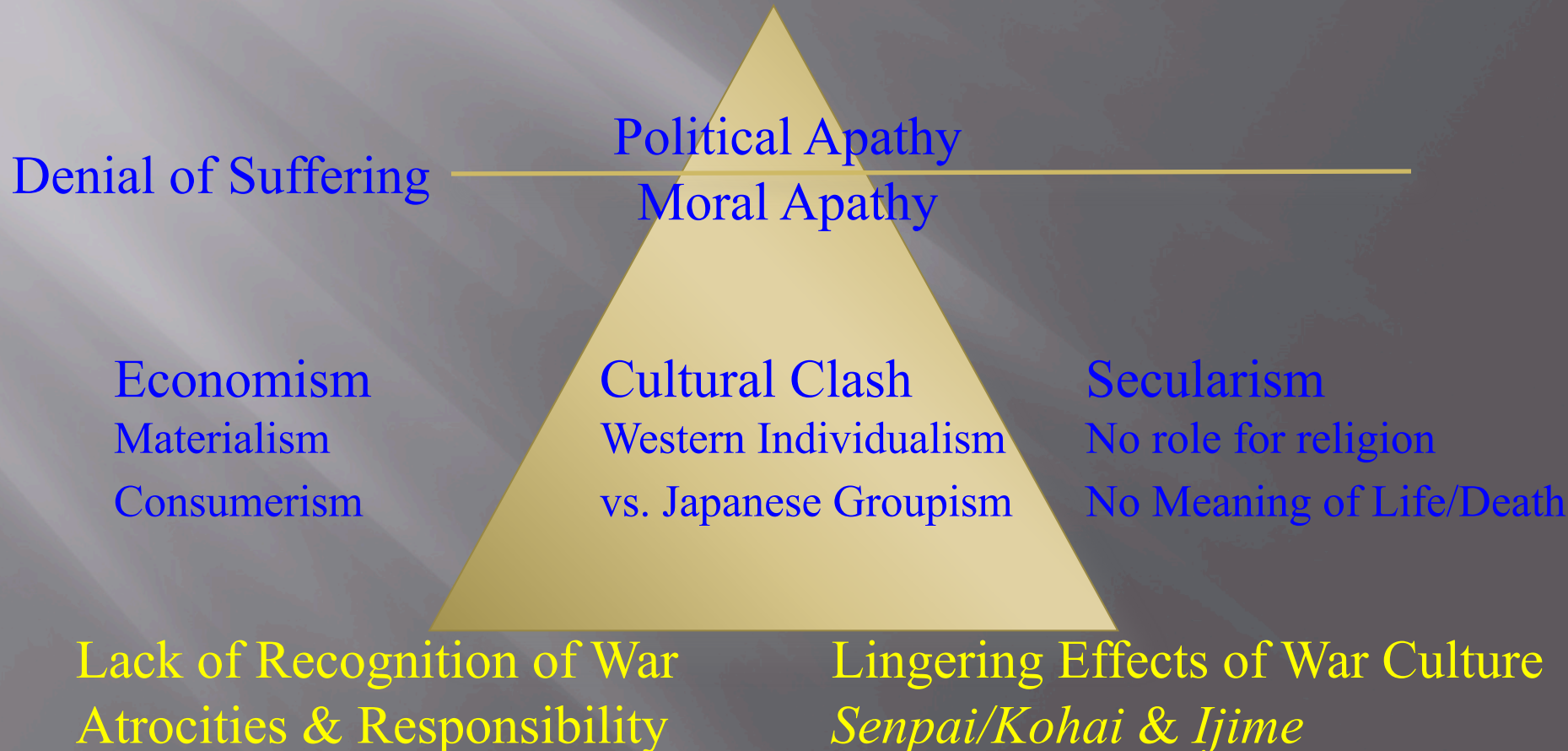


The Final Iceberg of Japanese Dukkha

The Disconnected Society

無縁社会 *Mu-en Shakai*



Reviewing Buddhism's Problems & Potentials in Japan

- Hisashi Nakamura, “Those who observed the moral confusion in Japan immediately after World War II may be led to doubt the proposition that the Japanese in the past were moralistically inclined ... Little difference seems to discoverable between traditional and recent Japanese morality. The difference seems to lie rather in the fact that what was considered to be morally tenable in Japan's ‘closed-door’ past became untenable under rapidly changing worldwide social and economic conditions to which Japan is adapting itself. The traditional concepts of honesty as loyalty to the clan and Emperor is applicable only to the conduct of man as a member of the particular and limited human nexus to which he belongs; it is not applicable to the conduct of man as a member of human society as a whole.”

S.N. Eisenstadt, renowned Israeli sociologist, “There did not develop in Japan the emphasis on a principled discontinuity between different regimes or “stages” of institutional change. Nor did there develop any strong conception of such changes and breaks as constituting steps in the unfolding of historical programs or cosmic plans with possible eschatological implications. In principle, no new modes of legitimization were connected with such changes. The assumed mythical continuity of the imperial symbolism—often fictitious but continuously emphasized—was crucial in this respect. The bases of legitimization—especially those rooted in the symbolism of the emperor—were continuous and could not be dismantled or changed. The epitome of this emphasis on (a reconstructed) continuity could be seen in the totally new construction of the emperor system under the Meiji regime. From *Japanese Civilization*. p. 424.

- ❖ This leads us to question as to whether Japan, despite its highly developed social and cultural forms, is indeed a “civilization”, since the one major distinction between it and the other civilizations we have mentioned is its almost total ethnic and linguistic homogeneity.
- ❖ If we define “civilization” as “the binding together of multiple ethnicities with various languages, cultural customs, and religious or spiritual outlooks through an appeal to universal – but not necessarily transcendental – values to enrich human and perhaps all sentient life amidst a dynamic interplay of diversity”
- ❖ then it is possible to call Europe, the Middle East, the Indian subcontinent, and even greater China all civilizations, but it is rather untenable to denote the single nation and people of Japan as a civilization unto its own.

Key Questions for Our Course

- Could Buddhism provide the universal, civilizational ethics for Japan to better integrate into the global system, while still preserving many of its indigenous values?
- Can socially engaged Buddhism provide Japanese Buddhism a means for re-establishing its core teachings and such civilizational ethics for the present and future of Japan?



Daisuke Kamijou

Saturday at 15:24 · 2 people



まだまだこんな所がいっぱいです。葛尾村50号線。



June 2018, in the hills of Fukushima, still 30 times the International Atomic Energy Association (IAEA) recommended maximum

Buddhist Economics & The Choice of Development Paradigms in Japan after the 3/11 Fukushima Nuclear Disaster

Jun Nishikawa – Professor Emeritus, Waseda University
1936-October 2, 2018



Modern Development Policy in Japan

- The Northeast part of Japan is one of the poorest parts of the country. It provides the role of supplier of agricultural and marine products as well as labor force for Japan's metropolitan, industrial center of Tokyo. It also provides the role of energy supplier to the latter.
- In order that this top-down centralized strategy of development be accepted by rural areas, two policies were adopted: 1) an economic policy of huge “subsidies” or aid were injected in the latter, in particular, in areas that accepted nuclear plants; 2) a cultural policy of huge propaganda advocating that “nuclear plants are always safe, bringing prosperity and a bright future to a region”.

Alternative Development Visions

- In 2009, the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) won national elections overthrowing the coalition of Liberal Democratic Party (LDP)-Komeito (based in the Soka Gakkai Buddhist sect) on the platform of: “Emphasis on education rather than cement works”; “Promotion of the New Public Commons (NPC)”; and “Regional Sovereignty.”
- In August 2011, Fukushima Prefecture adopted the “Fukushima Vision on Reconstruction”, and in November, the “Fukushima Action Plan” accompanied the former. The documents draw a vision of reconstruction for the sustainable development of the prefecture based on recyclable natural energy.

Rediscovering Spiritual Values: Towards a New World of Autonomy, Participation, and Conviviality

At the end of 2011, the character *kizuna* 絆, meaning “ties” or “relations”, was chosen to represent the year 2011. After the horror of the Tohoku Triple Disaster, *Kizuna* was chosen in contrast to the progressing isolation of individual life in this era of economic globalization.

Buddhist temples became very active in emergency aid and rescue during the Triple Disaster



Buddhist Economics for a New Japan

- Gandhi advocated two wheels for India's independence: autonomy (*swaraj*) and self-sufficiency (*swadesi*).
- This development notion corresponds also to the spirit of the Sarvodaya Sharamadana Movement for village reconstruction led by A.T. Ariyaratne in Sri Lanka. *Sarvodaya*—which means everyone stands by him/herself and awakens to the truth—is based on a Buddhist philosophy. It rejects dependency on greed and encourages a life of middle way (moderation) with self-esteem, compassion, and wisdom.
- Ven. P.A. Payutto, a leading scholar monk in Thailand, has interpreted the Thai word for development *pattana*—a transitive verb meaning “to develop from above”—as based on the human tendency toward *tanha* (grasping).

Buddhist Economics for a New Japan

- *Bhavana*—an intransitive verb meaning “to open up oneself to universal truth or enlightenment”—is based on *chanda*, which means right effort to abandon grasping
- *Bhavana* is based on autonomy and self-sufficiency, which is the Middle Way of life and knowing how to be fulfilled. This idea corresponds to E.F. Schumacher’s advocacy for “small is beautiful” and “Buddhist economics”
- Prof. Nishikawa has translated *bhavana* into Japanese as かいほつ・開発 in contrast to the typical reading for economic development かいほつ. 発・ほつ is a Buddhist term for opening the mind of enlightenment
- Now, after the 3/11 disasters, the Buddhist notion of development can provide a good and appropriate reference for the Japanese who are in search of the way of post-economic growth.

Final Visions

- ❖ The legacy of the Kamakura Buddhist revolution still offers a roadmap for social change based on egalitarian ethics that encourage tolerance and non-violent conflict resolution. In the spirit of Dogen, the understanding that the language, conceptual thought, and ideologies can be vehicles for the constant creation of buddha enlightenment gives us hope that such a movement is possible.
- ❖ The recent activities of engaged Buddhists in Japan indicate a new potential – along with a variety of recent social shifts like the growth of numerous localized civic works as the state recedes and the increase of long term foreign residents creating a new level of diversity.