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Linhart, Sepp

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Sociology in Post-war Japan: Declining or Blossoming?

A Short Overview of Some Critical Issues

Sepp Linhart

Introduction: A Decline of Sociology?

In 2005, Ilja Srubar and Shingo Shimada published the book *Development of Sociology in Japan*. Written by some of the foremost Japanese sociologists, it gives a broad overview of the history of sociology in Japan, from the beginning to the present¹⁾. One could argue that yet another article on Japanese sociology is not needed so soon after the publication of such a fine book. However, one could also argue that the very existence of the book enables one to concentrate on things not mentioned in Srubar's and Shimada's book, which is where I would like to focus my considerations. Furthermore, the above book represents a view of Japanese sociology by informed insiders, while my short essay is from the perspective of an interested outsider. I hope that this essay is perceived as a kind of short amendment statement to the book, which is indispensable reading for anyone interested in the discipline

1) Earlier reports on Japanese sociology in English can be found in Fukutake 1969, Koyano 1976 and Lie 1996. Very important are the regular reports about new research results in the Series *An Introductory Bibliography for Japanese Studies. Part 1: Social Sciences*, which have been published since 1974. See Aoi and Naoi 1974, 1976 and 1978; Shōji 1982, 1986, 1991, 1992, 1994, 1996, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004, 2006; as well as Shōji K., Machimura, Shōji Y., Takegawa and Yazawa 1988. In German, I tried to assemble basic information about the study of Japanese society and about Japanese sociology in Linhart 2001.

of sociology in Japan.

In Japan, society is said to have a special importance. Thirty years ago, Takie Sugiyama Lebra (1976: 2), the well-known American-Japanese social anthropologist, spoke of a “social preoccupation” which she saw as existing in Japan. Aida Yūji (1970: 127-45), historian and *Nihonjinronsha*, said that since in Japan there exists no absolute God like in the West, the role of God is performed by society. Society in this case probably is not *shakai*, or society as a whole, but rather the traditional concept of *seken*, or the closer community surrounding the individual; in Ferdinand Tönnies’ language *Gemeinschaft* rather than *Gesellschaft*²⁾. Although it is difficult to proof empirically, I venture to say that, in general, Japanese people try to incorporate the views of the people whom their decisions might affect into their personal decision-making to a higher degree than an average person from a Western country does. In many Western countries, acting according to one’s inner beliefs is encouraged in the socialization of children, while in Japan not to trouble others (*hito ni meiwaku o kakenai yō ni*) has priority. Thus, perhaps it is justified to say that society, or at least *seken*, plays a larger role in the average Japanese’s life than is the case in the West.

If this hypothesis is correct, one could assume that sociology as the academic discipline that is concerned with the study of society might play a greater role in Japan than it does in America, Great Britain, or Germany. In these Western countries in the 1960s and 70s, sociology performed a relatively important role as an academic discipline, after which it seems to have undergone a decline of sorts. In 1993, doyen of American sociology Irving L. Horowitz, then 64 years old, wrote the much-discussed book *The Decomposition of Sociology*, lamenting the decline of sociology in the United

2) The concept of *seken* has been studied thoroughly by Abe Kin’ya (1995), a historian of Western Europe, and earlier by the well-known sociologist Inoue Tadashi (1977).

States. Given the leading position of American sociology after 1945 and the pivotal position of American academic sciences globally, it is natural that the decline of sociology in the USA should have repercussions in sociology in other countries, like in Japan. But what exactly did Horowitz deplore?

Formerly, Horowitz argues, sociology was a “central discipline of the social sciences”, but it is now in a crisis, having become an “ideological outpost of political extremism”. As a consequence, “some departments have been shut down, others cut back, research programs have dried up, and the growth of professional organizations and student enrolments have been either curbed or atrophied”. Horowitz charges that “much contemporary sociological theory has degenerated into pure critique, strongly influenced by Marxist dogmatism. Such thinking has a strong element of anti-American and anti-Western bias, in which all questions have one answer—the evil of capitalism—and all problems one solution—the good of socialism. In criminology, for instance, he shows that high crime rates are seen as an expression of capitalist disintegration, and criminal behavior a covert expression of radical action”. A “formulaic thinking dominates the field, resulting in a crude reductionist view of contemporary social life”. For him “such reductionist tendencies and ideological posturings are outmoded” (N.N.: Oxford University Press Website).

Similar positions have been taken by other well-known sociologists: Peter L. Berger is renowned for his book *Invitation to Sociology* (1963), still in print after more than forty years, and for his contributions to the sociology of religion. In the October 2002 issue of *First Things*, he contributed the article “Whatever Happened to Sociology”, in which he laments the deformation of sociology with methodological fetishisms that started in the 1950s; and continued into the late 1960s, when the cultural revolution tried “to transform sociology from a science into an instrument of ideological

advocacy” (Berger 2002). This caused sociology to lose status, its brightest students and a lot of funding. The result of methodological fetishism is that many sociologists have been using “increasingly sophisticated methods to study increasingly trivial topics”. The result of this type of sociological research is that the ‘big questions’ are no longer asked and get lost. But even worse for sociology, states Berger, is its ideologization: sociology becoming an instrument of agitation and propaganda for leftist causes. Since there are considerably fewer adherents of true Marxism, but the influence of Marxism is still felt, Berger speaks of ‘marxisant’ sociology. Over the past few years, these sociologists have intoned the mantra of “class, race, and gender”. Berger concludes his article by stating that sociology may be more a perspective than a field, and that since this perspective has greatly influenced all other social sciences and also the humanities, it could be that it has fulfilled its purpose.

A third prominent American sociologist is Orlando Patterson, an Afro-American sociology professor at Harvard University, a specialist in race relations, and a sociologist mentioned positively by European-American Berger in the essay cited above. In May 2002, he published an obituary for his mentor, David Riesman, in *The New York Times* with the provocative title “The Last Sociologist”. In contrast to Horowitz and Berger, Patterson does not take issue with leftist or marxisant sociology, but instead with a sociology that “mimics the methodology and language of the natural sciences”, which he says is inappropriate “for the understanding of most areas of the social world”. Patterson deplores the dearth of public sociologists in the USA. Sociologists such as Erving Goffman, C. Wright Mills, William F. Whyte, Daniel Bell, Nathan Glazer, Peter Berger, and of course David Riesman, whose sociology “was driven first by the significance of the subject and second by an epistemological emphasis on understanding the

nature and meaning of social behavior". Thus, "mainstream sociology has abandoned [its] important mission", and the vacuum left behind has been filled with "the frightening intellectual mess of so-called cultural studies" (Patterson 2002).

Of course, these books and statements provoked a number of responses, including one from Michael Burawoy (2005), professor at the University of California in Berkeley, who, as president of the American Sociological Association (ASA), made public sociologies the theme of the ASA's annual meeting in 2004. The ASA examined the issue, and Roberta Spalter-Roth, director of a research program on both the discipline and the profession, reported in February 2003 that no trend toward the elimination of sociology departments could be seen between 1991 and 2001, and that the number of students had in fact increased (Spalter-Roth 2003). However, we have to bear in mind that many of the critics' allegations cited above have an evaluative character not easily answered to with statistics.

With this American discussion in mind let us now turn to Japanese sociology. Does the American discussion have any influence on Japan? Is Japanese sociology also victim of a marxisant ideologization on the one hand, and a fetishism of methods borrowed from the natural sciences on the other? Is Japanese sociology still a central discipline of the social sciences, if it ever was, or has this changed? Are any Japanese sociologists acting as public sociologists or have the last Japanese sociologists also died out?

First, I would like to answer the question of whether the ongoing discussion in the U.S. is noticed by Japanese sociology. The straightforward answer is yes. Many Japanese sociologists still regard the USA as the Mecca of sociology, and carefully watch what is going on there. To cite just one example, as early as March 1995, Kashioka Tomihide, then at the International Institute for Japanese Studies (Nichibunken) in Kyoto,

published an essay titled “History of the Rise and Fall of Post-war American Sociology”, and there are probably various other similar reports.

The following remarks are an attempt to narrate a short interpretative history of post-WWII Japanese sociology set against the critical issues mentioned in the US sociology discourse and some others. I will briefly cover two problems seldom mentioned in histories of Japan’s sociological field and also lacking in Srubar and Shimada (2005); namely the overcoming of colonialism and the feminization of Japanese sociology. If Japanese sociology was and still is academically colonized by American sociology, similar trends as in the US can be expected in Japan. While the issue of colonialism was not, to my knowledge, mentioned as a problem in American sociology, some specialists hold the second issue, feminization, responsible for the decline of sociology. Both issues seem to have definite relevance. Only when sociology frees itself from the fetters of colonialism, can it become a truly independent discipline, - a pre-condition for its evolution. Additionally, the full effect of womanpower can only be achieved if a certain feminization of the discipline occurs. Thus, the anchoring of a balanced female perspective in all fields of sociology, without a radical feminist dominance, is certainly another prerequisite for the blossoming of Japan’s sociological field. After having looked at these two issues, I try to get an answer as to the importance of ‘marxisant’ sociology in Japan, as expressed in a predilection for studying social problems that can be interpreted as caused by Japanese capitalism. Finally I try to investigate the existence of public sociologists in Japan over the past sixty years and then I will try to make a final evaluative statement about the state of sociology in Japan today as compared to US sociology as seen by its mentioned critics. The issue of methodological fetishism is too complex to be answered in a short essay like this, but a brief look into some of Japan’s sociological journals

reveals that Japanese sociology, like every national sociology, also has its methodological fetishists.

I have tried to cite appropriate literature and to give statistical data for my assumptions, but I also incorporated a lot of personal observations and experiences accumulated over the past more than forty years, during which I always have been an interested observer of what was going on in Japanese sociology.

Japanese sociology as colonial and as colonized studies

Until 1945, there was no academic ethnology in Japan, although sociology held a chair at Tōkyō University as early as 1893, first occupied by Tōyama Shōichi and, in 1898, by Takebe Tongo, who later became a member of the Lower and the Upper House. Most people interested in ethnology, like Oka Masao, first head of the Japanology department in Vienna in 1939/40, graduated in sociology. Quite a number of them have worked in Japan's colonized territories as researchers for the Japanese government, or for private colonial enterprises like the Mantetsu in Manchuria. In 1940, Oka Masao returned to Japan, never to come back to the University of Vienna again. In Japan, he was instrumental in establishing the National Ethnic Research Institute (ERI, *Minzoku Kenkyūsho*). Officially founded on January 16, 1943, this Ministry of Education institution had the aim of studying the various ethnicities of Japan's colonies (Shimizu 1999: 150-53; Nakao 1997). Takata Yasuma, former professor of sociology at Kyōto University and one of the best-known pre-war sociologists, was head of the institute. Because of his engagement, Takata was purged from academic life after the war, until June 1951 (Doak 2001: 32). But Takata was not the only sociologist who worked for or collaborated with Japan's colonial administration. The

ERI's initial researchers included six sociologists, the largest group of any discipline. One of them, young Oikawa Hiroshi, later became a professor at Meiji Gakuin University. Among the better-known post-war sociologists working outside the ERI were Okada Yuzuru, a sociologist at the University of Taiwan in Taipei and a specialist for the Taiwanese indigenous people; or Fukutake Tadashi, who worked in Northern China during the war and afterwards became an important leader of Japanese sociology. Equally important, Shimizu Morimitsu and Makino Tatsumi made key studies during the war on Chinese family structures (Tominaga 2005: 44).

It is apparent that a number of Japanese sociologists worked thus as 'colonists' during the war, and that this changed afterwards, when Japan's colonial empire was lost. Now, the former colonizers became colonized scientists, and quite a number of them were actively used by the 'new colonizers'—U.S. occupation forces and American sociologists. Particularly revealing in this context is a study by Arthur Raper on land reform, which benefited from input by a great number of the existing and upcoming *crème de la crème* of Japan's sociology field, including Suzuki Eitarō, Kitano Seiichi, Koyama Takashi, and Takeuchi Toshimi. Raper's study was carried out institutionally by the Public Opinion and Sociological Research Division of the Supreme Command of the Allied Powers (SCAP), in which two sociologists well-known in Japanese studies were working: John C. Pelzel and Herbert Passin (Linhart 1996: 116). In his recent overview of social survey research in Japanese sociology Tamano Kazushi also mentions that the Civil Information and Education Section (CIES) of the SCAP saw the introduction of social surveys as one means to make Japan democratic. It approached the above mentioned Japanese sociologists to teach them quantitative methods, but they all stopped using them when they were allowed to return to the universities with the sole exception of Koyama

Takashi³⁾ (Tamano 2007: 4).

The American occupation of Japan was brief, about 6 and a half years, but had a long lasting influence on Japanese sociology, setting the future contents and direction. Since the Japanese sociologists held especially theorizing in high esteem, it is not surprising that the U.S. sociologist most influential in Japan was Talcott Parsons, with his theory of action and theory of the social system. Adherents to this kind of sociology soon constituted the mainstream faction of Japanese sociologists, while Marxian sociology developed as the anti-mainstream faction (Tominaga 2005: 41). Whereas sociology before the war delved mainly into theoretical questions, it now developed into an empirical science under the post-war American influence, thus changing its character considerably.

The typical attitude of a ‘colonized scholar’ is best illustrated in Daidō Yasujirō’s book *Amerika shakaigaku no chōryū* (Currents in American Sociology), published in 1948 and printed a second time within the year. In his introduction, Daidō writes: “America is the country of sociology; so much so that they call it ‘the American Science’. American sociologists now lead the world in both the quantity and the quality of their work. We should empty our minds of old ideas, and strive for a new knowledge and understanding of American sociology” (Baba 1966: 11). Daidō probably used these words to propagate his book, but, seen from today, they also look like a very deep kowtow before one’s master. Naturally, many Japanese sociologists tried to experience American sociology first-hand, by studying in the United States for a shorter or longer period. To cite just one example: My first Japanese sociology teacher, Seki Kiyohide, professor at Hokkaidō University, born 1917, stayed at the University of North

3) On Koyama and American sociology see Mizuno 2004.

Carolina with a Rockefeller scholarship between 1955 and 1957, an episode in his life which was henceforth duly mentioned every time his biography was printed.

After the 1960 Anpo (US-Japan Security Treaty) unrests, the only victim of which was Kanba Michiko, the daughter of an academic sociologist; and especially after the student revolution of 1968/69, the hegemony of empirical American-style sociology gradually decreased and Japanese sociologists regained interest in sociology from other parts of the world, some even trying to find Japanese roots for sociology. I would interpret this process, which continued throughout the 1970s, as a decolonizing movement aimed at breaking away from American sociology. The Vietnam War and the 1970 publication of Alvin Gouldner's *The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology*, which appeared in a Japanese translation in 1974/75, did much to promote resistance to orthodox American sociology in Japan.

In 1972-73, I experienced strong anti-American sentiments first-hand while trying to find sociology students from the Tōkyō University graduate course to assist with the collection of data for a habilitation project. The students clearly saw me, a young European just starting his academic career, as a 'sahib'. After explaining the proposed research, I was immediately asked if I had already considered the consequences of this study for the people interviewed; if the study would be of any use for them at all or if I was only going to use the interviewed people for my own purposes; if I wanted to write a book or paper co-authored by the students; and if I was going to pay them properly. Having informed myself in advance about what Japanese professors were paying, I had brought enough money to pay the students a similar amount; but it turned out that they expected much higher wages from foreigners. They did not want to be misused by foreigners any longer, and therefore showed a very anti-colonial attitude towards the

‘sahib’ from Austria.

Summing up: about thirty years after the end of World War II Japanese sociology can be seen as a post-colonial science, a science purged of the too-strong influences both of U.S. and Soviet sociology⁴⁾. However, this does not mean that foreign influences were negligible. Japanese sociology had gained in confidence, Japanese sociologists had started doing research abroad, and the USA was no longer the sole international influence. But of course during the last quarter of the twentieth century, too, many Japanese sociologists continued to pilgrimage to the United States. Ishida Hiroshi, e.g., professor for social science research methods at the Graduate School for Political Studies at Tokyo University and presently editor of the *Social Science Japan Journal*, took his BA at Sophia University in Tokyo in 1979, his MA at Harvard in 1983 and his PhD also in Harvard in 1986. Such ‘international professors’ have an important role in Japanese sociology, as they are likely to act as intermediaries between Japanese and American or other Western sociologies.

The feminization of Japanese sociology

In many societies, women’s voices are not heard as loudly and authoritatively as those of men. On the other hand, some sociologists maintain that American sociology suffers from its high ratio of female sociologists. In Japan, women were first admitted to universities in 1945. Naturally, it took some time until the first female academic sociologists

4) Lie (1996) writes that there are signs “that Japanese sociology is finally emancipating itself from Western dominance”. I think that this process started much earlier. But a generally acknowledged Japanese theoretical sociologist with worldwide influence like Bourdieu, Habermas or Luhmann has still to appear.

came to the forefront.

In 1967, I spent a year at the sociology department of Hokkaidō University, and a year later at Tōkyō University. At both universities, the teaching staff was completely male, not a single teacher, professor or assistant, was female. At Hokkaidō University, one female graduate worked as a sociology teacher at a small college, keeping contacts with the graduate and doctoral students, Abe Toshiko. Later known as Kamada Toshiko, she became a professor of Tōkyō Joshi Daigaku. At the same time, I also attended two annual meetings of the Japan Sociological Society and remember that it was mainly a male affair. Most of the few female attendants were students researching for a doctor's degree. As for students, the sexes were almost balanced at Hokkaidō University, both at the undergraduate and the graduate level. All six graduate students at the time later became sociology professors, men and women alike. Of the latter, Fuse Akiko, wife of the pronounced Marxist sociologist Fuse Tetsuji, is perhaps the best known. At Tōkyō University there were only male graduate students—possibly a difference due to the central and peripheral locations of the respective universities. It was certainly easier for women to enter the field of sociology as researchers in peripheral Sapporo than in metropolitan Tōkyō.

To test this impression, I did a brief empirical review of *Shakaigaku hyōron*, the official journal of the Japan Sociological Society. I consulted every fifth volume from volume 5 to volume 55, or from 1954/55 to 2004/05. This corresponds to a sample of 11 volumes out of 55, accounting for 20%. Authors were tallied by gender, not including authors of book reviews, obituaries, and other minor contributions. Of the 306 contributors, 275 were men and 31 women. Of these women, 15 were published in the two most recent issues. So, if there is a tendency towards feminization in Japanese sociology, it has taken very long and can be observed in the official

Table 1: Number of articles by female sociologists in *Shakaigaku hyōron* 1954 to 2004

Year	Volume	Male authors	Female authors	Percentage of female authors
2004/05	55	26	7	21%
1999/2000	50	25	8	24%
1994/95	45	22	1	4%
1989/90	40	21	2	9%
1984/85	35	24	2	8%
1979/80	30	17	6	26%
1974/75	25	27	1	4%
1969/70	20	24	2	8%
1964/65	15	31	1	3%
1959/60	10	22	1	4%
1954/55	05	36	0	0%
Total		275	31	10%

journal only during the last five years.

In addition to this, I also examined the composition of the journal's editorial committee. Being a member of this committee carries with it a certain prestige and power, and it is therefore not meaningless whether female sociologists participate or not. The predictable result is that before 1985, there were no female scholars on the editorial committee. Since 1990, 1 to 2 of the 10 to 11 members have always been women.

In 2005, sociologist Sodei Takako, from Ochanomizu Women's University, wrote a paper about the status of female scientists in Japan. She decried that women in science and technology (11.6 %) are even less visible than those in politics and business; and that despite 30% of Ph.D. students being women, only 9.6% of professors are women (Sodei 2005). It appears that the situation in the sociological field fits very well into this general picture.

My final indicator is a count of important sociological books written by female authors. The *Shakaigaku bunken jiten*, with the English title *Encyclopedia of Basic Books in Sociology*, edited in 1998 by five Tōkyō

Table 2: Number of female sociologists on the editorial committee of *Shakaigaku hyōron* from 1954 to 2004

Year	Male members	Female members
2004	9	2
1999	10	1
1994	10	1
1989	8	2
1984	10*	0
1979	26*	0
1974	27	0
1969	24	0
1964	22	0
1959	22	0
1954**	?	?

*Between 1979 and 1984 there was a change in the composition of the editorial committee.

** not announced in the journal

Table 3: Important books on sociology by Japanese female sociologists, according to the *Encyclopedia of Basic Books in Sociology* (1998) (alphabetic order)

Name	Number of books
Ehara Yumiko (1952 -)	3
Iijima Nobuko (1938 – 2001)	2
Inoue Teruko (1942 -)	1
Ishimure Michiko (1927 -)	1
Kada Yukiko (1950 -)	1
Kanō Mikiyo (1940 -)	2
Morisaki Kazue (1927 -)	1
Nakamura Keiko (1936 -)	1
Nakane Chie (1926 -)	1
Namihira Emiko (1942 -)	1
Ochiai Emiko (1958 -)	1
Ōzawa Mari (1953 -)	1
Segawa Kiyoko (1895 -1984)	1
Takeyama Akiko (1928 -)	1
Tanaka Mitsu (1934 -)	1
Tsurumi Kazuko (1918 – 2006)	1
Ueno Chizuko (1948 -)	4
Yoshizawa Natsuko (1955 -)	2
Total number of female authors	18
Total number of works by women	26 of 338 (7.7%)

University and one Kyōto University professors, lists and describes in the first section one hundred basic books on sociology, among which nine Japanese books were included, all written by men. In the second section, 894 important books on sociology are listed, 338 by Japanese authors. Of these books, 26 (7.7%) were written by women, not an impressive fact given that the outspoken feminist Ueno Chizuko was one of the editors. Of the 26 books by female authors, Ueno herself wrote four. Perhaps it should be mentioned that several of the female authors are not sociologists by profession, although the same holds true for the male authors.

Tominaga Ken'ichi, former Tōkyō University professor and one of the most outspoken Parsonian sociologists in Japan, appended a list of the most important sociological books to his overview *Sengo Nihon no shakaigaku. Hitotsu no dōjidai gakushi* (2004). His list reflects the subjective evaluation of one male sociologist, and therefore it is not surprising that of the 528 books he deems important, he finds a mere 22 authored or co-authored by women worth mentioning, which comes to only 4.1% of all titles, even less than in the *Encyclopedia of Basic Books in Sociology*. However, it can be seen that from 1980 onwards, the number of female authors whom Tominaga sees as important increases.

More important than such statistical considerations, is the existence of female sociology professors known at a national level, and not only within the closed world of the sociological community. Two women in particular are relatively well-known, Ueno Chizuko and Ochiai Emiko. Ueno is a graduate of Kyōto University, an institute said to produce more independent, anti-establishment scholars and intellectuals than Tōkyō University or Tsukuba University, but Ochiai graduated from Tōkyō University. Both, born in 1948 and 1958, respectively, are professors of sociology at Tōkyō University and Kyōto University, and have a feminist background. It caused a

Table 4: Important works of Japanese sociologists by gender, tabulated according to Tominaga's *Sengo Nihon no shakaigaku*

Year	male authors	female authors	total
1946-50	23	0	23
1951-55	17	0	17
1956-60	23	0	23
1961-65	26	0	26
1966-70	25	2	27
1971-75	30	0	30
1976-80	37	0	37
1981-85	42	3	45
1986-90	71	6	75
1991-95	58	4	60
1996-00	93	3	96
2001-04	67	4	69
Total 1946-80	181 (98.9%)	2 (1.1%)	183
Total 1981-2004	331 (94.2%)	20 (5.8%)	345*
1946-2004	512 (95.9%)	22 (4.1%)	528*

The total is less than the sum of books by female and male authors, because several books were co-authored by a man and a woman, in which case they were counted for both sexes.

small sensation when Ueno Chizuko, known as a feminist Marxist, was made professor of sociology at Tōkyō University's graduate school in the 1990s. Already well-known from her many popular, provocatively titled books at the time of her appointment, she had until then suffered the fate similar to many female researchers of being placed at relatively unknown, small colleges or universities. In her case, the private Kyōto Seika University, a university with 3,700 students and four faculties: humanities, arts, design, and manga. Although I have not studied the process of professor Ueno's appointment to Tōkyō University, one of the reasons for her appointment may have been to draw more attention to Tōkyō University's sociology department, which has always maintained a central position within the Japan Sociological Society, but has had no really famous professors for some time. Professor Ueno was the first female teacher within Tōdai's sociology program. At the present, Tōdai's sociology staff comprises four male professors and one female (Ueno), as well as one male and one female⁵⁾

associate professor. Compared to 1968/69 and 1972/73, when I was at Tōdai, this is quite an achievement. At that time, the only two women who had joined the group of my own professor Fukutake Tadashi, an *oyabun* (big boss) in Japanese sociology with many followers (*kobun*), were Murayama Saeko and Iijima Nobuko. Both are now deceased: Murayama, a professor at Momoyama Gakuin University in Ōsaka, deceased around 1980; and Iijima, still considered one of the foremost Japanese environmental sociologists, who, after likewise occupying a position at Momoyama and later at Tōkyō Metropolitan University, died in 2001. Although both were highly spoken of, neither had a chance of becoming a professor at a truly acclaimed university.

In contrast to Ueno, who achieved her position through her well-known writings, Ochiai Emiko focused on her academic career from the very beginning. After graduating from Tōkyō University, she entered the female student's branch of Kyōto's top private university (Dōshisha Joshi Daigaku), spent some years at Nichibunken, and was then appointed to Kyōdai. It may be that Ochiai's selection was stimulated by Ueno's appointment to Tōdai. Kyōdai, which publishes the journal *Soshioroji*, now has one female and two male professors, as well as one male associate professor. As far as I can remember, Ochiai is the first woman at Kyōdai's sociology department, as Ueno was at Tōdai's. What is important is the fact that the two representative sociological departments of Japan each have one important female and feminist representative. This was achieved within the past fifteen years, and seems to be in accordance with a more increased participation of women in the *Shakaigaku hyōron*. But these facts can certainly not be called a feminization of Japanese sociology. The overwhelming

5) Shirahase Sawako, formerly at Tsukuba, wife of Ishida Hiroshi mentioned before, who got her Ph.D. from Oxford University.

majority of sociologists is still male. A look into the new book by Srubar and Shimada (2005) shows that almost no female researchers are mentioned in the eleven-chapter book, with the exception of two chapters: one, authored by a woman, on the history of feminist sociology, which of course mentions a great number of women; and the other on family sociology, written by Amano Masako, a retired sociologist from Ochanomizu Women's University, like Sodei Takako. Here we can see the pitfall of female sociology in Japan: its dedication to questions of gender, women, the family, and social welfare. These are the fields in which women seem to be granted a certain competence, and are therefore easily accessible to women, while men are concentrating their research efforts on social stratification, industrial sociology, theoretical sociology etc. In these fields, female researchers are still very rare.

Contents: Is Japanese sociology only looking at losers and outsiders?

One of the more conspicuous schisms in sociology in post-war Japan took place in 1974, when a group of scholars orientated towards Parsonian-style American sociology founded the journal *Modern Sociology* (*Gendai shakaigaku*) in order to establish a boundary to Marxist and leftist sociologists. Thus, pro-American Japanese sociologists used exactly the same language as America-orientated economists do when drawing a line between 'modern economics' and 'Marxist economics'. This biannual journal gave birth to 25 numbers in 14 volumes, its existence ending, exactly, aptly and symbolically, in 1989 with the end of the cold war world order. Although I do not know the exact reasons for the discontinuation of this journal, it seems that by 1989 the discrepancies between right and left in Japanese sociology had

diminished to such a degree that it was no longer deemed necessary to devote a specific journal to a single ideological line. As could be expected, Marxist sociology was severely hit by the end of communist totalitarianism in the Eastern European countries, by Perestroika and the fall of Soviet communism; as well as by the de-ideologization of Chinese communism. Did this result in an almost exclusive focus on social problems of the outsiders and losers in society, and on gay and lesbian groups, as is professed about U.S. sociology?

Yet another search of every fifth volume of *Shakaigaku hyōron* for articles dealing with social problems showed that out of the 277 articles in the 11 relevant volumes (= 44 numbers) only 22, or 8%, fitted into this category. There are two volumes with a higher proportion of such subjects: volume 20 from 1969/70 contains a special issue on student struggles accounting for five articles, and volume 55 from 2004/05 includes 7 articles out of 28 focused on social problems. It is too early to say if this represents the beginning of a new trend. Before volume 50, no consulted issue included more than 10% of such articles. At the present, the *Shakaigaku hyōron* is the figurehead of the Japan Sociological Society, and it could well be that people restrain from publishing problematic articles there, or it could be that the editorial committee follows a restrictive policy on such articles.

If one searches the sociological literature database of the National Institute for Informatics, a search for ‘problems of discrimination’ (*sabetsu mondai*) retrieves 1,191 books and articles, and one for ‘social problems’ (*shakai mondai*) retrieves 4,314. On the other hand, there are 9,319 works on the ‘family’ (*kazoku*), 7,037 on the ‘city’ (*toshi*), and 6,010 on ‘labor’ (*rōdō*). My favorite subject, ‘leisure’, retrieved 711 books and articles when searched for *as yoka*, and only 54 when looked for *as rejā*. The results of this database places critical subjects higher than the simple counting of

eleven journal volumes, but even so, one cannot say that Japanese sociology shows a special leaning to social problems, etc.

The question of public sociologists

Ueno Chizuko, mentioned above, is widely known and plays a certain role as a public sociologist. In autumn 2005, a controversy started between Ueno and the Tōkyō Metropolitan Government (TMG) when the TMG refused to subsidize a series of lectures on human rights arranged by a citizens' group in the district of Kokubunji because Ueno Chizuko had been selected as the first speaker. The "Tōkyō officials objected to the choice of Ueno because she might use the phrase 'gender-free'—a poorly defined term originally intended to mean free from sexual bias. The citizen's group refused to find another speaker and instead cancelled the series of events" (McNicol 2006). A protest movement formed, and Ueno accused the TMG of censorship. For conservative administrators and politicians, the term 'gender-free' is associated with loose sex education, and was forbidden for use by educators in Tōkyō from 2004 onwards. For many Japanese men, including mayor Ishihara Shintarō and later Prime Minister Abe Shinzō, former chairman of an LDP "Extreme Sex-Education Gender-Free Education Survey Project Team", Ueno is considered a threat and a nuisance. She certainly is not the public sociologist whose voice is heard by the whole population and whose advice is eagerly sought by society. Rather, she represents the stratum of 'radical' sociologists held responsible in the USA for the decline of sociology.

If Ueno Chizuko can be compared to any other radical, public sociologist, it is Hidaka Rokurō (1917-), also from Tōkyō University, who was said to be a leader of the new left and of the Japanese student movement of 1968/69. A peace activist, he was linked to the Japanese Red Army Faction and

denied entry into Australia because of his 'extremist' views (Hidaka 1984). He resigned, or was made to resign, from Tōkyō University in the early 1970s, later settling in Paris. Hidaka co-edited two of the most influential textbooks in sociology in 1952 (Fukutake and Hidaka 1952) and 1968 (Sakuta and Hidaka 1968), a six volumes series of lectures on sociology in 1963-64 (Fukutake and Hidaka 1963-64), and the first sociological dictionary after World War II in 1958 (Fukutake, Hidaka and Takahashi 1958). Looking at these achievements one could argue that he was one of Japan's most influential sociologists between 1950 and 1970.

The opposite of Ueno or Hidaka is well-known Nakane Chie. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs even distributed parts of her work worldwide because her notion that Japan is not a society of classes, but rather of hierarchical groups, fitted so well into the anti-Marxist stance of the ministry during the Cold War. But since Nakane was a social anthropologist, not a sociologist, there is no need to deal with her position any further here.

So was there ever a sociologist in the position not of an elder statesman, but of an elder academic, able to address the nation on great issues and be heard? Scholars generally respected because of their achievements, their personality and their experiences? After the war, rural sociologist Fukutake Tadashi, legal sociologist Kawashima Takeyoshi, and social psychologist Minami Hiroshi played a certain role as "modernizers", trying to democratize Japanese society with the help of their academic position. However, even though Kawashima and Minami published their theses in affordable editions, and Kawashima received an important award for his book on the familial structure of Japanese society, their fame seems to have been restricted to the intellectual world. Even within this limited world, neither of them ever gained a position like, for example, the literary critic Katō Shūichi, of the same generation. Instead, outsider Kida Minoru (1895-1975), who had

spent some time in France before the war with Marcel Mauss translating famous French sociologists into Japanese, and who had lived in a small suburban village during and immediately after the war, became famous for his unconventional description of village life, which can be seen as a critique of Japanese society from an outside perspective. Kida did not continue this interesting approach following his tremendously successful *Kichigai buraku* (Crazy village) books, and today the academic sociological community treats them as literature rather than as sociological classics.

Another female scholar comes to mind: Tsurumi Kazuko (1918-2006), a professor of sociology at Sophia University who died at the age of 88. Well-known philosopher Tsurumi Shunsuke's older sister, she grappled with problems not liked by the political establishment: social structure during the war and the changes thereafter, or environmental problems like Minamata. A well-behaved upper class lady, she may have been too far removed from the general public for her voice to really be heard, although we have to concede the sincerity of her approach and her will to change Japanese society.

But all the above sociologists are dead or very old by now, and we have to ask if younger people are coming to fill their positions. There are, of course, younger sociologists liked by the media. One of them is Yamada Masahiro (1957-), professor at Chūō University, famous in Japan for coining the phrase 'parasite singles' (*parasaito shinguru*), young people who delay their weddings as long as possible, whom Yamada even held responsible for Japan's economic depression in the 1990s. Very fond of sensational phrases, Yamada called Japan's declining birthrate another Guadalcanal; Guadalcanal being the site of the last decisive battle in the Pacific War. He calls it this because, in his opinion, Japan is currently undergoing a life or death struggle, like the Guadalcanal battle (Coleman 2006). I doubt

whether his scapegoating and hysteric warnings will hoist him into the role of a generally accepted public figure. Miyadai Shinji (1959 -), from Tōkyō Metropolitan University, belongs to the same generation, a popular commentator specializing on Japanese youth culture. With a very childish appearance, Miyadai openly discusses *burusera* (middle and high school girls who sell their used underwear) and *manga*, about *enjo kōsai* (paid dating of female middle and high school students) and anime. Of course he is also a specialist on Japanese sexual behavior. According to a Wikipedia article on him, Miyadai, who got his Ph.D. in mathematical sociology, “is one of the most outspoken sociologists in Japan, and is currently working on the strategy the Japanese government should adopt for the 21st century.” So, perhaps it is too early to make a final judgment about him, and about whether he will become the public sociologist of Japan in the years to come.

Summing up this section, it can be said that since 1945, although some sociologists have become widely known, Japanese sociology has not had a David Riesman or Ralf Dahrendorff, no Erving Goffmann and no Ulrich Beck, and no Pierre Bourdieu or Anthony Giddens either. The best-known public sociologists were anti-establishment people like Hidaka Rokurō or Ueno Chizuko, intellectuals convincing in their critical views of society and social problems, but not as influential elder scholars to whom Japanese society as a whole might listen to for guidance into the future.

Conclusion

In the course of over hundred years, sociology in Japan seems to have achieved a stable position amongst universities and academia. The Japan Sociological Society boasts almost 3,000 members, not many compared to the 15,000 sociologists in the USA, but membership figures are growing

continuously⁶⁾. The Society's journal, *Shakaigaku hyōron*, is in its 59th year of existence and has been published continuously four times a year. Moreover, a yearly journal in English, *International Journal of Japanese Sociology*, has been published without interruption since 1992, increasing international discussion and collaboration. Usually, each volume centers on a specific issue, but also leaves room to other topics. Perhaps it is interesting to note that female sociologists are especially active in the production of this journal. Since volume 7, for nine continuing issues, the chief editor has always been a woman: Sodei Takako (vols. 7-9), Yazawa Sumiko (vols. 10-12), and Naoi Michiko (vols.13-15). Presently (vol. 16), six men and five women are on the editorial board, which is a much higher representation of female sociologists than in the Japanese language journal. This poses the question whether Japan's female sociologists are more internationally minded than their male colleagues.

If assessing the general standing of Japanese sociology, attention should also be given to the two 21st Century Center of Excellence (COE) Programs in which sociologists play leading roles: the Center for the Study of Social Stratification and Inequality (CSSI) at Tōhoku University (<http://www.sal.tohoku.ac.jp/coe/index-en.html>), which draws on the long experience of the Japan Sociological Society's Social Stratification and Mobility Surveys every ten years since 1955. The new center actively promotes internationalism: research fellows have been recruited not only from Japan, but also from Korea, China, and other countries; and three monographs have been published so far in English. The other sociology program out of 26 COE programs in the social sciences is located at the private Kwansei Gakuin

6) In their 1974 report Aoi and Naoi (1974:50-51) give a figure of 1300 members for the Japan Sociological Society for the year 1973, which they contend in size of national associations was second only to the ASA.

University (<http://coe.kgu-jp.com/en/>), which has a long tradition of sociology in high standing. It concerns itself with the Study of Social Research for the Enhancement of Human Well-being, and its first collection of papers in English appeared in 2006 as *A Sociology of Happiness. Japanese Perspectives*, edited by Kosaka Kenji. Perhaps it is interesting to note that neither Kyōto nor Tōkyō University's sociology departments were honored with a COE program. Both COE programs can be said to be very representative of Japanese sociology. The study of social stratification, although done from a very broad perspective, focuses on classical empirical research. The study of happiness, based on the method that Max Weber called “verstehen” (understanding), is representative of interpretative sociology. Both COE programs deal with important topics relevant to people's lives, and both programs provide an opportunity to enhance the reputation of Japan's sociological field, both nationally and globally.

Returning to my initial questions, it can be stated that there is less discussion on the future of sociology in Japan than there is in the USA. Starting in 1945 as a colonized science, in the 1960s and 70s sociology freed itself from American dominancy, entering the post-colonial state around 1980. At that time, women began to gain ground within the field, and in the late 20th century some of the most remarkable figures of Japan's sociological field have been women. The new field of gender sociology has become a central sphere of activity, but there is no sign yet that Japanese sociology is undergoing a trend towards feminization. Quite some time remains before the percentage of female sociology teachers at universities will correspond to the percentage of female sociology students.

Although a single outstanding sociological scholar whose well-known personality could endow the field of sociology as a whole with added authority does not seem to exist, there are numerous academic sociologists

active as newspaper and TV commentators and working on various government councils as experts, thus enhancing the status of the field. The end of communism in the Soviet Union and in China has not lead to the concentration of 'frustrated marxisant' research on losers and outsiders, as is contended for the USA, instead bringing about greater internal peace and understanding within Japanese sociology. Greater openness can also be seen in the fact that sociological subcategories are no longer as dominant as they used to be. There is no catastrophe and there is no need for a feeling of catastrophe within Japanese sociology.

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