A Treatise on the Ideology of National Identity

Constitution, Yasukuni Shrine, Textbooks, Territory
— Why China and South Korea are Angry over the Series of Actions by Japan’s Koizumi Group?

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Prologue
Why have things come to pass?

The criticism of Japan by the governments of China and South Korea has gone from sharp to fierce.(1) In April, the criticism by the two governments escalated and spearheaded by demonstrations against the Japanese embassies in the two capitals.(2) Anti-Japanese feelings came to a head as "public" demonstrations were carried out against Japanese convenience stores, supermarkets, restaurants, etc. and this threatened to develop into a movement of boycotts against Japanese goods.

Where lay the reasons for all this?

It is quite clear that the cause of all this lies in the words and deeds of the Koizumi Government of Japan, in the recent few years, over the basic ideology and history of China and South Korea which literally stroked backward the feelings of the two governments and their peoples.(3)

The Koizumi Group's acts of worship at the Yasukuni Shrine, the compulsive campaign to revise the constitution, the textbook content negate the history after 1945, and the territorial disputes based on aggression over Chinese and Korean territories are all carried out on the premise of "internal" issues in Japan which amounted to negation of the very "existence" of China and South Korea. In particular, in respect to the issue of U.S. "occupation" of Taiwan, whereas China sees as an internal issue, the Koizumi government, subservient to the military strategy of the U.S., issued a joint statement with the U.S. which amounted to supporting the independence of Taiwan. This clearly stings on the raw nerve of China.(3)

Why does the Koizumi group adopted such hostile speeches and actions against China and South Korea? What are the reasons for such? And what do they hope to achieve? Unless we have answers to this, the tensions with the two countries will not be resolved.

Presently, trade relationships with China and South Korea have expanded at a pace much faster than trade with the U.S. How does the Koizumi Group reckon this trend?

One cannot help but feel that such a hostile policy has its basis on the ideology prior to 1945 which looked down upon China and Korea. Would this "rightwing opportunism" of the rightwing extremists in the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) lead Japan to the cul-de-sac of August 1945? Would such a clumsy and naïve foreign policy bring the bilateral relationships with these two countries from the boycott movement of Japanese goods to the brink of military tensions?

Would such military tension bring benefits to the Japanese armament industry?

What benefits would it bring to the economic circles of Japan centering on the heavy and chemical industries?

What benefits would it bring by rescinding the three principles governing the export of armament?

What benefits would this policy of extreme rightwing opportunism bring even allowing Germany and France to take away the opportunities offered by the Chinese infrastructure investments centering on giant national projects such as the Shinkansen, high speed expressways, etc.? Why would one choose to commit double suicide with the U.S. over investment opportunities to the magnitude of 100 to 200 trillion yen? Moreover, signs of conflict are beginning to show with the U.S. to whom it has been hitherto subservient. We must pay attention to the real intentions of the Koizumi Group which are reactionary and revengistic.
What would the Koizumi rightwing extremism bring? We cannot help but recall the historical facts of prewar history which ultimately led to conflict with the U.S. What results would it bring by adopting an extreme rightwing chauvinist policy of hostility?

One does not need to spend too much effort to draw up the following list of situations. Let us be calm, stand in the Chinese and Korean shoe and put the issues in order.

1. China and South Korea’s criticism of Japan on the issue of the Senkaku Islands = Yudiao Islands and Takeshima = Dokudo

2. Criticism of Japan on the issue of fascist textbooks approved by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) = LDP’s fanatic Tenno-ism.

3. The ideology of LDP’s fanatic Tenno-ism symbolized by the issue of worshipping at the Yasukuni Shrine which is the root of criticism by China and South Korea.(4)

4. One cannot help but come to the thought that all this issues of 1) territorial dispute; 2) textbook; 3) Yasukuni Shrine visit, and 4) constitutional revision, are related to the “Ideology of National Identity.” As demonstrated by the tenacious rebukes of Japan raised by China and South Korea between 2004 and 2005, Japan’s chauvinist treatment of these issues as Japanese internal issues is the cause of aggravation of relations with its neighbors.

5. For us students of history, i.e. history of political thoughts, we must conduct a basic study based on the Chinese and Korean perspective. Moreover, as orchestrated recently by the Japanese Government and the Japanese mass media, by presenting it as one of anti-Japanese acts against Japanese nationals and enterprises in China, it is a basic misrepresentation of the issue.

The State Shinto-ism = Amaterasu-ohmikami-kyo was fabricated towards the end of the 19th Century. We must not allow the Japanese society to be colored by such a new found religious ideology of that time.

The defeat of Imperial Japan in 1945 has allowed the Chinese and Korean peoples to form their own societies. We must watch the process with a comrade feeling of compassion, respect and understanding. We should never fall prey to shallow state ideology and nationalism and allow ourselves to down tread the feelings of the people in other societies with one’s own “egoistic expression.”

This past down treading might have taken place in the military, ideological and economic realms only. But we must learn that this will never be erased from the people’s minds. One only needs to compare the verdicts of the Japanese courts, which use every possible “subterfuge” to evade wartime compensation, with the “graceful contrition” of the German government.

For a people to perpetuate in this world it must have its own sense of history. And such a sense perpetuates.

I . The Lesson of the Federal Republic of Germany

Post-war Germany has long since dispensed with the prewar German militarism and negated Nazism, and transformed itself into a modern nation. For this reason, such “reflection of history” has been firmly established as the ideology of national identity for the German state which no one can deny. And because of this ideology of national identity, Germany has gained the friendship and trust of its neighboring countries, albeit gradually. Former
Prime Minister Brandt’s kneeling before the memorial to the unknown soldiers in Warsaw, Poland was the first step toward reconciliation between the two countries.

In Germany, it is unthinkable for the German Prime Minister to worship at the memorial to Nazis Hitler. The worshiping of Tojo and other war criminals in Yasukuni Shrine by Prime Minister Koizumi is looked upon by the whole world as a grave criminal act against history. Japan continues singularly to drag along with it the legacy of prewar Tenno-ism and is, in fact, even trying to resurrect it.

Such a “cultured nation” fails to command the respect of its neighboring countries but continues to perpetuate tension, despise and conflict. The failure of Japan in gaining international support on issue of abduction of Japanese nationals by North Korea has to do with this as well. The Japanese attempt to gain permanent membership in the U.N. Security Council fails to gain support not only from China and South Korea but even from the U.S. which the Koizumi Group has relied on so much. In the international community, one cannot survive with hostility, despise and chauvinist nationalism. Japanese enterprises and their staff working in the local communities have long since learned of this.

History tells us of the outcome of this extreme rightwing opportunism. One must not forget that the down treading of the peoples of Asia by the Fanatic Tenno-ism and State Shinto-ism Ideology at the end of the 19th Century had brought great misery not only to the peoples of China and Korea but also to the common people in Japan as well. We must bear in mind that we cannot survive in the world community without gaining the goodwill of the common people worldwide.

For this reason, we must treat the issues of 1) territorial dispute; 2) textbook; 3) the worship at the Yasukuni Shrine by the Prime Minister; and 4) revision of the constitution not as internal issues but as issues with a much broader basis.

II. The LDP’s Coup-de-tat-Style “Revision of the Constitution”

1) Presumptive understanding of this thesis

Modern constitution is based on the principle of people’s sovereignty. The formulation of the state power, its structure and functions is based on the exercise of the people’s right of rule. Therefore, in a modern constitution, there exist three different categories.

1) The exercise of the function of state power by the people, i.e. the subject of the exercise of state power in its narrowest sense. In other words, it is the function of the state power and the definition of the structure of the three powers. In the modern state, it is the cabinet and central government, the national assembly, local governments and assemblies, and the judiciary courts, etc. In other words, the constitution possesses the characters of practical law. And it possesses also the technical characteristics of the practical law.

2) There exist in the modern constitution principles which the people will never concede.

These are: People’s sovereignty, people’s basic human rights, parliamentarianism formed by the people. And within the parliament, the legislative function, budgetary decision, the openness of deliberation. Furthermore, based on the generality and legitimacy of the rule of law, the interpretation of law and its practical judgment are carried out exclusively by the judiciary court.

3) These practical law elements of the modern constitution have great influence on the technical aspects of law as well as the practical life of the people. Meanwhile, the people’s sovereignty pro-
vides the basis of legitimacy/orthodoxy to the modern state power.

These principle elements of the modern constitution cannot be denied, altered or freely interpreted by any state power group (not to mention any individual). These categories demonstrate the principle universality of the modern constitution.

4) The various principles in the political process of formation of the modern state based on the people's sovereignty are the prerequisite to the founding of the modern constitutional state. It can also be called the ideology of national identity.

The political process as the prerequisite of the national identity of a state also forms the basis of the legitimacy of this state. The legitimacy of the national identity finds expression in the ideology (world view) of an individual state.

(2) The ideology of national identity of China, South Korea and Southeast Asian countries also applies to Japan

"The ideology of national identity and the politics of state formation in China and Korea." For instance, the ideology of national identity in Japan as indicated in the political process of state formation was one of renunciation of war. Since ancient times, the identity of a nation recognizes in the name of sovereignty the unlimited use of violent physical force in the process of exercising its state power. This was the discovery of the acts of war.

In Japan, an act of genocide was carried out by the U.S. with the dropping of atomic bombs in August 1945 killing 100,000 to 200,000 people. Moreover, in Tokyo, Osaka and other major cities where there was a high concentration of population, genocide, in the scale of 10,000 to 100,000 people at a time, also took place with the strategic bombings by the U.S. (It is appropriate to note that such bombings were modeled on the bombings of Wuhan and other Chinese cities by Hirohito's Imperial Army in prior years.)

Moreover, we should also take note that the war actions which brought along such acts of genocide were carried out in the name of a single person "the Emperor." As a result of this, the ideology of national identity of Japan in the course of its state formation after the War was one of renunciation of war based on historical reflection. To this day (2005), this continues to be the ideology of national identity for modern Japan and its constitution.

Let us summarize for our conclusion. Presently, in order to change the various aspects of the constitution, the machinations carried out by the LDP inside and outside of the Japanese Diet are 1) to change the substance of the state power structure resting on the existing constitution and; 2) to change in substance the principles of the modern constitution which cannot be replaced; and 3) most important of all, to change in substance or to discard outright the ideology of national identity which forms the basis of the very existence of the Japanese state as a nation.

This ideology of national identity exists in the constitution of every nation. For example, the ideology of national identity of the People's Republic of China, as revealed in the political process of its state formation, is "anti-Japan." Here, "Japan" should read Imperial Japan.

The Imperial Japan was the Emperor (Tenno) and the Imperial System. As a result, the PRC, which achieved independence, has its ideology of national identity rested in the negation of the Japanese Emperor and the Japanese Imperial System in the course of its national formation. (The Republic of Korea achieved independence in 1945. In 1949, the PRC, Indonesia and other countries proclaimed
their independence.)

The political process in the national formation of South Korea was similar to that of the PRC. As the result of the Korean people's persevered struggle, the "annexation of Korea" was repudiated and Imperial Japan bankrupted militarily. And the Korean independence was made possible.

In both China and Korea, it makes no difference whether one is called socialist and the other capitalist, both have in their basis of national independence rested on the repudiation of Japan, the Imperial Japan, the Japanese Emperor and the Japanese Imperial System. And this finds its place in the ideology of national identity of China and South Korea.

The worshipping at the Yasukuni Shrine, a religious entity symbolizing Tenno-ism, by Prime Minister Koizumi who has been entrusted the authority to exercise the state power of Japan is for China and South Korea an act of negation and down treading the ideology of national identity of these two nations. As discussed, this ideology is based on the negation of Japan, the Imperial Japan, the Japanese Emperor and the Japanese Imperial System.

The leaders of the PRC have repeatedly stated that they "will never accept the worshipping (by the Japanese Prime Minister) at the Yasukuni Shrine." For them, this is a natural conclusion in their reasoning. Yasukuni Shrine symbolizes and glorifies the military power of the Japanese Emperor. Yasukuni Shrine affirms the Japanese Emperor and the Japanese Imperial System and their acts of massacre, occupation and looting of the Chinese and Korean peoples. Yasukuni Shrine is where the "war criminals," which directly carried out the acts of war in the name of the Japanese Emperor and brought sufferings to the Chinese and Korean peoples, are enshrined. The worshipping in the Yasukuni Shrine by Prime Minister Koizumi amounts to wholesale negation of the ideology of national identity achieved in the history of the People's Republic of China and the Republic of Korea. What would happen if the present prime minister of Germany bows before a memorial to Hitler? One cannot even imagine such a thing.

Should the LDP try to affirm the fanatic Imperial System through the "revision of the Constitution" and "the ideology of national identity based on Tenno-ism" which is a bag of theoretical misconceptions and acts of hogwash, it must explain to the Japanese people in an orderly fashion in accordance with these three constitutional categories and why they are not conflicting principles.(6)

Presently, the reactionary and revengistic LDP and its instigator, the U.S. Government, have been working to corrupt the constitution. Why has this machination of constitutional revision caused so many issues at the international political arena? There is a need for us to look into this.

The "constitutional revision" by the LDP, which runs counter to the universality of modern constitution, is a form of coup de tat. If the constitutional revision were, as explained in 1.) above, simply a form of technical revision of the constitution which is the corruption of a form of the state power structure, it would be an act similar to that which had taken place in the Federal Republic of Germany for over 50 times so far. As in the case of Germany, such a revision of the constitutional articles in the practical law as explained in 1.), this would not cause such serious debates on the state principles.

However, the constitutional revision as orchestrated by the LDP in Japan does not necessarily have the majority support within the LDP. It is a coup de tat conducted by a limited faction of
extreme right wing and rightwing forces aiming at corrupting the state principles and the long-term orientation of the society. The “Research Commissions on the Constitution” (Commission) in the two Houses of the Diet is a “stealthy” attempt at a hodgepodge discussion by the group on the three categories (1.), (2.) and (3.). Moreover, under the present constitution, the Diet members are bound by duty to respect the constitution. The motion by the members to revise the constitution is in itself a subject of debate.

Half a century ago, there existed a Commission which was formed by Nobusuke Kishi, the war criminal prime minister.

Their methodology has not changed.

The final report and its attachments submitted by the Commission in 1964 amounted to several thousands of pages and formed a dozen volumes. According to the book “Constitutional Believes and Political Phenomena–Notes on Postwar Constitutional History” (Waseda University Press, 1966) by Kenichi Nagai, the report itself alone occupies more than 1,000 pages. This Commission submitted, at the time of the Hatoyama Cabinet in 1956, that is, only ten years after the Constitution was promulgated in 1946, a Bill on the Research Commission on the Constitution in tandem with the Bill on Small Electoral System. As a result of Hatoyama’s electoral re-zoning machinery, the Bill on Small Electoral System was quashed. But the Bill on the Commission was adopted at the 24th session of the Diet. At the time of the Upper House election of July 1956, the Socialist Party took one-third of the seats and the Commission was rendered defunct.

In August 1957, the attempt by the Kishi Cabinet at “revising the Constitution for the purpose of rearrangement” incurred the wrath of the Japanese people. And the LDP learned better in calling it a research on “the actual application of the Constitution.” But the Socialist Party refused to participate and the 50-member commission was appointed by the LDP Cabinet. Almost 80% of the members of the Commission were proponents of constitution revision. Only ten years after the promulgation of the Constitution, Japan had become the supplement to the U.S. military strategy and the LDP was created in 1955 with the objective of strengthening the Japanese armed forces. The Kishi Cabinet, which ramped through the Diet the Japan–U.S. Security Treaty, resurrected this Commission and created a monster of it.

Like the present (2005) Report, the report submitted by the Commission in 1957 starting from the very first page and spending a better half of the pages in arguments for the revision of the Constitution. And history repeated itself. Presently, it is the Social Democratic Party and the Communist Party which are leveling strong criticism on the current Report.

Since the central proponents of the Tenno System led by ideologue Shinzo Koizumi and the like refused to participate in first Commission, the LDP failed to establish the thesis of the “Imposed Constitution” (which to this day it is still attempting to establish.)

Furthermore, while calling it a Research Commission, nothing was done to find out how in actual practice the Constitution had affected the people’s livelihood and the state of human rights in business enterprises (see aforementioned (1)). Nor had it done anything to study which were the basic rights that must not be changed based on the basic principles (refer to aforementioned (2)) of the Constitution. This has been a fragrant method of constitutional revision of the LDP as was the hallmark of the Kishi faction, reactionary and revengistic, which said yes but acted no.
They traveled to the U.S. in an attempt to gain approval for their revisionist efforts but were rebuffed. Meanwhile, they didn’t see fit to consult the Japanese Constitution Association (JCA). At the time, 80% to 90% of the JCA members were opposed to the revision of the Constitution. Subsequently, more than 50% of the members were also of the opinion that the Self-Defense Forces violated the Constitution.

Fifty years have passed; the LDP Commission of 2005 has among its major players a person related to the “war criminal” Nobusuke Kishi. Fifty years ago, Kishi, Sato, Nakasone, Abe and their like have created a lineage of ultra-rightists—Japanese nationalists but subservient to the U.S. It is still working for its realization in 2005.

As China and South Korea see it, the LDP Government’s educational practice of the past 50 years has succeeded in the mind-control of the Japanese people through occupying the local education commissions of the country with followers of Tenno-ism and nationalists and subjecting the Japanese people to ideological brainwashing. (According to what the mass media’s so-called questionnaires, it is now said that support for constitutional revision is growing.)

These believers of Tenno-ism and revengists are dreaming for the return of the pre-war Imperial Japan. They have given the state authority, the right of review and authorization of text-books, to Fusō-sha, a member of the Sankei Shimbun group. As a result, the history of China and Korea and their ideology of national identity have been completely repudiated.

As has already been said, Japan has territorial disputes with all its neighbors. With Russia, the four islands in the north. With Korea, the issue over Dokudo = Takeshima. With China, the issue is over the Senkaku Islands. Such a state of international isolation harks back to 1933 when H. Matsuoka led Japan out of the League of Nations.

III. Why does the LDP Government Choose to Practice such a Hard-Line Foreign Policy in the name of “Constitutional Revision”?

Like the Kishi Cabinet in 1960, Japan behaves as a vassal state of the U.S. —conducting a policy in close steps with the military strategy of the U.S. of the time and fighting its neighbors.

The constitutional revision by the LDP is nothing but an attempt to divert Japan toward the orientation of an extreme rightwing government. It negates the basic principles of modern constitution and the ideology of national identity of modern states. And, it is an attempt to fulfill the dream of establishing a state, not as a vassal state of the U.S., but with its own military forces and with Tenno-ism as its basic ideology. (The Koizumi Group has provided free fuel to the U.S. armed forces in the Indian Ocean but earns only the jests of the U.S. Forces as being “free station.”)

In 2005, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) which is imbued with ideas of constitutional revisionism of the Matsushita Institute of Government and Management and the Soka Gakkai/New Komeito (Komeito) which has been embraced by the LDP have traveled a long way and are bringing the country to the brink of revising to the worse of the Constitution. The constitutional revision attempt by the LDP government since 1955 is an attempt to derail Japan from the direction of a modern state. It is an attempt to discard the ideology of national identity for modern Japan, that is, the ideology of renouncing war and of peace which we gained through the hard lessons of the World War II and at the expense of the lives of several million people.
The “children who know no war,” who are borne since 1945, have now become the center of the constitutional revision forces in the Diet orchestrated by the LDP, the DPJ and the Komeito.

If we were to revise the Constitution, we should first of all expunge the mysticism in Chapter One about the Emperor (Tenno = Sumerare-mikoto in the Amaterasu-ohvikami-kyo) being the “center of unity” of the modern state. The argument surrounding “the only one and everlasting reign of Tenno” finds no place in the modern international community.

Under cover of the confusion created by the hostile M&A attempt of Livedoor, the constitutional revision attempt inside the Diet gained steady ground. (On April 15, the final report of the Commission was submitted to the Lower House Speaker.)

Nippon Broadcasting System Inc.- Fuji Television, which Mr. Takafumi Horie of Livedoor attempted to takeover, are subsidiaries of Sankei Shim bun, a newspaper which, because of its extreme-rightwing leanings, has to give up publishing its evening edition. In the same rein, Yomiuri Shim bun, under the tutelage of Mr. Tsuneo Watanabe, has also been drumming for the revision of the Constitution. We must see this as an attempt to distort the ideology of national identity of modern Japan.

In the past 50 year’s history of Japan, the LDP Government has moved from playing “subservient” to the U.S. to “writing its own Constitution,” to picking fights with its neighboring countries of Russia, South Korea and China and to strengthening and expanding its armed forces. All this is carried out behind an irrational theocratic ideological backdrop of paying respect to the religious entity of the Yasukuni Shrine. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) has created a controversy by approving textbooks which confirm past savage acts of invasion. It is clear to everyone today that total disregard of other countries will never earn us their ears. (The violent phenomena of exclusivism that are taking place in this country are the inevitable results of the “Yasukuni” acts.)

This closed-door, coup de tat like attempt at constitutional revision by the LDP, DPJ and Komeito is a repetition of history and is doomed to failure.

The ideology of national identity in China and South Korea is based on their passion for independence and only achieved at the expense of great historical sacrifices. This is true for all countries which achieved their independence after the War. These nations are established on the basis of an ideology of national identity. Japan should treat this historical sacrifice of China and South Korea with self-reflection, compassion and respect. Japan should conduct international relationships on the same basis as that of Germany.

Japan, as a military industrial power, is taking a hostile position toward China which is growing as a “capitalist” power. Japan is discarding its national identity ideology of “renunciation of war and pacifism” and instead building a totalistic state where militaristic economy (relentless pursuit for excessive profits and ideological, cultural and spiritual uniformity) and armed industries would flourish.

“Anti-Japan, Anti-Imperial System and Anti-Yasukuni” is the ideology of national identity for China and South Korea in their independence in 1949 and 1945 respectively. Japan must respect this fact or it cannot expect to survive as a nation in every aspect of existence.

As pointed out by former German Prime Minister,
Mr. Helmut Schmidt, Japan, as a nation, must take heart that it does not have true friends around. By relying on the anachronistic and fanatic Tenno-ism and sacrificing international cooperation, how can we survive in a sea of hostility?

We have not entrusted our entire historical orientations to the LDP which gained state power through a corrupt electoral system. Like China and South Korea, we Japanese people have achieved the national identity ideology of “renunciation of war and pacifism.” This is a solemn fact. We cannot allow the LDP, DPJ and the like to change through their machinations of constitutional revision such a solemn ideology of national identity which takes root in international trust and finds its source in the people's sovereignty.

This is a historical fact since 1945. We cannot allow the LDP to usurp such a historical fact from the Japanese people through their coup de tat.

Where on earth is the LDP trying to lead this country to? (End)

Notes

(1) 1945 : Yalta Conference, the Potsdam Declaration
1948 : The Republic of Korea Independence
    The Democratic People's Republic of Korea Independence
1949 : The People's Republic of China Independence

(2) Not only these two governments but also other southeast countries are criticized against Japanese Government.

(3) Their international activities against Japanese government are founded upon their historical feelings and the international treaties in those days.

(4) The Making of the Constitution of Japan 1972
    Vol. I Documents
    Vol. II Comments
    Kenzo Takayanagi, Ichiro Ohtomo and Hideo Tanaka Published Yuhikaku 1978

(5) e.g., FACTS BEARING ON THE PROBLEM
    The Potsdam Declaration provides that:
    “The Japanese Government shall remove all obstacles to the revival and strengthening of democratic tendencies among the Japanese people. Freedom of speech, of religion, and of thought, as well as respect for the fundamental human rights shall be established.

    The Allied note of August 11 to the Japanese Government stated that:
    “The ultimate form of government of Japan shall, in accordance with the Potsdam Declaration, be established by the freely expressed will of the Japanese people.”
    One of the ultimate objectives of the United States in regard to Japan is stated in . . . “United States Initial Post-Defeat Policy Relating to Japan,” to be:
    “To bring about the eventual establishment of a peaceful and responsible government which will respect the rights of other states and will support the objectives of the United States as reflected in the budget or to suggest new items; (P.414 d.) The Japanese should be encouraged to abolish the Emperor Institution or to reform it along more democratic lines.