Japanese Traditions and Globalisation: Transformation, Collision Course or Co-existence

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This article analyses the process of globalisation and how it affects the Japanese society and Japanese traditions. Globalisation has already fundamentally changed the international system, and in Japan there is a deep awareness of the need to adjust to the changed international environment. The Japanese discourses of globalisation, internationalisation, nationalism, and national traditions have provided an ample ground for analysis and observations. Furthermore, the contemporary Asian economic crisis has created a kind of crisis atmosphere in political and social discussions. In this article an interpretative approach has been applied to give and analyse meanings of this wide range of social phenomena, with an attempt to arrive at a better understanding of the process of globalisation and the current directions in Japanese society and international relations, as well as the transformation of national traditions and ideologies in general.

本稿では，グローーバリゼーションのプロセスとグローーバリゼーションが日本の社会と伝統にどのように影響を及ぼすかという研究課題を分析する。グローーバリゼーションはすでに国際システムを根本的に変えており，日本においても変容した国際環境への適応の必要性が深く認識されている。グローーバリゼーション，国際化，ナショナリズムおよび国の伝統に関する日本でのディスコースは，分析と思察に適切な事例を提供してきた。さらに，最近のアジアの経済危機によって，政治・経済の議論に一種の危機的な雰囲気が生じている。本稿では，解釈的アプローーチを適用しつつ，こうした広汎な社会現象の意味の把握と分析をおこない，グローーバリゼーションのプロセス，日本社会と国際関係の現在の方向，さらに国の伝統とイデオロギー一般の変容について理解を深めるよう努める。

Why Be Concerned About Globalisation?

What is notable in Japanese globalisation *(gurôbarizêshon)* discourses and internationalisation *(kokusaika)* discourses is the slight concern or worry about the destruction of Japanese traditions and Japanese culture. However, we may note that as terms *kokusaika* and *gurôbarizêshon* are still usually perceived to have positive connotations in Japan. Sometimes these terms are used in a rather casual and superficial manner to describe deterministic types of changes in the world economic structure and their consequences in Japan. However, these terms are also often associated with an emerging "international era" and the switchover in thinking and consciousness *(kangaekata--ishiki no tenkan)* it requires. Often mentioned among the changes are the transition from irresponsibility to responsibility, from individualism to collectivism, from the worship of money to affluence, from belligerence to pacifism, etc.[1] In short, the changes in mentality required will lead beyond the excesses and frictions of the contemporary world and will save the world from such ills as nationalism and racism, the accompanying elements of globalisation. What is also interesting in the Japanese discourses is that the virtues mentioned in the brave new global system usually have a strong Japanese tint to them.

As for the dangers of the new eras, even the most outspoken supporters of globalisation in Japan are ready to admit the economic risks that the Japanese economy has to face when production and technology are transferred on a massive scale out of Japan. Many researchers in Japan point to the lessons learned in other industrialised countries, particularly the United States, about the "hollowing out" of their industrial base. The recipe to cope with this balancing act is said to be continuing technological progress (or supremacy) at home and retaining competitiveness. The result should then be the maintaining of the current type of distribution of labour in the world economy, particularly between Japan and its "followers" in Asia. Of course, most other Asian people are not too enthusiastic about that kind of globalisation. The Japanese companies in Asia and elsewhere usually still have a long way to go with their localisation *(genchika)* and in becoming truly accepted partners with due

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respect for local interests. The Japanese companies are all too often known to place the *keiretsu* concerns and long-term business relationships (which also are seen to be a guarantee of quality) above solidarity with their new foreign business partners and developing societies. In such matters as nurturing local parts and supplies networks and in hiring (and trusting) local managers, many Japanese companies have reinforced the perceptions in Asia that globalisation is simply a type of cooperation between unequals where the Japanese side makes no attempt to let the balance of power shift.[2] The unfortunate economic crisis that has plagued many Asian societies during the last year has made other Asian societies even more dependent on the cooperation of the Japanese companies and the government, regardless of the terms of that cooperation. For the Japanese companies it is always easy to say that their presence abroad in general has a positive economic and social impact. For the Japanese government it has also been easy to refer to the continuing economic recession or standstill in Japan and to the needs of Japan to give first priority to its own economy. The talk about the risks of "hollowing out" indeed has some credibility in some fields of the Japanese economy.

In Japanese discourses there tends to be little emphasis on the increasing inequality among different nations which could result from the globalisation processes. It seems that in Japan it is taken for granted that, whatever the results of the closer cooperation and deeper interdependencies are, at least Japan as a whole would be reasonably well off. However, Japan is in a fundamentally different kind of situation with the globalisation process than Western Europe or the United States. Asia, the region with one third of the world economy where the role of the locomotive of globalisation is left to Japan, is full of countries and people who are suspicious of any attempts to use globalisation as a tool of dominance or continued inequality in relations between countries (or even within countries). For instance, Indonesia has for a long time been among the top recipients of Japanese Official Development Assistance and the Japanese government has, undoubtedly, wanted to contribute to the stability and economic growth in East Asia by ignoring the issues of political repression and inequality in a large country which must be part of any Asian integration scheme if that scheme is to succeed. However, being too closely associated with the Suharto regime may easily turn to be politically costly. Over 40% of the Indonesian trade is with Japan and Japanese firms have some $20 billion invested in Indonesia.[3] In short, Japan is already closely involved in the economy and political developments of Indonesia. It has already become clear that the economic growth did not contribute much to the peaceful development of society in Indonesia. Unfortunately Indonesia is not the only society with similar problems of uneven development. Analysing globalisation or integration primarily as an economic phenomenon tends to neglect the whole question of the inequality or injustice of current world structure and its political consequences. Selling the project of globalisation to the East Asians who are suffering from the consequences of sudden market fluctuations and irregularities, is going to be tough. The economic crisis was combined with political failure to act from the part of domestic and foreign governments, and one cannot expect that there is too much trust left for the international cooperation. It is doubtful whether there is much gratitude for the massive financial assistance that Japanese taxpayers have given to their Asian neighbours.

It may also be pointed out that in contemporary Europe much of the globalisation discussion is related to the assumption that the nation-state itself is in the process of hollowing out. The European integration process is usually seen to have already surpassed the phase of simple economic internationalisation. It is commonly seen to be an attempt to overcome some of the problems caused by the nation state system, the very same system that was first created in Europe and to which is attributed much of the unconstructive rivalry and divisions that have plagued the history of that continent, especially in this century. Many in Europe hope that European integration will also bring with it some kind of divorce between the political unit and cultural identification. It was most fortunate that in the past, all major schemes to unify Europe politically, such as those of Charles V, Napoleon and Adolf Hitler, failed to reach their goal and allowed the development of political and cultural pluralism in Europe. Although political pluralism in Europe is likely to diminish (in the traditional meaning of the concept), it may still be replaced with a more culturally pluralist system once the cultures are freed from some of the excesses of national and nationalist interference.[4] In some respects the wider globalisation process and European integration may be contradictory but the general opinion in most European societies does not seem to pay too much attention

to this conflict and to the possible outcome of an even more Eurocentric EU Europe that would have considerable difficulty in dealing with the rest of the world and could even turn more arrogant in its external dealings. In Asia Pacific, on the contrary, there is no similar attempt to deepen regional integration that would pose a serious challenge to nation-states in the region. The APEC is no European Union and it remains unlikely that any Asian or Asian-Pacific block would in the near future follow the model of the European Union. It is no wonder that in Japan the whole question of the disappearance of the nation-state is not perceived to be among the most acute social issues. Therefore the Japanese community of social scientists seems to be content to maintain a more or less nation-state-bound perspective in their analysis of globalisation.

Much of the integration literature in English tends to be overwhelmingly dominated by discussions of European integration and European perspectives in general. The Asian and Asia Pacific economic and political cooperation is simply taking different forms than the European one and is proceeding with different conceptual schemes.[5] The European solution of rapid institutionalisation and zeal to excel in regulating everything with rules and directives can hardly serve as a tempting alternative for many other regions. Some researchers point out that the variety of regionalism that we find in Asia Pacific is "open" against the "inward-looking regionalism" of Europe and North America.[6] As a result, it seems that we have major problems finding appropriate common criteria to evaluate and analyse integration, regionalism, and globalisation in different parts of the world. Moreover, Linda Weiss points out that the myth of the powerless state is based to a large extent on the fact that the social scientists of the English-speaking world confront in their lives a reality where passive and ineffectual states become victims of external forces because of the weakness of political institutions with their weak capacities for domestic adjustment strategies.[7] From different national globalisation discourses we may indeed learn that both the talk about the state being weakened and about the global processes are culture bound and instead of one universal globalisation discourse we have already a variety of discourses which reflect different kinds of cultural and social situations. As for the question of state responses to international pressures, Weiss presents Japan, Germany, and Taiwan as examples of states which have maintained a robust capacity for guiding and coordinating economic change.[8] The current Japanese economy may be suffering from adjustment pains but Japanese society is not short of domestic institutions which can provide effective responses to international pressures. In this respect Japan is in a much better position to make necessary adjustments and, at the same time, go ahead with its own long term policies and models. Against this background it is understandable that in Japan there is a lack of talk about the demise of the nation-state, and even in the middle of current economic worries, the process of globalisation is not perceived as a cursed external force that will cast Japanese society and economy into the same mould with all the other countries.

For Japanese society the 1970s and 1980s were a time of rapidly growing and diversifying economy, and a time of unforeseen affluence. For the United States and much of Western Europe these were times of internationalisation of economy that directly challenged the national compromises that had been reached in the fields of labour and welfare. This new aggressive economic internationalisation found its source of ideological legitimacy in the governing philosophy of the Thatcher-Reagan hyper-liberal state.[9] From these times on internationalisation and globalisation began to be represented as a finality and inevitable, a course without any real alternatives.[10] In many societies the internationalisation of the state has been perceived to include an ideological attack against welfare society and social (and class) harmony. The globalisation can be seen as an ideology that in its lack of solidarity often comes close to Social Darwinism. This time the poor nations and disadvantaged people are seen to be among those unfortunate who are not able to share the benefits of globalisation. At the same time we have the ideology of globalism preaching the awareness of global issues and interdependence. In Japan the situation and perceptions are obviously different since the establishment of the Japanese-model welfare society largely took place in that very same period of time. In Japan the globalism served partly to justify wider international contribution in such fields as development assistance and UN peace keeping. The continuing economic recession, of course, will test the limits of social solidarity and social harmony, domestically as well as *vis a vis* the outside world. By international comparisons, the Japanese social safety network is still rather undeveloped. The rapidly

rising unemployment figures are creating a new situation where the state has to decide which priorities it has when it tries to deal with the economic crisis.

In addition to the general economic risks and threats of globalisation in Japan there are certainly some specific policies which are part of the processes of globalisation that are often identified as a threat to certain forms of Japanese culture. This is true, for instance, of the discussion of the GATT treaty, establishment of the World Trade Organisation and liberalisation of rice imports, and the threat these cause to the farming communities and to traditional forms of village culture.[11] The rather smooth adjustment of the Japanese rice-farming communities to the new agricultural policies in Japan has already demonstrated that the liberalisation of rice imports *per se* does not signify the end of traditional villages in Japan. The traditional farming communities are still changing rapidly but it is difficult to identify just one factor which serves as the motor of this social change. What remained characteristic for Japanese farming for centuries was that the land size of the average farm tended to be minuscule: in the early Meiji period 70% of farming households cultivated less than one *chô* (2.45 acres). The size of the area tilled by the average farming family did not increase substantially in the next decades. The old labour-intensive methods of farming were also effective in terms of maximising production per acre and did not inflict too heavy a burden on the environment. The new fertilisers, better seeds, double cropping, and other improvements had amazingly little impact on productivity. From the 1870s to 1920s the annual growth rate in agriculture was only about 1%.[12] Since farming could hardly provide an adequate income and because the economy kept diversifying and creating new opportunities, most farming families in Japan were quick to turn to other activities for additional income. In the 1930s such opportunities were provided by raising silkworms and by the home manufacturing of straw and bamboo. The cities increasingly offered work opportunities for industrial work as well as in the service sector. Although the terms of labour were often clearly exploitative in nature, most farmers had no alternative to "giving up" their traditional life styles. In regions where the economy did not diversify and the population continued to rise, the lack of an appropriate welfare safety net caused serious problems in years of crop failure. Occurrences of famine and near starvation existed as late as the 1930s.[13] After the war, and the following land reforms and subsequent long economic boom, farming families followed the pattern of taking advantage of new economic opportunities. The post-war years also witnessed a rapid growth of larger cities and the movement of the population to urban areas. The modern Japanese rural communities are increasingly diversifying their sources of income. For most farming people there is nothing romantic about farm work and the traditions of their community. One often even discovers open hostility toward everything old, especially if it is perceived to be an obstacle for "development".

Therefore, it would be safer to argue that modern urban Japanese life styles and values pose a far more dangerous challenge to the traditional villages than minor changes in global trade policies. However, most people in Japan seem to be quite confident that Japanese culture is vital enough to adjust to new realities and that new situations also create new opportunities for culture. This optimism is sometimes accompanied by a certain arrogance or indifference of the plight of those people who are seen to be fighting a losing battle against history. In fact, the division between the preservation of traditional life style and "development" in a form imitating development in larger cities has divided the opinions in many localities. In many development plans one has to decide whether economic affluence counts more than preservation of traditional life styles and environment. It seems that, politically, the utilitarian type of technocracy still has the upper hand in the development of most areas in Japan. "Conservatism" in the sense of conserving everything which has proven to be of worth has never quite made it in Japanese politics. However, the direction of the social change and development in Japan is not that clear. Many people feel that the Western modernisation paradigms have failed to satisfy many of the needs of the people. The visions that the different globalisation schemes tend to offer for the future are often all too unexciting and are perceived to be too removed from the needs and wishes of the people. The sluggish economy tends to reinforce ideas about the futility of all attempts to control the social development. On the other hand, there are increasingly voices for new kinds of social utopias, for making Japan radically different and better all other countries, and from the present society, as well. Some people, for instance, write about the future "gardening"

(teienka) of Japan-making Japan (once again) more like "garden islands" and a more suitable place for people to live.[14]

Much of the discussion about traditional culture *(dentô bunka)* in Japan has focused, either explicitly or implicitly, on Japanese higher culture and traditional aesthetic values. Such discourses as those of *sabi, wabi,* or *iki,* all fall under the category of *nihonjinron* discourses emphasising the uniqueness of the Japanese culture. For a person living in Miyazaki Prefecture, all the talk about common Japanese aesthetic values appears grossly exaggerated and misleading. In Miyazaki the local tastes in architecture, shopping, cultural services, and traditional artifacts bear little resemblance to the elitist *wabi* and *sabi* ideals. If the traditional high culture is set as the standard norm for Japanese culture, that would automatically exclude most Japanese people, subcultures, and regions. If the contemporary Japanese consumers prefer the Peter Rabbit pottery over *Kiyomizuyaki,* does it testify to the end of *wabi* or should the Peter Rabbit pottery be accommodated under the category of *wabi*? I would rather accept and analyse all the cultural phenomena as they are and without too many labels of national origin attached to them. In the end all such general concepts as the Western (or Asian) culture (or art) are simplistic or even misleading. While Japan does not easily fit into the largely Eurocentrist categories used in much of the Western scholarship, it does not automatically follow that Japan must be somehow a marginal society or even an anomaly?[15]

For a great many Japanese the *wabi* and *sabi* ideals are already so elitist that they can afford to remain outside this whole cultural realm. However, Japan does still have a real high culture, and it is the one which defines the worth of all individuals living within this culture. The culture and cultural traditions in modern societies are something which are continuously redefined and in many cases this is done by the national elites from the top down. Most people acquire much of their culture through (national) education which also limits their employability, social acceptability, dignity, and effective participation in society.[16] Although in Japan there is some flexibility in the rules of this game, national policies by and large set up the coordinates for the future development of "Japanese culture" and in this one should not underestimate the role of education policies and the cultural conformity it produces.

However, in recent years in Japan it has become an increasingly commonplace argument to point to the changing role of broadcasting and communications technology in the global society making culture a global commercial commodity. It has been argued that in this process Japanese culture is doing fairly well, especially in Asia. At least we could argue that in Japan there is no widespread belief in the inevitability of global cultural stardardisation.[17] In this context Japanese culture is usually defined to include everything originating from Japan and usually the emphasis has been on popular culture, such as popular music, *karaoke,* high-tech commodities, *tamagocchis,* video games, advertising, and animations. In most cases it is highly questionable what is Japanese or Japanese-like *(nihonteki/ nihonrashii)* in these phenomena. Most foreign users of Japanese consumer goods think little about the national origin of the goods they have bought. Is there something Japanese left when *Karaoke* is being exercised outside Japan? However, some of the exported as well as domestically consumed Japanese popular culture in its "Japaneseness" tries to use the old distorted images of Japan and becomes a tool of "self-orientalisation".[18] The revived interest in Japan in things "Japanese", especially in the youth culture, has created a phenomenon of *neo japonesuku* (neo-Japanesque) and the creation of *japonaiserie,* things in the style of Japan.[19] This kind of stylistic postmodern neo-nostalgia is openly using the worst clichés and exotic images of Western orientalism for its commercial ends.

After all, is the "borderless popular culture" *(mu-kokusekina popyurâbunka)* fundamentally all that new a phenomenon? Culture has always been quick to spread in all directions and constantly produce new modifications, combinations, and forms. With the heyday of nationalism it was part of the nationalist agenda in many countries to identify some cultural forms as a permanent part of "national culture". Some forms of culture witnessed a rapid rise in fame and popularity while others were largely ignored. The distinction made between high culture and other forms of culture often reflected the power and class relations within societies. However, the age of nationalism was also a period of migration and increasing cultural and economic contacts. For instance, imperialism has greatly influenced most societies of the world. Sometimes the deep cultural impact is commonly admitted and sometimes even partly appreciated as is the case with many Commonwealth and

Francophone countries. Sometimes the bitter experiences of colonialism make it difficult for the victims to admit this impact, as is the case with the strong Japanese cultural impact on Korea during the colonial period. Culture traveled with ease in the "age of borders" and we can safely expect that all attempts to make a more borderless world are creating even more advantageous circumstances for new cultural forms and hybrids.

In Japan, nationalism embodied in the defining of traditions has not become a cause of open political conflict. Instead of awakening the "traditionalists" to fight for preserving Japanese culture, when the brave new role of Japan in world politics and economy is presented, the discourse of internationalisation in Japan often has a nationalist echo in its tone. The Japanese type of conservative politics finds it easy to ride the tide of nationalism resulting from internationalisation, and it is doubtful whether closer contacts with peoples throughout the world have promoted cosmopolitan values in Japan. On the contrary, the problems which have accompanied actual cultural encounters have in some cases made people less interested in expanding contacts with the world outside. Barbara Mori says that it is most likely that the negative experiences that the *Urasenke* school of tea has had with some Western people are likely to lead to a downscaling of its activities in the West.[20] We have to remember that even in the beginning, the *Urasenke* ideology can hardly be described as based on cosmopolitan or international values. Combining the "traditional values of Japan" with an international agenda is a most difficult task and can easily result in dishonesty when asymmetrical relationships are created and nurtured.

How would we then distinguish the different forms of Japanese nationalism, patriotism, and respect for traditions? All these are ideological in their nature and are based on more or less widely shared social beliefs that are general, abstract, and context free, at least enough so to be categorised under these labels.[21] As for ideologies in general, I see them to cover not only belief systems but also to feature such phenomena as symbols, rituals and discourse.[22] In my opinion, in the Japanese case it is particularly advantageous to consider ideologies primarily as products of social practices, open to continuous reconstruction, redefinition, and change.[23] In most cases, people in Japan tend to believe that their Japan-related ideologies and beliefs are to a certain extent shared by their group(s) of people, and this group of people is seen in many cases to encompass all the Japanese people or their "mainstream".

As for my general theoretical approach, in my research I use an hermeneutical and interpretative approach to give and analyse meanings of such social phenomena as traditions, globalisation, nationalism, democracy, or social development and change. These concepts can hardly be said to be politically neutral or have commonly accepted definitions; on the contrary, they are continually being contested and reinterpreted. My focus being on the traditions of Japan, I analyse the transformations of Japanese traditions by trying to make sense of them in the wider context of the changes in the Japanese society and the world system. Since I do not believe in the existence of fixed traditions (not to speak of a Tradition with a capital T) that would somehow be removed from their social context and the prejudices of interpreters, my article does not attempt to have the last word about Japanese traditions and nationalism.

To demonstrate the issues involved in making sense of the nuances of Japanese nationalism I briefly discuss Japanese "patriotism". In Japanese language the term *aikokushin* which is usually perceived to be the best counterpart for English "patriotism" includes a very strong association with intimate human relations (as *ai* stands for love between human beings and *shin* for heart). The English word "patriotism" or the French *"patriotisme"* do also include the love of one's country (or fatherland), but more in the sense of passion or devotion which inspires one to serve one's country or ultimately sacrifice one's life for it.[24] Since few people in modern societies have nowadays any personal experience of defending their country by means of firearms, or perceive any burning need to sacrifice their life for their country, the whole idea of "patriotism" becomes somewhat obscure or anachronistic.[25] Some may reserve the word "patriotism" for the "good type of nationalism" (to distinguish it from nationalism, which usually is seen to be a very negative word). For some people nowadays the concept of "patriotism" is all too paternalistic or masculine. After all it does reflect the traditions of leaving the defending and ruling of the fatherland predominantly in the hands of males.

The Japanese term *aikokushin* is first of all overwhelmingly emotional. It reflects the socially accepted forms of expressing one's patriotic feelings in the most emotional ways.[26] In this respect one could even find similarities between the Japanese and Korean social patterns. Among the most frequently shown TV camera footage of the Nagano Olympics is the seemingly uncontrollable crying of ski jumper Harada Masahiko when he tries to explain his pressure to compete on his native soil and before the eyes of his fellow countrymen. At least in many European societies his behaviour would be interpreted to be immature, and against his modest success, all the more shameful. In Finnish the terms *"isänmaallisuus"* as well as the loan word *"patriotismi"* both have a somewhat grandiloquent aura. Finnish patriotism is a serious matter, both for those who are its most ardent supporters as well for those who do not think too much about it. To become openly emotional with one's patriotism would not be within "normal" behaviour. In fact, patriotism in Finland is so closely associated with war-time defense of one's own country that those who see themselves as true patriots would be likely to shun all men with recurrent tendencies to weeping. However, in Japan *aikokushin* is also associated with the defense of the fatherland, especially when there are any symbolic issues of national sovereignty at stake. This term has been much used by the nation builders of Japan since the Meiji period. Even the first national political party in Japan was given the name *Aikokusha* in 1875. Since then Pacific war ultranationalists have tried to hijack *aikokushin* for their political purposes. Among the most visible of the contemporary ultranationalist organisations is *Aikokutô*. Obviously for the ultranationalists, *aikokushin* is much about defending Japan against its external and internal enemies. Many of their activities in Japan are related to the intimidation of their "traitor" compatriots by aggressive rhetoric, often presented with megaphones, and by occasional resorts to violence or threat of violence. Any perceived weakness in front of foreigners can be interpreted by the ultranationalists as equivalent to treason. However, one would be safe to say that *aikokushin* as a term still enjoys fairly wide support and approval among Japanese people, and that the ultranationalists have failed to monopolise its use.

The Nagano Winter Olympics of 1998 provided a steady flow of demonstrations of how Japanese "traditions", nationalism, and noble global ideals are presented and made to coexist (which is true for many other high profile sport events and other events). What was new in these Olympics was that some of the Japanese gold medalists, such as ski jumper Funaki and free style skier Satoya, expressed modest and quite un-nationalistic opinions and attitudes, to the disappointment of those who wanted to use the whole games for nationalistic ends. In these Olympics the young Japanese sportsmen and sportswomen used far less nationalistic vocabulary than has been the case in the past. This also creates a clear contrast to the uncritical and one-sided nationalistic hymns of praise which still characterise much of the sports writing and news reporting related to the Olympics, in Japan and elsewhere. Nationalism, honesty, and global viewpoints are often hard to reconcile. Those elderly Japanese nationalistic sports leaders and others who viciously attacked the attitudes of young successful Japanese athletes simply reveal much about differences in the ways of thinking about the "nation" and what can be reasonably expected from a "representative" of a nation. Some of the Japanese sportspersons apparently thought that it should be quite enough to bring home a few Olympic golds, thus inviting the wrath of their ideologically purist sport leaders. For these elderly gentlemen, speaking in the name of the "nation", it is usually difficult to admit that the new generations do not necessarily share all of their values and that some of their ideas of appropriate behaviour or of "being Japanese" might soon become obsolete. Naturally no one has a monopoly over the definition or use of such ideologies as nationalism, globalism/cosmopolitanism, or individualism. Usually individuals end up with their own combination of these ideas. However, these combinations and their diversity do reflect social and even generational changes. Right now globalisation is a common catchword in Japan, and it is through actual social practices in daily life that it is given meaning, contested and accommodated with other ideas and phenomena.

Differences—whether between ethnic or cultural groups, sexes, or differences in behaviour or personality—can become a medium of conflict or hostility,[27] but can also be a medium for creating mutual understanding and lasting solutions to cope with social change and the new challenges of the changing global system. In fact, in contemporary Japan one may identify a gradual policy change in favour of an overall attempt to make international-isation take place from the inside *(uchi naru kokusaika)*. This internationalisation from the

inside essentially means accepting more diversity and multiculturalism in the society.[28] Under the pressures of globalisation it is difficult to opt for isolation and the cultivation of mythologised home traditions. As the local needs for different kinds of internationalisation are bound to differ in various parts of Japan, it is most likely that the essence of Japanese internationalisation will grow to become even more diverse in its nature.[29] Since "internationalisation from the inside" takes place on individual and group levels as well as on organisational/structural levels and policy levels, it is a far more fundamental phenomenon than simple adjustments in economic policies or foreign policy.[30] One should still remain optimistic: in the case of Japan, a more traditional answer in the longer term would be to cope with diversity rather than trying to extinguish it.

The Discourse of Globalisation and Its Limitations

The larger interdependence and incorporation of societies into the global community have already changed the system and the processes of globalisation and are challenging even the most fundamental aspects of Japanese international relations and political life. Some are using the term "being adrift" *(hyôryû suru)* to describe the current state of Japan-U.S. relations.[31] Naturally it is not only the Japan-U.S. relations which are adrift, the state of fluidity has begun to characterise even those areas of Japanese politics that used to be regarded as parts of the unchanging landscape, and the dogmas and paradigms which have dominated political science. Unlike during the Cold War years, we are not dealing with a political system of divisions affecting the world from the top down. Instead we have a number of processes transforming all the former actors to something unforeseen–with local and regional variations turning up.[32] In fact, the whole idea of seeing the systemic changes which affect societies from top down is rather dogmatic and simplistic. As Sakamoto Yoshikazu points out, the changes that brought down the Cold War system in most cases had their native born *(dochakusei)* roots.[33] However, these regional and local developments together have contributed to major systemic changes, and in the absence of better terminology we may well call the contemporary phase as an era of globalisation, to emphasise the global reach of the ongoing processes and developments.

As for the general globalisation discourses, which have become a part of social sciences in most so-called Western societies, the future direction of the world system cannot be understood simply as a projection of some narrowly defined Western concerns onto the global level, such as the projections behind the "universal modernisation models" usually are. A more balanced analysis would require research on all societies involved in the process. Here I analyse the relevance of "globalisation" and "internationalisation" to Japanese international relations, and already from the beginning we notice that the whole discourse in Japan rises from a social and historical context, which is far from being universal in its nature. Naturally the Japanese cannot alone determine the future of the global system, but whatever the result of this process may be, the Japanese contribution will be significant. The diversity or complexity of the Japanese discourse may also suggest that this could be the situation in many other societies, as well.

Looking from outside, the aspect of the Japanese globalisation process that would fall under analysis, tends to be at the level of nation-state and official decision-makers. Even on this easily definable level the aims and priorities of Japanese globalisation policies seem to remain unclear to most observers: for Japanese decision-makers it is difficult to give full support to any existing Asian-Pacific schemes, such as APEC, which aim at establishing some kind of regional subsystem for the global system. It is, indeed, most difficult to find viable political solutions for pursuing globalism and Asia-Pacific regionalism at the same time.[34] In Japanese discourses there is at least a genuine concern for the ideal of a new truly global international society *(gurôbaruna kokusai shakai)*.[35] However, among researchers there seems to be lot of uncertainty as to whether the globalist policies that the Japanese government is pursuing are aimed at a true globalisation where Japan would be interacting as an increasingly open economy with the rest of the world and especially with its Asian neighbours, and also helping other countries by providing aid and investment. Some also argue that Japanese globalisation policies are turning Asian-Pacific countries into something of a second Co-Prosperity sphere, a more mutually beneficial one, or one where other countries become increasingly dependent on Japan and the Japanese economy. Still there are

some who argue that Japan is simply using aid and investment to increase the competitive position of Japanese companies in other parts of the world, and that other policies also tend to be subordinate to this goal.[36] Many of the high-profile Japanese political actors have, indeed, reinforced these ideas with their rather narrow statements of the need for Japan to adjust to the age of globalisation. For instance, Prime Minister Hashimoto Ryûtarô in his book *Bijon obu japan–waga kyôchû ni seisaku arite* explains the reasons for new Japanese policies in the Asia-Pacific region almost exclusively in economic terms, making it appear as if Japan is simply reacting to the changes in the world economic and political systems.[37]   However, when interpreting the texts or speeches of politicians, one always has to remember that all the texts are created for some specific political need and that the books published by top Japanese politicians can hardly reflect the rationale behind official Japanese policies. Hashimoto, in particular, has proved himself capable of picking up new issues and viewpoints in a most pragmatic manner, without sticking to his old definitions or concepts.

Japanese Roles in Asia

When it comes to the big decisions about the future Japanese role in Asia and the world, we find that Japan is in the middle of competitive projects and expectations as to how to reshape relations around the regional identities of "East Asia" and "Asia Pacific", without committing itself to go either way. However, the future of Japanese globalisation and internationalisation is very closely related to the choice which is made between these two models (or their combinations). Furthermore, in Japan there is also uneasiness about the possibilities of Japan playing a greater political and military role in Asia. The twin brakes of Japanese militarisation and militarism, anti-military,public opinion at home, and the fear of the revival of Japanese militarism in East Asia are still present, although both are being reinterpreted in a new historical context.[38] In most Asian countries the history of Japanese colonialism (and the problems in dealing with the issue of responsibility) as well as the Japanese military relations which place Japan tightly within the American global defense strategies make it problematic to go ahead rapidly with even national level cooperation. The difficulties experienced with the lessening of the military burden and tension in Okinawa as well as the sensitivity of China toward the revision of the so-called military guidelines of Japanese-American cooperation both demonstrate how there still are sensitive issues to be resolved in Japanese-Asian (and American) relations.[39]

Whatever Japan decides to do for a more visible role in Asia will take place gradually and cautiously, and without much public enthusiasm. In Japan, the images of Asian countries often still tend to represent the worst kind of stereotypes, such as poor, dirty, and lack of freedom.[40] In Japan one also hears voices discussing or questioning whether economic cooperation with Asian countries and the "borderless economy" are such good ideas, and what should be the selfish national interest of Japan.[41] One may wonder whether any real and mutually beneficial cooperation or integration could take place if the motives from the beginning are openly selfish. In the case of Sino-Japanese relations, the attitudes on both sides toward the relationship have been ambivalent since 1972: there has been an apparent economical complementarity and both governments have identified strong political motives for maintaining growing relations,[42] but in spite all of this, on both sides there seems to be a deep lack of understanding of the motives of the other party. One also has to remember that most versions of Chinese and Korean nationalism tend to use anti-Japanese sentiments and feelings as one of their basic elements and that reconstructing a new image for Japan would also require changing the national self-image. Historically, Asia has been the most problematic part of the world to place in the Japanese map of international environment and international society. Similarly, Japanese neighbours find problems relocating contemporary Japan on their intellectual maps.[43] However, in spite of all the obstacles it is likely that the "softer" forms of Japanese presence in Asia and vice versa will gradually grow, but on the traditional political level too much activism and talk about national interests could easily turn out to be counterproductive.

To make things more complicated, in this time when globalisation directly challenges national governments and new forms of international relations and transactions are spreading out in Asia, national governments may find it difficult to control foreign policies and developments in international relations. Incidents, such as trade disputes, the Senkaku Islands

dispute, or disapproval of human rights abuses or environmental destruction in other countries can be symptomatic of the age of globalisation with its greater participation of wider interest groups and viewpoints. Even if the Chinese and Taiwanese authorities want to avoid Japan-bashing being used as a channel of expressing nationalist sentiments, they may be unable to control this if the emerging Chinese nationalist and other movements do not find more constructive ways to express their ideas. In the era of globalisation and more open participation, there is an obvious risk that Sino-Japanese relations will continue to be plagued by old prejudices.

From the point of view of Japanese foreign policy, it was only with the changes in the relationships between the U.S., Russia, and the Western European countries, that the foreign policy paradigms of Japan started to change to give Asia and the Asia-Pacific region a much more important role in Japanese foreign policy and diplomacy.[44] Japanese diplomacy is still characterised by being rather reactionary in its nature, and cautious in making too many commitments. While gradually shifting the focus of Japanese diplomacy toward the rest of Asia, it has remained clear that given the global reach of Japanese economic and other interests, it is most unlikely that Japan will push for any kind of exclusive economic or political zone in Asia.[45] However, regional multilateral and bilateral cooperation and ODA activities have provided ample tools to stress new priorities and contribute to a better future in most Asian societies;[46] nowadays at least the volume of Japanese ODA is so large that it will have visible effects and is bound to be noticed in most of the recipient societies. Even if Japanese ODA has not been able to win wide gratitude for the Japanese in the developing world, at least it has brought a new type of acceptability for Japan within the Asian community.

The sheer magnitude of Japanese economic and political presence in Asia and the other parts of world has changed the world power relations, no matter how "soft" these forms of power may be.[47] However, when it comes to the more constructive global and regional role for Japan in the future world, much of the discussion in Japan has too often been overshadowed by the rather narrow domestic concerns related to these issues. Ronald Dore points out that in the early 1990s it was the nationalists, preoccupied with power and prestige, who were the most vocal supporters of high-profile Japanese participation in the building of a United Nations-based security system and many of the people most prone to have internationalist ideas were so fixated on defense of the Peace Constitution that they saw embarking on peacekeeping as yet one more concession to American attempts to subvert it.[48] Many Western researchers are quick to point out in these days that without a perception of common threat, there is more scope for Japan and the United States to pursue security policies independently of each other.[49] As for the United Nations it seems like virtually no one in Japan is in favour of so called "super-Scandinavian" option (term taken from Dore)— making Japan the champion of the UN. Therefore it seems likely that much of the future regional policies of Japan will continue to be rather conservative and cautious, and largely confined to bilateral relations between nation-states. In addition we have the sub-regional level where the collapse of the Cold War system has created more room for new alternative ways to link countries and national regions across boundaries. However, even at the sub-regional level the legacy of Japanese imperialism tends to cast a shadow over most attempts to deepen relationships with its neighbours (which of course would make the best candidates for sub-regional partners).[50] The great disparities in wealth between Japan and the other East Asian countries easily make all sub-regional links appear rather asymmetrical in their nature.

The Nature of Japanese Globalisation Policies

Especially when seen from the outside, Japanese globalisation policies and attempts are largely perceived to be limited to the field of economic policies. Most observers seem to distrust too open a commitment to solving global issues and working for a more stable world system, and a more stable Asian subsystem. All too often the attitudes of distrust are based on prejudices or on distorted ideas and partial knowledge. If the Japanese attempts to globalise are interpreted mostly on the basis of selective reading of Japanese history or the narrow ideas which characterise the statements produced by Japanese official decision-makers, it is no wonder that Japanese globalisation and its multiple effects remain rather "foreign" and unconvincing for its disbelievers.

        The perceptions of Otherness are automatically part of all "globalisation" and
"internationalisation" discourses. Becoming "global" or "international" requires changes
which will have an impact in all areas of life, and in the re-evaluation and contrasting of the
previous practices. If we interpret the Japanese processes of globalisation from within, the
whole issue becomes much more complex than the narrow foreign discourses on the Japanese
policies of globalisation usually suggest. However, in Japanese discourses the "Going global"
catchwords are most often used to describe the direction in which the Japanese economy is
heading. Many observers are quick to add that any deeper globalisation would require Japan
to become far more actively involved in global issues and activities, not only economic ones
but also political and cultural ones. It seems that the "internationalisation" *(kokusaika)*
discourse for many people in Japan has become associated with superficial Westernisation or
Americanisation of Japan, and there is an awareness that one must go beyond this stage in
order to become truly international.[51] The classical type of Japanese "internationalisation"
could easily be continued as a simple extension of the policies started by the Meiji
government to adopt those parts of Western culture, science, and technology which were
perceived to be suitable for the development of Japanese society or which were readily
available. A new idealised image of the West *(Ôbei*, literally: Europe and the United States)
was created in Japan and this concept started to live its own life. In the Meiji period it was
generally perceived in Japan that all the countries of Europe with the addition of the United
States already shared a common model image of modernity.[52] The concept of *"Ôbei"* is still
much used in Japan, often as a contrast to Japan. Of course, the lumping together of all of
Europe and the United States makes little sense and is most of the time misleading.
        However, in Japan, most social institutions and traditions have already been deeply
influenced by influences received from abroad. In fact, the whole concept of thinking
mechanically in terms of where the influences originated is just a way to define whether
some particular phenomenon is truly orthodox/ pure/ indigenous. Many of the fields which
are most commonly identified to be the most traditional parts of Japanese culture, such as
cuisine[53] or the arts, are at the same time fields where the ingenuity and propensity to
combine ideas from all directions has been the greatest. Since the contemporary Japanese live
in a world where they get influences and ideas from most parts of the globe, it is a rather
futile attempt to treat Japanese traditions as fundamentally distinct from other traditions of
the world. Since most traditions have experienced radical changes and transformations during
their existence, their continuity, the very property which makes them traditions, can in many
cases be questioned. Most Japanese traditions have already lived in close symbiotic
relationship with the rest of the traditions of the world and have shown great ability as well to
adapt to new circumstances or even to experience a resurrection.
        One of the best examples to demonstrate these properties of many Japanese traditions
is to point to the Japanese imperial institution. In my opinion, this institution has been
particularly adept at adapting to new political and social needs, and at taking influences from
many other traditions and institutions. The imperial institution, of course, has also been in the
unfortunate situation of often being used for political purposes. In addition to this, there have
been endless numbers of attempts to theorise about the nature and essence of this institution.
Even such famous philosophers including Nishida Kitarô have shown astonishing blindness
when projecting their own ideals of peace, culture, and harmony on the imperial institution
while claiming to avoid all subjectivising (and praising the value of objectivism).[54]
        However, when we discuss internationalisation and Japanese traditions, it is
appropriate to point out that in terms of regions and population at large, internationalisation
has not proceeded evenly in all parts of Japan. Overall rather successful internationalisation
in Japan has been achieved because of the rather small number of Japanese elite who have
seen the trouble of getting first-hand knowledge of the outside world and who in many cases
have made their international experiences serve their personal professional interests.
However, the need for internationalised persons in Japan has been rather limited, and it is still
fairly common that people with no fluency in any foreign languages or with no direct
experience of foreign countries make it to the top of the Japanese elite. However, some
individuals have been able to turn their experience of foreign countries to their advantage and
the idea of becoming an international person or doing anything with the world outside Japan
has some kind of strange perception and images of elitism associated with it. Because
"kokusaika" is perceived to be a vehicle of social mobility for an envied and often distrusted

minority, for a large number of Japanese who feel rather uncomfortable with the idea of having anything to do directly with the world outside Japan, *"kokusaika"* signifies social changes which are seen to be unavoidable as the political and economic elite is clearly seen to push forward with them, and social transformation has the clear potential to divide the Japanese people into a small privileged internationalised minority and a much larger majority which feels it does not understand the intersubjective rules of behaviour anymore.

Every new elitist discourse and *katakana* word erodes the basis of the old semantic world of mythologised traditional Japan. The new internationalist discourses take place most often in the so-called Tôkyô-based standardised language, *hyôjungo*. Instead of the old type of distinction between the various Japanese dialects we are entering a time when the language used by the Tôkyô media and academics becomes more and more unintelligible to the majority of Japanese people living in parts of Japan other than the biggest cities of Kantô and Kansai. Already now in Miyazaki Prefecture it is not that common to find people who read national newspapers and in a relatively large city one has to order most Japanese academic books from larger cities. The more serious Tôkyô-based periodicals or magazines, such as the *SEKAI* or the *AERA* are available only sporadically and in just a few places. Most of the Kantô TV stations remain out of the reach of people in these kinds of regions. However, even academic people seem to miss very little by being outside the sphere of influence of the Tôkyô elites. Of course, many people find annoying the cultural imperialism and insensitivity of the Tôkyô elite when they are faced with it, for example, when they watch the NHK television news which has a tendency to overreact with news concerning the Kantô region and ignore the rest of country.

Any talk of Japanese cultural homogeneity is out of touch with the reality and the actual differences in contemporary Japan, regional as well as those of life style and thinking.[55] As for future changes, any deeper "internationalisation" among the distant Japanese elites obviously would increase their distance from such people as the people of Miyazaki. It is very unlikely that the influences would simply be adopted in Japan from the top down, from the cultural centres to peripheries, as the Tôkyô elites often seem to believe. If most Miyazaki people find little use for the national newspapers today, why would they suddenly start reading them? The resistance to *"kokusaika"* takes place in daily life. It is like people who do not understand the meanings of the *katakana* words: they simply turn them into something which makes sense to them or ignore them. Much of the *kokusaika* discourse apparently is of little interest for many people in many parts of Japan. This does not necessarily mean that there is no internationalisation taking place in the so-called peripheries of Japan. Quite the contrary, in smaller cities even a smaller foreign presence can make a more profound impact than in places like Tôkyô where "internationalisation" already has a long history. The Japanese policies of activating local level administration and local government *(chihô bunken)* are opening new windows of opportunity for local level direct relations with the outside world. In many cases this development reflects the diversification of economic links of these areas and especially the growing links with neighbouring Asian countries. Many prefectures, cities, and universities have rapidly strengthened their international profile and are gradually creating quite new solutions of "internationalisation"– ones that can be radically different from the central government type of Tôkyô-centered "internationalisation".

The Construction of Traditions

To return to the general issue of the construction of traditions, I will continue to discuss traditions and their intricate relationship with their social context. What is often accepted or presented as "tradition" is myth.[56] This, however, does not make the fact empty that the continuation of society and culture is largely built on the existence of traditions. Tradition can be understood as a transmission of ideas or modes of action through an inherited pattern of thought and practice associated with some fairly well-defined activity and realm of discourse. Doing so we refer to a situation where knowledge, beliefs and customs are passed to the next generations, bound together with a body of long-established and generally accepted and authoritative forms of thought and behaviour.[57] In short, all the traditions have their roots in the common life and experiences of a certain community. However, this statement leaves us on a rather general level: how can we say anything

analytical about the Japanese traditions concerning such diverse aspects of culture as the Japanese traditional arts or the Japanese political traditions ranging from the emperor system *(tennôsei)* to Japanese-style democracy *(nihongata minshushugi)*.

Some critical commentators admit that they find it difficult to even talk about something as vague as the Japanese (sense of) traditional beauty.[58] As the human mind can containing wide cultural variety can at its best achieve something like a distorted preunderstanding,[59] we should maintain a critical attitude towards the existence of any particular "traditions", especially when "tradition" is used as a tool by historians of thought or by social scientists to reveal some more or less hidden "tradition" which only the "chosen people", usually a particular school of researchers, are able to identify. Once the "traditions" are canonised or "mythologised" they usually start to live their own life, being open to reinterpretations and "rediscoverings".[60]It is also clear that researchers as interpreters always stand within "traditions". To stand within a tradition does not limit the freedom of knowledge but makes it possible.[61] It may also be added that politics as a particular field of human life is also within the scope of hermeneutics, coming out of cultural tradition and being part of the understandable world where we live—a world that is. In fact cultural tradition is a realm of human understanding which is particularly interesting for hermeneutic work.[62]

For a researcher interested in a hermeneutical method, it is natural to treat language as an inseparable and significant part of social context. A certain kind of "linguistic community" is formed among all the people who share the same language and the social conventions of its use. However, Tanaka Katsuhiko shows how the *gengo kyôdôtai*, usually translated by *communauté linguistique* or *communauté de linguistique* (in French) or *Sprachgemeinshaft* (in German) as a concept already has a quite different meaning in different languages.[63] This example shows already how difficult it is even to find tools to deal with several different languages. As for Japanese ideas of tradition, we may generalise that the very idea of Japanese traditions *(nihon no dentô)* is located in a semantic field shared by the users of the Japanese language, and those changes which have an impact on the language itself.

Traditions and cultures never exist apart from other traditions and cultures. For the culture[64] of humankind and for its future, it is significant that–to a certain degree–parallel evolution of the "modern societies", the increased ease of human mobility, and the increase in all types of transnational and transcultural transactions, all together make cultural influences reach all parts of the world pushing these cultural influences to coexist and adjust.[65] A wider awareness of the cultural interdependence of humankind could already be counted as progress. The present members of humankind are not witnessing anything like the "end of history"; the world is full of thriving cultures and ideological constructions, all in a continuous state of flux. The "modification" or disappearance of the nation-states or some "political units" may also take place gradually and peacefully and does not constitute any loss to humankind. Cultures cannot be stored in museums to keep their purity untouched.[66]

All concepts are products of their social context and subject to social change. The whole concept of "nationality" (or *kokuseki* in Japanese, becoming close to the idea of national citizenship) is in modern societies becoming increasingly a bureaucratic labelling and measuring tool. In some cases, as in the European Union, it may even end up becoming more or less obsolete if the "residency" becomes the decisive factor in most aspects affecting the life of people. Originally "nation" (Latin *"natio"*) derives from the Latin word *"nascor"* (I am born)–indicating a (non-Roman) tribe or group of people who had the same ancestors. Only from the eighteenth century, especially in France and Britain, did "nation" become identified with "state", although the original meaning of the word "nation" was kept alive and even extended to cover all such characteristics as a common language, common origins, common traditions, and common history.[67] In Japan the modern ideas about state, nationality, and citizenship were largely adopted from Europe and the United States in the Meiji period. It seems in the Japanese case that nation and state are often used interchangeably, as the words *kokka* and *kuni* can mean both, depending on the context. The Japanese language has retained some of the meanings developed during the pre-Meiji period when people thought primarily in terms of their native *daimyô* domain or *han* (or even smaller units) than the whole nation. The expression *"kuni e kaeru"* refers to returning to one's hometown.

Such central concepts of Japanese political science as *"kokka"*, *"kuni"*, and *"kokumin"* remain extremely controversial and carry with them the whole history of a nation (while much of the history writing has been happy to render its services to the state).[68] Saitô Takashi

analyses the concepts of *minzoku* and *kokumin* and notes that the Japanese concept of *minzoku* refers to ethnic group, with shared language and culture. However, the English concept of "nation state" is usually translated as *"minzoku kokka"*. In Japanese the term *"kokumin"* is used in reference to people in the context of political participation in society or as citizens but for some reason *"minzoku kokka"* has been established as the translation for "nation state".[69] As a consequence, the concept "nation state" in the sense it is used in most European languages is widely misinterpreted in Japan. In translations of any Japanese texts into languages which lack good translations for *"minzoku kokka"* it is most difficult to find good counterparts, as for instance the English "nation state" would often not be an appropriate term. In short, the difference between *"minzoku kokka"* and *"kokka"*, and on the other hand between "nation state" and "state", are very different. Many of those Japanese who are worried about the weakness of *"kokka"* and Japanese national policies are not so worried about *"minzoku kokka"* as they represent such different things. It may also be noted that the concept of "democracy" with its translation *"minshushugi"* cannot be separated from the connotations of the word "people" *("min-")*.

In modern Japanese the term *kokuseki* is merely a legal term distinguishing one national citizenship from others. To talk about "ethnicity" one usually needs to use the loan word *"esunishiti"*. One may notice that the bureaucratic use of the "nationality" concept is what counts in the end for most individuals. For instance, the "nationality" *("natsionalost")* in the Soviet Union documents provided the basis for persecution and discrimination of all non-Russians. For the Georgians or Estonians it may be difficult to convey how "innocent" are the meanings the English language reserves for "nationality". [70]

To point out one more semantic field related to the construction of traditions, I want to bring up the issue of meanings given in Japan to "modern" as the counterpart of "traditional". It may be noted that in the context of Japanese society, when writing in English, the use of the term "modern" sometimes needs to be reinterpreted by those who have been used to think in terms of associating "modern" with Western cultural hegemony and by seeing all "modern": "modern man", "modern science", "modern life", or "modern industrial society" against the "traditional" defined on the basis of historical experience (and history writing) of the "West".[71] In Japan the emergence of "modern society" *(gendai shakai)* is not equated with the process of "Westernisation", but the *"gendai"* is rather seen as the conceptual opposite to the "tradition" *(dentô)* largely defined on the basis of the Japanese cultural past. It should also be noted that in Japanese the term *"kindaika"* refers to that particular process of "modernisation" which changed the "traditional society" of the *Edo* period to the "modern society" with all its complexities. The "modernisation" behind the term *"gendaika"* is not so clearly defined in its historical context, and the process of *"gendaika"* is still proceeding in Japan as in many other societies. What these terms reveal is that the "modernisation" in Japan is usually not seen to be associated with adopting the notions of Western cultural hegemony or superiority. The Japanese "tradition", considered to be more or less unique, also has its place in the "modern world" coexisting and even prospering with other "traditions".[72] It may be assumed that the unique and elusive nature of Japanese traditions is seen to make it resistant to the global forces of cultural unification and standardisation.

The Revision of "Traditions"

The ongoing discussion on the manipulation and censorship of Japanese history, symbolised by the legal battle of Professor Ienaga Saburô, tells about the openly political nature of the battle of controlling and defining the past. In this case as well as many other cases involving the ways that the state in Japan has interfered with the rights and freedoms of individuals ranging from religion to openly political issues, the court has served as a public forum to raise new social issues and criticise the government and insensitive politicians and bureaucrats.[73] Indeed, there could be more balanced, critical, and analytical discussion of war histories and other histories in most countries. The case of Japanese military history is rather untypical because the discussion about Japanese militarism in its former enemy countries, which make up quite a group of countries, is too often used for nation building purposes and for other nationalistic ends. The rest of Japanese history is left for the foremost, to the Japanese people themselves to make sense of and use for contemporary needs. Even such

fields as archaeology are not free from politics and nationalism. In Japan anything connected with the imperial family is sensitive since it has to deal directly with the myths of the origins of Japanese state and because this is the field where several pre-war archaeologists run into deep trouble with the authorities. However, with the *Nihonjinron* discourse becoming all the more sophisticated, the issue of the origins of Japanese people and the Japanese culture has become far more important.[74] It is obvious that all such theories about the Japanese past as those about the large-scale migration (during the *Yayoi* period) or the theories linking the modern Ainu and the *Jômon* period, or the modern Japanese and the *Yayoi* people, have far-reaching political consequences.[75]

We may argue that the collective memory is a matter of order and legitimacy, as P.W. Preston points out. The national past is an official public memory of the past of a collectivity which serves the concerns of the elite.[76] As a result, Japanese war history has became a part of national histories and mythologies of many other countries and even some people who themselves did not experience the war seem to think in terms of wartime anti-Japanese propaganda. The similarly uncritical attitudes and blatant forms of ethnocentrism typical to some older generation Japanese ultra-nationalists have not helped the situation: the existence of a small minority of stubborn militarists and imperialists has contributed to the longevity of many rather outdated images of Japanese people.

The correction or revision of outdated perceptions in national discourses is a most difficult task, even if it is attempted as a conscious effort. All the changes in wider discourses seem to take place only gradually, new content and images bringing new material to be re-interpreted against the background of former knowledge. The national discourses creating the "imagined communities" are in modern industrialised societies increasingly dominated by small elites controlling the media and publishing. This is also the picture which is shown to those observers who want to send fresh information on Japanese society to outside audiences. However, the 125 million Japanese individuals have diverse life-styles and live in communities with rich and diverse local traditions. It is virtually impossible to be well-informed about all the subdiscourses of Japanese society and the variety of viewpoints that would make a really balanced wider interpretation possible.

Social change keeps transforming all Japanese communities. However, the development is uneven and unequal, and so was the starting point. Some trends may connect all the people, but many changes never reach all of the population and the changes may also be quite superficial in their effect. In general, Japan has become an affluent society compared to the situation a few decades ago, and it is no wonder that the ideas of affluence and materialism have become a permanent part of Japanese discourses on changing Japanese "identity".[77] However, something as vague as "affluence" can hardly be used to create any deeper sense of national identity, although it can be used to distinguish the affluent countries from the less affluent and advanced ones. The self-identity of people does indeed reflect the common background as well as shared experiences of social changes around us. In this respect, the problem with all the nations and their national identities is that the individuals do not share all their experiences with all their countrymen. In the end, the common experiences and shared characteristics may end up being categorised as "models" for good or bad. Behind these models we may identify policies or programmes which have been carried out in these societies and which have become part of the political landscape of the communities. The outside world then becomes interpreted against the understanding of the phenomena of one's own environment and society. Japanese-style democracy *(nihongata minshushugi)* or Japanese-style welfare society *(nihongata fukushishakai)* can be seen as examples of how particular policies become identified as national solutions to issues which may be perceived to be essentially universal or global in their nature.

Once the people themselves identify with the certain "traditions" or "images" they often find it difficult to accept the social change and social phenomena which makes these "self-images" appear obsolete. The continuing discussion in Japan about the punishment of juvenile delinquents, in the light of the Kôbe murder case involving a 14-year-old murder suspect and the knife attacks and murders in schools, has brought up various social issues which reflect the popular astonishment that the society and people themselves, especially the younger generations, must have changed because these kinds of things continue to happen in Japan. Now the whole juvenile law *(shônenhô)* is being questioned because it does not seem to be able to help juvenile delinquents and because the new stereotypes of juvenile

delinquents are very far from the images that people used to have about Japanese children and the psyche of misbehaving children.[78] If the misbehaving children are seen to be beyond corrective measures, society, in the form of tougher laws from the parliament, takes one more step away from its respect of traditions of harmony. If it is the children who are seen to lack traditional values, these values must have a bleak future ahead of them. It is far from clear where the "new" values then come from. It is common in most societies to see that foreign corruptive influences (or even global changes/threats) are somehow changing the good old social values to something less desirable. However, most societies, including Japan, already have their indigenous traditions of violence and crime, among others, and one could easily recognise some "traditional" aspects in the most bizarre of the current juvenile crimes. If we want to caution school children from the casual violent use of knives and sharpened objects, most Kabuki dramas can hardly be recommended for them.

To conclude, one may argue that all traditions and values are constantly being reinterpreted, models and solutions come and go, but people and societies remain. It is the Japanese people who by their social practices and daily choices carry on the "Japanese traditions". There seems to be no escape from the fact that "globalisation" and internationalisation in their diverse forms continue to shape the Japanese society as part of all the societies of world. In Japan, globalisation is usually not perceived to be a paragon of global doom or the beginning of national ruin. It also seems that the possible extent of the implications of globalisation has still escaped the eye of many of the proponents of globalisation in Japan. For many, the whole question of the "withering away" of the Japanese state is still a rather theoretical or secondary issue. As a stark contrast to contemporary Europe, Japan is definitely not going to get rid of the yen in the near future and all the attempts to policy coordination and the deepening of regional cooperation and the future integration of Asia-Pacific are still rather preliminary in their nature, all this being reflected in the globalisation and internationalisation discourses in Japan.

Notes

[1]Cf. Ie (1993), pp. 37-38.

[2]Cf. Hatch and Yamamura (1996), pp. 18-19, 158-171.

[3]Calder (1998), p. 8.

[4]Cf. Gellner (1993), p. 30.

[5]Cf. Korhonen (1998), p. 1.

[6]See e.g. Hook (1996b), p. 13.

[7]Weiss (1998), especially p. 3

[8]Weiss (1998), Chapter 3, pp. 41-82, deals with the issue of transformative capacity of the East Asian developmental states–Japan, South Korea and Taiwan in particular. Weiss concludes that in all these East Asian countries state involvement continues to be important and useful.

[9]Cf. Cox (1987), pp. 259, 282-283, 289.

[10]Cf. Cox (1997), p. 23.

[11]See e.g. Sekai 7/1994, pp. 121-184, where a whole range of different researchers and representatives of people are interviewed on this issue.

[12]Hane (1982), pp. 29-31.

[13]See e.g. Ibid, pp. 114-136.

[14]Kawakatsu (1998), pp. 20-31.

[15]In parts of the Japanese *nihonjinron* discourse it has sometimes been pointed out that Japan is not Asiatic, neither West European *(ajiateki de nai ga kesshite seiô de wa nai)*, and, therefore must be a somehow marginal society *(genkai shakai)*. Ikei (1996), p. 185.

[16]Cf. Gellner (1996), p. 107.

[17]Much of the talk about globalisation of culture and cultural tastes is based on rather distorted interpretation of the superficially global reach of some forms of American popular culture. However, the version of "multiculturalism" represented by the American movies or

popular culture in general can hardly reflect the cultural diversity of the world. Even if many Japanese like to watch American movies it does not necessarily imply that these movies would radically change their value systems. While the Anglo-American cultural products are sometimes modified to appeal to the international audience, the product itself retains the hallmarks of its origins. Cf. Street (1997), pp. 79-83.

[18]See e.g. Iwabuchi (1998), pp. 69-81.

[19]Cf. Currid (1996), pp. 79-80.

[20]Mori (1997)

[21]Cf. van Dijk (1998), pp. 31-32.

[22]Cf. Ibid, p. 26.

[23]I would particularly like to keep clear distance from the rather mechanistic and positivistic research on ideologies done by the methods of cognitive psychology, although I admit that sometimes the surveys and opinion polls done on people's ideas and ideologies can provide a fertile ground for further analysis and interpretation.

[24]http://work.ucsd.edu:5141/cgi-bin/http_webster?isindex=patriotism gives the following definition from *Webster's Dictionary* "Patriotism: Love of country; devotion to the welfare of one's country; the virtues and actions of a patriot; the passion which inspires one to serve one's country". and "Love of country and willingness to sacrifice for it" [syn: {nationalism}].

[25]Of course, this applies only to those societies which have enjoyed long period of peace and stability. Countries and people with fresh memories of conventional warfare may still have very traditional ideas about patriotism. Japan, on the contrary, has under her Peace Constitution created a tradition of "critical thinking" when it comes to war, weapons and (war) heroes. In some respects this reminds me of the attitudes in many smaller European countries. For many Japanese and Europeans the most likely situation to encounter traditional patriotic values and behaviour would be in the Hollywood action movies. Although many of the post-Vietnam war movies have a highly critical attitude of the American armed forces, a great many uncritical movies are still made and distributed. The brutish heroes of the American war movies simply do not have counterparts in contemporary Japanese movies. In those rare Japanese or Finnish movies where war or patriotism are among the chosen topics, the movie usually depicts the suffering of people and the madness of war. In short, there is very little room for war heroes in these cultures.

[26]Cf. Sakamoto (1998), pp. 139-140.

[27]Cf. Giddens (1994), pp. 244-245.

[28]Cf. Hatsuse (1996), pp. 205-206.

[29]Cf. Miyajima (1996), pp. 10-12.

[30]Cf. Watado (1997), pp. 222-223.

[31]Kuriyama (1997), pp. 122-124.

[32]For similar ideas of changes on the local and regional level being linked to the changes in the systemic level, see Ikeda (1996), pp. 115-128 and Shimizu (1996), pp. 129-143. For a specific application what the systemic change means in East Asian regional level and regional and local levels in Japan, see Yabuno (1995).

[33]Sakamoto (1990), pp. 312-315.

[34]Cf. Funabashi (1995), pp. 371-372.

[35]See e.g. Kikui (1997), pp. 193-211.

[36]For these different perceptions and ways to analyse the Japanese policies of globalisation, as seen from outside, see Preston (1997), pp. 157-159.

[37]Hashimoto (1993), pp. 75-100.

[38]Cf. Hook (1996a), pp. 169-206.

[39]Cf. Takaya & Matsuo (1997), pp. 135-167, which provides a general analysis of the obstacles for closer cooperation between Japan and other East and Southeast Asian countries.

[40]Amako (1995), p. 233.

[41]See e.g. Kobayashi (1997), pp. 200-205.

[42]Cf. Taylor (1996), pp. 56-59.

[43]Cf. Ibid, which provides an overall analysis of the history of modern internationalism of Japan *(nihon no kokusaishugi)*.

[44]Cf. Watanabe (1997), pp. 18-23.

[45]Cf. Unger (1993), pp. 163-166.

[46]At least the last decade has witnessed that the Japanese ODA has been assigned the role of a major instrument of Japanese foreign policy. For an analysis of the uses ODA for the Japanese foreign policy as well as the foreign policies of other countries in most parts of the world, see e.g. Tanaka (1995). As for the diplomatic liturgy, one only has to take a look at the recent editions of Japanese Diplomatic Bluebook to find out that ODA has occupied an irreplacable role in the arsenal of Japanese diplomacy.

[47]Some researchers point out that it is often difficult to even recognise Japanese manifestations of power because those do not correspond to traditional notions of power, especially the forms of military power. Drifte (1996), pp. 85-92. For me it seems like it greatly improves the efficacy and general image of the Japanese diplomacy if there still is a widespread belief that the Japanese prefer to use "softer" methods than some other countries. Furthermore, there seem to be situations in international relations where the economic power and influence is the only kind of power which has some use, and even it may prove to be insufficient. With such tasks as persuading the present Indian government to give up its determination to escalate nuclear rivalry and the government of Pakistan to idly observe this to happen, it is hard to say which of the two, Japan or the United States, has been more efficient. As for the definition of the positive role that Japan has been playing in general in world affairs in the 1990s, I find most accurate the term "facilitator", used by Shibusawa, Ahmad and Bridges (1992), pp. 123-142. By serving its role as facilitator of peaceful change and development Japan can help to create more cooperative kind of power relationships and encourage the emergence of emancipatory forms of power.

[48]Dore (1997), p. xv.

[49]See e.g McDougal (1997), p. 72.

[50]Cf. Hook (1996b), pp. 21-24.

[51]Cf. Nakamura (1996), p. 13.

[52]Kashioka (1997), pp. 191-192.

[53]For the vast majority of people the rural cuisine tended be extremely coarse. The Edo *bakufu* policies actually dictated that the peasants be deprived of everything but the absolute minimum necessary to continue production. Several edicts severely restricted (or banned) in the villages the drinking of sake or tea and the use and trade of the five grains (wheat, rice, barley, and the two kinds of millet). In the end the peasants had to feed mainly on wheat, Deccan grass *(hie)*, potatoes, daikon and on leaves and vegetables they happened to be able to find or produce. Only the festival cuisine contained such highly valued foods as sushi or *kamaboko* (fish paste). Nishiyama (1997), pp. 159-161. As for such institutions as the sushi, this tradition has also kept changing during all of its existence. The Edo sushi shops had a rather one-sided menu by modern standards, reflecting the limited supply of that time *(nigiri zushi* being mostly shrimp, whitebait, tuna, sea eel, kohada and egg, eggs also being the most expensive items). Ibid, pp. 169-172. One can only guess how exotic place a modern *kaiten zushi* (rotating sushi) operation would be in the eyes of a traditional Japanese farmer.

[54]For critical analyses of Nishida's ideas on the Japanese imperial way and his works on this topic, particularly "The Problem of Japanese Culture" (1940), see Ueda (1995), pp. 77-106 and Suzuki (1997), pp. 87-108.

[55]For a detailed discussion on the social stratification in contemporary Japan, see e.g. Mouer & Sugimoto (1986) and Kosaka (ed., 1994).

[56]Cf. Gunnell (1979), p. 85. By "myth" in my work I mean a belief which is clearly based on misformed and inadequate understanding. My intention here is not to contribute to the discussion whether there exist "myths" which are of such a nature that their factual basis cannot be proved "right" or "wrong".

[57]Gunnell (1979), p. 88. In short, I see culture and tradition, both as wide concepts, to provide the basis on which the Japanese "understanding" and "thinking" are formed–and in the context of which those can be studied and interpreted by a researcher. As for the concept of "tradition", in research it is used to refer both to 1) wider cultural and social traditions and 2) to particular narrowly defined traditions. To avoid unnecessary scholastic speculation and dogmatism I have not felt it necessary or possible always to define the exact scope of "traditions" and have preferred to use the concept of "tradition" in a way assuming that the general scope of the "fairly well-defined activity and realm of discourse" can be judged by the reader from the context in which I use the concept.

[58]See e.g. artist Shimada Yoshiko, p. 57, in the discussion on how to make sense of history, published by *Gendai shisô*, 9/1997.

[59]In my work I use preunderstanding in the Gadamerian sense, that meanings cannot be understood in an arbitrary way and that we always place meanings in relation to the whole of our own meanings or ourselves in relation to it. As for hermeneutical work, it is important to be aware of one's own bias, so that the text in question could present itself in all its newness and thus be able to assert its own truth against one's own fore-meanings. Cf. Gadamer (1985), p. 238.

[60]Cf. Gunnell (1979), pp. 85-89, 124-125.

[61]Gadamer (1985), p. 324.

[62]Cf. Gadamer (1976), pp. 30-31.

[63]Tanaka (1991), pp. 196-197.

[64]Culture itself I understand as a comprehensive concept *(hôkatsutekina gainen)* containing both *bunka,* including the material culture *(busshitsuteki bunka)* and spiritual culture *(seishinteki bunka),* and civilisation *bunmei,* which cannot be excluded from its associations with the idea of national culture and national state and from the political, social, and legal conceptions born in a particular historical and social context, interpreted from the context of contemporary time. For the different possibilities of understanding and defining culture, see Yamazaki & Ichikawa (1970), pp. 537-539.

[65]Gellner (1987), p. 18, associates the evolution of the cultural homogeneity of political units with the growth-oriented industrial society, when culture is being used as a symbol of a political unit. When homogeneity is lacking, it can be attained by modifying either political or cultural boundaries. The homogeneity of culture is then used to create a sense (part illusory, part justified) of solidarity, mobility, continuity, lack of deep barriers within the political units in question. In Gellner's view the industrial societies engender nationalism but agrarian civilisations and societies are free of that effect. I agree with the basic logic of this description of historical process, but I would not use the "growth-oriented industrial society" and "homogeneous units" as concepts by which to describe all the trends and patterns in world history. The concept of "nation state" with all its myths of homogeneity is also just a linguistic convention on its way to the dusk of history.

[66]In Japan the widespread optimism of the results of the "internationalisation" process *(kokusaika)* stands in a stark contrast to the pessimism so often voiced by some well-known Finnish researchers, particularly Matti Sarmela, who are worried about the resistance and vitality of Finnish culture. According to Sarmela the traditional cultures are at the mercy of international unifying powers of cultural imperialism and Americanisation, which, according to him, have in the last thirty years already destroyed most of the characteristic local culture of Finland and now the whole culture and Finnish language are in danger of being wiped out by the currents of Anglo-American mass culture and global market economy. Sarmela (1989), especially, pp. 195-199. It must be noted that Sarmela uses "traditional culture" in a specific meaning, giving more narrowly defined meanings to both "culture" and "tradition". Naturally there are dangers in making too hasty comparisons between the Finnish and Japanese internationalisation discourses which are products of quite different social environments. However, in post-war Japan, too, one can still identify some voices denouncing modernity as a threat to "culture". These voices usually resonate with references to the pre-war "defence" of Japanese culture. Their most well-known representative was the novelist Mishima Yukio, who rejected consumerism and the homogenisation of society

spawned by it–and argued that Japanese *tennô* (for which, as he insisted, the English translation "emperor" is a misnomer) represented a culture that allowed "anarchy" within "aesthetic terrorism". Mishima simply wanted to separate "culture" from dehumanising and homogenising "politics" and in the process rejected the whole modern society where he saw no place for a real culture characterised by "cultural anarchy" whose symbol is *tennô*. Najita (1989), pp. 15-17. Mishima crowned his career as a known eccentric in Japan with his ritual suicide in 1970 on the balcony of the Self-Defense Forces Ichigaya Base, having been able to generate only little sympathy or understanding even among those small groups with militaristic ideals he had regarded as the heralds of a brave new future.

[67]Cf. Kemiläinen (1993), pp. 31-32.

[68]For a chronological analysis of the history of these concepts and their use in Japan, see Ishida (1990), pp. 142-164 and Saitô (1990), pp. 46-117.

[69]Saitô (1990), pp. 114-117.

[70]Cf. Kaplinski (1993), p. 107.

[71]Cf. Apunen (1990), p. 3.

[72]My position in the use of the concept "modern" is that I do not define the term by linking it with some of those narrow Western discourses with their inbuilt notion of Western cultural superiority, and would prefer to associate the concept loosely with the diverse social processes in the contemporary world and with the several "endogenously" defined versions of "modern"that exist. As I am still writing in English, and the avoidance of the term "modern" altogether could undoubtedly be interpeted as overacting, I only warn my readers to be circumspect with the use of this concept.

[73]Cf. O'Brian and Ohkoshi (1996), p. 31.

[74]Cf. Fawcett (1995), pp. 232-246.

[75]For a basic introduction to prehistoric Japan and to the scholarly discourses related to it, see Imamura (1996).

[76]Preston (1997), p. 62.

[77]For this kind of discussion, see Kawai (1995), pp. 62-73.

[78]Cf. Inose (1997), pp. 292-299.

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