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Can Philosophy Constitute Resistance?

An Interview of Takahashi Tetsuya by Lee Hyo Duk[*]

In starting up the journal *Zen'ya (On the eve*), one of the projects we most wanted to undertake was a series of interviews with people active in different parts of the world through the work of expression. We mean "people who work through expression" in a broad sense, that is, people who use expression as a weapon in struggle, as activists. Our purpose with such a series would not simply be to present information on the actuality of resistance movements around the world but to hear about the depth of resistance and the struggles such people are undertaking according to their particular situation, experience, knowledge, and background, and to determine what we can learn and adopt from them. In the reactionary climate of Japanese public opinion and the increasing corporatism of the mass media, we want to know how to hear the words that serve to criticize actuality, or how to generate such words, to weave them together, and further, through such linkages, to find a way to break through the walls that have divided and stifled society.

Our interview subject for today, Mr. Takahashi Tetsuya, has, as a philosopher and thinker, intervened vigorously and widely on matters pertaining to historical conscience, the Constitution, and education in a climate of deepening reaction. (Recent publications on these issues include *On the "heart/ mind" and war* and *From the ruins of "stories": Takahashi Tetsuya, dialogues and commentary.* [1]

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Double asterisks (**) mark footnotes added by the translator.

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Mr. Takahashi began his career as a scholar of phenomenology, but as we might deduce from his first collection of papers, *Logos in Counterlight—Contexts of Contemporary Philosophy,* [2] in which he exposed and analyzed critically the social, historical, and political determinations of philosophy and thought, so often regarded as universal and impartial, he has from the very beginning gone beyond the boundaries of academic specialization. His critical consciousness is singularly indebted to the encounter with the thought and philosophy of Jacques Derrida, but Mr. Takahashi never intended his study of Derrida to be comfortably situated within the academy, but rather, chose his subject and forged it into a tool for thinking fundamentally and therefore critically about the present. (For Mr. Takahashi's work on Derrida, see his *Derrida, deconstruction*.) [3]

It was well into his scholarly career when Mr. Takahashi began to involve himself in the actual problems of Japanese society, with his participation in what came to be (somewhat problematically) known as the debate on "historical subjectivity" with Mr. Katō Norihiro. (For Mr. Takahashi on the historical subjectivity debate, see his *Problems of Postwar Responsibility*.) [4] It should be noted, however, that even when he turns his attention to a current social issue, he insists on inquiring into the principles and foundations of the matter, of criticizing on the basis of a thorough identification of the problematic points.

Zen'ya, having declared in its inaugural statement that it "is not reluctant to be intellectual," has decided to ask Mr. Takahashi his views on the critical potential of philosophy and thought.

Lee Hyo Duk

** Grateful acknowledgement to the publisher, Takahashi Tetsuya, and Lee Hyo Duk for permission to translate, as well as to Aiko Kojima for assistance with the footnotes.

1. *Kokoro to sensō* (Shōbunsha, 2003), *and "Monogatari" no haikyo kara—Takahashi Tetsuya taiwashū / jihyō 1995–2004* (Kage Shobō, 2004).
2. *Gyakkō no rogosu: Gendai tetsugaku no kontekusuto* (Miraisha, 1992).
3. *Derida–datsukōchiku* (Kodansha,1998).
4. *Sengo sekininron* (Kodansha; 1999; Kodansha gakujutsu bunko, 2005).
   Two chapters from this work have been translated into English by Richard F. Calichman as "Japanese neo-nationalism: A critique of Katō Norihiro's 'After the defeat' discourse," and "From the *Hinomaru* and *Kimigayo* to the symbolic emperor system" in Calichman's edited volume, *Contemporary Japanese thought* (Columbia U.P., 2005) and these are included in this book.

On "resistance"

Lee.—We have just published the inaugural issue of *Zen'ya*. We hope readers will understand why we are publishing this journal by reading the "*Zen'ya* Declaration" as well as the articles in the inaugural issue, but our purpose, put bluntly, would be this: what kind of cultural base for resistance should we establish, can we establish, in a Japan where conditions have worsened to this degree? As the representative of the board of directors of the not-for-profit organization *Zen'ya*, I am sure you have many thoughts about creating a base for cultural resistance, but today I'd like you to share your views on "culture and resistance," the theme of our inaugural issue, from the viewpoint of philosophy and thought.

Takahashi.—The circumstances we face today are exceedingly difficult. The voices of resistance are divided, and they are not coming through the mass media at all. It is precisely in order to resist these circumstances that we have begun to speak out in this way, from the desire to create a base, but the very fact that that we have to keep repeating the word "resistance" indicates the gravity of our situation. That is, the current of history is flowing in a direction horribly different from what we would want. No one can deny this. If the age had been different, if, for example, this had been the age of popular revolutions in Europe, or the beginning of the twentieth century when socialist thought spread and revolution actually occurred or there was heightened expectation that it would occur, or the period after World War II when the old colonial empires collapsed and the peoples of Asia and Africa were winning their independence, then even if our immediate conditions were exceedingly unfavorable, we still might have been able to place some hope in the overall direction of world history. The present, however, is not like that. Globally, and domestically, within Japan, reaction reigns supreme, and optimism is not permitted. Needless to say, I am hopeful and do not intend to give up, but our having to put the word "resistance" up front in this way is itself indication of our having entered the age of reaction.

A further point is that we have declared our resolve to become a base for picking up and linking the various voices of resistance. Our

difficulty issues in part from the extent to which the media, including the publishing industry, have been transformed in their function or in how they position themselves. To put it simply, the degree of influence of the mass media over society has become overwhelming. Having come to rely on the advertisements and publicity fees generated by capital, having become institutions of big capital themselves, the media now dominate the images of the relationship between people and society and the world.

Lee.—In other words, they determine the framework through which people understand the world.

Takahashi.—That's right. In the past, we could have had the experience of reading books slowly, letting our imaginations stretch and turning our thoughts to a reality not present before our eyes, of having our feelings stirred by the words in the books, and from there, constructing images about the world, society, life, and history. But in contemporary society, such experiences are becoming lost to us at a rapid rate, and our imaginations are dominated by catchy images generated by capital. And this is happening at the pace of information technology, which, like scientific technology in general, expands and develops at a speed and rhythm utterly different from that of human thought and culture. We have to take into consideration the fact that the media environment is utterly unlike what it has been in the past. As we can see from the Koizumi administration in Japan and the war policies of the US government, state power has recognized the influence of the gigantic forces of mass media today and uses it to dominate people's image world in order to realize its own policies.

Under such circumstances, what resistance can the act of publishing a journal four times a year amount to? We are in no position to be optimistic. When I say I continue to have hope, I mean it in the way Suh Kyung-sik refers to that "hope against hope" in his inaugural appeal for *Zen'ya*. [5] Despite the fact that our project has no choice but to take the form of resistance given the adverse circumstances, we stand at the point where, if we were to desist in our efforts to resist, then that "hope against hope" itself would be extinguished.

5. *Zen'ya* inaugural issue (Autumn, 2004), p. 275.

There seem to be many views on our having chosen the name "*Zen'ya*" (*On the eve*) for the journal and the group. Some say that it's much too soft, that we don't stand on the eve, that we've gone way past a "brown morning" and now stand at a "brown high noon," in other words, that we are already living in wartime. [6] If we look at the global "war on terror," the deployment of the Self-Defense Forces to Iraq, or the suppression of antiwar movements, then surely we are already in "wartime"; but can we then say that we weren't at war before then? From the Vietnam War to the Gulf War, and in the ten years since the Gulf War, there has never been a time when the fires of war have disappeared from the face of the earth, and there has never been an instance where Japan was not involved in some way.

When we say "on the eve," we don't only mean "on the eve of war." Even when we are already at war, we are also "on the eve." War itself can be the eve of liberation or peace or reconciliation, and if you think about it, we are always "on the eve" of something. So long as that "hope against hope" survives, so long as it has not utterly disappeared, then whatever the duress of our present, it can be experienced as the eve of liberation. Even if the world is at war, however catastrophic the circumstances in which we are placed, as long as resistance does not abandon that "hope against hope," then we are always "on the eve." That's the sense I want to invest in that expression, "on the eve."

The reconfiguration of the nation-state

Lee.—One of the main points I wanted to ask you about has to do with the present of philosophy-thought as an activity—an activity I take to be cultural in a broad sense. In other words, putting aside for a moment what philosophers themselves may think, in the eyes of the general public, the distinction of philosophy-thought is that it thinks matters through fundamentally, that that's its weapon, and it's that

6.** This is a reference to the translation of *Matin brun* by French writer and advocate of children's rights Franck Pavloff. (1997; Japanese translation with an Afterword by Takahashi Tetsuya, *Chairono asa,* Ōtsuki Shoten, 2003; English translations 2003, 2004.)

thoroughgoing quality that gives it meaning and possibility and therefore invests it with a high position socially as well as academically. But in Japan today, there's a feeling that this function isn't being fulfilled. So what I want to ask you is whether this is a limitation that philosophy-thought (in Japan) had from the beginning or whether, as an activity it still has possibilities.

It's necessary to analyze the problems before us in terms of the present situation, but it's also important to analyze them fundamentally, historically, theoretically. For example, at present, we are faced with the likely revision of the Fundamental Law of Education [7] and Article 9 of the constitution. It's important to take these up as specific issues, but we also need to be thinking about national education as a precondition for the problem of education itself, we need to be asking what education is to begin with, what it's been historically, what kind of meaning it has. In the case of the Constitution, we need to be thinking about the relationship between the law and the state, or the law and individuals—we need to be thinking on the metalevel, or from first principles. It might be just my sense, but I have thought that this is, or ought to be, what makes the activity of philosophy-thought meaningful.

So what I want to ask you is, how do you think about the issues that you have been addressing critically from the standpoint of philosophy-thought (including the history of thought). For example, I have been thinking that the nation-state is in the process of being reconfigured. If the modern nation-state had for its purpose the equalization of status, the dispensation of a uniform education in order to put in place a basic literacy, thus raising the social functionality of each citizen so that citizens would provide a powerful base for the continuous development of the state, then I think that this notion is in the process of being reworked. I'm wondering if the ongoing "reforms" in education, in the workplace, and on the level of the law aren't actually tied in with this reconfiguration of the nation-state. I'd like to hear your views on this.

7. **The ruling coalition pushed through revision in December 15 of 2006. For an analysis of the changes, see http://www.hurights.or.jp/news/0612/b15_e.html.

Takahashi.—If I were to speak to the "reconfiguration of the nation-state" with respect to Japan, I would say that we have to focus on the simultaneous advance of neoliberalism and neo-statism. [8] And what we have is not just a matter of a parallel synchronicity, but rather, a situation in which neoliberalism is dependent on neo-statism, and neo-statism has strategically adopted neoliberalism as state policy. Neoliberalism, which espouses the supremacy of the free market, has been generally endorsed since the end of the East-West cold war, signalling the demise of its counterforce, the "actually existing socialist states." American-style, so-called "Anglo-Saxon" fundamentalist capitalism has globalized with accelerating speed. And this has come into Japan, too. This development is discussed as if it were inevitable, an ineluctable historical fate. It has had serious impact in all aspects of society.

The financial world in Japan now makes a strict distinction between the elite and the "disposable" others, in other words workers always ready to be tossed out in favor of fresh "raw materials." Correspondingly, in education, we are faced with the prospect of a system that discriminates between the "one-in-a-hundred elite student and all those other people without useful talent or altogether lacking in talent" (Mr. Miura Shumon). [9] We are becoming a society that tries to establish this distinction at as early an age as possible and to expand preferential treatment for the elite. We've had a system where-

8. **"Statism" as a term to indicate the strong role of the state in social and economic matters, or as the OED puts it with somewhat different emphasis in its 1989 edition, "Extreme development of the power of the State over the individual citizen," is a less familiar word in English than *étatisme* in French or *kokkashugi* in Japanese, Even though "ultranationalism" became familiar as the translation of *chōkokkashugi* as used by the late political theorist Maruyama Masao, "statism" will be used here as more accurately reflecting Takahashi's sense in using the term *shinkokkashugi*, or "neo-statism." Elsewhere, if it seems more appropriate, "nationalism" will be used.

9. **Miura Shumon (1926–) is a writer and former Director General of the Agency for Cultural Affairs of Japan (1985–86). Miura has also served as chairperson of various governmental committees and organizations including the National Curriculum Committee. He is married to writer Sono Ayako, the former chairperson of the Nippon Foundation (Nippon Zaidan, the massive philanthropical organization founded by the late Sasakawa Ryōichi, who was charged with Class A war crimes for his activities in China.

by humans from the time of birth until their emergence in society have to go through the institution of school, but now, stratification begins in school, to be followed by life in the corporate world, so that virtually the whole of life will be lived within fixed social stratification. Whether the resulting entities should be called new "classes" or not, it is evident that something like class division is setting in.

There was a time when people said that postwar Japan was a "classless society" or a "total middle-class" society, but that is now a thing of the past, and we are beginning to see a new "class society." With neoliberalism adopted as new national policy, the notion that this is the only way to survive global inter-national competition, that Japan's status as an economic power is in danger, is pervasive among Japanese officials.

This situation, however, has hardly been recognized as a problem in the world of philosophy in Japan until very recently. I myself have come to recognize its importance thanks to the work of people in other fields such as economics, education, or journalism. And that is because, to put it simply, the work I had been doing in philosophy was the critique of "the metaphysics of identity." By dismantling the logic of identity that had been foundational in the history of metaphysics—including contemporary phenomenology as well as analytic philosophy, I had thought that a path could be opened up to reveal the key to new forms of cognition and ethics, including diversity, difference, otherness, and relationality. For me, the greatest hint as to how to proceed in this endeavor came from Jacques Derrida's deconstruction.

When I started thinking about the reality of Japan, about postwar society, from this point of view, the first problem that became evident was that as a result of the failure to rupture the continuity between the pre- and postwar periods, there was a totalitarian tendency in this country and in this society. It has been pointed out that the emperor system survived, that there was a "nebulous totalitarianism," or a "comfort-seeking totalitarianism," [10] or a hyperconformity—there're

10. **Fujita Shōzō, "Anraku e no zentaishugi" (originally published in *Shisō no kagaku* in 1985) in *Zentaishugi no jidai keiken.* (Experiencing the age of totalitarianism, Misuzu Shobō, 1997.)

many ways to begin this analysis, but in any case, the basic point was that we needed to criticize the tendency toward totalitarianism. Concretely, the target of opposition was statism or nationalism, and we were always focused on the theme of trying to dismantle the forces that were trying to unify and integrate and totalize the state and the nation, and it was difficult at first to grasp how to bring this together with the analysis of the neoliberal reorganization of the nation-state that we've been talking about. It's only recently that we "got" how neoliberalism and neo-statism reinforce each other while advancing separately at the same time.

The current globalization of capital even reminds us of the survival-of-the-fittest aspect of early nineteenth-century capitalism. If we take a broad view, the globalization of capital can be traced back to the beginning of the advance of the West into the rest of the world. The westernization of the world encountered opposing forces at several stages and was momentarily arrested, but in the end, it has overcome and now is on the verge of swallowing up the world. It's also possible to describe this as the process in which the USA, a state with the form of a new "empire" that has inherited the West, is now truly taking over the entire earth.

Lee.—It seems to me, to begin with, that the principle of resistance of socialist and labor movements in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries consisted, at least in one aspect, of regarding the state as an instrument of plunder. What is puzzling, especially in the case of Japan, is that it seems as if the citizens, the object of the plunder, are actively rationalizing such plunder on the part of the state. It's hard to feel any rejection or resistance to plunder. Rather, they seem to accept state regulation in the form of a simplistic division of the people into winners and losers, thereby rationalizing plunder.

Takahashi.—That's exactly it. It's impossible to understand the extent to which neoliberalism has penetrated without taking this factor into account. Neoliberalism—market fundamentalism—deploys the euphemism of "open competition" to make it seem as if everybody begins from the same starting point. But that is not the case. Whether in the world of finance or of education, each person comes to the starting point with uneven access to "capital." An unequal race

is launched in order to produce "winners" and "losers," and the results are justified by asserting that "having entered the race of their own accord and on their own responsibility, [11] the losers lost, so there is nothing to be done about it." It's predictable that the "winners" in this case have internalized the ideology of neoliberalism, but those who have been deemed "losers" have also been made to internalize its values, so that they accept domination by the winners and, crudely speaking, seek the protection of their masters.

When this situation gets a little more twisted, the people who have been made "losers" turn their frustration against those who are in an even weaker position than they. This phenomenon is currently taking place in Japan on a daily basis. And it's these people who turn to "strong"-seeming politicians like Ishihara Shintarō and Koizumi Jun'ichirō in order to have their frustrations articulated by them. These are politicians who have begun to righteously assume the logic of the mighty. Despite the fact that these people ["the losers"] are positioned to be cut off by the powerful, they transfer their emotions to them, identify with them, and direct their aggressions at those who are weaker than they or who are minorities. This is a phenomenon we can see everywhere.

The "nation/nationality" [12] as false consciousness

Lee.—Education itself has been moving in a direction that rein-

11. **"On their own responsibility" is an adaptation of the more literal translation "self-responsibility," or *jiko sekinin*. This phrase took on new life in April of 2004 when three young Japanese were held hostage in Iraq. They had gone on their own, brought this fate on themselves and were therefore to be held responsible for the costs associated with their release and return. The phrase, caught on, resonating with other key concepts of a privatizing age such as *jiko futan*, referring, for example, to the portion of health insurance the individual must pay. The phrase will come up in discussion below.

12. Takahashi's own gloss for *kokumin* is *nēshon* (nation), but this usage does not work in English when persons are clearly indicated. The term is a challenge to translate, given the subtle but significant nonequivalence between *kokumin* and *shimin* in relation to the English word "citizen." Both "nationals" and "citizens" will be used where *kokumin* refers to persons, with a preference for the latter when the emphasis is on the "rights of citizenhood" as commonly understood in the U.S.

forces this.

Takahashi.—The school is the site where the simultaneous advance of neoliberalism and neostatism can be seen most readily. The more social stratification intensifies, the more necessary it becomes to prevent the rebellion of the "losers" by strengthening national unity. For Japanese conservatives, the only national symbols available for unifying the nation are the Rising Sun flag and the anthem that carry with them memories of the old empire along with the emperor system, so these are being newly recycled and have begun to function to conceal the splits and contradictions entailed by the division of society into winners and losers.

The reorganization of the nation-state in the direction of neonationalism was ominously foreshadowed from about the time of Governor Ishihara's "*sangokujin*" [13] statement, but as you know, it was dramatically foreground from September 17, 2002 (the Japan-DRPK summit and the emergence of the "abduction" issue) on. Those who are not nationals have been distinguished from those who are, and they have been excluded and externalized. Those who are not nationals by law have been marked as such and are subconsciously seen as the enemy, the other. That's one thing.

Next, we might ask if anyone who is a citizen can count on the protection of the state, but that turns out not to be the case. Those who do not go along with national policy are effectively deemed traitors and regarded as the enemy and the other. As soon as the people who were held hostage in Iraq sought the withdrawal of the Self-Defense Force troops, they were subjected to concerted attack, and a member of Parliament even called them "anti-Japanese elements." I thought that was a decisive moment.

It's impossible to characterize the imposition of the flag and anthem in the schools, especially in Tokyo, as anything other than the persecution of minorities. First, an administrative order is issued to all

13. **"*Sangokujin*" (literally, "third-country national") is a term used in postwar Japan for people formerly under Japanese occupation or colonial rule, principally Taiwanese, Koreans, and Chinese. It is usually regarded as an ethnic slur. Ishihara Shintarō, Governor of Tokyo, paired this term with "foreigners" to refer to a criminal illegal presence in Tokyo in his official speech before the Land Self-Defense Forces in 2000.

staff, with the threat of sanctions in the event of violation. Then there is thoroughgoing surveillance, followed by sanctions, with violators pressed to recant in the course of what is called "in-service training." This is a traditional way to flush out the traitors and "anti-Japanese elements" within the nation.

Are those citizens who submit to national policy secure? Not at all. They are made to serve the state and sacrifice themselves for it. The Self-Defense Force troops are the typical example, and they are constantly being called upon to serve and sacrifice. And in that process, you get citizens who internalize the state ideology of self-sacrifice "for the sake of the country." This is certainly the path to reconfiguration of the nation-state, but it's one we've seen before, the path taken by Empire Japan.

Lee.—Even so, we can still say that up until recently, we could recognize, however imperfectly, a strand within state policy that was concerned with redistributing wealth as widely as possible within Japan. To be sure, it was for the sake of strengthening and maintaining the national base. Now, however, that national policy has been identified with the profit-seeking of large-scale multinational corporations, there isn't even the pretense of redistributing wealth within the nation, but rather, to prioritize corporate profit. The structure of plunder abroad and exploitation at home is now blatant. This is a big change.

Takahashi.—That's true. And that's why, once you leave the major cities or those cities where one corporation reigns supreme, it's really hard to find a job. Incomes have gone down drastically, and there are many students dropping out of college and high school because they are unable to pay tuition fees. We're seeing a totally different Japan from what we had in the 1980s.

And precisely because of this, there's a desperate desire to recycle and revive the notion of the nation and to cover over the real situation. There's a national campaign on to get those who are being exploited to console themselves by believing, "At least I'm a citizen, part of the group that's supposed to be protected." They identify with the politicians who speak the language of the powerful, and direct their hatred and frustrations as those who are non-nationals or

deemed to be traitors.

But if we look back at the period after the Meiji Restoration, when Japan began racing off to "modernize," we can see, for example, in the arguments of someone like Fukuzawa Yukichi [14] the presumption that the world is organized according to the law of the jungle. It was an age in which, on the one hand, the government preached statism in order to get the new nation-state on track, and on the other, when social Darwinism swept over the world as a "theory of social evolution." We have a typical case in Katō Hiroyuki, the president of the Imperial University of Tokyo. [15] Katō is the sort of person who'd come first if we were writing a history of modern Japanese philosophy, someone who imported social Darwinism from the west and propagated it widely. He held that the rights of the dominant over the dominated, the superior position of men over women, were rights properly belonging to the victors in a competition, that rights, in other words, were the rights of the mighty. He applied this to international relations as well, even writing a book on how Japan's victory in the Russo-Japanese War was a necessity predicted by the theory of social evolution. No doubt we need to compare and contrast present-day ideology with this, but at first glance, there are certainly resemblances between the ideological climate today and that of the late nineteenth century.

The problem of the "law"

Lee.—On the one hand, modernity marks the period in which efforts were made to forge laws that would protect the individual from such expropriation and to safeguard rights. Popular revolutions were none other than such an endeavor.

14. **Fukuzawa Yukichi (1835–1901) was a writer, educator, and founder of Keio University. One of the most influential thinkers on modernization, he has also come in for criticism for his position on "de-Asianization."

15. **Katō Hiroyuki (1836–1916) was a political scientist and the first president of the Imperial University of Tokyo. Though Katō was first known for introducing "Tenpu jinken ron" (Natural rights theory), he later converted to social Darwinism.

Yet, at present, such words as "human rights" or "justice" are cynically held to be without value or meaning. I have the feeling that the very meaning of discussions sustained over the years, such as why have a constitution or why make laws in the first place, have little by little been nullified, and they are no longer shared. What are your thoughts on the relationship between the law and the individual as exemplified by the move to revise Article 9 of the Constitution?

Takahashi.—Like "human rights" and "justice," it seems that those in favor of protecting the Constitution have become the objects of derision. Now, there are among this group those who, partly for strategic reasons, assert that not a single word or letter of the Constitution should be changed. In this respect, I don't belong to this group, since I'm in favor of making a clean end to the emperor system. Constitutions and laws should be changed if they need to be. There's no such thing as an "eternal code of laws." This is true of the Fundamental Law of Education, too, and I believe that we can make it into something better, and if abolishing it were to make a better education possible, then we should do it.

The problem is that the parts of the Constitution and the Fundamental Law of Education that are up for revision are precisely those aspects that we cannot yield, which secure the fundamental values won through modern popular revolutions. Once the Occupation was over after the war, conservative forces wanted to effect these revisions right away, but there was still enough of an opposition to prevent it. Then the political conservatives and the financial powers both decided to go for economic growth without extensive military expansion, so long as their own profits were guaranteed. This started to change in the 1980s, and the change became plain for all to see in the 90s.

As I wrote in the inaugural appeal for *Zen'ya* (see p. 275, inaugural issue), I've become strongly aware of the "true character" of Japan. It was gilded over for a while after the Constitution and the Fundamental Law of Education were established, but it wasn't as if it had disappeared altogether. Now, it's as if the gilding were wearing off, and postwar democracy and pacifism, the Constitution and the Fundamental Law of Education, all those basic values are beginning to collapse. And it's not as if this were happening as a consequence of

one-sided action by state power. Opinion polls show that there's still a majority in favor of upholding Article 9 of the Constitution, but I don't think we can even count on this. With the major newspapers and television whipping up the mood for constitutional revision, I think there's a good possibility that the nation will be swept along with the tide and support revision.

Why I'm suggesting that this is the exposure of the true character of Japan has to do with the question of the nature of the Japanese nation-state after the war. At the time of defeat, there was no rupture of the fundamental power structure of Japan or the values held by the people associated with it. I can't help thinking that these are resurfacing now. Yes, we're surely seeing a reconfiguration of the nation-state, but from the way I look at history, I can't think of it as an entirely new situation. And this is true in every domain—the political world and the bureaucracy, of course, but also finance, industry, the mass media, and the university, too. In that sense, the situation today is all the more grave. The power structure of the Japanese state, its true character neither dismantled nor shattered, has survived and come into possession of information technology. It's bent on forging ahead with the message of the powerful, namely, don't get left behind in globalization.

Going back to the Constitution and the Fundamental Law of Education and the kind of view I've sketched here, it is true that many people have attested to how much these were welcomed in the immediate postwar period, even if we bracket the extent to which we can accept John Dower's account. [16] All the talk about the "imposed Constitution" is actually about the Japanese ruling class that had thought it could get away with touching up the Meiji Constitution feeling that the new Constitution had been "imposed" upon it, and somebody like Mr. Katō Norihiro seems to have inherited the sense of humiliation of that ruling class. One other thing that we must never forget is how the people of Asia, the people of the former colonies, who were grievously injured when the Japanese military invaded, wel-

16. **In *Haiboku o dakishimete*, the Japanese translation of *Embracing defeat* (2 vols., Iwanami Shoten, 2001).

comed the disarmament of Japan and the promulgation of the peace constitution.

Faced with a situation today in which we have to wonder whether democracy and pacifism were only gilding, we need to question the quality of the welcome the nation supposedly extended the Japanese Constitution. To put it bluntly, neither the Constitution nor the Fundamental Law of Education was something won by the nation and the people upon the dismantling of the empire or the national polity, but rather, they were "brought upon" the people as a result of defeat. I want to ask myself the extent to which the postwar Japanese movements to defend the Constitution and pacifism were able to overcome this weakness.

The memory of "resistance"

Lee.—It's a question of whether "resistance," the word with which *Zen'ya* has identified itself, was truly ever possible in modern Japanese history, isn't it.

Takahashi.—Of course, it's not nonexistent, but the examples are astonishingly few. And what little there was has not been officially recognized. It's common to compare postwar Germany and Japan, but I think the decisive difference is indicated by the official recognition given resistance. In his 1985 speech, President Weizsäcker named those who died in the resistance, both inside and outside Germany, and made them the subject of mourning. It would be unthinkable for a Japanese prime minister to do such a thing.

Going back to the Constitution and the Fundamental Law of Education, in the end, we have to say these were brought upon us by defeat in war. You might say there's a greater element of subjective investment in the case of the Fundamental Law of Education since it partly owes its existence to discussions among Japanese intellectuals. Even if Japan hadn't been driven to defeat in the way it was, it's likely that ultimately, it would not have been able to withstand the resistance of the peoples of the colonies, and the empire would have collapsed. But the Japanese people, who were the subjects of the

empire, lacked the strength to bring about the dissolution of the empire. It bothers me endlessly to realize that defeat was the only way that democracy and pacifism could be won. That's what I mean when I say that I'm feeling that Japan's "true character" is showing again.

What can we say truly changed thanks to defeat? True, the "law" changed. But fundamentally speaking, I don't think the "law" can be our ultimate ground. Our ultimate ground—I'm not speaking metaphysically here—cannot be the law. Our ultimate ground must have to do with what we come to desire out of our everyday lives and our experiences of society. The issue is, do we truly desire freedom and equality, do we truly hope for peace?

It's only when the majority of people truly desire freedom or equality or peace that we can talk about insisting that power guarantee these things. We make power guarantee these things, and to ensure that it will not act so as to violate the same, we bind it up with what we call a modern constitution. That's the only sense in which sovereignty can be said to reside in the people.

In other words, it's not as if, on the basis of their historical experience, the people of Japan had said, "We want freedom, we want justice, we want peace," and then proceeded to overthrow or otherwise confine those in power who denied those values and forced them to accept the Constitution. Just because defeat had brought them into possession of the Constitution and the Fundamental Law of Education doesn't mean that people who had, up to that point, thought of themselves as a race belonging to a family state with an unbroken line of rulers at its center, a divine nation with an emperor at its center, could have become the agents of democracy and pacifism.

Lee.—In such moments, it matters whether a point of reference is available or not. By point of reference I mean historical experience or memory. If there exists a collective memory of resistance or a government-in-exile, then I think that makes a decisive difference for subsequent subject formation. The history of anti-Japanese struggle holds a considerable meaning within the history of Korea or Taiwan and China. Is there no comparable point of reference in Japan?

Takahashi.—Unfortunately, there isn't anything that looks like a large-scale popular movement. We can find individuals. If you're

looking for groups, there're proletarian parties and other such movement-oriented groups that emerged in the Taishō period in association with sociological and socialist thought, but they were crushed beginning with the Great Treason Incident and Peace Preservation Law. [17] After that, you can only find exceptional individuals, such as adherents to religious creeds. In the former colonies, in the places that came under Japanese military control, resistance was organized and collectivized, and that memory has since been transmitted. This surely has happened with the democratization movements in Korea and Taiwan, and in the cases of the Philippines, China, and Vietnam, where people won their independence after enormous sacrifices, there's also a history of resistance to serve as a point of reference. If you ask if there's an equivalent experience of resistance in Japan, sadly enough, nothing comes to mind.

Now, this is the silver lining to the cloud—that in the postwar era, the Constitution and the Fundamental Law of Education have persisted despite the clear displeasure of state power. They've been hollowed out and willfully manipulated, but until they're changed, there are certain things that cannot be done. That's precisely why they are coming under extreme attack now, so that they can be finished off. The fact that the Constitution and the Fundamental Law of Education still exist is the one bright spot in these dark times. We've been pushed to the wall, but we have to prevent their revision and then use these laws as a weapon to begin to "normalize" the various situations that exist in violation of these laws.

The hypocrisy of the "discourse of self-responsibility"

Lee.—Something that's quite unpleasant, indeed, frightening, that's come up recently is the so-called discourse of self-responsibility. Of

17. **The Great Treason Incident (Taigyaku jiken) refers to the mass arrest of Japanese socialists and anarchists in 1910–1911 on the allegation that they were plotting to assassinate the Emperor Meiji. Twelve of them were executed despite worldwide protest. The Peace Preservation Law (Chian iji hō), first enacted in 1925, made challenges to the emperor state and private property illegal.

course, it's all been imposed, but everything's been reduced to individual responsibility and questions concerning the social and historical underpinnings of individual responsibility have been suppressed.

Moreover, this is all about affirming the status quo, so that there's no tolerance for criticism of the authorities, and it produces a situation in which any imaginative search for the fundamental rules and principles necessary for thinking critically about the situation at hand is cut short. I don't know where that "discourse of self-responsibility" comes from, but what do you think of its current prominence?

Takahashi.—Philosophically speaking, I think all responsibility is "responsibility to the other." Among philosophers, it was Husserl who emphasized philosophical "self-responsibility," but this concept expressed his understanding of philosophy as a discipline in which one doesn't begin by presupposing common sense or science but rather, must reexamine everything through one's own reason. This methodology emphasizes the mission with which history charged philosophy. In any situation, if we carefully analyze "self-responsibility," it has to do with our recognizing anew the responsibility we bear toward the other; fundamentally, it is "responsibility to the other."

In the present case, those who insist that [the Iraq hostages] exercise "self-responsibility" are only saying, "You brought your troubles on your own head, so what happens to you is of no concern to us." It's the same as when people say "you lost out in an open competition so it's your self-responsibility that you ended up with the losers and you just have to take it." It's only a rhetorical device to discard whoever's in the weaker position at any given moment. What's infinitely comical is that those people who are touting "self-responsibility" are pursuing the responsibility of the [Iraqi hostage] parents, apparently assuming a feudal sort of joint liability.

The atmosphere of Japanese society today is such that anybody who doesn't share in the prevailing values, anybody who acts on the basis of different values, or raises their voice in protest, will be attacked. The sensibility that's ready to ostracize those who demand the withdrawal of the Self-Defense Forces [from Iraq] as insubordinate before national policy is an example of the increasing revelation

of the "true character" of this society.

There was concentrated attack directed at the hostage families. That was surely painful for them, and from that point, their attitude changed, and they began to "apologize for the trouble we have caused everyone." It made me think of the case of Hasegawa Teru during the Sino-Japanese War [1937–45]. She was called a "squealing traitor," in other words, an "anti-Japanese element." She had gone over to China as an Esperantist and worked on Japanese-language broadcasts criticizing the Japanese war of aggression. Because she was engaged in action in China hostile to national policy at the time, the Japanese newspapers wrote her up as a "female traitor." Her father was quoted on the pages of the *Miyako shimbun* as saying, "If that is really my daughter Teruko, then I, as a subject of the empire, am prepared to terminate my life properly." To go on living in Japan, a family cannot oppose "society." We can't say that the situation today is the same as that when there was thought control, but in fact, we might say that even though there isn't explicit control by the authorities, families can't resist the power of "society."

Hasegawa Teru herself retorted, "I don't care if I'm called a 'traitor.' Rather, I'm ashamed to be from a country bent on a war of aggression." An U-saeng, the nephew of An Jung-geun, wrote a poem called "Peace Dove" in which he declared his solidarity with her. [18] If we think about how it was Hasegawa Teru who alone was able to miraculously maintain solidarity with the people of Korea and China through her resolutely "anti-Japanese" stance, then I think you have to say that in the end, it comes down to the individual.

Lee.—And I suppose that those individuals who are able to resist hold certain principles regarding humanity or justice.

Takahashi.—It's the sort of principle that is confirmed through experience, isn't it. Once I was at a gathering with Mr. Kōriyama Sōichirō, one of the hostages, and I heard something very good from him. The bashing hadn't stopped yet, and the hardest thing was for him to see his family members being attacked, but as for himself, he

18.** An Jung-geun (1879–1910) was a Korean independence activist and the assassin of Ito Hirobumi, the Japanese Resident-General of Korea.

said, "It doesn't especially bother me. I want to keep on going back to Iraq." There was no hint of retreat there. This is a different age, and the circumstances aren't the same as for Hasegawa Teru, but I was struck by how he didn't seem to be putting on a show of strength, as if he were forcing himself to meet his "fate" courageously.

Japan and the deployment of troops to Iraq

Lee.—Speaking of Iraq, the other unsettling thing is the psychological response to the Self-Defense Forces deploying to Iraq. As soon as Koizumi utters the words, "for the sake of our country," the nation starts waving the Rising Sun. In connection with what you were saying, it looks to me like a repetition of the scene of the Kwantung Army going off to China.

It wasn't perfect, but this sort of thing was rejected after the war. Why has it come back so easily? True, military bases have been shoved on Okinawa, and places not sending off troops have made other sorts of military contributions, but nevertheless, in an utterly egocentric ("mainland"-centered) way, there used to be the consciousness that troops were not to be dispatched, in accordance with the principle of peace. But all that's melting away now, and even people who were opposed to troop deployment before it happened changed their minds and supported it once had happened.

Takahashi.—The Koizumi administration was one of the first, together with Britain, to announce its support even before the Bush administration had officially announced the attack on Iraq. Because of this, a high-ranking official stated that next to the US and the UK, Japan was the country most hostile to Iraq. What was the nature of the military action by the Bush administration that the Japanese government declared such early and strong support for? Clearly it was a violation of international law. There might be some argument about precisely what international law refers to, but at the very least, we can say that it was a violation of the UN Charter. It was not as if Iraq had attacked the US, and the US was taking defensive action while waiting for the UN to act, nor was the US engaging in military action in

accordance with a Security Council resolution. According to the UN Charter, these are the only two circumstances in which the exercise of force or the threat of military action is permitted, and all other instances of war have been declared illegal. This was an attack that utterly ignored the UN Charter.

In order to justify the attack, the US brought up the accusation about the possession and development of weapons of mass destruction, but this has been shown to be utterly groundless. The American and British media have exposed this in many forms, and chief UN weapons inspector Blix has attested to having been pressured to produce results favorable to the US, but he could not produce evidence supporting the accusation. In the US, CIA head Tennett took responsibility and resigned. There had been no legal grounds to begin with, and the factual justification crumbled away as well.

The next justification that was trotted out was the democratization of Iraq. The idea was that the despotic regime of Saddam Hussein would be toppled and the Iraqi people would be liberated from the dictatorship under which they had been suffering. But this goal, too, has been betrayed. Abu Ghraib prison, which had been the symbol of Saddam Hussein's oppressive regime, turned out to be the site where US troops were committing the most abhorrent forms of torture and abuse. In Falluja and elsewhere, the resistance of the Shiite forces has not died down. Indeed, it is becoming ever more intense.

As you can see, the two kinds of reasoning presented in order to cover over the violation of international law have faded away. And accordingly, in both the US and the UK, support for the leadership has declined. But in this country, there has been absolutely no move to pursue the responsibility of the Koizumi administration for having straightaway declared its support for the war. What does this mean? I think there's a basic problem here. Now that the "righteous cause" in the name of which the Koizumi administration supported Bush's war has been exposed, why hasn't journalism, why haven't the citizenry, pressed the question of its responsibility? And let's remember that when the war began, there was a strong element of opposition in Japanese public opinion. But now, support for the Koizumi administration has actually gone up. It has to be said that many of the sovereign citi-

zens of this country have stopped thinking about important world issues. Essentially, if it doesn't affect your interests directly, you really don't care about what's happening in the world, but if there's some mention of "national interest," and it seems likely that the Koizumi administration is supporting the US out of considerations of "national interest," then it must be all right—it looks to me that this is how people are thinking.

And if that's so, this, too, might be part of Japan's "true character." This is how it was in the days of the empire. Kiyosawa Kiyoshi [19] writes in his *Pitch-black diary* on New Year's Day, 1945, the year of defeat, "The people of Japan are only now experiencing war for the first time." It's New Year's Day, and the firebombs are raining down. That's how the Japanese people come to experience war for the first time. He himself had been persecuted for his anti-war views. For a long time, war had been glorified in Japan. That had unmistakably been the mainstream view.

This was eight years after the beginning of the Sino-Japanese War, fifteen years after the "Manchurian Incident." Japan had been at war all that time, and moreover, from the latter part of the nineteenth century, Japanese people had gone overseas to fight every few years. What led Kiyosawa to write on New Year's Day, 1945, that the Japanese people were experiencing war for the first time?

Japanese troops had been killed, and their families had experienced the misery of war, but in sheer numbers, they were still in the minority, and moreover, since these had been cast as "honorable deaths," they weren't able to say that they were sad or left with a sense of futility. But more than this, I think what was ultimately the case was that if the colonies were to expand, the benefits would increase, and this would be profitable for the people as well. At the same time, there was no direct damage to the population. The Japanese military was waging war abroad. The people at home were made to believe that the imperial troops were undefeated—lost battles were concealed from them—and they were told that Japan was continuously victori-

19. Kiyosawa Kiyoshi (1890-1945) was a journalist and social commentator whose wartime diary, *Ankoku nikki*, was published to acclaim after the war.

ous. The people were unable to be critically skeptical of this situation. The Japanese state was waging war, but many of the people were unable to "experience" this fact. Isn't it possible to say that with the exception of Okinawa, this structure is largely unchanged today?

The cynicism that set in during the 1980s

Takahashi.—In the prewar era, Japan became a colonial empire, joined the "great powers," and realized the ambitions it had held since the Meiji era. This gave the people a sense of having achieved "success." It's this sense of success that made it impossible to put a brake on things, and the country headed toward catastrophe. Postwar success has taken the form of economic growth.

The peak came in the 1980s, and that's when any sort of critical consciousness got canceled out. It's in the 80s that serious discussion or social criticism came to be greeted cynically. This was the necessary precondition for the state of affairs we have today. If you brought up "war responsibility" or "responsibility for colonial domination," you were straightaway dismissed as a downer. Prosperity produced a lifestyle conservatism that preached, "If it's enjoyable, it's good"—leading to a "comfort-seeking totalitarianism." This did mean that even if somebody like Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro tried waving the flag, the people wouldn't dance, so that in a passive sense, the cynicism worked as a factor against the spread of nationalism. But it also led people into a retreat from social and public issues. I think we're paying for that today.

Lee.—Speaking of the cynicism of the 80s, the reaction to the Shōwa Emperor's death in 1989 was truly awful. People talked about him as if he'd been a philanthropist, and intellectuals uniformly affirmed his role in bringing on postwar prosperity.

Takahashi.—It's probably because it happened at the height of the bubble. And there's the special mystical spell of the emperor. And that's never, ever been subjected to public criticism. With economic growth and a hyper-ripe consumer society, the nature of the imperial family had changed, too, but fundamentally, there was never a sense

of a problem that needed examining. The spell cast by the emperor system, invisible to the eye, is the best expression of the "true character" of Japan.

So that there's no misunderstanding, when I say "true character," I'm not referring to anything essential and substantive, but rather, something that's been produced historically. What's been produced historically should be able to be dismantled historically, and I wouldn't be talking about "true character" without my "hope against hope."

What I want to underscore now is that whether it's the Constitution or the Fundamental Law of Education, the law cannot be our ultimate ground. It should be used to constrain power and to fight it. The same can be said of war tribunals for securing compensation. The ultimate ground can only be that which comes from our lives, our experiences, what we identify as our desires in the course of our everyday lives. If we don't come to desire to change our "true character" on that level and take action accordingly, then no fundamental change will come about. It's possible to change our "true character," so what I want to say is, let's do it.

The problem of "mourning"

Lee.—Among the issues that haven't been subjected to thoroughgoing criticism in the postwar period is of course the emperor system. Another question that you have been especially concerned with has to do with the way in which a country mourns its soldiers. How this is handled is a very important issue. Yet, again, this has not been subjected to proper discussion.

Takahashi.—It's just as you say. If we look at the members of Parliament, the pro-Yasukuni camp are still most numerous. When Prime Minister Koizumi made his first visit to Yasukuni on August 13, 2001, he attracted criticism at home and abroad, and although he said that he himself would continue to pay visits to Yasukuni, he also stated his intent to explore the construction of an alternative national memorial site, and to that end appointed (then) Chief Cabinet Secre-

tary Fukuda to head a "Committee to Consider Monuments and Facilities for Memorializing and Praying for Peace" in December of that year. Two years ago (2002), this committee presented a report recommending the establishment of a national memorial facility. But the power of the pro-Yasukuni forces was such that it was unable to recommend that the new memorial facility should take the place of Yasukuni.

The failure to publicly examine the question of historical understanding in the postwar period plays a key role here. The other problem is the failure—in the name of "the feelings of the people"—to consider how to think about the deaths of those who lost their lives both domestically and abroad.

The usual discussion of the Yasukuni Problem revolves around the enshrinement of the so-called Class A war criminals [20] and the separation of religion and state under the Constitution. I myself do not think these issues constitute the fundamental aspects of the Yasukuni Problem. The category of Class A war criminals is not only extremely limited, but in some ways, it has been used as a cover to avoid pursuing the emperor's responsibility. To reduce the issue of war responsibility to the enshrinement of Class A war criminals is inexcusable. Ultimately, it's just a device to arrive at a political settlement with the governments of China and Korea.

As for the separation of religion and the state, in order to avoid violating the Constitution, the argument goes, we can change Yasukuni Shrine from a religious entity into a special corporate entity, a nonreligious national memorial facility. But in fact, before and during the war, Yasukuni Shrine was, so to speak, a "nonreligious national memorial facility" to which Shinto ritual was clearly central. The imposition of the "nonreligious" ideology won over Buddhist and Christian cooperation with the Shrine's role in the war effort. Indeed, it's possible to say that Buddhism itself incorporated Yasukuni ideology. Rather than enshrine the military dead as "heroic spirits," temples

20. **Class A War Criminals are those who were condemned for Crimes against Peace at the International Military Tribunal for the Far East (IMTFFE). The IMTFFE also tried those accused of two other types of crimes, Conventional War Crimes (Class B), and Crimes against Humanity (Class C).

bestowed special posthumous names in praise, a gesture that can be regarded as one variant of Yasukuni ideology. Even though there's some meaning to the term "state Shinto," we won't get anywhere unless we problematize the Yasukuni creed in its overall prewar and wartime manifestation and try to overcome the ideology that praised the "heroic spirits" of those who died as members of the military or as their civilian employees and mobilized the nation by urging all to follow in their footsteps.

There's a move now within the Liberal Democratic Party to reconsider the separation of religion and the state. In a document "clarifying the points in dispute" composed by the team charged with producing a draft LDP version of a revised Constitution, there is an item regarding the reconsideration of Article 20 of the Constitution. Article 20, paragraph 3 of the current Constitution forbids any kind of religious activity by the government or its agents, including local public entities. The argument for reconsideration claims that this paragraph only disallows religious activities associated with specific sects, and activities that are "traditional" or "ritual" in nature should not be deemed religious. Here is another example that leads me to say that the Constitution cannot be our ultimate ground. If it were, then once it was changed, there would be nothing for us to do.

Prewar shrine Shinto was a sort of "supra-religion." To worship at a shrine was one of the duties of the subject, and for that reason, Buddhists and Christians had to do so as well and they, moreover, thought it was permissible for them to do so. It's this kind of thinking that has lingered on. The great offensive-defensive war waged in the 1960s and 70s to pass legislation allowing state sponsorship of Yasukuni Shrine took place along these lines as well. It wasn't just the LDP plan. The (former) Japan Socialist Party also had a proposal to make Yasukuni a "special corporate entity" as a "Yasukuni Peace Pavilion" and maintain it with state funds. If it's not a religion, it's okay. This is simply traditional ritual—that was the thinking. And that's what's reared its head once again. If the Constitution is revised, do we accept Yasukuni? No. It's the system called Yasukuni that we have to overcome. That's how I think about it.

"To die for one's country"

Lee.—Can we say there's a historical problem in Japan that has to do with the failure to think through the status and nature of religion, with that ambiguity working nicely for state policy from the Meiji Period on?

Takahashi.—The German-born Jewish historian George Mosse, who took refuge in the UK during the Third Reich, writes in his book, *Fallen soldiers: Reshaping the memory of the world wars* [21] that as long as wars were waged by mercenaries, the notion of dying for one's country did not have general currency. With the French Revolution and the emergence of citizen armies, however, peasants and ordinary people who had previously not gone to war came to believe that it was their task to defend their own country, and accordingly, to die in war for their country became a heroic act. Thus, they came to be mobilized for the wars waged between European nation-states.

But if we turn to someone like Ernst Kantorowicz, we learn that the sanctification of "dying for the country," with the dead becoming heroic spirits, far antedates the French Revolution. It was a view vigorously held in ancient Greece and Rome. The phrase "pro patria mori," to die for the country, comes from the Roman poet Horace. This concept seems to have died out for a time with the advent of Christianity. Under feudalism, vassals were meant to serve their lords, and the notion of serving the nation at large disappeared. Even though the notion of dying for one's country apparently disappeared from view on the stage of history, it was in fact was preserved within Christianity with the notion of the fatherland transferred to heaven above, to the Augustinian heavenly city, with the corresponding idea of Christian martyrdom. Then, beginning in about the thirteenth century, especially with the French monarchy, the older idea began to revive. This was taking place much earlier than Mosse had it, from the time of the European monarchies.

21. (Oxford U.P. 1990); Japanese translation: *Eirei—tsukurareta sekaitaisen no kioku* (Kashiwa Shobō, 2001).

This is a very large historical problem. We can see that the modern nation-state created huge national communities, and it demanded general recognition of the principle that dying for the nation was one of the single most important conditions of being a citizen. But the basic concept of those who sacrifice themselves for the community being sanctified is something we find wherever communities are formed. That being the case, the problem becomes even more daunting.

In modern Europe, as the influence of Christianity receded, and Jews, too, became secularized, the religious concept of martyrdom was increasingly replaced by martyrdom for the nation. The Japanese case presents certain commonalities, but compared with Europe, the religious aspect has remained relatively strong, such that Japanese religions, including Christianity, were incorporated into "Yasukuni-ism." Something more-or-less similar occurred in France and Germany, but in Japan, official ideology used Shinto as a nonreligious religion, a "supra" religion. That is precisely why it exerted such power over people's minds.

Lee.—This isn't always the case, but in those religions and creeds that posit a transcendent being, faith in that being makes possible the sublation of a harsh reality, the introduction of a viewpoint that relativizes that reality and even promotes its criticism. As a matter of fact, Christianity has on the one hand been the source of staggering oppression and tyranny, but on the other hand, it has also served as a basis for pacifism and resistance to oppression. But it's unthinkable for Shinto to become a basis of resistance.

Takahashi.—That would indeed be difficult. In Japan, the Meiji government tried to place the emperor cult at the center of a modern state. The emperor cult harkened back to ancient myths while being modernized. Nationalism and Shinto ended up in complete unison. Pre-Meiji Shinto preserved aspects of simple animism, a folk belief that did not presuppose a state. Then, when the Meiji state came into being, this was absorbed into what was called state Shinto and reconstituted so that nothing remains of the earlier form.

Lee.—These historical circumstances must be one reason why memorialization can't break out of the nation-state framework. What

direction do you think the issue of memorialization will take as you are conceptualizing it now?

Takahashi.—My approach has two components. The first is to explore historically the traditions of Europe and East Asia and to see whether the heroicizing of those who die for the country is in a certain sense universal, an inevitable consequence of human beings being organized into nation-state communities. The other strand is to explore the particular historicity of Japan.

If you strip the "particular Japaneseness" from the Yasukuni cult, what's left? Ritual for praising and for expressing gratitude and respect to those who died for their country. The state is deified here, and in that sense, what we are talking about is a state religion. The state is made religious. Historically speaking, this might be thought of as the remains of religion as the world secularized. This is quite clear in Europe. In any case, it is quite difficult to separate the nation-state community from religion. My hope is to make this possible.

Republicanism or communitarianism in North American political philosophy affirms this structure. The idea is that if, in a crisis, people are not willing to risk their lives for the community to which they belong, then the community itself cannot exist. How can we forge a path that will overcome this reasoning?

Imperialistic nationalism and the nationalism of resistance

Lee.—What complicates things here is the issue of "heroic spirits" in the colonies. Those who died in anticolonial struggle are in fact the substance of the memory of struggle for a given people. I think that what these deaths represent is decisively distinct from the Yasukuni problem, but what do you think? Of course, it has happened that the post-independence state can usurp these deaths in order to reinforce its own power.

Takahashi.—Like you, I think that we need to differentiate between the two.

There are those people who say, what's the difference between Japanese nationalism and the nationalism of the Korean people, but we

can't identify the imperialistic nationalism of the sovereign state with the nationalism of resistance.

In Seoul there is a huge national cemetery called the Hyeonchungweon, primarily devoted to the fallen soldiers of the Korean War. At the highest point in the cemetery are the graves of President Park Chunghee and his wife, and just below it, the grave of Lee Seungman. [22] Included are the graves of Resident Japanese Militia Volunteers as well as members of the Anti-Japanese Korean Righteous Army. [23]

What astonished me was a river running through the cemetery with a bridge over it, upon which was inscribed "Yasukuni" in Chinese characters. According to the brochure, the site honors the fallen spirits, the martyred patriots—in other words, the rhetoric is identical to that of Yasukuni Shrine. We have to take into consideration Park Chunghee's career and his relationship to Japan, and moreover, given the focus on the Korean War, we cannot call the nationalism in this cemetery a "nationalism of resistance." At the same time, there is a memorial tower to the Provisional Government in Shanghai, so there is no single way to summarize the nature of this cemetery.

At the very least, however, we can't deny, whether in Korea or China, that the people who died in the name of a "nationalism of resistance" have subsequently been used as "heroic spirits" by state powers to legitimize their own authority.

22. **Park Chunghee (1917–1979) was a former army general and then President of the Republic of Korea. Park is officially identified as having collaborated with the Japanese colonization of Korea. Park led a military coup d'etat in 1961 and was elected president in 1963. His policies led to high economic growth in the ROK. In 1979 he was assassinated by the director of the KCIA. Lee Seungman (1875-1965) was a Korean independence activist and the first President of the Republic of Korea. Lee promoted a staunch pro-US, anti-Communist policy. He resigned the presidency in response to massive protest.

23. **Resident Japanese Militia Volunteers: When the Korean War broke out in 1950, 642 Resident Korean students in Japan volunteered for the South Korean militia. 135 of them died in battle, 265 survivors returned to Japan, and 242 remained in Korea. (See The Ministry of Patriots and Veterans Affairs, ROK.) The Anti-Japanese Korean Righteous Army refers to militias that have engaged in armed struggle against Japanese invasion. They were later succeeded by various Korean independence struggles. An Jung-geun was a member of a Righteous Army militia.

And thinking from those examples, what's important is to find a way to draw out the possibility for popular resistance and liberation, to draw it out without having it usurped by the state. We can see this in Korea and China. Confined though they are by President Park Chunghee's ideology of memorializing the fallen spirits, in a cemetery inspired by anticommunist ideology, there are still the graves of volunteer fighters. In China, in the Patriotic Education Cemetery, we can also find such graves. Can we find anything like that in Yasukuni in Japan? Not a one. If we cast our minds on the two million five hundred thousand "heroic spirits" enshrined in Yasukuni, not a single one invoking the memory of resistance or liberation comes to mind.

Yasukuni and colonialism

Lee.—Among the indigenous Taiwanese people known as the Gaoshan there are those who served in the imperial army who come to Yasukuni as members of the veterans' association. It's excruciating to see, on the other hand, those Koreans and Taiwanese who, despite the opposition of their families, are forcibly enshrined in Yasukuni under their Japanese names. It's as if the history of division and domination in East Asia brought about by the Japanese Empire lives on in concentrated form in Yasukuni.

Takahashi.—When I went to Taiwan, I met with some of the plaintiffs of the lawsuit against Koizumi's worshiping at Yasukuni Shrine. I was able to hear the stories of a number of people who were involved in the February 28 Incident and subsequently continued to resist despite being pursued by the Kuomintang.[24] One person of Han background said that until just before defeat, he was prepared to "give his life for His Majesty the Emperor." But after defeat, when the Kuomintang came over from the continent, he was repeatedly oppressed and incarcerated, beginning with the February 28 Incident.

24 **The 2.28 Incident, or 2.28 Massacre refers to a mass uprising in Taiwan beginning on February 28, 1947 against the Kuomintang, the National People's Party. The uprising was suppressed by the Komintang, resulting in thousands of civilian deaths.**

He even showed me his scars from torture. He is currently a member of the plaintiffs of the Osaka Yasukuni lawsuit.

It's often said, "After the dogs, the pigs came in." The meaning is that the rule of the Kuomintang was so harsh that the preceding colonial rule of the Japanese began to look good. But there are currently over one hundred Taiwanese participating in a Yasukuni lawsuit, and there are signs that change is beginning on a subterranean level. The story Japanese have told themselves, about how "in Taiwan colonial rule was peaceful, and therefore the Taiwanese people are pro-Japan, whereas the Koreans continue to be resentful forever," is beginning to crumble.

In the series of lawsuits contesting the constitutionality of Koizumi's worshiping at Yasukuni, the Fukuoka District Court decision held that the act violated the Constitution. It was, however, followed by a decision from the Osaka District Court ruling that the worship was a private act. It turned down the suit without even attempting to address the Constitutional issue. One of the plaintiffs in this suit is a Taiwanese person named Gao Jin Sumei. She belongs to the Tayal tribe of the Gaoshan people, and after pursuing a career as a singer and actress, she became a parliamentary representative. Shocked by a photograph showing Japanese troops about to behead an indigenous Taiwanese person, she began to feel a sense of mission about informing people of the reality of the Governor-General's policy of subjugating the indigenous population.[25] As she continued to deepen her understanding of history, she began to feel that Koizumi's worshiping at Yasukuni was intolerable and joined the plaintiffs. In the press conference after the verdict, she wept, asking why there could be such differences in the decisions between Osaka and Fukuoka. She has edited and published a photography book called *The wordless gorge.* [26] It's a compilation of photographs that show how the Japanese military, in the name of "civilizing the Taiwanese barbarians," invaded and suppressed indigenous society. I bought this book without know-

25 **"Taiwan riban," or "bringing to reason ('civilizing') the barbarians of Taiwan."**

26. Gao Jin Sumei et al., *Wu yan de you gu* (Zheng Zhong Shu Ju Gu Fen You Xian Gong Si, 2002).

ing about this in a bookstore in Taipei that I happened to go into. It makes glaringly obvious the devastating nature of Japanese colonialism.

In order to learn about the relationship between Yasukuni Shrine and the colonial practices of the Japanese Empire, we should also note the five-volume *Yasukuni Shrine history of loyal souls* published in 1935. These volumes take us up to the "Manchurian Incident" and the "Shanghai Incident" from the viewpoint of Yasukuni Shrine. Here are recorded the names, units, the place and circumstances of death, and even the prefectures of all the troops and civilian employees who participated in not only the major wars, such as the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese Wars, but also in the colonization of Korea and Taiwan, who died and became "heroic souls" and "shrine deities" of Yasukuni. For Taiwan, there is a detailed account beginning with the expeditionary force of 1874 right through the suppression that took place in the Wushe Incident.[27] It makes clear just how one-dimensional is the image of Yasukuni Shrine as represented by the suicide squads from the last phase of the Asia-Pacific War.

In Ms. Gao Jin Sumei from Taiwan, and Ms. Lee Hija from Korea, a plaintiff who is demanding the termination of the enshrinement of her father at Yasukuni, we see the beginning of a movement to challenge the logic of Yasukuni from the former colonies. To question the mutually constitutive relationship between Yasukuni and colonialism is an urgent task for us as well.

Lee.—It's about how we understand Yasukuni overall, isn't it.

Takahashi.—The history of Yasukuni is, on the one hand, the history of the emperor system and the history of how "Japanese" were mobilized. On the other hand, it is also the history of Japanese colonialism, a history that has yet to be confronted and overcome in the

27. Yasukuni Jinja shamusho ed., *Yasukuni jinja chūkonshi*, (5 vols., Yasukuni Jinja shamusho, 1933–35).

**The Wushe Incident was an uprising by the Tayal people against the Japanese colonial administration in 1930, resulting in massacre. After this incident, the designation of the indigenous Taiwanese changed from "Banjin" (barbarians) to Takasagozoku (the Takasago people), and the policy of governance shifted from *riban* ("civilizing") to *kōminka* (imperial assimilation).

postwar era. We cannot separate the two, for they are like the two sides of a coin. This is why arguments dismissing the protest of neighboring countries against the prime minister's worship as interference in domestic affairs have no validity.

Lee.—In the end, it comes down to understanding that mourning the war dead can never be thought of as something involving just one's own country.

Takahashi.—Yasukuni Shrine was not only a mechanism for aestheticizing colonial war and colonial domination, but it also mobilized colonized peoples as soldiers and civilian employees of Japan, led them to die in battle, and then enshrined them. Now it refuses to entertain protests against the enshrinement. It is utterly natural that the people of the former colonies cannot think of the Yasukuni problem as the domestic affair of a foreign country.

It is not just a matter of the former colonies. As Zushi Minoru's *Shrines of aggression: Toward an analysis of Yasukuni ideology* [28] demonstrates, shrines were erected even in places like Shanghai and Nanking once they were occupied by the Japanese military. The Yasukuni Problem concerns all of East Asia.

Concerns about "judicial reform"

Lee.—And yet, we can see that this awareness is not properly reflected in the unjust verdicts handed down in all the war compensation lawsuits brought by people from the former colonies. The Japanese judiciary is really terrible and seems to be incapable of producing reasonable decisions. And there is little sign of internal effort to change this. There's a marked tendency in recent years for the judiciary to lean ever more toward the state.

Takahashi.—Never once since defeat has the judiciary in Japan reflected critically on its own responsibility for the war and its involvement in colonial domination. There is an individual, exceptional case, though, but it's hardly known. It is "A judge's war

28. *Shinryaku jinja—yasukuni shisō o kangaeru tame ni* (Shinkansha, 2003).

responsibility," by Mr. Aoki Eigorō of the Osaka District Court, published in 1962 in the *Legal seminar*. (I have learned about this piece thanks to Mr. Matsudaira Tokujin.) [29] This is the first and remains the last instance. It seems to have produced no response whatsoever. By comparison with Germany, where the judiciary changed dramatically from the 1970s on, there's much more continuity between the prewar and wartime era and the present.

There have been over sixty postwar compensation suits filed beginning in the 1990s, but almost all of them have ended in dismissal. In terms of age, the plaintiffs are reaching their limit, so it's hard to avoid thinking that the Japanese government and judiciary are hoping to get away with it. Recently, however, victories have been won concerning forced labor in the Niigata District Court and the Hiroshima High Court, giving us a slender hope.

Lee.—A friend of mine who has looked into this tells me that from the 1970s on, a structure seems to have been set in place whereby judges who have delivered decisions unfavorable to the state have been demoted. Despite the fact that freedom of thought and belief are guaranteed, judges associated with the Communist Party have been subjected to attacks from outside the judiciary and refused assignments. In other words, it's a system that deploys various screening mechanisms so that only those judges who will go along with state policy survive. In any case, the judges are appointed by the government, so there's no way the judiciary can function properly. You can hardly say there's a separation of powers among the three branches.

Takahashi.—In the case of Yasukuni lawsuits, it's been said that after the Sendai High Court pronounced official worship to be clearly unconstitutional, the judge was driven into an extremely painful position. Despite the decisions of the Osaka High Court and the Fukuoka High Court holding the Nakasone visits to be in "possible violation of the Constitution" or "if repeated, unconstitutional," decisions handed down regarding Koizumi show quite a different

29. *Hōgaku seminā*; (subsequently published as) *Saibankan no sensō sekinin* (Nihon Hyōron Shinsha,1963).

judiciary. We can't get rid of the impression that the judiciary is now more inclined toward the administration. The Fukuoka District Court decision was better than anticipated, but it is said that the chief judge wrote his will before announcing the decision.

Lee.—It seems to be "national character" that allows this country to be signatory to the International Covenants on Human Rights as well as the Removal of All Forms of Discrimination, to have various human rights violations and discriminatory practices taken up by UN bodies, to receive repeated recommendations for improvement, and still never get around to revising domestic law as called for, and to continue to neglect problems of human rights violations and discriminatory practices.

Takahashi.—This is the case with the "comfort women" problem as well as discriminatory treatment of Korean schools, isn't it.

What I fear is that the Japanese judiciary, which has so many problems to begin with, is going to become even more conservative and pro-establishment as a consequence of current "judicial reform." Neoliberal and neostatist reforms are coming into the judicial as well as the education world, and I'm afraid that the judiciary will increasingly serve the interests of the powerful.

In Japanese society, where administrative power has been markedly strong from before the war, turning to the courts for redress—whether in the case of the imposition of the Rising Sun and the Kimigayo anthem or Yasukuni or pollution or Hansen's Disease or tainted-blood-induced AIDS cases—and arousing public opinion has been one of the few means of resistance available to citizens. Through involvement with several cases, I have come to feel deeply how meaningful it is for citizens holding minority views to have the court as a site for appeal—even putting aside the question of victory or defeat. That is why, as I have been saying, even though the law cannot be our ultimate ground, I am not one of those who regard legal battles cynically or lightly. All the more reason why I am extremely worried about the direction of "judicial reform."

Lee.—In Europe and in the US, there seem to be serious fundamental and theoretical arguments in jurisprudence and legal philosophy that are then tried out in actual legal struggle. I don't

know in detail, but in the US, critical legal studies or critical race studies, or feminist jurisprudence or deconstructive feminist legal philosophy seem to have been established on the basis of interaction with practice. It doesn't seem that such practical endeavors are viewed favorably in Japan.

Questioning jurisprudence

Takahashi.—Even in Japan, there are a few legal scholars who are practically engaged. In the lawsuits pertaining to the Rising Sun and anthem, Yasukuni, and postwar compensation, constitutional law scholars, education law scholars, and international law scholars have appeared as expert witnesses and made theoretical contributions to the plaintiffs' arguments.

This kind of jurisprudence exists in the Europe and the US as well. Liberal jurisprudence, which is influential in the US, is very pro-establishment. Countering this in the 1980s, something called "postmodern jurisprudence" appeared in the 1980s. My book *Derrida*, published several years ago, partially introduces this movement. Its core is the view that "Law is politics" [in English in the original]. The law, even natural law, is constructed according to the interpretation of those who perceive it to be natural law and therefore is necessarily a reflection of a given worldview and ideology. Since the law can never be neutral or absolute, or constitute a fundamental ground, it can be the object of political criticism.

Derrida's deconstructive thinking has been utilized in this movement, and he himself, in response, has written such works as *Force of law.* [30] Even though the law can always be deconstructed, the reason that it is susceptible to deconstruction is that something called "justice" exists on a separate plane. It is precisely because "justice" exists, transcending the law, that the law can be deconstructed. At the same time, however, if "justice" is not concretized within the law, it cannot

30. *Hō no chikara* (Hosei Daigaku shuppankyoku, 1999);
**"Force of law: the 'mystical foundation of authority'," in *Deconstruction and the possibility of justice*, (Routledge, 1992).

have any "force." It's important to affirm both aspects. Even though some scholars have introduced postmodern jurisprudence into Japan, I don't have any sense that it has been seriously received as a challenge to jurisprudence generally.

Lee.—Why is it that scholars of law and political science only interpret, and never consider their own subjectivity?

Takahashi.—That's true in philosophy, too. (Laughter.) But recently, some relatively young constitutional law scholars, political science scholars, and philosophers have issued appeals opposing the deployment of the Self-Defense Forces in Iraq, the use of depleted uranium weaponry, the "war against terror," or they've started up a practical research group on "public philosophy."

Lee.—Even the Women's International War Crimes Tribunal, [31] which was thought to be pathbreaking, has not been properly acknowledged, and it has never been seriously discussed.

Takahashi.—Precisely for that reason, Mr. Abe Kōki's *The horizon of international human rights* is an epochal achievement, a book written from the viewpoint of an international law scholar. [32] According to Mr. Abe, Japanese international law began with the goal of justifying the Meiji government's diplomatic policy, so it was very much a "service discipline," and this dimension has remained strong to this day.

By contrast, he argues from the position that international law belongs to the citizens of the world, and presents us with an extremely persuasive logic of criticism. *Feminist international jurisprudence*, [33]

31. **The Women's International War Crimes Tribunal was a "people's tribunal" held in Tokyo in 2000 to try Japanese military sexual slavery in World War II. Through the examination of documents and testimonies by former comfort women and legal experts from Asia and the Netherlands, it rendered a final judgment finding Emperor Hirohito and other top military commanders guilty for their role in the perpetration of the comfort women system. The verdict has incited a considerable backlash from Japanese conservatives. For an analysis of a recent Tokyo High Court decision on national broadcaster NHK's handling of the Tribunal, see N. Field, "The Courts, Japan's 'Military Comfort Women,' and the Conscience of Humanity: The Ruling in VAWW-Net Japan v. NHK" at Japanfocus.org.

32. *Kokusai Jinken no Chihei* (Gendai jimbunsha, 2003).

33. *Feminizumu kokusai hōgaku no kōchiku* (Chuo daigaku shuppanbu, 2005).

to which Mr. Abe has contributed, should be considered as the starting point of Japanese feminist international jurisprudence.

Lee.—What you have been calling "true character" does not seem to be a static entity constituting a "core," but rather, something having the active function of marginalizing or neutralizing any movement to change it. In other words, a certain kind of reasoning is continually being reproduced without the majority ever reaching the point of self-criticism or criticism of the so-called establishment. If it's the case that the situation is the same within jurisprudence or political science, then the future seems very bleak.

Takahashi.—There was a failure to dismantle this "true character" in all parts of Japanese society. Under the so-called "1955 system," [34] "progressive" forces, however unsatisfactory, still existed, but now, they are all but destroyed, and so that "true character" exposes itself once more, even aggressively so.

If we think about how much energy is required to sustain resistance to this tendency, I myself am hardly optimistic, but if we shift our viewpoint, then it's not only a "dark future' that we face. That the "true character" has been exposed means that that which we must confront, that which we must change, has become clear. Until now, the true problems facing this country and this society were plated over and concealed. Now that our sweet dreams of postwar democracy and pacifism have crumbled and we're forced to confront the true problems before us, I'd like us to turn the circumstances into an asset for our resistance and our struggle.

If we think about all the difficulties before the resistance of the peoples of East Asia before and after 1945, it does seem a little self-serving to think that Japanese became overnight believers in democracy and pacifism following defeat.

In the 1960s, Mori Arimasa trenchantly observed that he supported the "new Constitution," but if Japanese failed to truly learn from

34. **The Japanese political system established in 1955, with the leading entities being the conservative Liberal Democratic Party as the ruling party and the Japan Socialist as the major opposition. In practice, the LDP dominated throughout and there was no change of administration until 1993, when a coalition under former LDPer Morihiro Hosokawa took over.

the "bitter struggle" of the small minority who genuinely resisted that war, then "the laws and peace movements that have come into being *thanks to* defeat in war will vanish like the wind" ("Foggy Morning," *Tembō*, February, 1966). [35]

There is a historical significance to the struggle to resist and change our "true character," and that is what we are facing today.

Philosophy and war

Lee.—There's a tendency to regard you as specializing only in Western philosophy, but in fact, you have published on Watsuji Tetsurō and the prewar Kyoto School [36] and have a deep interest in the history of prewar Japanese thought. If philosophy can constitute resistance in Japan today, what form would it take? For the latter part of this interview, I'd like to ask you to respond from a historical viewpoint.

First of all, I'd like you ask you about the genealogy of "knowledge" in Japan. You study not only the philosophy of Western Europe, but have written about the Kyoto School as well. The way you have expressed your sense of the issues thus far, I believe that you have a strong desire to reconsider the history of Japanese thought from the

35. "Kiri no Asa," in *Mori Arimasa essei shūsei* 3 [Collected Essays of Mori Arimasa, vol. 3] (Chikuma Shobō, 1999). Philosopher and scholar of French literature, Mori Arimasa (1911–1976) taught on the faculty of Oriental Studies at the University of Paris from the 1950s and resided in Paris until his death. He was the grandson of Mori Arinori, Meiji statesmand and the first Minister of Education.

36. Watsuji Tetsurō (1889–1960) was a philosopher, intellectual historian and a professor of ethics at Kyoto Imperial University. He first studied Western philosophy but later turned to the research of Japanese original culture and thought. The "Kyoto School" refers to a philosophical movement centered at the Imperial University of Kyoto, whose leading figure was Nishida Kitarō (1870–1945). The philosophers associated with the movement were interested in the dialectical amalgamation of Western philosophy and Eastern thought. Although this endeavor led some of them to provide theoretical support for Japanese colonialism and nationalist ideology (indeed, some of them were purged from public office by the GHQ of the US Occupation on the charges of cooperation with the war effort), it is important that the school had a "left-wing" as well, notably in Tosaka Jun (1900–1945) and Miki Kiyoshi (1897–1945).

prewar era.

Takahashi.—The revival of the Kyoto School is taking place as predicted. It's often said that after defeat, the guys who cooperated in the war effort weren't worth reading, or that they shouldn't be read, and that they've therefore been ignored. On the contrary, the Kyoto School, rather than being taboo, survived without their responsibility ever having been questioned. Their work has had a latent influence, but now, it's beginning to be revalorized openly.

I disagree with the idea that we should ignore the thinkers who cooperated with the war. As you say, I think we ought to thoroughly examine the relationship between philosophy and the war.

The re-evaluation that's taking place now, however, is either a metaphysical one cut off from political considerations, or one that embarks on a reactionary affirmation of philosophical nationalism—we can only say, la plus ça change… I began to have misgivings when the late Mr. Sakamoto Takao praised the "philosophy of world history" by such figures as Kōyama Iwao and Kōsaka Masaaki [37] as a "failed first attempt to assert Japanese identity," so I wrote critically about the "philosophy of world history." Soon after that, Mr. Sakamoto joined the Society for Writing a New History Textbook, and I realized that it was as I had thought.

It's not just the Kyoto School. The task of rereading the history of Japanese thought has never been more urgent. But in doing so, I have no intention of restricting myself only to the discourse of academic philosophy. In Japan, philosophical discourse is in fact not privileged. I am interested in the discourses of religious figures, literary figures, politicians and military leaders, people in all areas of life. In that sense, I am always interested in engaging in an overall reconsideration. At the moment, since I'm concentrating on the problems pertaining to education and to Yasukuni, I am particularly interested in the discourse of religious figures.

Lee.—In the prewar era, a sense of competition with the West

37. **Kōyama Iwao (1905–1993) and Kōsaka Masaaki (1900–1969) were philosophers associated with the Kyoto School. They were among those purged from public office by the GHQ on the grounds of having provided theoretical support for the Great East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere.

seems to have led philosophers to seriously examine religion in Japan. People like Miki Kiyoshi and Hattori Shisō would study Shinran, or reconsider Nichiren. [38] Curiously enough, such endeavors seem to have disappeared in the postwar era.

Takahashi.—The collected works of Kiyozawa Manshi [39] have appeared from Iwanami Shoten, and Imamura Hitoshi has emphasized their philosophical significance. The relative weight of religious philosophy was much greater before the war. I myself would like to emphasize that such reconsideration of philosophical significance must simultaneously be accompanied by a critical examination of the ways in which philosophy positioned itself with respect to the emperor system and state Shinto. In fact, the area of philosophy in which I'm most interested at the moment is religious philosophy.

Lee.—I am quite interested, too. It seems to me that in Japan today, on the level of everyday life, the intellectual dimension, or the aspect that is not religious per se but spiritual, has worn thin. This is the case in the scholarly domain, but it also seems that communality or community itself is devoid of this element and has hollowed out. I suppose it depends on how you look at it, but if you compare Japan to other places, then it seems like a society remarkably devoid of spirituality. It seems to me that a community can't be totally cut off from spirituality.

38. **Miki Kiyoshi was a philosopher and student of Nishida Kitarō at the Imperial University of Kyoto. His interest in Marxist thought and associations with the outlawed Japan Communist Party kept him from gaining a faculty position at the University, and he published extensively as a journalist. Arrested in March, 1945 on the charge of harboring a Communist, he was not released even after Japan's surrender and died in prison in September. Hattori Shiso (1901–1956) was a historian and member of the so-called Kōza-ha ("Lecture School") of Marxist historians who claimed the need for a two-stage revolution, first, bourgeois to overcome the emperor system, followed by a proletarian revolution. Shinran (1173–1262) was a Buddhist monk and the founder of Jōdo Shinshū sect. Nichiren (1222–1282) was a Buddhist monk and the founder of Nichiren sect.

39. *Kiyozawa Manshi zenshū* (9 vols., Iwanami Shoten, 2002–2003).
**Kiyozawa Manshi (1863-1903) philosopher of religion and Buddhist monk (Shinshū Ōtani school). His *Skeleton of a Philosophy of Religion* (*Shūkyō tetsugaku gaikotsu*, 1892), was translated into English and received acclaim at the World Parliament of Religions held in conjunction with the Columbian Exposition of Chicago (1893).

There was a time when religious issues were discussed as matters of spirituality. I think there was a time when this sort of discourse had influence, for better and for worse.

Takahashi.—It was mostly for the worse, I'd say, in the sense of "religion of the empire."

Lee.—Traveling abroad, you come across places where religion constitutes the core of the community. There're pluses and minuses to this, but if you have a faith or a religion that posits a transcendent being, it can help in criticizing present reality. Christianity is a case in point. But I can't see such a "potency" in modern Japanese religion, though surely there are individual cases…

"A Statism Unique to Japan"

Takahashi.—When we talk about the spirituality of prewar "Japanese," I always think of Kawakami Hajime's "A statism unique to Japan" [40] This was written in 1911, the year after the "annexation" of Korea. Kawakami is best known for the Marxian economics of his *Tales of poverty,* but his philosophical journeys constitute an interesting example of the history of modern Japanese thought.

"A statism unique to Japan" is a criticism of Japanese society immediately after the "annexation" of Korea, following upon the Russo-Japanese War. Kawakami takes up the commonplace observation that if Westerners visit Japan and ask Japanese people what their religion is, most of them reply that they have "no religion." This, however, is false, for they believe in the "state as religion." "In the eyes, brains, and hearts of Japanese, there is nothing so noble as the state. For this reason, even though Japanese would sacrifice any and everything for

40. "Nihon dokutoku no kokkashugi," *Kawakami Hajime hyōronshū* (Kawakami Hajime: Selected criticism; Iwanami Bunko, 1987).

**Kawakami Hajime (1879–1946) was an economist and member of the economics faculty at the Imperial University of Kyoto. His Marxist inclinations led to expulsion. He first joined the legal Worker-Farmer Party, then the underground Communist Party in 1932. He was arrested in 1933 and imprisoned until 1937. *Tales of poverty* (*Bimbō monogatari*) was first serialized in the Osaka *Asahi shimbun* in 1916.(Iwanami Bunko, 1965.)

the state, they would be unable to agree to sacrifice the state for any and everything. The state is the sole divinity to which they would offer any sacrifice, but they cannot even imagine the existence of other divinities to which they might sacrifice the state." Kawakami concludes, "From this obtains the view that the majority of Japanese do indeed have a certain sort of religion." In his view, it was "state as religion" that constituted the spirituality of Japanese at that time.

Kawakami was especially concerned about scholars and priests and said that in Japan, "Scholars sacrificed truth to the state, and priests sacrificed their faith to the state." Scholars and priests were willing to sacrifice truth and faith to the state but were unwilling to sacrifice the state for truth and faith. For that reason, there would emerge neither great thinkers nor great religious figures. Moreover, Japanese had not even understood this to be a problem. Japanese did not have a need to "enjoy" thought or faith that was incompatible with the existence of the state, so they did not find their situation problematic. So pervasive was "state as religion" that it became like the air we breathe. He even touched on Yasukuni Shrine, concluding that the pervasiveness of state as religion was the why those who had died for the state were enshrined there. Kawakami was saying these things before 1930, before the stage of intensified ultrastatism around the time of the "Manchurian Incident."

If you say that Japanese life is lacking in spirituality, that is so, but in its place, there is the state, or the community, or an awareness of belonging to a community distinctive to "the Japanese."

What happened to the "state as religion" constructed during the imperial era? Was it broken off with defeat in 1945? I don't think so. It continued on at least as an undercurrent, as the "true character" of this society. Wasn't there such an ethos in the corporate world in the era of high-growth economics? Isn't there still?

Incidentally, Kawakami was to visit Okinawa just after writing "A statism unique to Japan." He had gone as an assistant professor of the Imperial University of Kyoto to investigate the land allotment system, but got caught in a "slip-of-the-tongue incident." In Okinawa, the entire prefecture enthusiastically greeted the "visit of Dr. Kawakami," and Kawakami ended up giving a lecture, in which he said the follow-

ing: "Upon careful observation of Okinawa, in matters of language, customs, manners, faith, and thought, in all other respects, I have come to see that it hat Okinawa apparently differs from the mainland in its history. Accordingly, there are some who say that Okinawans are lacking in their sense of loyalty and patriotism. This, however, is not something to be deplored. It is precisely because of this, on the contrary, that I not only entertain considerable hope for Okinawans but find myself most interested in them. That, in the present-day, in a country such as Japan where patriotic sentiment is more pronounced than elsewhere in the world, there should exist a region where this element is even slightly attenuated is among the things that interest me most."(*Ryūkyū shimpō,* April 5 [1911].)

This stirred up a furor. Assistant Professor Kawakami had, of all things, insulted Okinawans by saying that their patriotism was weak. He was denounced as a "promoter of traitorous sentiments." Kawakami lectured once more in order to explain himself, but he seems to have left Okinawa deeply wounded. The person who came out in support of Kawakami was Iha Fuyū [41] and his associates. Serializing "A statism unique to Japan" in the Okinawa *Mainichi shimbun*, they tried to undo the misunderstanding about Kawakami.

At this stage, Kawakami had not yet determined to fight statism, but rather, was trying to dispassionately analyze its problematic aspects. To be sure, he was speaking and acting in a delicate situation. A "Yamato person" comes from "the center" on a trip and goes home after pronouncing "Okinawa different from the mainland and [therefore] good." This is the same Orientalist structure we find today, although it has become ever more serious because of the US bases. If we ask whether Kawakami went to Okinawa with such an attitude, the answer is probably not. It was because Kawakami found "state as religion" to be of a dubious nature, because he entertained questions about the nationalism of "loyalty to one's lord and love of country," because he maintained a certain distance from all of this, that he felt a "considerable" "hope" and "interest" in Okinawans who were relative-

41. **Iha Fuyū (1876–1947) was a scholar of Japanese and Okinawan culture and linguistics. Regarded as the father of Okinawaology, Iha is known for his "theory of the common ancestry of Japanese and Okinawans (Nichi-Ryū dōsoron)."

ly uncontaminated by the "statism unique to Japan." But that was a time when bureaucrats from the center were coming in with the aim of educating Okinawans to become imperial subjects, and so this [Kawakami's "hope"] was in conflict with this aspect.

Lee.—What year was this?

Takahashi.—"A statism unique to Japan" appeared in the March 1911 issue of *The central review* [*Chūō kōron*]. He goes to Okinawa right after, in April.

Now later, in 1913, Kawakami goes to Europe to study, and he gathers together his writings from that period in 1915 in *Thinking back on my country*. [42] He must have undergone a terrible culture shock, for he writes that after reading H. Chamberlaine's *The Foundations of the 19th Century,* [43] which preached the superiority of the Aryan race, he writes that "There are reasons for believing that Japanese are a rare, superior race." It's after this that he takes up Marxism seriously, so we can see how much he was oscillating.

Confronting the limitations of Japanese intellectuals

Lee.—Maruyama Masao and Ōtsuka Hisao are the names that come up when we think of studies of Japanese statism. What do you think of them?

Takahashi.—I don't think we can avoid criticism of Maruyama's nationalism or rather, his "national subjectivism." [44] As for his overall views on the defeat, we find a discourse on war responsibility, but no discourse on responsibility for colonial domination. It's not just Maruyama. We need to thoroughly examine the historical consciousness of postwar "progressive intellectuals." Those who belong to the "Mar-

42. *Sokoku o kaerimite* (Jitsugyō no Nihonsha, 1915; Iwanami Bunko, 2002).

43. **Houston Chamberlain (1855–1927) was a British-born, naturalized German author and a proponent of anti-Semitism. His most influential work, *The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century* (1899), proclaimed Teutonic supremacy over other races. The pioneering Japanologist Basil Hall Chamberlain (1850-1935) was his older brother.

44. **The first term is *kokuminshugi*, the second, *kokuminshutaishugi*. In fact, Maruyama seems to have used the term *kokuminshugiteki shutai* ("national subject").

uyama School" have reacted too defensively to such criticism.

These matters should be discussed as limitations on the part of Maruyama. That said, Maruyama's discourse on democracy should be acknowledged as holding universal potential. Take Nambara Shigeru, for instance, a very big presence among postwar intellectuals. [45] Nambara called for the abdication of the emperor, but he always stayed within the framework of the emperor system. Compared with Nambara, Maruyama, despite the limitations of his time, offers many more aspects that are fresh even today. This is commonsensical, but we need to distinguish between the things we should inherit and those we should criticize. Isn't that what Mr. Nakano Toshio is saying? [46]

Lee.—He says that people have attacked him for putting him [Maruyama] down unfairly, but he says that in fact he is valorizing him, too.

Takahashi.—If there were nothing to valorize, there would be no use in pointing out his limitations.

As for criticism of colonialism, this is a problem with Japanese intellectuals that goes very deep. As one who grew up in the former metropole, I myself may have unconsciously inherited the same limitations to a degree. For this, there is nothing to do but be humble before the criticism of others.

This is a truly deep-seated issue, comparable to the Palestinian problem for European and American Jewish intellectuals.

The writings of Ms. Kim Chong-mi have pierced. Such works as *An introduction to the history of popular Korean and Chinese anti-Japanese struggle in Northeastern China*, or *Studies of the history of the Levellers' Movement*, and *The world history of native place* [47] are not

45. **Nambara Shigeru (1889–1974) was a political scientist and president of the University of Tokyo (1945–51). As a "Non-church" (Mukyōkai) Christian, Nambara maintained his liberal position even during the war years, during which time Maruyama Masao was his student. He was an influential leader of liberals in a number of early postwar causes, including education reform and defense of the postwar ("no war") Constitution.

46. **Nakano Toshio (1950–) historical sociologist and intellectual historian, is the author of *Ōtsuka Hisao to Maruyama Masao: dōin, shutai, sensō sekinin* [*Ōtsuka Hisao and Maruyama Masao: mobilization,subject, and war responsibility*], (Seidosha: 2001).

47. *Chūgoku Tōhokubu ni okeru kōnichi Chōsen Chūgoku minshūshi josetsu* (Gendai Kikakushitsu, 1992). Full titles of the last two works are *Suihei undōshi kenkyū-minzoku*

only important for their content, but for their sharp criticism of Japanese intellectuals. You can say this about this society as a whole, but intellectuals, beginning with historians, have not tried to learn much about colonialism, and they've ended up producing a gigantic black box. Indeed, more than a few have lent their energies to legitimizing or writing apologias for colonialism.

There are such observations as the following in Ms. Kim Chong-mi's writings: If Japan were to pay compensation and reparations to the people in the regions where Japanese imperialism established colonies, it would likely become one of the most impoverished countries in the world. If the US were to pay compensation and reparations to the Vietnamese people for the damage US imperialism had inflicted, then it would likely become one of the poorest countries in the world.

Though we have to acknowledge that acts were committed that can't be compensated for materially or monetarily, what she says is right, and it is totally false to suggest that after defeat, Japan was reborn from ground zero. There was earlier primitive accumulation, an accumulation built upon the injuries inflicted on the peoples of Asia subjected to invasion and domination. True, there was some loss as a consequence of total war, but that's where Japan's "postwar" began, and thanks to the "special procurements" generated by the Korean War and the Vietnam War, the economy took off. We can't let ourselves forget this.

A fundamental reconsideration of modern Japan

Lee.—Or put it this way: what made it possible to forget or deny such episodes? There were 2.5 million Chinese and Koreans in Japan, and there's no way that people didn't know about them or that they were invisible. The Kwantung Army actually went to the continent, and if you were an intellectual, you would have to been aware of this.

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sabetsu hihan (Studies of the history of the Levellers' movement: A criticism of ethnic discrimination, Gendai Kikakushitsu, 1994), and *Kokyō no sekaishi—kaihō no intānashonarizumu e* (The world history of native place: Toward an internationalism of liberation, Gendai Kikakushitsu, 1996).

There were people who had some consciousness about China, but Korea and Taiwan are completely ignored. What is the nature of this black box anyway? Without pushing on this point, we can't solve the problem of Japanese modernity.

Takahashi.—Concretely speaking, for example, it's still commonplace to speak of prewar Japan's "error" as having begun with the "Manchurian Incident," the invasion of China, or to single out the ultrastatism from the 1930s on for criticism. On this point, moderate conservative and progressive intellectuals converge to the point of being indistinguishable. The mass media "of conscience" also adopt this line. In other words, in the public sphere, it's still taboo to subject the totality of Japanese colonialism to fundamental scrutiny. This is the case with Korea, Taiwan, Okinawa, and the Ainu.

We can turn this around to say that during the Asia-Pacific War, even if there were nationals purely motivated by the desire to "defend the country," who were utterly devoid of aggressive intent, the fact remains that the "country" they sought to defend was one immense colonial empire. The colonial empire that came into being through invasion was not one that should have been defended, but rather, one that should have been criticized and dismantled. The sort of story about how "many young people intent on defending their country fell on the battlefield" completely misses this fact.

Lee.—What is truly exasperating is that when people tell that story, there is no introspection, no soul-searching. It's one thing if this story emerged from reflection, but there's no attempt to think through the logic or even a desire to do so, so there's no exchange of arguments or criticism. Even so-called intellectuals are speaking from an assumed shared emotion, and they seem to have abandoned the attempt to engage in "intellectual" work. If there's any discussion of colonial domination or war responsibility, it's a cynical one directed toward affirming the status quo, or an ultrapragmatism, an excuse for not engaging in real "intellectual" labor. I can't help thinking that people are letting go of being intellectual so that they can go on being irresponsible.

To think critically in order not to be deceived

Takahashi.—In Japan right now, I can't help thinking that the majority of people have stopped trying to think. I recently appended a modest message to Franck Pavloff's little book, *Brown Morning*, to the effect of "Let's put an end to our state of suspended thinking, let's start thinking." The response was unexpectedly overwhelming, much of it from so-called ordinary citizens who said, "There's something wrong with the way things are now. I didn't like it, but I was swept along by the demands of everyday life and I'd stopped thinking. I realize this is wrong."

The pervasive tendency of the times is being manufactured as "state strategy" by the dominant strata in politics and in finance, by journalism and the "culture industry" that have lost their capacity for criticism and simply follow along, by "intellectuals and cultural figures," as well as the great majority of citizens who have stopped thinking in any regular way about political and social issues. I think we have to begin by examining ourselves to see if we haven't unconsciously fallen into the same trap.

I myself have a certain resistance to the classic image of the "great intellectual," rightly or wrongly identified as Sartrean. Keeping in mind that this sort of image of the intellectual has been subjected to considerable criticism, we nevertheless stated the need "to be intellectual" in the *Zen'ya* declaration because this is not a special mode of being. "To be intellectual" is not a privilege granted to those who are called "intellectuals," certainly not just to "philosophers" or "thinkers."

"To be intellectual" in our context minimally requires that we no longer continue in a condition of suspended thought about political and social problems, that we stop following uncritically the general tendency of our age and society, that we think with our own heads, that we not neglect critical scrutiny, that we not simply accumulate knowledge, but that we seek the knowledge necessary to examine critically, that we make a constant effort to formulate deeper and more fitting evaluations. These are not tasks that only so-called intellectuals can perform, but rather, things that any "ordinary" citizen can do.

As a matter of fact, what philosophy means to me is no different from this. It's neither a preestablished discipline, nor something that can be fitted into the framework of a textbook of the history of philosophy. I'm not very interested in such things. The philosophy that exists as an academic discipline is necessary for learning about the techniques of thought and the accomplishments of past and present philosophers and thinkers, but my own interests can't be confined in that framework.

If I were to put simply what philosophy is for me, it is "thinking critically so as not to be deceived." We need not be deceived by politicians, by ideologies and ideologues of any stripe, by the "air" or "atmosphere" of the times as produced by the mass media, etc. And if it is in this sense of being thoroughly "intellectual," then yes, philosophy can indeed be a means of "resistance." If asked, "Can philosophy constitute resistance," then I'd like to respond, in this sense, yes, philosophy can constitute resistance.

Lee.—If there's any possibility in the academicism represented by philosophy, it would lie in the fostering of the capacity to criticize society from a constructive viewpoint, to look at things fundamentally in the way that the more practical disciplines alone cannot promote.

Takahashi.—The space that is the university was meant to be a space where one is permitted to be thoroughly intellectual. On the one hand, it is certainly the case that in the contemporary university, numerous "realistic" demands are posed by industrial society, and I understand the ways in which the various disciplines in the sciences are especially pressed to respond to such demands. On the other hand, the university is a space where being thoroughly "intellectual" is something to be permitted for its own sake, and that it is precisely through this feature that, if there are problems in society, the problematic aspects are elucidated, the possible directions for resolution pointed out, and thus, the university is able to "contribute" to society in a profound sense. It should be a space for such "intellectual" activity. Whether civil society is truly realizing a benefit by supporting such a space of "intellectual" activity with public funds is the marker of whether the university system is functioning properly in a given soci-

ety. In that sense, the university in Japan is presently in a deep state of crisis.

To be thoroughly intellectual, to be thoroughly critical is the condition for resistance. Whether it's literature or art or some other endeavor, culture cannot constitute resistance without the activity of the intellect. For me, this activity is philosophy.

Lee.—It's necessary to hold the conviction that to be intellectual leads to redemption and liberation.

Takahashi.—Well, conviction or at least, hope. We don't want to let go of that "hope against hope."

Note about the author

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