

THE JAPANESE ECONOMY AND SOCIETY IN THE NON-GROWTH STAGE

Escaping from the Myth of Economic Growth: A New Perspective on the “Non-Growth” Japanese Economy | TAKEDA Haruhito

Since the 1990s, Japan’s economy has often been negatively described as “The Lost Decade.” However, this article emphasizes that this period should be reviewed as a trial and error to find a solution for a new era. In that case, the current situation of the Japanese economy can be understood as a pioneering figure of non-growth society, which will one day all developed economies reach due to the given global environmental problems and resource constraints that restrain further economic growth. However, even a non-growth economy can be realized as a full vigorous society. In order to achieve such society, the government policy should aim to improve people’s quality of lives rather than to focus on economic growth. Enterprises should enhance their abilities to conserve materials, and individuals should embrace the cognitive turn in the usage of spare time, which emphasizes time commitment to human activities rather than to additional labor for an extra income.

• Keywords: economic development, non-growth economy, resource constraint, qualitative improvement of national living

The Depression of Japanese Economy since the Collapse of Bubble in 1990 |

ISHII Kanji

The depression of Japanese economy since the collapse of bubble in 1990 continued for very long time. Recent economic policy, named “Abenomics,” has failed to fully recover the economy, although it had produced a weak yen value and raised the prices of stocks by ordering the Bank of Japan to expand its credit. In this paper, I intend to analyze the reason for the depression of Japanese economy from a historical perspective. At first, I point out that the bubble of Japanese economy was brought about by helping the U.S. government’s effort to in recover her economy. Then I show that the depression of Japanese economy since 1990 was caused by the denial or the stagnation of Japan’s custom of long-term employment and its tradition of continuous innovation, ignoring the fact that these two factors had been the most important bases of Japanese-style business management. I also stress that these changes stemmed from the economic policy of Japanese government, which accepted the demand for

structural reforms from the U.S. government. In order to overcome the depression, I argue that the Japanese people has to play a decisive role of choosing an alternative way to establish a new government, which will break away from its dependency to America.

• **Keywords:** Abenomics, bubble of economy, Japanese-style business management, custom of long-term employment, innovation, the U.S. government, structural reform, dependency on America

The Politics of Japanese Long-Term Recession since 2000s: Neo-Liberalism, Welfarism, Neo-Conservatism | KIM Yong Bok

Japan has fallen into the pit of long-term recession for almost two decades, which has dismantled its post-war system of social integrity and political stability. The Japanese people have lost their self-confidence and become conservative due to a long-term recession symbolized by “lost twenty years.” Japanese politics since the 2000s has witnessed instability in the party system because of the increase in electoral volatility and the reforms in electoral system. According to poll results, the level of electoral volatility had reached fifty percent since the middle of the 1990s. This article argues that considerable changes have appeared in the politics of Japan throughout the process of overcoming long-term depression, and such changes have realized at recent major elections in Japan (the 2005, 2009, 2012 general elections). The Japanese parties, such as Liberal-Democratic Party (LDP) and Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), needed reformative politics to win the election, and their strategies varied as neo-liberalism of Koizumi’s Cabinet, welfare state policies of LDP Administration, and a strong conservative swing and Abenomics of Abe’s second Cabinet.

• **Keywords:** Japan, long-term recession, political economy, election, nonpartisans, Liberal-Democratic Party, Democratic Party of Japan

Status and Challenges of Non-Regular Workers in Japan | OH Hak Soo

Non-regular workers in Japan have increased after the collapse of economic bubble in 1991 within the context of long-term depression, low-birth and aging society, and globalization. The rate of non-regular workers has risen to about thirty-seven percent of the whole employed workers, and they have increased in both men and women of all ages.

An increase in non-regular workers was accompanied by the enterprises’s various usage of non-regular employees and the resulting diversification and polarization of choices of the workers. The company’s reasons for utilizing non-regular workers have diversified from the previous causes like labor cost down and employment adjustment during the 1990s, due to the necessity of recruiting professional workers, the impossibility of securing regular workers, and the inevitability of responding to changes in social and economic conditions, such as the revision of elderly employment law in the 2000s. The reasons of workers for choosing non-regular positions have also diversified from the original purposes during the 90s, – household

assistance, self time management, short commuting time, light workloads, and other physical problem – to the newly emerged objectives in the 2000s – the usage of professional qualifications or capabilities, the greater work-and-life balance, the impossibility of obtaining full-time jobs, and the better income.

The increase in non-regular workers was also accompanied by a characteristic phenomenon, which is the increment of Freeter and NEET among young people. The causing factor of such phenomenon was often pointed as the suppression of new employment of graduated young people among large companies, but the main factors are low level of professionalism, vocational ability, and education among young people.

The increase in non-regular workers has led to many social and economic problems, such as job insecurity, low income, a wage gap between regular and non-regular worker, low fertility, slow economic growth, and the crisis in social security system.

The Japanese government has set up a countermeasure, “Strategy Meeting for the Youth Independence and Challenge,” in pan-governmental level since the 2000s, and has developed additional policies with the aim of intensifying career educations in schools for the smooth transition from school to work, converting non-regular workers to regular worker through improvement in job skills, and eliminating mismatches in employment. Also, the government has implemented law revisions for the prohibition of unreasonable discrimination between regular and non-regular workers and for the promotion of job security among non-regular workers by regulating the conversion of non-regular workers to permanent positions.

A fundamental solution to the problems of non-regular workers is the higher quality of education, and thus, securing education financial resources through the increase in consumer taxation rate is critical.

• **Keywords:** non-regular workers, employment type, Freeter, NEET, mismatch of employment

Observing Japan’s Low Growth Society from a Gender Perspective: Gender Discrimination as an Obstacle to Adopting Low Growth | TAKENOBU Mieko

Japan continues to suffer from a prolonged deflation, called “The Lost Twenty Years.” Various reasons exist, including the decline of birth rate and the drop of wage rate, but the failure to switch from the “division-of-labor-by-gender-role” model during the period of the high-growth economy in the 1960s-1970s cannot be overlooked. Bubble economy in the 1980s had blocked a soft-landing from a high-growth-society to a maturity society. At that time, Japan had already become a low-growth society, but it was not realized due to its temporary prosperity. Such prosperity created an illusion among the Japanese people that the “division-of-labor-by-gender-role” model would be able to survive forever. It is impossible to overcome the stagnation in Japan without the liberation from the “spellbinding of the division-of-labor-by-gender-role model that succeeded too much,” and the new beginning from the reality of the man and woman in Japan.

• **Keywords:** gender, low-growth society, Abenomics, equal employment opportunity law between Men and Women

Quaking Japan, Yet Literature | KIM Gae Ja

From rapid economic growth to low and minus growth, post-war Japan who pursued phantasm of “growth” came to an end. Modern Japan is quaking due to economic polarization problems, endless disasters, and continuous conservative shift. During this period, what role did literature play? This article examines sensational literary works and followed phenomena at the time of economic depression and reconsiders the actual meaning of literature in modern Japan.

Two outstanding keywords of modern Japanese literature are healing and humor. A series of novels about gourmet have prevailed recently, because they provide consolation in anxiety of modern society. However, they need close watch on their patterns of consumption as simple fantasies without revealing the fundamental structure of pain. The novel *Flame* by Matayoshi Naoki created a noticeable sensation in the literary world in 2015, illustrating humor with materials from comedy entertainment. The success of this novel shows one characteristic of modern literature, which is an act of literary consumption as an industrial content. In addition, novels describing the agony of people that comes from economic depression and criticizing closed society have also succeeded. Especially, since 2010 “literary award on the street” has introduced novels that depicted the experience of homeless people, and such movement is expected to evoke the proper meaning of literature by relativizing the standardized mainstream literature and to propose the possibility of literature as a place for horizontal communication among common readers.

Since the collapse of economic bubble, modern Japanese literature is struggling to describe the problems that cannot stay in the individual area. Miyabe Miyuki’s detective novels are noticeable examples. If a certain literature is requested in spite of economic depression, such literature can be considered as in the form nearest to the proper meaning of literature.

• **Keywords:** literature at age of low growth, humor and healing, the novel *Flame*, literary award on the street, Japanese literature and individual

ARTICLES

A Study on the Japanese Music Students in Berlin during the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich | LEE Kyung Boon

It is well known that the Japanese people were the largest group among the East Asian musicians who had studied ‘Western Music’ in Germany, especially in Berlin, during the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich. However, the research has progressed around only

a few famous musicians, and thus the whole dimension of such phenomena has been rarely researched.

This study explores how the Japanese music students in Berlin was able to build an imperial cycle, which combines the Japanese Empire and the Third Reich, by analyzing German documents in the archive of the Universität der Künste Berlin and the Deutsche Institut für Ausländer an der Berliner Universität.

• **Keywords:** Japanese students studying music in Berlin, the Weimar Republic, the Third Reich, Stern'sches Konservatorium, Hochschule für Musik

Interpreting Changes in the Japanese Early Modern Architecture: Focusing on Japan as Heterogeneous Colonial Motherland | KIM Hyo Jin

In this article, I analyze the process of conflicts, contests, and compromises around the Japanese early modern architecture as the case symbolizing the paradoxes inherent in Japan as the only colonial motherland in Asia. I argue that the unique relationship between Japan and the West has an aspect of colonial situation in terms of modernization, because Japan as colonial motherland cannot be explained without considering the influence of the West. Since Japanese traditional architecture that are made of wood are prone to fire, Western-style modern architecture was introduced into Japanese landscape relatively easily, and it helped commoners to experience the transformation of Japan, named “Civilization and Enlightenment Movement.”

The Japanese early modern architectures are classified into three periodical categories: 1) pseudo-Western architecture, 2) intermediate style, and 3) orientalist architecture by foreign architects. I examined 1) the First National Bank, 2) Ginza Rengagai, and 3) Rokumeikan as examples of each category respectively. Pseudo-Western architecture, the mimicked western-style architecture by Japanese traditional carpenters, was inherently the Japanese Hybrid-Style, which commoners readily embraced. After that, Ginza Rengagai (Brick Town) appeared as the result of the first modernized urban planning in Japan, designed and created by the Western architect. However, Ginza Rengagai followed the early colonial architectural style of Southeast Asia, and the Japanese people adapted themselves into the brick building by changing them in various Japanese ways. While it is Rokumeikan that was the first genuine modern architecture by Josiah Conder, officially invited by the Meiji government aspiring to Europeanism, the details and the style of Rokumeikan show its hybridity, which strongly influenced by orientalism.

The fact that Japan as colonial motherland faced its own colonial situation regarding modernization implies the necessity of reinterpreting Korean modern architecture during the colonial period. By incorporating the instability of Japan as hybrid colonial motherland into colonial modernity in Korea, we can expect more detailed and objective perspectives on colonial Korea.

- **Keywords:** Colonial Motherland, Japan, Japanese Early Modern Architecture, built environment, Colonialism, Westernization, Pseudo Western-style architecture, Japanese hybrid-style Architecture, Orientalism

Rethinking Japanese Wartime “Comfort Women” From a Global Perspective: Beyond Korea-Japan Bilateral Relations | SHIN Ki Young

On December 28th, 2015 the government of Japan and South Korea had announced their agreement on the Japanese wartime “comfort women” issue, and as a response, multiple criticisms had been raised from the public. Such criticisms focused on the fact that the agreement was a product of an internal government negotiation in which victims were not given a room to participate, and that such approach cannot be an ultimate solution for a serious human rights violation like the “comfort women” issue. The United Nations (UN) Human Rights bodies and International Criminal Court (ICC) had developed a victim-centered approach as a solution method for serious human rights violations within the universal human rights norm since the 1990s. In accordance with such effort, the UN Human Rights bodies kept their interests in the “comfort women” issue and continuously demanded the Japanese government to propose a “lasting resolution.”

This article, at first, points out that the act of framing the “comfort women” issue within Korea-Japan bilateral relations ignores complex and multilateral characteristics of the problem and reduces a serious human rights violation to a problem of negotiation between the governments. Then it proposes the necessity of multilateral and universal normative approaches to a solution, which includes diverse female victims from other Asian countries.

To this end, the article examines the previous efforts for the resolution of the “comfort women” issue and their limitations, and then reviews the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) that has continuously asserted the restoration of victim’s justice based on the universal norms to the human rights of women.

- **Keywords:** Japanese Wartime “Comfort Women,” Korea-Japan Agreement on “Comfort Women,” United Nations Human Rights Norm, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Asian Women’s Fund, Women’s International War Crimes Tribunal on Japanese Military Sexual Slavery