A Study on the Communications between
a Religious Person and a Non-Religious Person:
A Critique of Methods of an Intercultural Philosophy

Jun Fukaya

<Abstract>

In today's society, it often happens that people of different cultural and religious backgrounds have a contact. Then, there can be an enormous gap, if they are religious and non-religious people. Sometimes religious people tend to involve non-religious people into their own religious beliefs. On the other hand, non-religious people are more influential in our modern society. For example, most of Japanese recognize themselves as non-religious. However, religious scholars say, they belong to "a Japanese Religion". One of its features is "unconscious religious mind". In short, the Japanese does not know that they believe in a religion, but their behavior and their way of thinking fit with the religion in a religious way.

How is it possible for a religious person to communicate with the "non-religious person" ? There could be some hints. According to the idea of the "Weltethos" by Küng, the aim is to achieve a dialog between a religious person and a non-religious person. Or in the view of intercultural Philosophy, it is possible to have communications between them by "Polylog. However, those hints are not enough to follow the communicative development of "a Japanese religious believer". As for the non-religious person, it is more necessary to add a pedagogical approach in order to develop their communicative skills. As well as this, the religious person needs to state their religious mind clearly for the non-

religious person.

Introduction

In general, a commitment to a religion means becoming a member of the religious community. It is almost the same meaning of relying upon the religion whose view could explain his /her identity. For example, we often see an item for asking one's religious denomination on curriculum vitae or documents in western countries. However, this is to say that such a function of religions is not able to apply in modern Japanese society, especially, for the people who live in a big city. Nowadays, most of Japanese could regard a religion as something fearful, with the resulted of the terror attack in Tokyo subway stations by the new religious cult, Ohm-shinrikyo, in March 1995.

It is with difficulty in Japan that man can identify himself by a specific religion, because we, Japanese, are accustomed to a religious view of polytheism. According to the fundamental statement of a Japanese modern scholar of ethics, Tetsuroh Watsuji, a human being is a Being of "Between Being". In short, he is defined by a relationship between two persons[1]. It is entirely different from a western view of "a human being" as "an individual being" in western cultures. In Japanese tradition, "Ie"（i.e. an ancestry of Family） is the most important foundation of a rule of one's determination, instead of a specific God in western cultures. Since the Middle Ages, in other words, the Samurai period, keeping his own family is the first priority among samurai society.

In secular modern society, the differences of the views of human beings, depending upon religions, could hinder communication especially between a religious person and a non-religious person. A Japanese religious scholar, H, Shimada, says that about 70 percent of Japanese would identify themselves as "non-religious"[2]. It is also said, people who increasingly leave churches and become non-religious even in western countries. It seems that there are no ultimate principles of our lives and traditional religious values have no power to

lead our life. We have no common values and each of us has a different sense of values. As the result, it could be hard to radically understand who we are, then we could not trust each other. One of the reasons is the phenomenon of an escalation of non-religious influences. Such a situation is not good for them, even if they have a discussion of an economic or political issue. Therefore, I try to think about a principle of communications between a religious person and a non-religious person in this paper.

In this paper, a man who believes in a particular religion and who belongs to the religious community and who can identify himself/herself by the religion, is defined expediently as a "religious person". On the contrary, a man who does not believe a particular religion and who does not belong to the community and who cannot identify himself/herself by the religion, is defined as a "non-religious person". Additionally, it is necessary that we discuss many issues in order to clarify communications between the two persons. At this time, I can only suggest the outline of the process of the communication. In chapter 1, one of the features of religious people is to spread their own culture into other cultural areas. In chapter 2, it is explained how a non-religious person thinks about a religion and a culture. In chapter 3, "Nihon-kyoh" as an example of "non-religion" and in chapter 4, a philosophical method for a communication between a religious person and a non-religious person, are illustrated. And in chapter 5, I critically consider the method of analysis. Yet, I cannot afford to analyze the difference between a not religious person and an anti-religious person in detail in this paper. However, it could be briefly said that both "a not religious person" and "an anti-religious person" show their standpoints more clearly than that of "a non-religious person". In this paper, "a non-religious person" is defined as a person who is not interested in making his/her beliefs or principles clear.

1. A religious person and a cultural "centralism"

It seems with difficulty that a religious person and a non-religious person can understand each other in terms of at least their religions and their beliefs. Therefore, what an important for their communication might be themes of culture. Likewise P. Tillich's saying: culture is a form of expression of religion, and religion is the substance (Inhalt) of culture[3]. (Although some criticizes his thesis,) Even though, if a non-religious person who cannot understand the essence of a religion and its faith, he/she can mention and interest to a religion through music, painting and arts etc. and he/she can appreciate works or opus.

Kishimoto, a scholar of religion, classifies religion to contain three parts: idea of God(s), emotional experiences of human beings and activities in human life. His hypothesis is, "religion is cultural phenomena which are mainly in human daily life, who believe that religion could disclose an ultimate meaning of human life and it could be concerned with a supreme solution of human's problem."[4] If a religion could not be separated with culture as indications of Tillich and Kishimoto, a religious and a non-religious person could find their common points at least in cultural regions. As the result, they could communicate each other. However, it is disputable, whether every culture has a religious elements or not. Because it can be admitted that there is a cultural region without religions[5]. In this paper, I cannot afford to explain the relationship between religion and culture. But we can find common ground between a religious person and a non-religious person at least in dimensions of cultural regions in terms of human life, neither religious credo nor doctrine. And we can consider ethical dimensions as the common ground as well.

Here, we should notice the distinction following two standpoints: a religion as a cultural phenomenon, or substance of cultures as Tillich, and a religion as a compound with essential doctrines and works as its representation. The former points cannot be discussed here because we cannot afford to explain what a

religion and a culture is. It is very hard that they could be clearly separated from each other. But I mainly take the latter standpoint and continue my analysis.

In general, a religious person who is even a member of a traditional religion, belongs to a religious community, such as a church in which members have the same religious values. Their behavior, for example a way of religious ceremony, rituals, or daily life and annual events, are common. They keep their order by obeying their holly documents and religious laws which are the description of their values.[6] These features are dispersed by various methods not only for establishment in their community, but also for acquiring new members. Essentially, a religious group tends to grow their community and get new members who are going to have common religious value by missions.

In other words, such a general feature of a religious person disseminates two other people, spreading their faith, doctrine and culture forward in different cultural regions. Western countries' missionaries in 19th and 20th centuries in Japan, for example, built churches and mission schools in international bay areas, because they had a plan in which these stations had a function to spread their mission in all parts of the country. There are schools whose name in part are such as "Seinan"（South-west in Japan）, "Tohoku"（North-east in Japan）, and "Kanto"（East in Japan）, "Kansei"（West in Japan）[7]. Supposedly, these names are described as divided regions for which Christian missionaries took responsibilities. In a sense, it seems that there was an political intension behind the missions.

In principle, the Christian mission is to spread Christianity to other cultural and religious people and convert from other religions. For example, the Japanese Catholic central organization explains the world mission day in October in their Website as follows:

There are many people who do not know Jesus Christ. In Japan, we are surrounded with them and live in daily life. Mission as telling Jesus Christ is

our call. We as Christ's pupils have been given the mission.[8]

According to this explanation, mission means to let "a person who does not know Christ" talk about Christ. It also means that the missionary tells a Christian value which is peculiar to Christianity and tries to increase his pupils who have the same religious value. In other words, the way of a mission stands for so-called cultural "centralism(Zentrismus)"[9] in which Christian values is its central value and which tends to asssimilate other religions and cultures into it. In fact, there was the missionary in Japan, Annie Syrena Buzzell(1866~1936), for example[10]. She missioned, respecting Japanese culture. On one hand, Japan in the Meiji era, at the end of 19th century to the beginning of 20th century, was eager to learn western cultures in order to radically promote modernization as quickly as possible. On the other hand, one of the reasons of the missions from western countries to Japan should not be ignored that of "the Awakening Movement". Historically, the cause of the movement is that the American protestant churches influenced by the Anglican church in England, sent missionaries to non-Christian countries one after another in the end of 18th century to the beginning of the 19th century. In Japan, after lifting the ban on Christianity in 1873, Christian activities began more energeticaly than ever before[11]. In a sense, the movement is a kind of self-cultural centralism. As for Japan, they wanted to get advanced western cultures and techniques as quickly as possible, in order to avoid colonization by the western countries. In short, both Japanese motivation and missionary's needs worked together at that time.

One of the examples is English education. In general, Japanese traditional Christian mission schools tend to be full facilities and have a better curriculum and teachers than normal schools. It comes from the history, in which missionaries taught their classes directly in English. For example, Hanako Muraoka, a translator who went to the Canadian Methodist mission school, Tohyoheiwa-Jogakuin(women's school)in 1903, says in her biography,

> We had to attend English services every morning and evening. Canadian womens' missionaries taught Japanese general subjects and the Bible, Reader, Grammar, Composition, text interpretation, English conversation, English literature, world history and geography, music, dressmaking, cooking and physical education in English.[12]

This example shows a typical mission school's curriculum.[13] As before mentioned, we can see the peculiar situation of Japanese modernization in which they had to learn advanced science, technique and culture in English from western countries.

In fact, there were few philosophers who could find equivalent values in oriental philosophies（or thoughts）as well as in western philosophies in the middle of the 20th century. Karl Jaspers was an exceptional philosopher among them. He introduced oriental thought such as Buddha and Nagarjuna and advocated the Axial Age which was his original division for the history of the world.[14] Incidentally, there was one Japanese philosopher who made efforts to familiarize oriental thought and philosophy, Daisetu Suzuki, a master in Buddhism. In 1927, he published "Anthology of Zen" in English in London. After that, he lectured about Buddhism not only in England, but also in the US. and other European countries[15]. Obviously, his book and lectures contributed to spread Zen in western countries. Another example is a philosophy of Kitaro Nishida（1870~1945）who established the first original Japanese philosophy in the early 20th century.[16] As his philosophy was familiarized in western countries, interests among the western people in oriental thought gradually increased. It seems that they have not only exotic interests, but also some respect for different principles and modes in oriental cultures.

2.　Religion and culture for a non-religious person

If different religious people discuss mainly cultural and ethical themes

amongst each other, themes of their religious dogma or truth cannot be spoken in their discussion. Their topic could be the issues of global environment, world peace, and human rights etc.. These are some of the methods for us, as human beings, to overcome common problems on earth. For example, Hans Küng has advocated his project of a Global Ethic[17] since the 1990s. The project has no aim to discuss theological issues, such as religious truth and God(s). His attitude is described from the standpoint of respecting a religious diversity of each religion. It is also said that this project is related with the position of respecting different thoughts and cultures. It is also disputable if a religion has a "profound" view of human life, nature and world, and if the religion is filled with historical, cultural and philosophical elements, or not. However, we should not place religions one above the other by the degree of their depth of historical, cultural, and philosophical elements.

Therefore, a discussion theme between a religious person and a non-religious person ought not to be chosen as a religious truth directly, but methods of how to inquire into common domains of human ethics or cultures. It is important that people understand a different religious position and trust and respect others in order to achieve this goal.

This idea is the same philosophy of the interreligious education by Nipkow whose aim is to communicate with different religions.[18] In fact, if man faces a different religion at first, he could find the religion as a different "culture". Practically, religions contain not only their creed and dogma, but also arts, way of conduct and customs which belong to cultural dimensions[19]. But we should exactly notice the distinction of the cultural dimensions: as for a religious person who believes in God, human's daily life is to be considered as "God's work", although a non-religious person thinks that it belongs to a cultural category.

We can find gaps among them clearly through their radically different attitudes toward a religion between a person who lives a religion and a person who lives by a religion. The former is constructed by his/her religion and a

view of the religious world is in his/her view of life. On the contrary, the latter recognizes a religion as an object, a method of his/her job and his/her theme in his/her study. In a broad sense of the word, a non-religious person can belong to this type. They do not believe in a religion, but they research it, or they can live by dealing with some religious subjects. Although they can talk about a religious topic, the former as a person who lives a religion by itself, can hardly permit recognition of a religion as an object like the latter's recognition. Because it means for the former to accept a relative view of self-being, in other words, an objectification for a religion as subject. However, this self-relativity cannot be avoided in order to communicate with each other. In general, a non-religious person cannot understand the world view of a religious person, because of their presupposition of the understanding is to "believe" at first! We can often see this logically to avoid their communication with each other. But it could be an exception for a religion whose dogma is not centralized in its faith.

As the above mentioned, makes clear how a religious person has his/her "mind" in their communications. That is to answer the request of an objective view a religion for which domains of a view of worth, ethics, and a world in a religious person. In short, it is an attitude of objectively viewing oneself. This view is considered as a common conduct of the recognition in which a non-religious person finds a religion as "an object". Here I would like to say that a religious person should approach a non-religious person first. Probably, a religious person could be tempted to let a non-religious person be involved in his/her cultural sphere. However, we can often see nationalistic symptoms of political power today. On the contrary, influences of established religions are declining. For example, it is reported in a newspaper, Christian churches hardly continue to be a community by themselves[20]. This phenomenon is increasing for non-religious persons as a common issue in our modern society in the world.

Then, the next agenda is how a social and cultural group can be classified to which a non-religious person belongs. Just saying, "non-religion", there are

various standpoints: atheism, nihilism, communism and so on. There is a man who admits being of a God, but he does not want to belong to a religion. Or, a man who denies God by himself. We can see many various ways of believing or thinking concerned with God(s).

And there is a religion, such as Buddhism in which there are no Gods in the original. In a view of theism, we can find a standpoint which is not a non-religion, but is surely a kind of theism, like Kant's philosophy. Consequently, it is not easy to categorize a non-religion into a cultural group. In reality, this trial is not a constructive idea. In this paper, my study is an alternative attempt, studying a Japanese religious consciousness whose religious position is dominated 70 percent non-religion.

3. "Nihon-kyo" as a non-religion

Generally speaking, one of features of Japanese people's mentality is to change a religion, even Christianity, into a Japanese religious way. It is called "a Nihon-kyo(i.e. Nihonism)". Tamaki Saitoh, one of the modern famous psychologists in Japan, says, "a kind of believer of Nihon-kyo is a man who trusts neither on a God, nor transcendent being."[21] As well as his indication, we can find out one of the roots of a Nihon-kyo in the book, "Japanese and Jews" by Isaiah BenDasan. He firmly says, "There is a religion whose name is a Nihon-kyo. The religion is the strongest religion in a world."[22]

Because "even its believer cannot recognize it by himself. He is totally involved into the religion unconsciously."[23] In fact, I had an experience in connection with this definition.

In past days, I gave an exercise in my Christian education class at a college. It followed as: Please draw out an original story on a subject of the Bible and play a drama freely.

I made ten groups from about 100 students and gave them some famous stories in the Bible. Additionally, I instructed them to make their original story

in their own way. Surprisingly, every drama resulted in its ending like a story of describing Japanese spirit, such as, "Do your best! Then you can reward for it."[24]

We can find the Nihon-kyo in the novel, "Silence"（Chinmoku）, by Shusaku Endo, a famous catholic novelist. This is a story at the Edo period in which man could not believe in Christianity. Under the banning on Christianity, people secretly tried to keep their own Christian faith. They were called, "Kakure-kirisitan"（hidden Christian）. An example of a Japanese mind which can change even Christianity into the Nihon-kyo, is described in the story. On the spiritual ground, a Christian church could become a community like a Japanese small village[25]. In the beginning of the 20th century, "a Christianity in a Buhido" in which the Bushido and the Christianity were mixed. (The typical example was the "non-church movement" by Kanzo Uchimura.)[26]

Besides that, Takeshi Yohroh, a scholar who admits a Japanese Non-religion, Non-thoughts, Non-philosophy as a positive attitude, says, "the Nihon-kyo is rather rational." His statement as follows:

> If man does not try to have a religion, a thought, and a philosophy, it is unnecessary to pretend to think about something, or correct some bad things. If it is necessary to think, man can just borrow some thoughts from outside. And if the borrowed thought goes out of use thoroughly, man can just "exchange". It was the Meiji Revolution and the Post-World War II period.[27]

As he also mentions, one of famous modern Japanese thinkers, Masao Maruyama explains about "lack of an axis of a thought coordinate in Japan" in his book[28], Japanese Thoughts. Maruyama did not mind that Japanese people do not think anything at all, like Yohro's interpretation, but he stated that the "axis" in which man could historically recognize what he was, had not been built in Japanese mind. It should not be interpreted that Japanese people had simply literally

thought nothing. As for Japanese people, this is a theme in terms of an idea of time, but I cannot explain about it here.

This Japanese way of mind, in other words, a working of a non-verbal consciousness is related with the way of being as a believer of "natural religions", as Anan mentions.

According his analysis, natural religions are not the same as established religions, but they are free from religious communities and their dogmas. Nobody can clearly know the origin of natural religions. This succession has been unconsciously continued among Japanese people for a long time.[29]

It is said that there are no conclusions of the research of non-religions in western countries[30]. I think that it is the key for how we should understand the standpoint of the non-religions as a kind of culture for the present. At the same time, I suppose, what man cannot define, a clear standpoint, is actually the essential factor of non-religions in Japan.

4. Methods of an intercultural philosophy

If the difficulty of grouping non-religions could be solved, how can we assume a way of communications between a religious person and a non-religious person?

An intercultural philosophy which comes especially in German speaking areas since the 1990s, could give us some suggestions for the way. In short, one of the founders of this philosophy, R.A.Mall says, the spirit of intercultural philosophy is, "individuals try to view the whole matter impartially, leading for the theory and the practice of a pluralistic norm of live and let live, read and let read, and believe and let believe." [31] And the intercultural philosophy has a motto: the desire to understand and the desire to be understood go hand in hand and are the two sides of the same interculturally oriented, hermeneutic coin.[32] Additionally, he claims that there is no absolute value, but it does not mean "the acceptance of an absolute relativism leading to total incommensurability." However, he also

says, "the telos of one absolute is linguistically, culturally, philosophically, and religiously interpreted, understood, and realized, it becomes a relative absolute, which means that the binding universality of the absolute expresses itself in various ways."[33]

Another philosopher, Franz Martin Wimmer, adovocates Polylog as a method. The Polylog is not just a variation of a monolog or dialogue. It has mainly two features. The first is to recognize themselves as communicative partners who are hard to place one above the other. The second is flexibility. They do not persist in their own cultural, religious and philosophical positions, but they can discuss many different views.[34]

Instead of the Polylog, Mall adovcates "overlapping structure" in an intercultural philosophy. In the structure, the different cultural positions are not totally unified into one position, or integrated into a kind of "universal" position, but they keep their differences at the same time and tend to seek for universality.[35] He also takes "will of communication" by Karl Jaspers as the example. He refers to Jaspers's expression as follows: "the will to a total, universal communication in which to differ is not to misunderstand."[36] Mall thinks that the will could overcome real differences in their histories and bring "universality" by which man aims at ideals as human beings.

The most important factor for which people with different backgrounds are able to achieve intercultural communications, is to have a consensus. Although they keep their own cultural and religious features, they are eager for an ideal as a human being through multicultural communications, interpreting for themselves various views. To accomplish the consensus, they need tolerance[37] all the same. In the intercultural philosophy, the key is communications. However, the communications might have already given a big advantage for so-called "the Abrahamic religions" because of its linguistic features as a critique against a Pluralistic Theology by Jürgen Moltmann[38]. Besides the religious issue, as a philosophical issue, it seems to give us apprehension that an establishment

of a consensus must be asked for the out-of-date "grand theory", such as the argument by Jean-François Lyotard against Jürgen Harbermas.[39]

5.   Issues in intercultural communications

Probably, the intercultural philosophical methods could be helpful for opening up the possibilities between religious and non-religious persons to some degree. But it is wondered if especially a Polylog is just able to be carried out in a relationship in which man has his own standpoint. In other words, it means that the only person who firmly has any kind of disciplines or dogma, can take part in communications. If it is true, it is possible for the unfortunate who cannot declare their opinions officially, to appeal themselves through some radical methods. Perhaps, they could assert to sit at the negotiating table with the extreme ways. If man regards tolerance and openness toward all cultures as a disciple, like fundamental rules of an intercultural philosophy, he could avoid being judged himself as an unqualified or immature person by others. Therefore his culture has neither traditional values nor representative works, for example. On the consideration of "a non-religious person", it is not clearly possible to define his/her social position and the cultures to which they belong. The main reason is that man cannot become a communicative partner for a religious person.

Additionally, it is questionable, whether persons with different cultural backgrounds could have their attitudes for which they do not have any criteria. Is it possible not to take care for length of cultural tradition, or the depth of thoughts etc.? Because these elements could be important to take the initiative of communications. On the communication between a religious person and a non-religious person, the person whose cultural tradition is long and whose depth of thought is rich, can actually take the leadership. A language by which man communicates, for example, a person whose mother tongue is an international language, or not, is apparently different in terms of speaking power.

"Nihon-kyo", I have already mentioned, is one of standpoints which is based

on Japanese cultures and traditions. But it has neither established principles nor words by which they can be explained. Rather there is nothing to explain. In short, it is an anti- logos cultural position. Traditionally, gift sending as a method of communication is rather more developed than verbal communications in Japan. The Japanese people have kept their relationship through this method for a long time. In addition, they need enough sense to understand what others really want without language. Today, "Read atmosphere", (Kuhki-wo-Yomu, it stands for KY,) is a popular attitude among the young generation. Longtime wisdom in Japan, as a small island, the Japanese always take care to avoid another's anger. The credo which they have believed since their childhood, is "A tall tree catches much wind" and "Never do what gives others trouble." If the Japanese had a principle, such wisdom could be regarded as credo which are handed down by ordinary people in their daily life.

It is apparently clear to judge who is more powerful, in communication between a untrained person who has poor speaking skills and a well-trained person who is based on traditional philosophies and religions. Probably, the trained person does not recognize the untrained person who consciously knows his/her disadvantage in communications. I do not assert a significance of "silence".[40] And I think self-assertion can be clearly expressed just by languages. However, it ought not be ignored that "the ability of communications" which depend on differences of degree, how sophisticated one's culture and language is. Therefore, I would like to set down a view for which the well-trained person has to take care. It is the point that man does not forget a will of reason (Wille der Vernunft) like K.Jaspers and "will of being understood to each other" by Mall. It is possible to overcome various misunderstandings and miscommunication by the will.

In this sense, the overlapping structure could be more constructive than polylog, if man considers the method which does not tend to make differences clear between a religious person and a non-religious person. The overlapping

structure can contain the differences at the same time. It does not matter how much the well-trained or the untrained are, but both of them should basically respect each other. I cannot explain about the theory of "Overlapping" by Mall. At least, we should notice that the word "overlapping" does not mean "domination" or "annexation". Such as the bigger merges with the smaller. As far as I understand, the structure interpreted is not a clear distinction by logic and principles, but rather a soft relationship with "organic" connections, although they have different features.

Conclusion

Communication is possible not only to be firmly on an established foundation by complex theories and deep thoughts, but on a will in which man admits to the other personality and wants to make a relationship with the other. It is also possible for a baby to have communications, although it is under a process of building its identity. In general, such a theme, like building a personality through communications, belongs to a subject of pedagogy or education. And at the moment of communications, endurance or patience is necessary. A person should trust the other person's development. Additionally he/she needs to have tolerance and love for others, even though they have totally different religions and cultures. It is one of the theme of ethics. Above all, various academic points of view are necessary to analyze communications between a religious and a non-religious person. Henceforth, which subjects of an intercultural philosophy should be deliberated is added to a pedagogical view the same as a philosophical analysis of the structure of communications.

Notes

[1] Tetsuro Watsuji(2007)：Jinkan no Gakutoshiteno Rinrigaku, Iwanami Shoten, Tokyo, p.27

[2] Hiromi Shimada（2009）: Mushuhkyo koso Nihonjin no Shuhkyo dearu, Kadokawa-Shoten, Tokyo, p.18

[3] Paul Tillich（1973）: What is religion? （ed.）James Luther Adams. Harper & Row, New York, p.73

[4] Hideo Kishimoto（1996）: Shukyo gaku, Daimeidoh, pp.16-17

[5] Michael F. Palmer（1990）: Paul Tillich'sPhilosophy of Art.（tr.by Yoshio Noro & Tomoko Sashiya）The Board of Publications the United Church of Christ in Japan, Tokyo, pp. 294-295

[6] Toshimaro Ama（1996）: Nihonjin wa naze mushuhkyo nanoka, Chikuma-Shobo, Tokyo, p.11

[7] cf. Seinan Gakuin（2001）: Seinan Spirit C.K.Dozer Fusai no shohgai, Fukuoka, p.27

[8] http://www.cbcj.catholic.jp/jpn/kiganbi/mssn.htm 2016/06/18

[9] Wimmer, Franz Martin（2004）: Interkulturelle Philosophie, Facultas Verlags- und Buchhandels AG, Wien, S.54

[10] Reiko Kageyama（2015）: The Influence of Christian Teaching Given to Students in Preacher Buzzell's Bible Study Group in the Ascent of Modern Japan, Kantoh Gakuin University Publication, Yokohama, p.23,36

[11] cf. Kazuo Shiono（2010）: Kindai Nihon niokeru Purotesutanto kei Gakkou no seturitutotenkai, Seinan Journal of Cultures, Vol.25. No.1, October 2010, Fukuoka, p.74

[12] Eri Muraoka（2014）: Hanako to Anne he no michi, Shincho-sha, Tokyo, p.38

[13] cf.Seinan Gakuin（2001）, p.35

[14] cf. Jaspers, Karl（1992）: Die Grossen Philosophen, Erster Band. R.Piper & Co.Verlag, München1957,（Neuausgabe 7.Auflage,）, cf. Achsenzeit, Vom Ursprung und Ziel der Geschichte, R.Piper & Co., Verlag, München, 1949,（Neuausgabe, 9.Auflage, 1988）, S.19-42

[15] cf. Daisetsu Suzuki（1999）: Nihonteki Reisei, Iwanami-shoten, Tokyo, pp.271-273

[16] Kitaro Nishida（1990）: Zen no Kenkyu, Iwanami-shoten, Tokyo

[17] Hans Küng（1993）:Declaration Toward a Global Ethic, Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago cf.Stiftung Weltethos für interkulturelle und interreligiöse Forschung

[18] cf. Nipkkow 2005, S. 372-375

[19] Kishimoto（1996）, p.17

[20] Asahi Shinbun, Oct. 1. 2013, p.10

[21] Asahi Shinbun, June 19. 2016, p.16

[22] Shichihei Yamamoto (pen name: Isaiah Ben-Dasan), names a Japanese feature which represents Japanese people's consciousness of "Kūki" (air) as "Nihonkyō". This is translated into "a Japanese Religion", but it is distinguished as a religion which belongs to an academic category of religions. Avoiding being defined by itself is the reason why it is the Japanese religion. I would like to explain it as follows.

He says that the Japanese religion（Nihonkyō）has no specific principles Besides that, Japanese people have no consciousness of believers of Nihonkyō. There are no logics, no creeds, no Gods, no sense of time, in other words, no historical consciousness. They do not recognize it as a particular object. They often tend to mix facts with norms.

There is the only thing among them. It is "Kūki". That is an atmosphere in which people easily judge or sometimes believe a fact through their own values and prejudice. The atmosphere surrounds Japan. In a sense, it consists of a kind of religious atmosphere. Such sociological features represent "Nihonkyō".

Again, the above mentioned features are particularized as follows.

(1) No principles

Originally, no words could explain logically what Nihonkyō is. There are neither dogma nor sacrament. People are not accustomed to thinking about objects with words and objective recognition. They tend to judge the values of an object rather than the facts of an object. Therefore, their views become subjective. The features of Japanese thinking, in other words, their recognition would hinder their logical thinking, then they will not know the standards of cognitive judgement. Besides that, they cannot be aware of their self-contradiction. In the Japanese way of thinking, there is no western-style dogma.

(2) Nihonkyō is like "Kūki" (air).

Instead of doctrine, "Kūki" (air) has the functions of Japanese behavior and judgement. "Kūki" is born among people who have no contract with the absolute God, as in Judaism and Christianity. It also occurs where they have no historical consciousness. If they have it, no doctrine would be incoherent. Because the idea of judgment of good or evil could be justified by historical consciousness.

A clarification of judgement of right and wrong means that people systematically have a kind of norms. It is the feature that Kūki has no such system. Although it has no systems, it is characterized by three points as follows: 1. The produced atmosphere by Kūki is right. 2. The righteousness should be followed. 3. If it could not be abided, people should be punished.

(3) Nihonkyō is based on nature

Basic concepts of Nihonkyō are humans and nature. Humans are a fulcrum and they keep balance in the world. Japan is compared with the world in which humans are a bearing and they work a balance. On one side is the world which is constructed in "Jittai-go (real words)" and humans put real described expressions on the plate. On the other side is the world which is constructed in "Kūtai-go (vacant words)" and humans put expressions based on value judgment.

According to Yamamoto, just before the end of World War II, the expression as a vacant word, "ichioku-gyokusai (all Japanese should fight until they die)", was put on the plate and more vacant words were put on it. Then the fulcrum fell down. This was the end of the war. Both real and vacant words were dropped off the plates. Then, Japanese lost all words and they were in an "empty situation". In other words, they stopped thinking of everything. If it is true, it seems that this is a main reason why GHQ easily occupied Japan. Nature is the basement of human beings as a center of balance. As for Japanese, nature means an expression in which "one's feelings and social and natural orders" are integrated. They accord with each other. Japanese believe nature could be standard as itself. Letting it be as it is, is the best. According to Kaibara Ekken, a scholar

in the Edo period, nature is established as "heaven and earth". It is the "credo of nature" and the root of the way of human beings.
(cf. Isaia Ben-Dasan(1984): Nihonkyoh nit suite(About Japanese Religion), (tr. Yamamoto Shichihei) Bungei Shunjuh, Tokyo)

[23] Isaiah Ben-Dasan(1990): Japanese and Jews, Kadokawa-shoten, Tokyo, p.119

[24] cf.Designed the learning experience in Christian Education II in St.Agunes Junior College 1994 to 2003. Fukaya

[25] Shuhsaku Endo(1994): Chinmoku, Shincho-sha, Tokyo, p.189,192

[26] Jun Fukaya(2014): The Non-Church Movement and Bushido, Seinangakuin University, Studies in Human Sciences Vol.9, No.2, Feb., pp.60-64

[27] Takeshi Yohroh(2005): Mushisoh no Hakken, Chikuma-shobo, Tokyo, pp.74-75

[28] Masao Maruyama(2012): Nihon no Shisoh, Iwanami-shoten, Tokyo, pp.4-5

[29] Ama, p.11

[30] Cf. Robert Jackson(2014): Reconfiguning' Education about Religion and Beliefs- Some Issues' International Seminar on Religious Education and Values, Session XIX, 2014, York, UK.

[31] Mall(2000), p.4

[32] Mall, Ram Adhr(2000): Intercultural Philosophy, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. Oxford, p.100

[33] ibid.

[34] Wimmer(2004), S.57
„ Er oder sie (Der oder die Einzelne) macht sowohl das Beibehalten wie das Ändern von Urteilen von nichts anderem abhängig als von eigener Einsicht. Unter solchen Voraussetzungen zu philosophieren, erfordert Verfahrensweisen, die zwischen Menschen stattfinden, die einander als Gleiche anerkennen, "

[35] Mall(2000), p.16

[36] ibid., p.47

[37] ibid., p.107, cf. "tolerate the tolerant and think, feel, and act in the spirit of the wisdom in live and let live, read and let read, believe and let believe."

[38] Gavin D'Costa,(ed.) (1997): Christian Uniqueness Reconsidered: The Myth of a Pluralistic Theology of Religions,(tra. Anri Morimoto), Kyobunkan,Tokyo, p.208

[39] Habermas(2000):Dohtokuisihi to Kommunikashon kohi, (tran. Keiichi Mishima), Iwanami-shoten, Tokyo, p.159, Lyotard(2003):Post modan no johken,(trans.Yasuo Kobayashi), Suisei-sha, Tokyo, p.11,160-161

[40] Wittgenstein(2003): Ronri tetugaku ronko, (tran.Shigeki Noya), Iwanami-shoten, Tokyo, p.149

Division of Childhood Education

Department of Human Sciences

Seinan Gakuin University