibility to the soldiers who above all died in his name?” (*Haisengo ron*, p. 74). If we are to interpret Article Three of the Japanese Imperial Constitution (which states that “the emperor is sacred and inviolable”) as “sovereign immunity from prosecution,” then it becomes impossible to question the responsibility of his actions in terms of Japanese law. The emperor’s responsibility toward his “subjects” is thus reduced to a question of “moral responsibility” rather than one of legal responsibility. On the other hand, however, responsibility toward Asia is first and foremost a question of international law. Despite prevailing international opinion, the emperor was not tried as a “war criminal” at the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal because of a combination of U.S. Occupation policy objectives and Japanese demands for the “retention of the national polity.” The fact that Katō shows absolutely no interest in this matter is further evidence that he neglects this question of legal responsibility. Focusing instead solely on “moral responsibility,” he claims that the emperor should have “abdicated.” What concerns Katō is the fact that the emperor did not abdicate, not that he escaped judgment. As he argues, “Regardless of the sophistry of his postwar supporters, it is abundantly clear that the Shōwa Emperor should have clarified his responsibility as signatory of the Imperial Declaration of War by abdicating, at either the time of the defeat, the end of the Occupation, or

some other time" (*ibid.*, p. 72).

Let us focus here on this notion of "responsibility as signatory of the Imperial Declaration of War." If Katō understands the emperor's responsibility in this manner, then he would be forced to restrict the meaning of war responsibility. For the emperor would thus be released from all responsibility for those "soldiers who died in his name" during the first four years of the second Sino-Japanese War, as this was an "undeclared war" which preceded the Imperial Declaration of War (issued on December 8, 1941). *In other words, Katō both excludes the emperor's responsibility prior to the Imperial Declaration of War and interprets his responsibility as "signatory" of this document solely in domestic terms. Through this double operation, the emperor's responsibility comes to be reduced to nothing more than a matter of moral responsibility for those "Imperial Army" soldiers who died in the so-called Pacific War.* Also, there is an obvious confusion here. Since the "three million Japanese dead" that Katō cites is the government's figure for those who died "after the China Incident," the emperor's responsibility for these dead remains at odds with his "responsibility as signatory of the Imperial Declaration of War."

Now, Katō subtly revised this point after a two-year silence. With the publication of his essay in book form, there appears without any explanation whatsoever the following change: "The emperor is responsible for his subjects, and above all for those soldiers of our nation who died in his name. While we the Japanese people bear responsibility for the twenty million Asian dead, the emperor cannot escape partial responsibility *not only for these people, but all the more* for the three million of our nation who died" (*ibid.*, p. 72; italics Takahashi).

It seems that "twenty million Asian dead" are now added to the emperor's war responsibility. Since however the emperor is responsible "all the more" for the "three million of our nation who died," the emphasis remains on the emperor's domestic moral responsibility. Nor is there any change in Katō's notion that the emperor should abdicate as part of this moral responsibility, which introduces the possibility that responsibility toward Asia is likewise conceived only as moral responsibility. Katō leaves this question of Asian responsibility vague,

but what has in any case already been established is the question of order, according to which the Japanese dead, and particularly the soldiers, are given priority over the Asian dead. This prioritizing of “our nation” can be seen throughout Katō’s argument, but it is set forth most boldly in his third point, concerning the mourning for the war dead.

V. The Problem of Mourning the War Dead

For Katō, the problem of “mourning” the war dead lies at the “origin” of postwar Japan’s personality split. Here, then, we enter the heart of the debate around “After the Defeat.” In the “debate on the historical subject,” some have regarded as mistaken those efforts to critically focus on Katō’s notion of mourning the war dead, as these overlook the important issues he raises. Yet such focus may be justified when one considers the structure of his argument, in which this issue of mourning occupies the “original site” of the postwar “distortions.”

What is meant by postwar Japan’s personality split as concerns this question of mourning the war dead? According to Katō, the postwar reformists claim that we must apologize for the “twenty million Asian dead” killed during Japan’s war of invasion. Yet these reformists ignore the issue of the “three million dead of our nation,” and particularly the “dead soldiers,” for they revile those who led the invasion as “defiled dead.” On the other hand, the conservatives fall into the “falsehood” of ignoring the “twenty million Asian dead” and worshipping the dead Japanese soldiers at Yasukuni Shrine as “fallen heroes.” If the reformists in their focus on the “twenty million Asian dead” represent postwar Japan’s “outward-looking self,” then the conservatives are the “inward-looking self” that focuses on the “three million dead of our nation,” and particularly the dead soldiers. There exists a kind of “Jekyll and Hyde” split at the “origin” of postwar Japan, one that is both *of* the war dead and *by* the war dead. Like an annual event, apologies for the war are repeatedly nullified by reactions against them, as when Prime Minister Hosokawa’s 1993 statement

that “the war was a wrongful war of invasion” was followed by Justice Minister Nagano’s remark (for which he was forced to resign) that the “Nanjing Massacre was an invention.” Insofar as Japan does not overcome this personality split, it will remain unable to take responsibility for the war and offer a true apology to the Asian victims. Conversely speaking, in order to accept its responsibility and truly apologize, Japan must overcome this split and form a unified nation as subject of apology and responsibility.

What then should one do? Katō proposes that the Japanese people should not, like the reformists, focus solely on the Asian victims, but rather first of all deeply mourn the “dead of our nation,” and particularly the soldiers. But what does such mourning mean? Katō says that this is to “respect” these dead and “thank” them from one’s perspective as postwar Japanese (“*Haisengo ron wo meguru* ‘Q & A’” [Questions and answers about *After the defeat*], in the January 1999 issue of *Ronza*).

One should thus “thank” the dead soldiers, whom Katō describes as having “died for our nation,” “died so that we could be here now.” But how does this logic differ from that of Yasukuni Shrine? Katō insists there is a difference. Indeed, he says that we must first mourn and thank these soldiers so as to sever that Yasukuni logic. For Katō, it is not the case that Yasukuni logic still survives among the conservatives *despite* the reformists’ efforts to apologize to the Asian victims. On the contrary, it survives *because of* these efforts, in addition to the reformist neglect of Japan’s dead soldiers. The source of Yasukuni logic lies precisely in the reformists’ abandonment of and contempt for those soldiers as “invaders” and “defiled dead” killed in an “unjust war.” For Yasukuni’s supporters, it is intolerable that the soldiers have come to be ignored in the “outward-looking official histories.” Even when these supporters “forge history” and repeat such “slips” and “reckless remarks” as “The war was not a war of invasion” or “The Nanjing Massacre was an invention,” Katō attributes this to their determination to somehow give meaning to the soldiers’ deaths and mourn for them. Or as he puts it, “Yasukuni logic emerges from the reformist view of the war dead as its twin” (“*Haisengo ron wo meguru* ‘Q & A’”).

In order to break free of this logic, one must break free of its point of emergence, i.e., the “reformist view of the war dead.” Rather than neglect the dead soldiers of our nation and focus on the Asian victims, as with the reformists, one must in fact give priority to these soldiers and deeply mourn and thank them. Only then can postwar Japanese first recover their unified identity as “we Japanese,” in the sense of a single undivided national subject, and truly apologize to the Asian victims. It is this that is the logic of Katō’s “After the Defeat” discourse. While differing from Yasukuni logic, the national subject of “we Japanese” is nevertheless still conceived as a *community of mourning* for those soldiers “who died for our nation” and as a *community of gratitude* for those soldiers “who died so that we could be here now.

I cannot agree with such an argument. In the following, I shall speak of Katō’s argument in the order of its premises, its effectiveness, and its central idea.

VI. Odd Premises and a Questioning of Effectiveness

To begin with, let us examine the argument’s premises.

First, it is unreasonable to interpret the repeated “slips” and “reckless remarks” of the conservative revisionists (including “forgery of history”) as a reaction against the reformists’ logic of apology to Asia. Katō’s assertion that “*Yasukuni logic emerges from the reformist view of the war dead* as its twin” (italics Takahashi) is itself a “forgery of history.” This logic existed before the war, which makes it impossible to speak of its emergence from the postwar reformists’ view of the war dead. Dating back to the Meiji period along with the Yasukuni Shrine, Yasukuni logic promoted nationalist displays and the heroization of those who “died for the emperor” throughout all of modern Japan’s wars—the Sino-Japanese War, the Russo-Japanese War, the second Sino-Japanese War, and the Pacific War. The notion of dying for the homeland (*mourir pour la patrie*) is the typical slogan employed by the modern nation state to mobilize its people for war, and Yasukuni logic is its Japanese version. It is simply that this logic

still lives on in the nationalism of Japanese conservatives today.

The same thing can be said of such justification of colonial rule as is evident in the representative “slip” or “reckless remark,” “It was right to annex Korea.” This “Kubota’s remark” aggravated the third Japanese-Korean negotiations of 1953, and yet a horrible “tradition” thus emerged in which these words were repeated some thirty times. It would be impossible to see in “Kubota’s remark” a reaction against the reformist logic of apology without thereby committing a flagrant anachronism. For this represented the same defense of colonial rule as could be seen in the 1948 Finance Ministry and 1949 Foreign Ministry documents—papers which in turn marked the extension of prewar colonial rule ideology. If Katō were in fact correct, then the Japanese people must now once again “thank” those who died in the nation’s wars of colonial acquisition (the Sino-Japanese War, the Russo-Japanese War, the Taiwan colonial war, and the suppression of the Korean resistance struggle) in order to break free of the discourse of justifying colonial rule.

Second, the claim that the reformists have neglected the dead of our nation and focused only on the Asian dead is entirely unconvincing. For after the war there was an overwhelming belief among the Japanese, *including the reformists*, that they themselves were the war victims, having suffered through such experiences as Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and the urban air raids. Mourning at this time was strictly for the “dead of our nation.” The “National War Dead Memorial Ceremony,” held every August 15 since 1963, was devoted to the “three million dead of our nation,” who, as the “cornerstone of post-war peace,” were given “thanks.” In the prime minister’s speeches, even the slightest concern for the “dead of other countries” did not appear until the 1990s, after Hosokawa and Murayama. The nonreligious Chidorigafuchi cemetery was built in 1959 as an alternative to Yasukuni Shrine, but this too was an institution in which one mourned only the “dead of our nation.” Furthermore, there existed a massive imbalance in the financial support given to the war-dead families: until the early 1990s, approximately forty trillion yen was made available to the war victims “of our nation,” most of which went to the families of soldiers and military civilian employees, whereas foreign

payments were stopped at approximately one trillion yen, with no individual compensation. Katō's proposal that the Japanese dead, and especially the soldiers, be given priority over aliens and foreigners was thus realized some time ago.

Generally speaking, the reformists' sense of responsibility toward Asia began in the turmoil of the anti-Vietnam War movement of the late 1960s. This sentiment gradually expanded during the 1970s and 1980s, and yet it was not until the late 1980s and early 1990s, when Asian victims from various countries began suing for postwar compensation, that an actual movement was formed seeking apology and compensation from the Japanese government. Hayashi Fusao's "affirmation of the Greater East Asian War" appeared in 1963, but this was not premised upon the reformists' recognition of their war responsibility. (Hayashi's discourse represents an extension of his prewar right-wing activities as a writer of *tenkō* literature). With the exception of such figures as Takeuchi Yoshimi, the 1950s debates on war responsibility were utterly devoid of any reference to Asia. For example, a 1956 survey conducted by the *Nihon dokusho shinbun* [*Japan readers' news*] reveals that even "progressive" intellectuals focused on the domestic aspect of war responsibility: of a total of 181 responses, only two referred to responsibility for the invasion of Asia (Yoshida Yutaka, *Nihonjin no sensōkan* [*Japanese views of war*], Iwanami Shoten). The Japan Memorial Society for the Students Killed in the War (popularly known as the Wadatsumi Society) is one of the antiwar groups most representative of postwar Japan, and its activities are symbolic. This group was formed in 1950 with the goals of remembering those students who were killed as "soldiers" and of working to prevent war. After a half-century of various twists and turns, during which it overcame its focus on student-soldiers and sought to thematize the emperor's war responsibility, it finally took up in the late 1980s and 1990s the issue of these dead students' own responsibility. It should thus be clear that the Constitution protection camp can in no way be understood as mourning only the Asian dead and neglecting the dead of our nation.

Next, let us discuss the effectiveness of Katō's argument.

Katō states that Yasukuni logic can be "choked off" by "severing its

emotional roots.” More concretely, its adherents’ “slips” and “reckless remarks” will disappear if the “three million dead of our nation,” and particularly the soldiers, are mourned first. For here a logic would emerge that, as he writes, “represents ‘ourselves’ by containing the opposition”: this would be a “logic of apology that ‘assimilates’ the conservatives’ logic by containing the basis of such assertions within itself so as to make these conservatives unable to issue contrary assertions”—for instance, that accepting responsibility for Asia means no longer mourning the Japanese soldiers—“thereby arriving at apology.”

I am unable to agree with this. Katō’s claim is that “The Japanese died meaninglessly in a war of invasion, but they can still be mourned first.” The conservatives’ logic is that “the war was not one of invasion. If it were, then the Japanese deaths would have been in vain, meaningless.” Regarding World War II, Katō’s premise is that Japan’s war was “unjust,” “wrong,” a “war of invasion.” He says that “the dead of our nation” perished “meaninglessly,” “in vain.” Were he to state otherwise, then his claims for the priority of “the dead of our nation” would be indistinguishable from those of the conservatives. However, it is precisely this premise that the conservatives and Yasukuni supporters would find so unacceptable. The conservatives’ “emotional roots” are this: “If we accept that the war was an invasion, the Japanese will have died meaninglessly, in vain. This alone is absolutely unacceptable.” Such words can hardly be “incorporated” or “assimilated” by a logic that states that “The war was an invasion, and so the deaths were meaningless. Yet the Japanese must still be mourned first.” In fact, the *manga* artist Kobayashi Yoshinori, whose revisionist claims are made alongside those of people like Fujioka Nobukatsu, flatly rejects Katō’s argument as masochistic.” From the perspective of Kobayashi and Fujioka, even Katō is a prisoner of the “masochist view of history” by accepting responsibility for Japan’s war of invasion.

What then should one do? I believe there can only be confrontation. By this I mean that we must repeat, clarify, and persuade ourselves of the judgment that Japan’s war was one of invasion, in which the soldiers were each in their own way victimizers.

I would like to refer to this confrontation by way of analogy with

psychoanalysis as “working through.” Here, working through refers to the analytic work done in order to overcome the patient’s resistance to accepting the analyst’s interpretation of his past. This involves creating a critical distance vis-à-vis that past, which is achieved through recollection—regardless of how painful—and judgment. This kind of working through is necessary in order to eliminate the fierce resistance against accepting both the past invasion and the fact that the soldiers were also victimizers. What was in the past must be bravely confronted and then critically judged through one’s own responsibility. To avoid this process is to ensure that the work of “mourning,” which severs the domination of the past, never takes place.

VII. The “Japanese Nation” as Closed Community of Mourning

Finally let us turn to the, so to speak, central idea of Katō’s proposal.

In a word, I am unable to agree with this idea because *it constructs a Japanese “national subject” as both closed community of mourning for the dead of our nation and closed community of gratitude for the dead soldiers of our nation, and this ultimately leads to the obfuscation of Japan’s war responsibility.* I shall explain why this is so in the following three points.

First, the “national subject” formed by mourning only the dead “of our nation” without regard for the Asian victims necessarily excludes the memory of these latter. These victims would thus be excluded from the center of the Japanese nation’s war memories, unable to encroach upon its subjectivity and identity; they would be merely inessential to Japan’s national identity, such as to have no essential effect on the truth of “we Japanese.” Their accusations would have no influence on the definition of “we Japanese,” whose essence would remain unchanged. For this essence cannot be formed without mourning only the dead “of our nation” and ignoring the Asian victims’ accusations, which we should already have seen and heard. In this sense, it must be said that Katō’s argument, as it were, structurally protects Japanese national memory from the memory of the Asian other, such as to prevent the memories of those forced to work as

“military comfort women,” for example, from marking up the nation’s interior.

This closure of the community of mourning would cause serious problems even within the Japanese nation in its legality. For example, although the roughly 200,000 Korean residents (who for various reasons became “naturalized” Japanese after the war) possess the sovereign right to demand that the Japanese government fulfill its war responsibility, must these residents therefore “thank” Japan’s dead soldiers? And what of the people of Okinawa, whose memories are of being held at gunpoint by the Japanese army? It would be absurdity itself for these “Japanese citizens” to mourn those soldiers for having “died so that we could be here now.” Wouldn’t Katō’s notion of “we Japanese” also exclude these people?

Second, the proposal that one mourn not simply the dead “of our nation” “first” but indeed the “three million” dead as a whole, serves to obfuscate Japanese war responsibility. Katō claims that the reason he insists on this point is to overcome the “division” between military and civilian dead (“*Haisengo ron wo meguru* ‘Q & A’”), for the dead who were originally separated were all simply Japanese. Again, such a call for blind, indiscriminate mourning can be seen only as a pure nationalism that remains indifferent to content. For if you are Japanese, as Katō says, you must mourn the Japanese dead regardless of the circumstances of their deaths. This pure, blind nationalism is of a piece with the abstraction and emptiness of mourning those “of our nation” who died in a war with others without relation to those others. This makes all concrete mourning impossible. Concretely speaking, how can one mourn a soldier who died in the second Sino-Japanese War without any regard for the fact that he died in China, that is to say, without relation to the Chinese victims?

The American intellectual historian Dominic LaCapra examines postwar Germany’s relation with its dead by means of a psychoanalytic model, and argues through the example of Hitler that the work of mourning is not a benefit to be enjoyed indiscriminately by all the dead. In effect, we must not obfuscate the differences in war responsibility among Japanese at this time by giving priority to such emotional demands as national mourning and gratitude. Mourning

the dead of the victimizing nation cannot take place without judging the nature of their war responsibility. I would like to point out that Katō refers to the Japanese military dead as “soldiers,” but these include many high-ranking officers below the level of general. In fact, it is odd, if not indeed impossible, to mourn equally and collectively the commander who led the Chinese invasion, the soldier who participated in the Nanjing Massacre, the boy who served in the suicide unit at the end of the Pacific War, and the girl burnt to death in Hiroshima, simply because they are all the dead “of our nation.”

Third, we find the problem of “fathers” or “those close to us.” Katō says the following about this “psychological” motif of his argument: “The war was wrong. Yet say one’s own father killed people. There is an impulse to defend him as one’s father, but this is meaningless. Nevertheless, the fact remains that he died for us, as someone who could have been loved” (Akasaka Norio shi tonō taidan, “Sanbyaku man no shisha kara nisen man no shisha he” [Interview with Akasaka Norio, “From Three Million Dead to Twenty Million Dead”]).

Preceding all debate, these words can be seen as a straightforward expression of where Katō’s own “emotional roots” lie. Why must we “first” mourn the dead “of our nation,” and particularly the soldiers? For Katō, it is because they are “fathers”—even if they were murderers, these “fathers” died “for us,” as people “whom we could have loved.”

There is clearly here a confusion between the levels of family and nation. We must not superimpose the familial relation between father and child onto one’s relation with the soldiers “of our nation” or the “three million dead of our nation.” As is well known, the image of soldiers who “died for the homeland” as “fathers” of the nation as a whole is one of the typical representations of nationalism. In the pre-war period, this image combined with that of women as the nation’s “mothers” to form a view of Japan as one large family with the emperor as head. (Excluded from this view were the so-called licensed prostitutes and “comfort women.”) Insofar as Katō’s notion of “we Japanese” also supposes only those members who can be mourned like the “fathers” “who could have been loved” and who died “for us,” it leads to an extremely closed community of family ideology. I have

only one father, and so why must I treat the soldiers “of our nation” as “fathers” simply because they are the soldiers “of our nation”? I have only one father. We will become caught up in nationalist movements when we lose the ability to resist the emotionalism inherent in imagining all the dead and the dead soldiers “of our nation” as “fathers.” One can only feel anxious in seeing the warm welcome extended to Katō’s *Haisengo ron*, as evidenced by such comments as, “The heart-rending voice that says our defiled fathers are still fathers” or “The deliberate battle to mourn our fathers.”

Next, Katō makes a remark in the heat of debate. In response to criticism of his proposal that the dead “of our nation” be mourned first, he says: “Yet speaking of this problem as one of human feelings, one naturally focuses on the pain of realizing the meaninglessness and emptiness of one’s close relatives dying in a wrongful war. Here the notion of atoning for the wrongs of others emerges after this pain.”

(“Why do you think that?”)

“Well, if for example a schoolboy were to ask his teacher why it is wrong to kill people, I think the most common response would be to say... wouldn’t you be sad if your father were killed?” (*Asahi Shinbun* [*Asahi news*], August 13, 1998, evening edition)

Here as well, Katō explains the issue of the nation’s wars through recourse to the individual’s relation to his “father” or “those close to us.” Without even mentioning people from Okinawa or those Koreans who have acquired Japanese citizenship, why must I direct the feelings I have for my family toward the dead and dead soldiers “of our nation” in general? Utterly missing here is the notion that distance should be kept from the very mindset that superimposes the images of father and family upon those of soldier and nation.

As goes without saying, I am not at all denying that those who lost their fathers and grandfathers in the war should mourn. Of course “defiled fathers are still fathers.” Even those fathers who were “Class A war criminals” are still fathers from the perspective of their children, and it is natural for these latter to want to properly mourn them. I think that family and friends have the right to mourn anyone—exactly like Antigone of ancient Greece, who opposed the “law of the gods” to the “law of men” (the law of the nation) when she risked her life by

violating the king's injunction and burying the exposed body of her elder brother. In fact, Japan's war dead have also been mourned "privately" in a variety of ways and places. In such mourning it would be meaningless to discuss the question of priority.

Yet this "private" mourning must not be allowed to obfuscate war responsibility. This issue can be raised even with regard to actual "fathers." In the Costa-Gavras film *The Music Box*, a female lawyer finds that her beloved father is suspected of helping in the slaughter of Jews in wartime Hungary. She defends him, convinced that he would never do such a thing. On the verge of winning the suit, however, she discovers his secret and agonizingly decides to have him indicted. In the West Germany of the late 1960s, it is said that the children's questioning of their fathers' actions during the Nazi period led to the country's struggles with its past since the 1970s. Such questioning is possible even with *one's actual* fathers who are *still living*. This is all the more reason why we must not leave unclear the judging of war responsibility and demand that one first mourn collectively the dead "of our nation"—who were the victimizers in a war of invasion— simply because they are the dead "of our nation."

VIII. Nationalism and Democracy

In the foregoing, I have clarified the three major arguments set forth by Katō Norihiro in his "After the Defeat" discourse. These points regard the Peace Constitution, the Shōwa Emperor's war responsibility, and the mourning of the war dead.

We have, I believe, confirmed the existence of certain elements that make up what must be described as an index of a new Japanese nationalism, even if Katō differs from the revisionist and xenophobic nationalism that can be seen in the Liberalist historical view and the "New History Textbook Association."

As we have already seen, *Katō constructs the "national subject" that is "we Japanese" in his dual claims that (one) the Shōwa Emperor should have abdicated as a sign of his (strictly) moral responsibility for the dead "of our nation," and particularly the soldiers of the "Imperial Army," and*

(two) the people must first of all mourn (only) these same dead “of our nation,” and particularly the soldiers of the “Imperial Army.” These two claims fully correspond to one another. What remains consistent in this logic in regard to both the emperor’s responsibility and the people’s mourning is the exclusion of the relation to the Asian other. Moreover, this “we Japanese” desire to make the Constitution purely “our own” regardless of its content, and hence even if it loses its quality of pacifism. *It is impossible to think of the emperor’s war responsibility, the war responsibility of the Japanese soldiers and citizens, and the Peace Constitution apart from the relation to the Asian other.* Nevertheless, I cannot but be surprised at the attempt here to define “we Japanese” without relating it to this other.

Both Katō and his supporters routinely deny the charges of nationalism. As I have said, Katō is certainly not a nationalist in a xenophobic or negationist sense. In claiming that he is not a nationalist, Katō in effect means that he is neither a traditional conservative nationalist nor a Liberalist historical-view nationalist. But let us be careful here. In truth, Katō cannot not be a nationalist. In an essay on Fukuzawa Yukichi titled “‘Yase gaman no setsu’ kō” [A study of the “theory of strained endurance”], Katō states that the opposition between the reformists’ notion of democracy and the conservatives’ notion of nationalism is one of the signs of postwar Japan’s personality split, whereas in the modern West, democracy was originally one with nationalism (in *Kanōsei toshite no sengo igo*). What is thus needed is to unify democracy and nationalism so as to create a *democratic nationalism*, a nationalism that is without “distortion,” an originally “sound nationalism.”

A democratic nationalism, or perhaps a nationalist democracy.

In a discussion of the post-Cold War global situation held in Paris at the Sorbonne, the political analyst Alain Minc referred to the series of violent incidents of xenophobia perpetrated by the neo-Nazis following German unification, and concluded that whereas German nationalism was originally an “irrational nationalism” (*nationalisme de déraison*), that of France was a “rational nationalism” (*nationalisme de raison*). Upon hearing this I was once again shocked. There is a deep-rooted belief that the nationalism of the modern West exemplifies, in

its oneness with democracy, a “sound” nationalism, one that is “rational,” “healthy,” and “normal.” When France later repeated its nuclear testing in the South Pacific in the face of global opposition, I remember thinking that I had very clearly seen the dangers of “irrationality” that dwelt within such nationalism.

If we consider the case of “resistance nationalism” as adopted by those fighting against invasion and colonial rule, we realize that nationalism must not be denied in all cases. To the extent that nationalism is nationalism, however, we cannot deny that it possesses an essential tendency to fabricate a nation’s oneness, homogeneity, and identity, thus excluding the heterogeneous other. If we imagine democracy as a political device through which people of different nationalities and national memories can respect one another’s differences, then I think we must conceive of a *democracy without nationalism*, one that goes beyond nationalism, as precisely a democracy to come.