

INDIVIDUALIZATION OF SOCIETY AND RELIGIONIZATION OF INDIVIDUALS: RESACRALIZATION IN POSTMODERNITY (SECOND MODERNITY)

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ABSTRACT: It is widely perceived that the period called modern times came to a turning point in the latter half of the 20th century. There is no objection to exploring the characteristics of «postmodern» or «second modern» times with the concept of «individualization» as a key as Zygmunt Bauman and Ulrich Beck did. When this is applied to «religion», a conclusion may be extracted that individualization is progressing also in religions, and that the power of religions that functions to integrate followers as a group is retreating. In fact, later developments have not followed to confirm this view. Rather, resacralization and the rise of public religions have come to be discussed. In this paper, the author will attempt further to explicate how we can consistently understand the tendency of individualization in religions, and the tendency of forming new kinds of religious communalities.

KEY WORDS: spirituality, postmodernity, thanatology, new spirituality, self-help, individualization.

Individualización de la sociedad y religiosidad de los individuos. Resacralización en la postmodernidad (segunda modernidad)

RESUMEN: Es ampliamente admitido que el período llamado «modernidad» llegó a un punto de inflexión en la segunda mitad del siglo xx. No es objetable el explorar las características del tiempo «post-moderno» o «segunda modernidad» a través del concepto clave de «individualidad», tal como hacen Zygmunt Bauman y Ulrich Beck. Cuando esto se aplica a la «religión», puede extraerse la conclusión de que la individualidad está también progresando en las religiones y de que el poder de las religiones que actúa integrando a sus seguidores como grupo está también retrocediendo. De hecho, desarrollos posteriores no han llevado a confirmar este punto de vista. Más bien, la re-sacralización y presencia renovada de las religiones públicas ha sido objeto de discusión. En este artículo, el autor intentará además explicar cómo podemos entender de forma consistente la tendencia a la individualización en lo religioso y la tendencia a formar nuevos estilos en las comunidades religiosas.

PALABRAS CLAVE: espiritualidad, postmodernidad, tanatología, nueva espiritualidad, auto-ayuda, individualidad.

1. ARE INDIVIDUALIZATION AND RESACRALIZATION CONTRADICTORY?

It is widely perceived that the period called modern times came to a turning point in the latter half of the 20th century. We do not need to be over-particular about what we call the emerging phase whether «postmodernity» or «second modernity». First, energy should be concentrated on trying to understand the distinctive characteristics of changes occurring currently by placing the emerging social phase in a long-term perspective of «social» and «cultural» changes.

There is no objection to exploring the characteristics of «postmodern» or «second modern» times with the concept of «individualization» as a key as Zygmunt Bauman and Ulrich Beck did (Beck, 1986; Bauman, 2000). Systems are spreading into

various life spheres, traditional norms are increasingly losing their binding power, and group control at the workplace and the union of family based on the gender role division are being loosened. The principle of an economic society has shifted from production to consumption; individuals have been pressingly encouraged to choose their purchases to satisfy their desires; despite the progress of standardization, distinctive differences are demanded of individuals; as a result the base for solidarity among people is being collapsing. People are conscious about designing their own life courses on their free will, and have to live by always reviewing their identities. It is in each process that ruling relations and structural violence are buried, and systems such as psychology and therapies to unravel them act to further facilitate individualization (Bellah *et al.*, 1985; Melluci, 1989; Tanabe and Shimazono, 2002).

When the above phenomenon is applied to «religion», a conclusion may be extracted that individualization is progressing also in religions, and that the power of religions that functions to integrate followers as a group is retreating. As a matter of fact, some influential theses in sociology of religion published in the 1960s were foreseeing this trend as the future course of religions (Shimazono, 2000). For example, sociologist Brian Wilson presented such a view from earlier days, and understood that the loosening of community ties and secularization and the privatization of religions would occur simultaneously (Wilson, 1966). In fact, later developments have not followed to confirm his predictions. Rather, resacralization and the rise of public religions have come to be discussed. The author also considers that resacralization and the rise of public religions are certainly observable in the contemporary world. Then, how is the general individualization of society related with social resacralization and the restoration of public religions?

The author dealt with this topic in his article «Contemporary Religions and the Public Arena: Centering on the Situation in Japan» (Shimazono, 2008; first published in Japanese in 2000). In this paper, the author will attempt further to explicate how we can consistently understand the tendency of individualization in religions, and the tendency of forming new kinds of religious communality. This might call upon the advocates who force the process of «individualization» in «postmodern» or «second modern» times to make some rectifications.

This author's view is related with the subjects that he has considered in his publications in the past decade or so. They include *Gendai Kyusai Shukyo-ron (Salvation Religions in the Contemporary World)* (1992), *Seishin Sekai no Yukue (Directions of the Spiritual World)* (1996), *Postmodern no Shin-Shukyo (Postmodern New Religions)* (2001), *Iyasu Chi no Keifu (Lineage of Healing Knowledge)* (2003) and *From Salvation to Spirituality* (2004). Suppose modern times were an age dominated by many national elites who had acquired rationalistic knowledge based on science, the late 20th century was an age when social phenomena questioning the authority of these elites had expanded. Elites have lost the aureole of «national» and «progress» and have become mere «specialists» in their specific areas. To respond to the transition of the aspect of the times, the trend of religious restoration emerged. The religious situations of the world in the 1970s and on

can be understood from the background of changes in ideology such as the above.

The Enlightenment or modern rationalism has been supported by the affirmative belief in modernization. The belief is that modernization is a process during which humans as intellectual beings expand their control over nature by the development of objective and scientific knowledge, and increase the freedom and welfare of humans. This belief was linked with the concept that the unity of people to realize progress was self-evident. However, it was revealed around 1970 that the accumulation of wealth in industrialized countries through the modernization process had brought about environmental destruction, new poverty and the destruction of living environments in large cities. Then, people of wide socio-economic strata came to wonder whether their belief in modern rationalism and modernization was good to them or not. The retreat of the illusion of «nation» accompanying with the globalization process has fostered this doubt.

It has been the viewpoint of change in belief or worldview that the author has adopted as one of the major axes in discussing contemporary religions. It has been an attempt to understand the aspect of an age characterizing «postmodern» or «second modern» times from changes in basic belief that underpins social consensus. This indicator is related to reviewing the view on humans as «advancing beings» and the view of «history» which is compiled by humans. The «postmodern» times in the context of Western ideological history characterized by Jean-François Lyotard as being a breaking up of a «grand narrative» may emphasize this aspect.

How are the comparison of modernity and postmodernity (second modernity) in the dimension of worldview, and the understanding of «second modernity» (postmodernity) focusing on «individualization» as Beck and Bauman did, related? Bearing this question in mind, how the «individualization of religions» is taking shape will be looked at. While taking Japanese examples, the discussion will proceed by broadening horizons into different countries and areas.

2. RISE OF SPIRITUALITY (1)

Emile Durkheim considered the major functions of religions to be strengthening the bond of a community and society (Durkheim, 1912). Traditional religions in civilized societies and new religions developed in modern times were applicable to this definition. However, traditional religions and new religions that required communities as an indispensable factor have lost strength in the modernization process in Japan, in particular, in the 1970s and later. In Europe, attendance rates in worship services in churches have been declining for a long time.

In place of these religions, movements that encourage the development of individual spirituality have risen. This is a cluster of spiritual movements or a cultural phenomenon collectively called «Spiritual World» in Japan, and «New Age» in the west, which became apparent in the 1960s in the United States, and

in the 1970s in Japan and other developed countries. The author calls it the «New Spirituality Movements and Culture» (Shimazono, 1996; Shimazono, 1999).

Typical supporters of the New Spirituality Movements and Culture advocate the evolution of human consciousness and are aware of themselves as being the members of spiritually enlightened people who will lead the new age. They refuse to pledge loyalty to the tradition of a religious organization or a specific religion, and insist on the development of the spirituality as individuals. In this aspect, they are individualistic, but the movements have a nature close to religious movements aiming for the establishment of the Millennium and the Utopia, in that they intend to develop a communal awareness among many people. The supporters of the movement, however, do not like to be organized, and therefore, do not like to form sustainable communities. This aspect of the New Spirituality Movements and Culture has been discussed in my «Contemporary Religions and the Public Arena» and other papers, therefore, it will not be touched upon here.

Among the phenomena that can be called the New Spirituality Movements and Culture, there are some activities which are not so ambitious but are rather limited within personal interest. They are rightly called New Spiritual Culture phenomena, rather than New Spirituality Movements. Outstanding phenomena among them are (1) the rise of spirituality relating to palliative care and care for the bereaved people, and (2) the expansion of self-help networks. First, the rise of spirituality relating to death and grief care will be discussed.

In the 1990s, the term *shiseigaku* (death and life studies) came to be frequently used. This is used as a Japanese term for the English term «death studies» or «thanatology», and came to be used in close association with medical and nursing care service provision.

The earliest movement is the Study Group on Clinical Services for Death which began in Osaka in 1977 (Okayasu, 2001). When Cicely Saunders founded a modern hospice in Britain in 1967 (Du Blay, 1984), it immediately attracted attention from many sectors, and practice of death care came into the worldwide limelight. Around the same time, Elisabeth Kübler-Ross who migrated from Switzerland to the United States had conversations with dying people, and listened to their loneliness (Kübler-Ross, 1969). Her books gave great impact on care to be given to dying people. Information about attempts in death care made in the United States and Europe has permeated gradually among medical and nursing care providers in Japan.

There was an inevitable reason for this development. Because of medical advancement, people dying on the «tatami mat» in their own houses rapidly decreased in number. On the other hand, a grave defect in modern medicine became apparent that hospital employees had not learned how to deal with dying patients. Deeply disappointed with working for a hospital which did not know how to deal with death and dying, Dr. Fumio Yamazaki became a hospice doctor, and published the book *To die in a hospital* in 1990, which was a record hit (Yamazaki, 1990). The piteous death in a hospital became a reality for many people around this time.

Caregivers also became more conscious about death. In the 1980s, opportunities to respond to the grief of those who are facing with the death of their family members, or who have lost their family members recently came to be seriously demanded. A catholic father, Prof. Alfons Deeken of Sophia University in Tokyo, opened a seminar to «Consider Life and Death» in 1982. Later, some people in the audience began to gather together, and in the following year, an Association to Consider Life and Death was founded (Deeken, 1996). This meeting evoked a massive response. In 1996, the number of members in Tokyo exceeded 1500, and similar meetings were held at 35 places across the country. In parallel, grief work meetings came to be held to heal the grief of people who have lost beloved ones.

Deeken considers his lifework to be death education. He says that people should learn how to face with death from childhood, and proposed that death education be included in the curricula of schools of all levels from primary to university to help people become prepared for death. Thanatology is a system of academic knowledge supporting «death education». Deeken tried to expand his attempt modeling after the practice in Germany. In the 1990s, books deeply related to «death education» and «thanatology» were published in Japan.

As if chasing after the expansion of hospices and grief work activities by the Christian community, the Japanese Buddhist community also launched the Vihara movement (Buddhist hospice). Masashi Tamiya advocated the concept of Vihara in 1985 with Nagaoka West Hospital as his base. Soon, he found many supporters in the Buddhist organization. The Buddhist Hospice Society was established within the Tokyo Buddhist Information Center in 1987, and meetings on life similar to Deeken's meeting to consider life and death began to be held. In the 1990s, diverse attempts came to be made in terminal care and grief work by various sectors including the Buddhist community.

This does not mean that Japan only followed the developments in the west. Around the same period, heated discussions over brain death and organ transplant were held. The issue had been discussed since the 1970s, but it was in the Provisional Commission for Study on Brain Death and Organ Transplants which was set up in 1989 that a serious debate took place. Based on its recommendation in 1992, the Brain Death Law was promulgated in 1997. In the Commission, enthusiastic deliberations over what death was were held in a public space, and many people showed their interest in the question. An underlying question was that a death managed and determined by medical doctors might not be a genuine death.

One book that gave a kind of depth to controversies over brain death and organ transplants was «Sakurifaisu – Waga Musuko Noshi no 11 nichi (Sacrifice – 11 days of my brain-dead son) by a non-fiction writer, Kunio Yanagida. Yanagida discloses what he thought and felt when his second son Yojiro committed suicide at the age of 25 after suffering for some time with social withdrawal and who was kept in a hospital in the brain-dead condition. At the very end of his sad life, Yojiro desired to offer his organs for transplant as a proof of his life. Therefore, the father-writer tried to enter into his son's sentiment. At the same time, he contemplated

the question of brain death, and eventually attempted to make important proposals. His proposal is summarized in the term «a viewpoint of death expressed by the second person». Instead of the standpoint of medical doctors who face with a death as the third person, he insisted that brain death should be considered from the viewpoint of families who are faced with the death of precious persons.

While emphasizing the importance of «religious» and «mental» dimensions of death, Yanagida considers that there are biological parts and spiritual, social and religious parts (hereafter termed generally as mental life) in human life. He adds that from the viewpoint of death from the second person, the dimension of «mental life» is more important. This dimension can be understood as a religious dimension in a broad sense.

«Parents and children, spouses, and siblings are closely sharing life and living. Family members, therefore, share different kinds of pleasure, sorrow, anger and hatred from others. It is because they are “sharing” a mental life» (Yanagida, 1995, 220).

He uses the term «mental» with a meaning that is close to «spiritual». Yanagida stresses that brain death should be considered as paying respect to the spiritual dimension.

In Japan in the 1980s and particularly in the 1990s, the issue of bioethics came to be considered as important problems of thanatology and the view of life and death, incorporating the interest in spirituality. Rising interest in palliative care and spirituality is a common phenomenon in industrialized countries, and in Japan, the interest has developed as a subject of public discussions relating to bioethics in organ transplants from brain-dead persons.

This phenomenon was deeply associated with people's perception that the modern hospital system had no measures for the terminal crises that every person had to be faced with. Hospitals are good at providing scientific treatment that can be applied uniformly to patients who are placed under their control, without facing them individually. But they lack capabilities to give holistic care to individuals faced with terminal crises, and in particular, to respond to their existential interests and spiritual needs. As the range covered by medical services has expanded, and as individuals have increased their dependence on medical services (Ivan Illich calls this «medicalization». Illich, 1976), the existential and spiritual dimensions of individuals who have spilled out from these services have come to surface. These dimensions then came to be part of the cultural movement around death.

3. RISE OF SPIRITUALITY (2)

The expansion of self-help networks of people interested in spirituality was remarkable around that time in Japan. Just like the cultural movement around death, the rise of the self-help movement reflects a worldwide trend. First, the movement originating in the United States in which self-help movements rapidly

developed in and after the 1970s will be overviewed. The source of self-help movements in the U.S. can be found in the Alcoholic Anonymous (AA) founded in 1935. It was the movement of alcoholics to help each other following twelve-steps reflection system. The methodology of healing developed in this organization later led to the growth of movements to share distress among people who have the same addictions. For example the Overeaters Anonymous (OA) by women suffering from bulimia was founded in the United States in 1961, and developed to have more than 300,000 members in 24 countries in 20 years (Masako, 1989). As of 1992, there were 130 twelve-steps groups in the United States (Katz, 1993).

In a twelve-steps self-help group, members follow the twelve-steps propositions with the essence that individuals admit their helplessness and entrust themselves to the grace of a higher power. The first two steps are as follows. «1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol – that our lives had become unmanageable», and «2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity». In other words, these steps encourage members to go through a sort of self-awakening experience, and there is at the core, a spiritual element which is away from specific religions. Members do not seek salvation by accepting norms associated with a transcendent being. Rather, they consider that spiritual liberty is attained in liberating themselves from constraints imposed by traditional norms.

This kind of element was contained in the feminism movement that began in the 1970s, and in the mid-1980s, a new consciousness raising movement in the form of the self-help movement of Adult Children (AC) became remarkable. In this movement, the subject of «freedom from traditional norms» or «freedom from one's family» came to have an obvious spiritual character (Saito, 1995).

Adult Children (AC) are those who have been brought up by parents one of whom is alcoholic, and those who are giving care to the alcoholic and, who, while doing so, develop a dependent attitude on the alcoholic person, and who are suffering because of this (Saito, 1995). First, a focus is given to the fact that a spouse who takes devoted care of one's addicted partner, in fact, is fostering the other's alcohol addiction. Next, not only the spouse but also their children (adults who were children of alcoholics) become mutually dependent (addiction), that is, co-dependent. Those who have found that they were in the state of co-dependence, began self-help movements in order to get out of that state.

At this stage, the twelve-steps self-help movements noticed a suppressive nature in traditional moral norms and families and other communities, and developed to have a function of providing a psychological therapy for liberation to liberate themselves from the suppression (Koike, 2002). Later, in addition to alcoholic patients, many young people and grownups who were brought up in families with an inclination of co-dependence and who were conscious about themselves as Adult Children in a broad sense of the word came to seek liberation from co-dependence in this kind of self-help group. Cases of mothers (wives) who have fallen into emotional difficulties because of workaholic fathers (husbands) and in turn place too great expectations on their children have come to be considered as an expression of Adult Children.

The self-help movements in the twelve-steps lineage sometimes contain the motif of «liberation from suppressive norms and communities». When focusing only on this point, they may seem to have a different vector from religions which have the function of integrating followers as groups. But this does not mean that self-help movements are in conflict with religious movements. Sataru Saito, a leader and psychiatrist of self-help groups of those who experienced child abuse in their childhood summarizes what to say to his members as below:

«Tell them, “Don’t try to make others understand about yourself”, or “You can keep silent”. Then, explain basic rules of meetings such as “Don’t speak what you have heard from others here to outsiders”. Tell them, “This meeting is intended to get rid of the excessive feeling that you have done wrong”. Finally, I may add, “It is good if you can become courageous enough to face with a part of your past veiled in fog”, or “It is good if you can direct your justified anger to the due person”. I may speak at the end as a participant, only on the moving sensation I had during the session. Then we all stand up and recite the Serenity Prayer in chorus to close the meeting» (Saito, 1995, 168).

The Serenity Prayer by Reinhold Niebuhr is:

«God, give us grace to accept with serenity the things that cannot be changed, courage to change the things that should be changed, and the wisdom to distinguish the one from the other».

Satoru Saito calls a group like this the «Family of Soul». When a kin family becomes dysfunctional, people tend to belong to a family of soul out of necessity. He says that liberation from an ordinary family (kin family) and finding a new family in which spiritual learning (spiritual, spirituality, mental) takes place occur at the same time. How then does this «family of soul» differ from a religious organization?

«Even though it is different from a religion, spiritual growth is valued in the “Family of Soul”. Religions have a god (often being reified) and dogma outside itself, but the “Family of Soul” only has “love that appears within a group”. If religious followers gather under a god, members of the “Family of Soul” find “love” in a group of people gathered in relation with a problem. AA calls this “love” their “god”. It is only a matter of taste if you consider this title appropriate or not. As Berenson says borrowing the words of Martin Buber, it is an close and equal relationship between “I” and “thou”. Participants reform their relations with their own selves through this relationship, and come to accept what they are including worries and paradox. In other words, “solving a problem” here means that members accept themselves and take it upon themselves to look at the problem squarely, and to be worried about it. The “Family of Soul” challenges efficiency superiority-and technology supremacy, and the dualistic theory of mentality and physicality that prevail in the contemporary society. It is because the cause of their frustration existed there» (ditto, pp. 214-215).

Although individuals aim to liberate themselves from groups, liberated individuals are in need of support from something religious. Even though this spirituality takes a form that respects individual freedom, different from traditional

religions, it can be included in the category of religions in a broad sense in that they intend to place themselves in relation with something great beyond themselves. With this religious nature as their support, the spirituality aims for involvement in a public space.

4. RISE OF SPIRITUALITY (3)

Some self-help groups developed in Japan in the 1980s and afterward were organized spontaneously without being influenced by foreign examples. Among such organizations are groups in which spiritual elements are strongly incorporated, although members are not so strongly conscious of it. An example is an association for the multiple deaf-mute disables, «Donguri-no Ie (House of Acorns)». The movement to found and maintain this workshop began not by the people with hearing disability themselves but their parents and other family members and people with light hearing disability, but it can be categorized in the self-help movement in a broad sense.

«Donguri-no-Ie» began its activity in Omiya city, Saitama prefecture in 1986, by the parents of disabled children helping each other. Having learned of the process, a comic writer Osamu Yamamoto depicted the life of disabled children and their families in his work «Donguri-no-Ie» which won enormous sympathy from the readers. This story was then produced as an animated film, and the proceeds from screening by private groups were to be applied to the administration of the «Donguri-no-Ie» workshop.

Yamamoto had created two works about people with hearing disability, and was strongly impressed by an account *Ikiyo-ne Mirai-wo mitsumete (Let us live, looking forward)* recording the process of establishing the workshop in 1992. He says, «Although I was not clearly aware at this time, I felt that this account contained a more profound and fundamental theme of life that delved more deeply than what I dealt with in the previous two works. Why do they fight against “discrimination?” “Why do they insist on their ‘rights?’” “What are human rights?” Reading this account, I felt an ardent affection for a person who is born and grows» (Yamamoto, 1998, 139-140). His work appeared in a series in *Big Comic* magazine from 1993 to 1997.

The families of disabled persons must face the difficulties of supporting the disabled members with their weak and small bonds. In a society where the market economy is pushed forward, disabled people are placed in weak positions in competition for survival and their supporting people are faced with hard trials. Families that are managing to provide continuous bonds to support individuals while coping with the pressures of an increasingly individualizing society are forced to either be disbanded or to sacrifice their disabled members (for example, to institutionalize them). However, there are some experiences that lead families to have the will «let us live together» and these experiences are rightly defined as spiritual awakening.

Yamamoto, while writing this story, came to consider that the theme of his work was the «acceptance of a disability». This is the concept that he has developed. An important episode in the story is «Keiko». He writes what the parents of this girl who is deaf-mute and mentally disabled have attained while confronting the sufferings of their child. «How have Keiko's parents come to accept her disability, and what of Keiko did they see to accept the disability? What part of their disabled child did the parents accept? In turn, what did Keiko want to appeal to her parent?». Yamamoto sets a scene when Keiko suffers from an asthmatic attack, and lets the mother utter: «hue, hue, Keiko is protesting. It sounds like Keiko who cannot speak is saying something to protest». «This child sees into my heart. My desire to escape from, if possible, being the mother of this child. The latent desire at the bottom of my heart!».

When the following words came out of the mother's mouth, Yamamoto considers that he has reached the essential core of the existence or spirituality of the «acceptance of a disability» embodied by the «Donguri-no-Ie» movement.

«This child is trying to live. Keiko is trying to live. And she is appealing to us, though we are weak and silly. This child who bears a heavy burden on this small body is trying to show us that she is living, living with all her might.

After all anxieties, she reached the simplest fact. The child is living, and they accept the child with the disability, her life and existence as a whole. This was what the "acceptance of a disability" meant. Any life which was brought into being with disabilities whatsoever has the power to grow, or a will "to survive". A life is a physical being with the shape of a human, and at the same time, with the "will" to live. To discover and acknowledge this will means to "accept disabilities" as well as the foundation of "human rights"» (Yamamoto, 1998, 154).

This movement does not have any formula like the twelve steps, or formulated prayer. Unless Yamamoto has published his work, the spirituality hidden in the group will not be recorded, or disclosed to the public. In the age when individualization is progressing, self-help movements are certainly in existence and making efforts to provide a place for solidarity including spiritual awakening. And they seem to present the existential support that religions once provided.

Spiritual things as understood by the members of the «Family of Soul» and «Donguri-no-Ie» are sometimes expressed in the terms of «life» and «bond». These terms are used to understand their experience of finding the reason for living in something beyond oneself when facing death and a crisis by giving transcendent meaning in the factuality of «life» and «relations» (Yamazaki, 1995; Kashio, 2002; Miyajima and Shimazono, 2003; Murakami, 2003).

In the above, 1) Rise of spirituality concerning death care (section 2), and 2) Expansion of self-help networks (sections 3 and 4) have been observed with examples. People facing a life-or-death crisis, addicted people desperately seeking mutual help, and heavily disabled people and their families are placed in particularly difficult situations in industrialized societies today. In the past, communities had a system to help individuals with their difficulties. In the past, there was a system of practice concerning life and death which was inseparable

from religions, and the system was supported by communities with a mutual help function.

However, contemporary people find the style of mutual help in the past to be suppressive and restrictive of individual freedom. Even if they desire to restore it at all, they do not know how to bring it into being. Governmental, professional and commercial care services are provided with an intention of satisfying basic needs. However, there is a limit in these services. They can hardly reach the inner depth of users' hearts, and a mutual bond of life can never be developed. The building of fundamental bonds that support individuals' life is totally entrusted to individuals, who can manage to develop bonds by mutual support among those who share the same suffering and sorrow.

Science which has provided a common value in place of religions, and solutions and goals put forward by specialists are no longer believed. Modern myths are broken up also in this aspect. Even the value of liberation from discrimination, or the concept of human rights is not considered to have enough trustworthiness to support individuals who are faced with existential crises. Instead, spirituality comes to the fore in an individualized form not through religious organizations. Individuals have fewer opportunities to succeed the values and culture which have been transmitted by firmly knitted communities, and have a lesser degree of contact with religious concepts and practice. In other words, they are faced with existential crises without preparedness. They have to encounter something transcendental through associations or networks (or something that Satoru Saito terms «relation through specific problems») each time suited to different crises with which individuals are faced. Various networks and the media supply cultural resources for this.

5. INDIVIDUALIZATION AND EXCLUSIVE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES

The rise of spirituality is occurring in an individualized context, and spirituality can be seen as the replacement of traditional organized religions. This phenomenon is conspicuous in the spirituality of the Spiritual World and New Age which aim for broad and loose networks extending to the entire human society with the perspective of the «evolution of consciousness». A similar observation can be made to what has already been discussed regarding 1) Rise of spirituality concerning terminal care, and 2) Expansion of self-help networks.

With the lack of a cultural mechanism for terminal care, mourning services, and healing for sorrows that religious culture has provided, hospices and Vihara, thanatology and attempts to organize the «Association to Consider Life and Death» and the like have emerged. Being women, the sick, and the disabled have been recognized and accepted to perform a role to offer a certain sense of satisfaction to others in the system of values with a religious background. But now, they consider themselves to be suppressed and alienated by discrimination, and it is from here that self-help communality is developed for them to rise while being emotionally healed.

Spirituality advocated in the Millennium and Utopia does not seem to confront the evils and difficulties in the contemporary society. Spirituality concerning the views on life and death and self-help is meant only to stand up to crises and hardships of a limited range and is not for people of all walks of life. Satoru Saito's term «relation through specific problems» is suggestive. It implies communality for those who share a problem, and does not cover their whole life and the whole range of living.

In contrast, it is salvation religions' respective group norms that accept the evils and difficulties squarely in the contemporary society and call for the establishment of universal solidarity of the world (Shimazono, 1996; Shimazono, 2001). Looking widely at the present world, the expansion of Christianity and Islam with exclusivist inclinations is the most remarkable phenomenon. The most visible forms of the revival of religions and the expansion of fundamentalism are found here. Christianity in the United States is an easy-to-understand example. In and after the 1960s, the liberal group which had maintained a hegemony in the Church declined and gave way to the Evangelical groups which was gaining strength.

Considering that secular elites who did not believe in Christianity and the liberalists who thoroughly came to terms with secular elites had led the American society to depart from Christian values, Evangelical Church followers attempted to restore Christianity-oriented values to the society. They do not recognize the value of other religions, do not agree to have dialogues or cooperate with people who believe in other values, and place importance to unity within their own organization. Can this be defined as an opposing tendency to the individualization tendency, and as a movement to choose the path for organization anew?

In Japan, there has been no phenomenon to which the term fundamentalism can be applied (as to the appropriateness of this term, refer Usuki, 1999), but there has been the rise in exclusivist and autistic religious groups. These groups are often characterized as «cult organizations», and the term rightly illustrates this situation. New religious organizations that had developed by around 1970 were comparatively friendly with modern values and positive to work in partnership with their external forces. However, among organizations developed in and after the 1970s there are some organizations that attempt a confrontation with the values of the secular society or refuse obstinately to cooperate with outside groups. They value unity among their members, and try to build a wall between themselves and people outside the organizations. In the past, an autistic inclination would prevent an organization from developing, but today, religious organizations may have the potential to expand their membership by maintaining their autistic inclination (Shimazono, 2001).

How then do these religious organizations presenting strong group orientation relate with individualization? They can be seen to be resisting, on the basis of their religions, the individualization tendency promoted by the system prevalent in developed countries. However, people who can choose such a stance are limited to those who are placed in the peripheral areas of the driving force of the contemporary world system and who are forced to stay outside the competition

game that forces individualization. Or, it is also limited to those who are highly educated in or from developing regions who are sympathetic and try to be with these people, who are critical about the dominant system, and who intend to belong to a religious system which is different from the dominant system.

These people are certainly exposed to the influence from individualization. They seek a means to cope with the pressure in the religious solidarity of faith that they have chosen anew. As a typical example, the description by Masanori Naito on the immigrants who have joined an Islamic Restoration group in Germany may be quoted:

«People who were looking for a place of solace, tired out by living in Europe, have found their friends and met their fellow countrymen at a mosque. There, not only the aged first generation, but also young people of the third generation and women could spend a time free from mental strain in living on a foreign land. The mosque provided the place for prayer at first but gradually became a place for communication» (Naito, 1996, 188).

A 31-year-old man who has stayed in Germany for 7 years, says, «I come here because I can stay for some time with people who share the same social, cultural and religious thoughts with myself». To the question, «On what occasions do you feel it good to be a Muslim?» a 40-year-old man with 10 years of living in Germany replies, «I am thankful that I am Muslim when I see Europeans, be it young or elderly, or women or men, who have become addicted to drugs or otherwise have fallen below animals» (ditto 189-190).

They are strongly aware of living in a different culture, and keenly sense the tendency of individualization of society. They refuse to be swallowed in cultural groups which will lead the individualization of society and the relativization of values. Instead, they choose to join a movement to build a community with a religious character. This is an expression of the religionization of individuals, but in this case, they make a choice to oppose individualization and seek group solidarity. This phenomenon may suggest a limit of the individualization of the contemporary society. Although the progress of individualization may seem to gnaw at religious commonality, it cannot be overlooked that the wall of religions stands in the way to resist it.

6. RELIGIONIZATION (RESACRALIZATION) OF INDIVIDUALS AND PUBLIC ARENAS

The trend that values individual spirituality and the trend by religious restoration groups that value a group-oriented religious character are apparently looking at two different poles. Both reflect, however, the tendency of resacralizing (religionizing) individuals, or the tendency whereby individuals choose their own religions and spirituality afresh.

The resacralization and religionization of individuals does not always encourage individuals to be involved in public arenas. But it is needless to say that involvement in public arenas frequently occurs. In countries where Islam restoration groups

have influence, or where Jewish and Hindu groups exert strong political influence, the tendency of individuals being involved in public arenas through their religious groups is gaining strength. In the United States, the involvement of religious groups including Evangelical Christians is becoming stronger. The Evangelical Church, for example, instructs followers to positively advocate the reflection of the Christian way of living in formal education in their local communities (Unoura, 1998; ditto 2001). The situations in Europe are a little different from the United States, and political involvement by religious groups appears to have remained low. Beck and Bauman are influenced by this situation to understand the contemporary society. There certainly is the trend of religious orientation or resacralization among individuals, but it is seen that they have not developed strong enough to take a clear form of movement. But is it truly the fact?

The author is not prepared to make an in-depth analysis about developments in Europe, but considers that the signs of individuals becoming religiously inclined may be apparent in many aspects. Socio-theorists such as Beck and Bauman tend to over-evaluate the tradition of the Enlightenment that social theories have followed, and under-evaluate the religious character or spirituality that public arenas are bound to bear. The same is true for Japan which has established its academic tradition in recent times from a syncretic fusion of Confucianism and modernism-oriented western thoughts.

Then how can the present situation of Japan be evaluated? The rise of Neo-Nationalism in and after the 1980s can be understood in connection with the progress of individualization (Shimazono, 2001). Already since the 1970s, the rise of cultural nationalism has been apparent in the form of the Japan theories of the theories of the Japanese uniqueness. In the 1980s, the Japan theories increasingly referred to religions. The increase in the theories on religions of the Japanese corresponded with the rise of the «Spiritual World», a Japanese form of postmodern spirituality that reflects individualization (Shimazono, 1996).

Shoichi Saeki, a well-known scholar of English literature, published *Shinto no Kokoro (The Heart-Mind of Shinto)* in 1989 in which he listed good points of Shinto comparing with Christianity and Communism, and advocated that that it was time to restore Shinto. Saeki insists that the Japanese should be conscious of themselves as being the successors of Shinto tradition. He also says that the Japanese should clearly identify their religious beliefs, and should express their opinions on the Yasukuni shrine issue.

«With what sentiments and attitudes do people worship at Yasukuni shrine? It is the matter of their religious belief, and their religious psychology lies at the core. Or, at least, there should be one at the core of their heart-mind. Nevertheless, as long as I have seen, this essential matter has been left untouched in the newspapers, magazines and TV in Japan. They have reported on legal interpretation, or how other governments had perceived about the Yasukuni shrine issue. They are all of secondary aspects (...).

The Japanese are particularly enthusiastic about mourning the deceased, consoling the spirit of the deceased and comforting them, and tend to continue to be concerned about (...).

Therefore, I have believed that it was one of the religious practices that we the Japanese had acquired as a matter of nature to mourn for the dead heartily, and to console the soul of the dead. But looking at the responses of the media to the current Yasukuni shrine issue, my confidence is shaken. I wonder if the contemporary Japanese are gradually, or they seem to me extraordinarily, political and ideological. Even on a question of religions, or the issue of faith to everyone's eye, the media nonchalantly indulge in political deliberations» (Saeki, 1989, 46-48).

His attitude is modern in that he tries to take a clear position to be united with a religious tradition and to behave on the basis of the religion in the world where globalization is progressing and various beliefs and information coexist, while being strongly aware that the identity tends to diffuse. Saeki urges that Japanese citizens clarify the basis for their living as individuals. This is a suggestion by someone who has lived for many years in the United States to study and teach. He says if people are supposed to clarify the basic principle for their life, there is nothing but Shinto which is the root of national tradition.

Saeki reveals it as a kind of change in his mind to have put forward this stance. In the «foreword» to the book, he comments, «As a matter of fact, what I consider the main motif of this book is my rediscovery of Shinto or change of my mindset turning to Shinto». Here is an example of the «religionization of individuals» while being strongly conscious about the proliferation of communality through the progress of individualization. If the term «religionization» is not used, it is the orientation of an individual to place oneself in relation to the transcendental being, or putting oneself along a specific kind of communality, and to hope to demonstrate one's distinctive identity as an individual person in a context where diverse beliefs and information are intermingled. This mindset resembles that of Turkish migrants in Germany who have come close to the Islam restoration groups in order to clarify their identity as Muslims. It should not be overlooked that there was a spiritual movement such as this behind the movement of the association «to create new history textbooks» which became active in Japan in the late 1990s.

The «religionization of individuals» contains an orientation to bring religious elements into public arenas in the contemporary society. It is not limited only to the Yasukuni shrine issue, textbook issue, and historic perception issue. The permeation of religions and spirituality into public arenas is not only observed in activities geared to nationalism. Other typical examples are environmental problems and bioethics problems. Kunio Yanagida has contributed to the formation of negative public opinion on the issue of organ transplants from brain-dead persons through taking the stance of opposing brain death as human death, and thus, being not in favor of promoting organ transplant. Possibilities of the involvement of religious elements and spirituality in various political disputes are increasing.

It is one sided to consider that the «individualization of religions» will lead to the withdrawal of religions from public arenas and to the «privatization of religions» (for example, Luckman, 1967). On the reverse side of the «individualization of

religions is the situation of the «religionization of individuals» which accompanies the spread of religions and spirituality into public arenas. In this aspect, countries and social classes in which the fundamentalism is rising, and those in which spirituality seemingly avoiding group integrity is favored, in fact, share the common foundation. Certainly resacralization is progressing, and this is coincident with the individualization of society at large.

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