

“The Development of Monthly Magazines in Japan”

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総合雑誌の誕生とその発展

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月刊総合雑誌は、文明開化期に誕生し、それ以来、日本人の生活の知的文化的側面において重要な役割を担ってきた。現在もなお、50数誌が発行されており、数多くの熱心な読者を有している。月刊総合雑誌は、一貫して政治、社会、文化面での思索家たちの営みを紹介し続けてきた。日本近代史そのものを映し出してきていると表現してもよい。日本近代史の理解を深めるため、総合雑誌の歴史をたどり、日本近代史において果たした重要な役割を探る。

キーワード： *Sogo-zasshi*(総合雑誌)、*Chuokoron*(中央公論)、*Hanseikai Zasshi*(反省会雑誌)、*TAKITA, Choin*(瀧田樗陰)、*YOSHINO, Sakuzo*(吉野作造)、*Minponshugi*(民本主義)、*MINOBE, Tatsukichi*(美濃部達吉)、*Kaizo*(改造)、*Tennokikansetsu*(天皇機関説)、*Taisho Democracy*(大正デモクラシー)

The phrase *sogo-zasshi* is a term that could perhaps be rendered in English as “integrated intellectual magazines” or “composite magazines.” Magazines which are called *sogo-zasshi* have been an important part of the intellectual and cultural landscape of Japanese life since the Meiji period. Still today, there are nearly 50 such magazines, which boast large circulations and dedicated support. Throughout their history, they have specialized in publishing the writings of Japan’s leading political, social, and cultural thinkers, and as such, they mirror the history of modern Japan itself. In this lecture I will give you a brief sketch of the history of *sogo-zasshi* with an aim of illustrating the important role they have played in modern Japan.

From 1985 through 1988, I served as editor-in-chief of a journal by the name of *Chuokoron* (中央公論), which is one of the representative monthly magazines that we refer to in Japan as *sogo-zasshi*, or as you might call them in English, “integrated intellectual magazines” or “composite magazines”

At the time of 1988 there were 50 such magazines being published in Japan, and the total number of copies printed in that year was close to 50 million. This figure has probably changed little during the past 15 years.

The contents of each issue of these magazines range broadly from serious policy proposals to short stories, serialized novels, and hobby and entertainment-related pieces.

Readers also look forward to the glossy photo pages.

Chuokoron in particular features articles of highly academic journals: they represent an effort by the authors to address specialists in fields other than their own, as well as non-specialist readers. In this sense, magazines like Chuokoron offer a forum for the exchange of views on topics of interdisciplinary interest.

Before I say any more, I should make one point. I am quite aware that people have criticized the Japanese for being too ready to emphasize their own uniqueness. And sure enough, some of my fellow countrymen and women like to suggest that our integrated intellectual magazines are something peculiarly Japanese that is found nowhere else in the world. It is not my intention to make that sort of assertion. Nor do I mean to give that kind of impression on you.

I have to stress two facts. Firstly, they have the same sort of magazines in China – both in the mainland China and in Taiwan – and also in Hong Kong and South Korea. These are all countries where people use *Kanji* or Chinese characters in their writing systems, as we do in Japan. Secondly, there are also examples outside the East Asian cultural sphere. I am told by people who are more familiar than I with the American publishing world that among the US journals the Atlantic, the New Yorker, and Harper's bear a close resemblance in composition to my magazine. In scale, however, my magazine probably has something like ten times the contents of an issue of the Atlantic.

Japan's most respected historical novelist, SHIBA, Ryotaro(司馬遼太郎) declared that "the history of *sogo-zasshi* in Japan is the history of modern Japan itself." And I heard from him personally that he was referring in particular to Chuokoron. Out of the many *sogo-zasshi* now being published in Japan, he went on to say, "Chuokoron alone has more than a century-long history which corresponds to the history of modern Japan." Actually many other intellectuals have written or voiced sentiments similar to his

Chuokoron's readers, contributors, and editors are all strongly conscious of the magazine's history. In my own case, serving as I did as editor-in-chief at the time of its centennial, I felt especially strongly bound by the traditional character that the magazine possesses as a result of the circumstances of its birth and of its subsequent development. I am fully convinced that knowledge of this path over which Chuokoron has traveled can be a great aid to understanding the history of modern Japan. And in retracing this path, we find that ever since the time of the magazine's inauguration a hundred and sixteen years ago, Japan has been consistently under Western influence.

Though few people know it even in Japan, Chuokoron was born as the house organ of a movement of young Buddhists calling for abstinence from alcohol. In the spring of 1886, just 18 years after the Meiji Restoration that marked the beginning of the history of Modern Japan, a group called the "Hanseikai(反省会)", or "Reflection Society", was born in Kyoto, the nation's pre-Meiji capital. Its members were students at a school operated by Japan's largest Buddhist sect, Nishi-Honganji(西本願寺).

In August of the following year the group published the inaugural issue of its house organ called "Hanseikai Zasshi"(反省会雑誌). This publication later grew into today's Chuokoron.

This Buddhist school in Kyoto admitted both clerical and lay students to its school with a six-year course of studies. Soon after Japan opened her door to the rest of the world at the time of the Meiji Restoration, lots of things Western flowed into Japan, Christianity being among them. The influence of

Christian teaching was being felt very strongly in Japan, and Buddhism was very much on the wane. The school was founded with the aim of helping the Buddhists recover their confidence and the strength of their convictions and to propagate religious knowledge with a Buddhist foundation among the general public.

Though it was a Buddhist school, the subject that was most emphasized in the curriculum was English. This was in order to enable graduates to learn much from the West. The books that students studied were almost entirely original works in English. This period in Japan's history is often referred to as the age of "Bunmei Kaika"(文明開化), or "Civilization and Enlightenment". In January of 1887, the year in which the first issue of "Hanseikai Zasshi" appeared in Kyoto, electric street lights made their first appearance in Tokyo, the nation's new capital – an event which symbolized "Bunmei Kaika."

During the 18th and 19th centuries the Western powers had extended their influence over Ch'ing-dynasty China and other Asian countries, turning many of them into their own colonies or dependencies. Japan's Meiji Restoration in 1868 was the outcome of the appearance 15 years earlier of a fleet of American ships off its shores. The fleet in question, the US East India Squadron led by Commodore Matthew Perry, which was dispatched to Japan by America's 13th president, Millard Fillmore, opened the eyes of the Japanese people to the overwhelming technological lead Western civilization had over Japan. It was these "Black Ships," as the Japanese termed the American vessels, that forced our country to abandon the policy of isolation from the West that it had maintained for two and a half centuries and to open itself up to the rest of the world.

In other words, these US ships forced the Japanese to recognize the backwardness of their own country and the rest of Asia compared with the West in the areas of military force and technological capability. Seeing other Asian countries being colonized by the Western powers, the Japanese feared that a similar fate might befall their own country. It was this fear that served as the driving force behind the Meiji Restoration.

After the country was opened, the Japanese sought to learn as much as they could from the West. They believed that the advanced state of the Western civilization was attributable to the Protestant principle of "Self Help." In fact, a translation of a book titled "Self Help", by a British author, Samuel Smiles, was a best seller in the early years of Meiji. The Japanese during this period strove strenuously to absorb civilization and enlightenment and thereby to catch up with the West.

They received great assistance in their efforts from the contributions of Christian missionaries, mainly Protestant missionaries from America. Protestant missionaries came to Japan in this period and devoted themselves to such activities as establishing and operating hospitals and schools. This work brought them into contact with Japanese in many walks of life.

Many Meiji Japanese were deeply impressed with the dedicated efforts of these Christians and with the fact that they sought no material reward. They were spiritually awakened by the message of self-help that these people preached. Many were converted to Christianity, and even those who were not converted looked upon these missionary workers from the West with great respect. Of course, it goes without saying that the acceptance of this spirit of self-help was hastened by the fact that it had much in common with samurai thinking or *Bushido* asceticism.

To the Buddhist students in Kyoto a hundred and sixteen years ago – those who formed the Hanseikai – the lives of the Buddhist clergy seemed decadent. Buddhist priests, it seemed, would use every ceremony and religious observance as an excuse to drink. This made a sharp contrast to the Christian missionaries, who were laboring wholeheartedly to help Japan progress, forgetting at times even to eat or sleep. These students believed that in order to promote Japan's enlightenment it was necessary not just for their own particular sect to cast off its old ways, but also for Japanese Society as a whole to be made over. Their goal was to start by reflecting on their own spiritual weakness, and then to encourage others to reflect as well. The specific form their introspection took was abstinence from liquor.

This is how the Reflection Society was born. They decided to translate their Japanese name "Hanseikai" into English as "The Temperance Association." The magazine published by this group carried the Japanese title "Hanseikai-Zasshi." But on the front cover, above these Japanese words in *Kanji* was printed the magazine's English title, The Temperance. In fact, to judge from the cover, one might have imagined that the magazine itself could have been in English.

The editorial staffs of "The Temperance" were keenly conscious of another contemporary journal, called "Kokumin no Tomo"(國民之友), or The Nation's Friend, whose inaugural issue had appeared just six months earlier. Though this periodical was destined to have a life of only 11 years, it represented Japan's first integrated intellectual magazine.

As I mentioned earlier, some people believe that this type of magazine is unique to Japan. But in fact it is not. The concept of "Kokumin no Tomo" came from an American weekly magazine, the Nation, which was first published in 1865. "Kokumin no Tomo" was put out by TOKUTOMI, Soho (徳富蘇峰), a man who had been converted to Christianity in his native town Kumamoto and who later studied at Doshisha, a Christian school in Kyoto. This school, which still flourishes today as Doshisha University, was founded by NIIJIMA, Jo(新島襄), a Japanese convert who had studied Christianity in the U S.

These facts show that the roots of Japan's integrated intellectual magazines lie in Christian intellectual tradition. This is also true of Chuokoron, which has the longest history among these magazines now being published in our country. Though it was first published by Buddhists, these people were deeply influenced by Christian way of life and by the examples of Christian missionaries who were working in Japan at the time.

The editors of this period were extremely eager to introduce foreign thoughts and intellectual trends, as they were deeply conscious of Japan's backwardness. They also introduced foreign literary works, like those of the Russian author Turgenev, which had a great impact on the subsequent development of literature in Japan.

The Temperance gradually softened its anti-drinking stance and the magazine turned into a journal of commentary based on Buddhist philosophy, thereby gradually developing into an integrated intellectual magazine.

The headquarters were moved from Kyoto to Tokyo in 1896.

The magazine changed to its present name starting with the January issue of 1899, the third year after the move to Tokyo. On the cover, above the Japanese title, Chuokoron, was printed "The Central Review." The Central Review – this is exactly what "Chuokoron" means. We can no longer be sure

whether the English title or the Japanese title was decided upon first. In 1912 the magazine formally cut its links with the Buddhist group in Kyoto to form an independent publishing company – Chuoukoron-sha, Incorporated. But the editorial policy at that time is precisely that which has continued to be observed to this day.

By the time the name changed, Japan had already won the Sino-Japanese war. Therefore, some Japanese people at that time began to feel that Japan had already caught up with the West. However, many of them still recognized Japan's backwardness with respect to the level of its culture and the development of its political structures. Recognizing Japan's backwardness, Chuoukoron sought more eagerly than before to inform Japanese readers about conditions abroad. Noteworthy was the section which contained articles translated systematically from Western papers such as the London Times, the Evening Post and the Daily Mail, etc. This translation work was carried out by a student of English at Tokyo University. At first he was a working student, but after a while the editor-in-chief recognized the student's literary talent and offered to him a position of a temporary editorial staff. Finally, he left the university without completing his regular course of study to become a regular member of the staff. Later, at only 30 years of age, he was promoted to editor-in-chief during the year in which the magazine severed its links with the Buddhist group. He believed that the Japanese should cultivate their character by reading literary works and also that they should have a democratic form of government in order to conquer their backwardness.

I nearly forgot to tell you his name. His name is TAKITA, Choin(瀧田樽陰). He started his work by giving opportunities to many novelists. To have one's work or works published in the literary section of the magazine immediately came to be regarded as something like the first step to a successful career as a novelist, and it was even true that an author's status among literary circles was established by the number of times he or she wrote for the magazine. Mr. Takita visited authors by jinrikisha, or rickshaw. The fact that his jinrikisha stopped in front of an aspiring writer's house was equivalent to a literary prize to a young novelist of that age.

Chuokoron at that time consisted of two parts, the first half carried political articles, and the latter half, literary works. It seems to me that Chuokoron was two magazines in one: a political magazine and a literary one put together.

It was YOSHINO, Sakuzo(吉野作造), a professor at Tokyo University, who contributed most frequently to the magazine that Mr. Takita edited. He also wrote the editorial comment anonymously almost every month. Professor Yoshino hoped for the development of democracy on Japan, as Mr. Takita did. Even now he is remembered in Japan, I believe, for his article, "Kensei no hongu wo toite sono yushu no bi wo nasu no michi wo ronzu(憲政の本義を説いてその有終の美を済すの途を論ず)", or "A Discussion of the Means of Perfecting Constitutional Government," which appeared in the January 1916 issue of Chuokoron. He used the term, "Minponshugi(民本主義)", to stand for democracy, which can be literally rendered in English as "People-as-the-base-ism." His main thesis was that Japan could enjoy democracy even under the Meiji Constitution which set up the emperor as "sacred and inviolable" and the possessor of supreme authority. To this end, he advocated the extension of suffrage, that is the enactment of universal manhood suffrage.

Professor MINOBE, Tatsukichi(美濃部達吉), who is well known for his “ Tennokikansetsu (天皇機関説)”, or “emperor-as-the-organ-of-the-state” theory, also contributed to Chuokoron. He was also on the faculty of Tokyo University and was 5 years older than Yoshino Sakuzo. I believe that both of them had the same viewpoint concerning the focus of the emperor in the Constitution.

As I stated earlier, Meiji Japanese were deeply influenced by Christian thought. One of them was certainly Professor Yoshino, who converted to Christianity when he was in high school in his native Sendai. Indeed, most writers and contributors at that time were influenced by Christianity, especially in their youth. Many of them studied abroad, and after returning to Japan, they tried to feedback their experiences and newly-gained knowledge into Japanese magazines so that Japanese society could become more democratic.

The term used to refer to them at that time was “Shinkichosha (新帰朝者)”, or “New Returnees from abroad.” As these new returnees competed with each other to contribute to Chuokoron, the magazine, especially the first half where the political articles appeared, became the house organ of these returnees.

Chuokoron rapidly won a large audience for its substantial policy proposals and literary works. This period in Japan’s history is referred to as the age of “Taisho Democracy,” since the name of that era was Taisho and movements for democracy flourished at that time.

The fruit of the labor of Yoshino Sakuzo and others was the enactment of universal manhood suffrage. In 1928, 12 years after the appearance of Yoshino’s article in Chuokoron advocating “ 民本主義,” the first election based on universal manhood suffrage took place.

It was in that year that Yoshino ceased writing the editorial comment for the magazine, which he had written for more than ten years. To tell the truth, Chuokoron’s editors forced him to quit. By that point of time, Yoshino’s stance had been long outside the mainstream of the journalistic world. Even though Chuokoron had gained many readers thanks to Yoshino, its editors began to feel that Yoshino’s thesis was out of date.

Instead, articles by socialists became dominant in *sogo-zasshi*. Socialists, encouraged by the Russian Revolution of 1917, exerted a strong influence upon the labor movements that were carried out vehemently as a result of the economic circumstances brought on by the depression after World War I.

A journal, “Kaizo”(改造) or “Reform,” which started in 1919 and immediately came to equal Chuokorn in subscriptions, flourished at that time mainly owing to articles by socialists.

To compete with Kaizo, Chuokoron also began to carry articles with a socialist slant. Takita Choin, who had devoted himself to establishing democracy in Japan, died in 1925 at the age of 43 years. In the following year, the Taisho(大正) era ended and the Showa(昭和) era began. The Taisho Democracy movement, which he had directed, began to decline and had been replaced by the socialist movement by the time he died.

In fact, in the late Taisho and early Showa periods, books written by communists and socialists gained an amazingly large audience.

Returning to the year 1928, the third year of Showa, just after the election, a large number of communists were arrested for being in violation of the Peace Preservation Law, which made it illegal to

advocate either change in the national polity or the abolition of private property. This law was originally enacted in 1925, at the same time as universal manhood suffrage. Even after these mass arrests, communists, socialists and intellectuals who tended toward socialism were still active in *sogo-zasshi*.

In the following year, 1929, the magazine printed the following introductory comment in the January issue: "Chuokoron itself is neither right-wing nor left-wing. While taking greatest care that our magazine not be misused for the sake of propagandizing one particular faction, we shall unstintingly offer the freest forum for the expression of sincere views from both the left and the right." This sentiment, I believe, explains the term "Chuo" or "Central" in the magazine's name. However, the very fact that the magazine felt the need to carry those comments indicates that there had been a severe conflict among its contributors.

Unfortunately, the year 1929 also marked the onset of the Great Depression, which started with the stock market crash in the US. And in this same period the authorities in Japan began to tighten their ideological controls, marking the arrival of a period of troubles for the country's integrated intellectual magazines.

In the meantime the authorities gradually extended their controls over the academic community. On the other hand, a tide of right-wing nationalism which denied Japan's backwardness and emphasized Japan's uniqueness and belief in a mystical notion of the national polity was gathering strength. Finally, those in power, sustained by the ultra-nationalists and militarists, began attacking those who had preached the democracy which had seemed to be common sense in the Taisho era. The assault on Professor Minobe's "emperor-as-the-organ-of-the-state" theory in 1935 is symbolic. Though his theory was nearly common sense until that time, "radical militarists" objected to Minobe's theory because they favored an absolutist interpretation that would permit them to exercise power on behalf of the Emperor, whom they claimed to represent directly under the provision of the "independence of the supreme command." Minobe was finally forced to resign his seat in the house of Peers and his teaching post at Tokyo University.

Even while confronting those troubles, Chuokoron was still striving to maintain the philosophy of self-help that was based on the religious and ethical foundations on which the magazine had been founded; at the same time it was working to fulfill its function as the "Central Review", a non-factional media organ that supported democracy. But this non-factional stance made the magazine a thorn in the side of those in power, as their attitudes became ever more militaristic.

Sogo-zasshi, including Chuokoron, suffered a heavy loss, with many contributors like Professor Minobe gone, while at the same time going through strict censors. Whenever the magazine tried to carry articles criticizing the authorities, it was prohibited from doing so, or was ordered to water down objectionable articles.

Consequently, despite the efforts of the editors to maintain their editorial policy, the magazines at this time were subject to the influence of the authorities when they reached the readers.

At the same time, some magazines insisted that all magazines should publish articles aimed at helping the war effort. Around this time Chuokoron was repeatedly denounced as being Western-oriented. It was subjected to various forms of oppression in the years that followed, including publication bans and the arrest of editorial staff members. Having exhausted all its resources in this fight,

the magazine finally succumbed and went out of business on July 30th, 1944, as did the journal Kaizo, or Reform, which had been a partner of Chuokoron in the struggle against official repression. It was just about a year before the end of World War II.

If the story had ended there, I would obviously not be here talking to you today as I am. What happened was that after Japan's defeat, the Allied Occupation Forces ordered the Japanese government to prompt re-establishment of Chuokoron and Kaizo with their tradition as organs of freedom of expression. On or about December 20th, 1945, only four months after the end of the war, Chuokoron published its January 1946 issue, its first issue as a magazine that was reborn. Allow me to quote briefly from the introductory editorial comment that appeared in that issue: "Inspired by the accomplishments of our predecessors, who built up this magazine's tradition, hewing to the middle way and fighting for freedom and justice,...we are setting out upon the thorny path ahead".

In passing, I might just mention that the magazine also made a contribution to elevating the status of women in Japan. The magazine "Fujinkoron(婦人公論)" or "Women's Review," a journal of opinion concerning women's issues, was created in 1916 originating in a special issue of Chuokoron.

Finally, I must confess that my today's speech has at least one defect.

That is, I did not mention two magazines, one called Taiyo(太陽), or Sun, and the other, called King(キング), which later changed its name to a Japanese title, Fuji(富士).

The former especially flourished in the later Meiji era, and the latter boasted the largest sales of all magazines published in the pre-war Showa era.

In order to keep this talk from becoming too complicated, today I talked mainly of Chuokoron's history, because I believe that the knowledge of the path over which this magazine has traveled can be a great aid to understanding the history of modern Japan.

I plan to continue my study of *sogo-zasshi* by learning more about the history of these two magazines. I do hope someday I will have a chance or chances to talk to you about those magazines.

Thank you very much.

(2004年1月15日、アメリカ・ミシガン大学日本研究センターにて、同センター主催2004年冬学期公開講座シリーズ第1回“The Development of Monthly Magazines in Japan”を担当。上記のおりの記録に加筆修正)

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