Civil Society and Social Movements
in Modern Japan

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I would like to discuss on the formation of citizen's identity and civil society concerning social movements.

In 1968, in every events, activities and movements, the youth searched for identity and identity politics, sociabilite (intimacy) and also the alternative society. Radical social change caused by rapid economic growth in the 1960's brought crisis to their identities and communities.

In this context people who quested for identities, identity politics, and alternative societies began to refer to the new citizens not only searched for freedom and equality but also new flaternite/sociabilite. I think one of the legacies of 1968 was the return of democratic citizens and the reform or formation of civil society.

"Shimin" (Citizens) Movements in the Late 1960s

The people who called themselves "shimin" (citizens) appeared first in 1957 in the protest against 1950's Reverse-Course policies of the government. At the 1960 Anpo (U.S.-Japan Security Treaty) Protests, Anti-Security Treaty National Conference meant to organize all the participants by class and occupation but left some disorganized such as housewives, who called themselves "shimin". Kuno Osamu, the philosopher, wrote the article "Political Citizens Coming Into Existence". But the term "shimin" did not become popular. Maruyama Masao never used "shimin". He referred to the people as "kokumin" (nation).

In Japan, "shimin" must be born and survive in a situation that contains neither a civil society nor strong foundation of civil rights. The disorganized people involved in the 1960 Protests could not call themselves laborer, and began hesitantly to refer to themselves as "shimin". Their hesitation arose from implications of the term "shimin" that are left over from the "old paradigm", that is, the stigma of "bourgeois", which is the legacy of Marxism, and the administrative association with the category of "urban resident". Beheiren (Peace in Vietnam Now! Citizen's Association) was organized by citizens and youth in 1965 to protest against the

Vietnam War, and activated in 1968. The people protested "as citizens" and "as human being". They demonstrated in the streets against the U.S. and against the Japanese government's complicity. Oda Makoto, a writer and one of the leaders of Beheiren, thought that the basic point of citizens' movement was demonstration. For him, citizens were nonviolent demonstrators, who called out to the people on the street to participate into the demonstration.

The police began to refer to the standing people on the street as "ippan-shimin" (general citizens), discriminating them from the demonstrating "shimin". "General citizens! Don't come near to demonstrations. They are dangerous".

Beheiren left the collective-action frames or paradigm of autonomous citizens' movements as legacies. The frames are as follows ; Those who first propose should first put the proposition into practice ; don't throw cold water on praxis of other people ; you should act as you want ; people should be rotated in roles and posts ; it is not always good for organization to continue long. Beheiren became a pioneer in new social movements in Japan.

The old social movements were organizationally-based and led by political parties and ideology. Old type social movements supported rapid economic growth as a mechanism for distribution, but precisely for that reason such movements lost momentum as the "affluent society" took shape in the course of the 1960 s and productivity-first modernization became social realities. Their decline accelerated as the Japan Socialist Party also began a long-term decline ; in parallel with these trends, the social strata marginalized by the "affluent society" were absorbed into new religions and the Komei Party became increasingly influential, labor unions split and were often replaced by "second unions" that cooperated with management, the masses abandoned the estabished political parties and no longer responded to ideological appeals, "struggles" were undertaken only according to pre-established schedules, and the discourse of class struggle became increasingly alien to daily-life attitudes and lost effectiveness.

The New Social Movements and the Limited Citizen's Identity

The new social movements appeared when it became clear that neither representative politics nor administration nor pressure groups nor the old social movements could begin to resolve those contradictions and distortions that were caused by productivity-first policies of the Liberal Democrats, established single-party rule since 1955. The social movements no longer measure themselves along the axes of conservative or progressive, left or right, nor do they associate themselves with the

socio-economic codes of a particular class ; rather, they measure themselves according to such standards as way of life, identity, self-renewal, self-realization, self-determination, new forms of commonality, conviviality, peace, ecology, and self-government. While pursuing protest activities and struggles for power, old social movements actually moved in the direction of corporatist interest mediation. The new social movements, on the other hand, bring together independent individuals in spontaneous, free activities and manifest a wide range of styles from the logic of refusal on the one hand to the formulation of alternative proposals and popular world views on the other. In contrast to the "tree", or pyramid, form of integration manifested in old paradigm social movements, the new social movements follow a rhizome pattern of horisontal networking.

But in 1968, "shimin" were first of all demonstrators in the streets as Oda Makoto defined. "Shimin" who called out actively were separated from the masses who were called out passively.

High economic growth in the 1960 s developed the progressive systematization of national economy via the mass production, transportaion and consumption. Income rose relatively, way of life was modernized, and urbanization took place rapidly. Most of the "kokumin" thought that they belonged to the middle class. This situation was described as "ichioku so churyu" (all of a hundred million belonged to the middle class).

Laborers no more thought themselves as the proletariat. Identity of "kokumin" (nation) as homo-economics became dominant. Overwhelming "a hundred million so churyu" consciousness kept "class" and "citizen" out of sight.

The 1960 s also exposed the contradictions of advanced industrial society. Migration to the cities disrupted community in both rural and urban areas, while over-development polluted the environment and degraded living space. Not only industrial pollution but medical and medicinal pollution, agricultural chemical pollution, air and noise pollution caused by cars mounted combined attacks on the environment.

Official responses to this situation were not completely lacking. In the late-1960 s progressive mayors were elected in various cities and they instituted environmental agreements with industry and anti-pollution regulations. They also estabished the "right to sunlight". In 1971, the Environmental Agency was formed, while intellectuals and activists proposed and elaborated such concepts as "civil minimums" and "citizen participation". Nevertheless, from the perspective of local residents, this tendency to define issues so as to invite administrative solutions was

still mired in the "old paradigm" of postwar progressive movements.

The period from 1968 to 1970 made junction of several roads where events, activities and social movements came and went ; citizens' movements like Beheiren ; anti-pollution struggles ; campus protests ; 1970 Anpo (U.S.-Japan Security Treaty) Protests ; Osaka World Expo ; women's liberation movements from 1970 ; successive shot murders case by Nagayama Norio in 1968 ; Kim-Hiro (Kin Kiro) case of murders in 1968 ; Mishima Yukio Suicide in 1970. Legacies of 1968-70 junction were suggested as the issues and agenda for identity problems, human rights, anti-discriminations, self-determination, life, sociability and conviviality.

The students and peoples who internalized those issues and agenda spread in various fields. They appeared in sight with new social movements and new styles of activities in the 1970 s and the 1980 s.

Residents Movements in the 1970s

In the late-1960 s and early-1970 s, social movements arose spontaneously around the problems of local life. Many of the new movements in this period called themselves "residents movements". In 1973 it was learned that some 3,000 of these residents' movement organizations existed across Japan. Most that arose in the 1970 s were formed in opposition to pollution or to protect local life from regional development as manifested in industrial concentrations, airports, dams or electric power plants. Yet the 1970 s also brought citizens movements that focused on such trans-regional issues as opposition to war and nuclear facilities, and the pursuit of human rights, sexual equality, welfare and environmental quality.

Residents' movements were notable for the strength of their resistance and rejection to development plans that were imposed coercively by industry and public officials. However, once residents' movements shifted attention to local community -formation in the 1980 s, they not only began to make counter-proposals to administrative organs and corporations, but organized local councils for community-formation, engaged in give and take with administrative officials and became actively involved in local consensus-building.

Residents' movements were typically led by local intellectuals, and the local middle class. Among the most important actors in residents' movements were women who provide sharp insight into issues related to livelihoood and environment, and were the creators of local culture.

The rapid rise in oil prices that accompanied the Yom Kippur War of 1973 put an

end to ultra-high growth rates, and low growth threw productivity-firstism into crisis. Yet, the result of adjustment to low growth was, in fact, a process of reorganization designed to accelerate rationalization, not only of the social order that supports them. "Kanri" (management) diffused and instruded into all sectors of society including business, labor, education, medicine, childbirth, distribution and even consumption of things and informations. The result is a so-called Kanri (managed and controled) society which institutes a new form of oppression. By the early-1980 s, the advance of this managed society was reinforced both by grass-roots conservatism, which sought to preserve the "affluent society", and by the political neo-conservatism, and also by the development of information-oriented society.

Citizen's Activities in the 1980s

Neo-conservative politics performed by the Nakasone Yasuhiro LDP Administration carried forward the transfer of public corporation to the private sector, weakening of labor unions, introduction of market principle, maintenance of "doken" (civil engineering and construction oriented) state, and reinforcement of militaly strength. Neo-conservative politics rather recommended citizen's voluntalism.

The 1980 s has been called the era of "me ism" and of the diversification of desire. The social categories formed in the course of modernization in the 1960 s, including the nuclear family, school education, the corporation, and representative politics, began to weaken, giving new salience to the individuals with plural desires. When it became clear that the existing 1955 system lacked the ability to adjust to this change of social categories, a full range of citizen's activities began to appear in various forms. They were quite different from the Beheiren type citizen's movements. They set their sights on problems related to "life". When national desires have become diversified, the content of "life" is no longer unitary. The present recession calls for a reordering of economic life, but there is more to "life" than that. It includes human rights, environment, welfare, peace, education, self-rule, local community-building, symbiosis and redress. The desire to "make my own decisions about my own life" is expressed in the citizens' activities. The organization has a bottom-up structure piling up from the grassroots, using the networking concepts. They are not just to "oppose something", but also to "propose the alternatives" and to "practice" what they propose.

Citizens' activities that take various forms, including networks and movements,

are grappling with concrete issues and working cooperatively toward the construction of a responsive citizens' public realm. Throughout Japan in the late 1980 s, people begin to find out identity of "shimin" (citizens), and their activities place major emphasis on the construction of "shimin shakai" (civil society). Beginning in the late 1980 s, citizens have moved to strengthen their organizations while learning from American non-profit organizations (NPOs), and working to get a NPO law, which passed in March of 1998 and put into effect in December.

NPOs will play very important roles in strengthening and pushing the level of citizens' activities. However, NPOs may give the danger of incorporationg citizens' sector into administrative sector, and also of eliminating other types of voluntary citizens' activities than NPOs. NPOs should not be regarded as the objectives but as one of the tools for thickening the layer of the citizens' public sector.

Civil Society and People's Movements

Minamata disease movement is one of the typical people's movements. Minamata disease was officially found out in 1956. In 1959, the cause of Minamata disease was traced to the factory liquid waste including methyle mercury discharged into the sea by Chisso Corporation. But, until 1965, Chisso had continued to discharge lipuid waste, and until 1968 administrative officials had given a tacit permission to Chisso's discharge. The result of 9 years delay was clear. Also "Minamata Shimin" (citizens) have protected Chisso Corporation, and continued to discriminate and eliminate Minamata disease sufferers even until the middle 1980 s. Thus, the sufferers called themselves "shi-min" (dead-people). In this context we find that civil society oriented to economic value discriminate and eliminate victims, minorities, and the social weaks.

Minorities including the Ainus, Okinawa, foreign laborers, Minamata disease sufferers, Hansen's disease sufferers, "ju-gun ianfu" (war comfort women) and others have begun struggling to recover human dignity. Modern society has reproduced those minorities and victims ; discriminated and eliminated, hidden its power, and even "relieved" or "supported" them. Modern society has formed the process of both reproduction and assimilation of minorities and victims.

What the Minamata disease movement claimed Chisso Corporation and the state through direct negotiations and the courts was a restoration of humanity, namely, an apology and mutuality as human being on an equal basis. Indeed, the ultimate demand of Minamata disease suffyes was, "Bring back the children who died". This demand implied, "Please reorganize industrial structure and civil society so as

to insure that children do not have to die." But Chisso Corporation and administration responded to the Minamata disease sufferers only in the logic of money as compensation. It is not only difficult for Minamata disease sufferers to accept a process of industrial development that inevitably produces casualties, but it is especially difficult for them to accommodate a notion that somehow money payment is sufficient to compensate for those casualties. Now the Minamata disease sufferers seek "moyai" (mooring), that is, symbiotic networking.

On the one hand, identity politics of prople's movements moves in the range between the direction to be assimilated into NPO-directed civil society incorporated with administration, and the direction to activate the radical reform of civil society, looking forward an alternative "kyosei" (symbiotic : convivial) society.

On the other hand, civil society is now standing at crossroads, either to be incorporated with market and administraion protecting vested interests, or to promote assimilation of minorities to majority culture although separating itself from both sectors, or to form an alternative "kyosei" society reconstructing itself based on regional society with different people.

Meta-Democracies

First ; Who decide? On democracies before 1968, how to decide was the point at issue ; after 1968 the point has been shifted to who decide. Self-determination has been investigated. In 1970 Minamata disease sufferers went to Tokyo from Minamata to have direct negotiations with Chisso Corporation on the equal basis as human being. Before that Minamata disease sufferers had been given a gift of very small money from Chisso as a favor. Perhaps we can find the influence of 1968 in direct negotiation. This made a turning point for history of Minamata disease. Minamata disease sufferers decided to be the subject who decide their own life by themselves.

Second ; Whose democracy? Democracy of majority and democracy of minority run in contradiction. Rather democracy of minority oppresses democracy of minority.

"The greatest happiness of the greatest number" always mean majority decision. This rule includes self-contradiction. Right of freedom and equality make contradiction with rights of existence, or rights of difference. For example, assertion of equality between man and woman may enforce the male-female dichotomy to sustain modern authoritative nuclear family, and oppress without intention another sexuality and gender, namely trans-genderism and plural sexuality like Futitan in

Mexico where at least 4 sexualities and genders are still alive. Meta-democracies which regulate the democracy of majority and the democracy of minority are necessary. Majority rule must be changed. Rights of existence, and rights of difference have become important.

Through the symbiotic relationship majority and minority should takd the same seat on the equal bases, and dialogue is necessary. Look at the Kyosei between Sanrizuka people and administrative officials.