Summation: Dynamics of Kyōyō

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Summation: Dynamics of Kyōyō

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In this concluding essay, I would like to consider $ky\bar{o}y\bar{o}$ as a dynamic element of civilization. More specifically, I would like to discuss the emergence of $ky\bar{o}y\bar{o}$ in the evolution of human society, $ky\bar{o}y\bar{o}$ as a symbol of the elite class, downward and upward mobility of the contents of $ky\bar{o}y\bar{o}$, and finally, cross-cultural differences in the ways $ky\bar{o}y\bar{o}$ is viewed. Before we begin on the substance of this chapter, a preliminary clarification of terms is needed.

1. CULTURE (KYŌYŌ) AND INTELLECT (CHI OR JITSUGI)

The terms kyōyō and *chi* or *jitsugi* are not easy to translate. We might use "intellect" in this context to refer to what in this symposium we have called in Japanese *chi* or *jitsugi*, and the term "culture," in the sense of "high culture," for kyōyō. The following three kinds of distinctions may be made, at least initially, between culture (kyōyō) and intellect (jitsugi).

- (1) "Intellect" refers in general to technical, analytical knowledge, or science, whereas "culture" refers to the arts, belle lettre, music, that is, what we generally associate with the "humanities." It includes what Japanese call yūgei or okeikogoto. Kyōyō is integrative and expressive in contrast to chi, which is analytical and instrumental.
- (2) Intellect, referring to chi or jitsugi, and culture, referring to kyōyō, differ also in the processes of how they are acquired. Cultural "arts" are acquired with feeling, intuition, and affect: Kyōyō without affect is dead. Intellect, on the other hand, being "pure" objective knowledge, presumably is, or can be, acquired

without the aid of affect.

- (3) Objectives of the two differ in that in kyōyō, expressive enrichment is an aim, if not *the* aim, of the activity, whereas in chi, this is not the case. That is, even though affect may accompany objective learning, the aim of chi is to acquire objective knowledge.
- (4) Lastly, chi is jitsugaku: it is utilitarian and allows one to earn a living, whereas kyōyō does not directly contribute to livelihood since it is something to enrich one's life, such as tea ceremony or poetry reading. In fact, there is a saying, gei ga mi o tasukeru hodo no fu-shiawase (there is nothing so wretched as having to earn a living through art [gei]). That is, if by some misfortune one loses means of livelihood, one can teach art to make a living, if one has acquired it; but this is considered very unfortunate.

2. THE DISTINCTION IS NOT SO CLEAR IN REALITY

Having made a distinction between chi and kyōyō, one immediately realizes that this distinction is not as clear-cut as one might initially make it out to be. For example, whether chi, or objective knowledge, is or even can be acquired without affective elements may be questioned. Affect seems to be a very important component in the process of acquiring knowledge. At the same time, kyōyō, needless to say, is not all affect. There is objective knowledge and skill involved in learning tea ceremony, calligraphy, or any other form of art.

It may indeed be a misfortune for some to have to make a living by teaching art, as the saying goes, but what the saying admits is that some in fact do have to earn a living by imparting kyōyō to others. Teachers of traditional Japanese dance, traditional singing, such as *utai* or *kouta*, and flower arrangement receive payments for the lessons they give. For some teachers, these payments may only amount to a modest sum. But for others, it is their sole means of livelihood.

At the same time, the *iemoto* or the headquarters of a school of learning, be it tea ceremony or flower arrangement, receives fees for certifying students at various stages of progress; payments received from students are almost the sole source of income, an income which provides an enviable lifestyle for the *iemoto* master and permits the nationwide activities of the school. This fact of the *iemoto* earning livelihood through its art is not considered a "misfortune" in the way it is for ordinary folk.

Or, to take another example, a professor of art history makes his or her living by teaching and conducting research on the history of art. As such, it goes without saying that he or she is expected to be knowledgeable on the subject. This is "real learning" or jitsugaku in the sense that it allows the professor to earn an income. However, a businessman who happens to have a passionate interest in art history and knows a great deal, say about Renaissance art, does not have "real learning;" instead, his knowledge is part of his kyōyō.

Of late, so-called "culture centers" have sprung up like mushrooms throughout

Japan, particularly in large urban centers. According to Moriya [1984], these culture centers teach all subjects imaginable, from the Persian language to incense appreciation, and from how to wear kimono to the history of Mayan civilization. Some of the instructors for these courses are hired from nearby colleges; some are teachers of traditional arts and crafts.

The vast majority of the subject matter taught at culture centers is what we may comfortably place under the rubric of kyōyō. Moreover, the intent of the students taking these courses is to acquire social and cultural "credentials," rather than to obtain skills to help earn a living. One certainly may teach Persian or become a Persian translator; but for most students, who are housewives and young unmarried women, these courses are taken to enrich their lives, and for unmarried women, additionally, to make them more qualified bridal candidates. For the institutions organizing these culture centers, some of which enroll tens of thousands of students in the hundreds of courses they offer, students' tuition is virtually the sole source of operating funds. For instructors, too, the remuneration paid for this service is often a lucrative source of additional income, although none can make a living solely on the basis of teaching at a culture center.

In short, what distinguishes chi from kyōyō is not the subject matter as such. That is, utilitarianism is not inherent in the subject matter pursued. Rather it is how the knowledge is used—whether it is used for making a living or for enrichment of life—that ultimately determines whether a given type of knowledge is utilitarian or non-utilitarian—whether it is chi or kyōyō.

In spite of such conceptual imprecisions as these, kyōyō is intuitively comprehensible to the Japanese as an area of learning and knowledge that gives a person "class," that makes one cosmopolitan, and that gains respect and admiration from others. It is knowledge that is "useless" in a strictly utilitarian sense, yet indispensable as general accourtement of cultural refinement. It is in this general sense that we shall proceed to use the term kyōyō in the following discussion.

3. CULTURAL STRATIFICATION AND CULTURAL CONTROL

In the beginning of human history, civilization was without kyōyō to speak of. For kyōyō is knowledge, information, and art which is not evenly shared by every member of the society, but is an icon, a symbol of the better-off classes. This means that kyōyō as a phenomenon did not emerge until a civilization was characterized by cultural stratification. Political, theocratic or economic stratification alone was not enough. Stratified differentiation of a society on the basis of political power, or of access to supernatural power and wealth, does not in itself imply stratification of knowledge. There needs to be knowledge that is not shared by all but is the exclusive property of privileged classes. Such knowledge was kyōyō, and it performed the important function of symbolizing power.

In evolutionary terms, thus, rise of a "cultured class" has been associated with emergence of political, theocratic, and economic stratification in the ancient Near

East, in Indus Valley, in the Yellow River basin, and so forth. And this evolution of a cultured class is almost invariably associated with invention or adoption of literacy.

From ancient times, a major form of this knowledge was literacy, which was a privilege of the ruling class of the society. In the classical world, whether in the Near East, China, or Japan, literacy was limited to a small segment of the population. Without literacy, one could not aspire to move up in the world or be a member of the ruling class.

Literacy itself of course was a form of knowledge monopolized by the privileged class, but at the same time literacy enabled expression of knowledge through writing, and whatever knowledge was thus expressed became esoteric knowledge of the privileged class that possessed literacy. Control of this knowledge—"cultural control," one may call it—was an important means of expressing the status of those in power.

In the Islamic world, as Otsuka's paper in this volume demonstrates, because of the emphasis placed on rote recitation and appreciation of verbalized recitation (which is in part legitimized by the fact that Mohammed himself is claimed to have been illiterate), literacy, especially in Sufism, did not play as central a role as it did in other classical civilizations. Nonetheless, the Kur-ān was committed to writing in Arabic; consequently, acquisition of literacy in Arabic was essential for other schools of Islamic religion, such as the $^c Ulam\bar{a}$.

But the importance of literacy did not end in simply providing a means to read and write anything and everything. Literacy was a vehicle through which culture expressed its *geist*, its accomplishments. In China these accomplishments were to a great extent Confucian philosophy; in South Asia, Buddhist and Hindu theology; in ancient Maya, chronicles of wars. Literacy, in short, was the gateway to other privileged knowledge.

Contents of what was to be controlled by the ruling classes of the society, basically through literacy, included both chi and kyōyō. Kyōyō was not simply a desideratum, but was essential, a sine qua non for admission to the status of "cultured person." In fact, it is not too much to say that in classical civilizations, the ruling class was identified and symbolized by its exclusive possession of certain cultural accourrement. Not that lower classes did not have any culture, though the wont of the privileged class was to claim that the common folk were "without culture," but that what lower classes had was of "little tradition," a folkish version of the elite culture, a bastardized version in the eyes of the elite, be it folk tales, folk dance, or folk music. Never mind that historically roots of the elite version of the culture may be found in folk culture; for the elites, what was important was the monopolistic possession of certain cultural practices.

Acquisition of the "high culture" of the elite was made difficult for the common folk simply by the sheer resources it required. Common people were too busy eking out an existence and paying taxes to the ruling class so that the elites could indulge in high culture; they had no time to acquire literacy to begin with, let alone

other accoutrement of the "great tradition."

Some civilizations, not content to let subsistence and taxation dictate the shape of the civilization, institutionalized cultural control and monopoly of the great tradition. Indian civilization created an elaborate caste system in which different modes of cultural practices for different castes were instituted and enforced with religious sanctions. Traditional China similarly created the four class system of gentry (scholars)—peasants—artisans—merchants, where the gentry class had a definite advantage over the others in acquiring literacy and other elements of high culture. Korea, too, created the yangban class, an equivalent of the Chinese gentry. Tokugawa Japan adopted the Chinese four-class system—with a modification, in that warriors replaced the civilian scholar-gentry as the ruling class. The Tokugawa government issued sumptuary regulations prohibiting non-samurai from adopting material symbols—in clothing and dwellings—of the elite class. These class/caste systems, even if they did not directly institute by law monopoly of the high culture, made it easier for the ruling class to monopolize it.

4. POPULARIZATION OF KYŌYŌ: PREREQUISITES

Kyoyo thus was property monopolized by the ruling class, and was at the same time the ruling class's symbol. "Popularization of kyōyō" in this sense sounds like a contradiction in terms. Some members of the symposium in fact showed resistance to this concept precisely because of the monopolistic nature of kyōyō: once acquired by the masses, kyōyō is no longer kyōyō. As we shall see, however, popularization of kyōyō has definitely been taking place. In the words of Iwanami Shigeo, as printed at the end of every publication of Iwanami Bunko, "to retrieve knowledge and beauty from the monopoly of the privileged class has always been a sincere desire of the mass."

A major force enabling this process is mass education. School is the most common and probably the most efficient place to teach literacy on a mass scale. Acquisition of literacy by the masses opens up doors for all areas of "high culture" to be acquired by the populace. Japan was no exception. While there was a relatively high degree of literacy even during the Tokugawa period [Dore 1965], it did not match what took place after the Meiji Restoration. Although claims of near-one hundred percent literacy by the end of the 19th century seem to be exaggerated, according to recent research by Richard Rubinger (yet to be published), it is safe to say it reached 90% by then.

Another important factor in popularization of high culture is removal of the institutional barriers described above. In Tokugawa Japan, institutional barriers kept most of the non-samurai, in short the vast majority of the population, from using literacy to acquire "high culture." Literate merchants, peasants, and artisans basically limited themselves to reading popular novels (best characterized as "pulp" fiction) and practical materials, such as government edicts and setsuyōshu, an encyclopedic compendium of facts and practical rules of social intercourse

[Үокочама 1984].

In Japan, the end of the Tokugawa period marked the end of institutionalized class barriers backed by legal sanctions. Social mobility was at least in theory and in law free for all Japanese, although we should not ignore the enormous social barriers that have lingered on for generations. Also, classics were an essential part of the school curriculum, which itself is an indication of the extent to which "high culture" was beginning to be shared by the wider populace.

Besides mass literacy and removal of institutional barriers, development of technology to make high culture accessible and available to the masses at low cost is a prerequisite to popularization of high culture. One severe limitation in classical civilizations was the absence of the printing press and other, more sophisticated, devices for mass dissemination of knowledge and information, such as the camera, record player, tape recorder, television, video recorder, copying machine, and so forth. Medieval Europeans had to resort to hand-copying of manuscripts. The Gutenberg press was, in this respect, truly a revolutionary invention.

Wood block printing was a vast advance over hand-copying, but still the process was slow and arduous. In Japan, woodblock printing was widespread during the Tokugawa period, and was responsible for dissemination of printed material. But it was no match for modern printing methods imported from Europe in the Meiji period, insofar as production in quantity was concerned.

Also, a high standard of living and substantial family income are necessary to allow the populace to purchase necessary "hardware"—be it books, record players, or tape recorders—to gain access to high culture. This was made possible through the industrial revolution and through the process of mass production, which came to Japan after it opened its ports for trade in 1868.

Not to be forgotten in considering factors for popularization of high culture is the obvious motivation on the part of the masses to emulate upper classes. Desire to improve one's condition in life and motivation to acquire the life style of those in higher stations in life are universal. In the poetic words of Iwanami Shigeo, printed at the end of Iwanami Bunko books, "Truth desires itself to be sought by all and art wishes itself to be loved by all." One sees a similar process of emulation of the upper class life style by the common people in the interaction of the great and little traditions that Redfield [1955] so well described. It is also seen in the process of sanscritization that Srinivas [1956] reported from India.

Mathias-Pauer's report in this volume is a testimony to these processes of popularization of high culture. By 1927, the inaugural publication year of the Iwanami Bunko, that is, some sixty years after abolition of the feudal (Tokugawa) class system, the sense of high culture being the exclusive property of the ruling elite was well nigh gone. Compulsory education had succeeded to the extent of achieving near-universal literacy. Importation of Western printing methods made mass production of books at a low cost possible. Finally, the size of the middle class was beginning to increase. It was at this wake that Iwanami Bunko was inaugurated to meet the demands of the common people to acquire "culture," or kyōyō through

printed matter. The fact that Reclam's *Universal-Bibiliothek* appeared some half a century earlier in Germany than in Japan is probably an indication that Germany was already "ready" for popularization of $ky\bar{o}y\bar{o}$ in terms of its social institutions as well as its technology. Of course, the sale of Iwanami Bunko was still rather limited. An explosive expansion in the sale of inexpensive pocket books had to wait for the post-World War II boom.

5. KYŌYŌ AND TERTIARY INDUSTRY

This brings us to consideration of kyōyō in the context of the development of tertiary industry. For popularization of kyōyō goes hand in hand with the expansion of tertiary industry. Enjoyment of kyōyō by a large segment of the population has taken place since the 1960's, and this is the period that has seen rapid expansion in tertiary industry. As agricultural productivity rose and less agricultural labor was needed to produce farm products to feed the nation, there began a mass exodus from rural areas into urban centers, including whole families rather than only junior sons and daughters moving to cities. This decrease of labor force in primary industry was accompanied by an increase in secondary and tertiary industries. First, the shift was primarily to secondary industry, but then later, with technological rationalization, automation and computerization of the manufacturing process, secondary industry, too, required fewer and fewer workers. At the same time, tertiary industry was expanding to accommodate the increasing demand for more consumer goods and for leisure activities. Tertiary industry then performed the role of absorbing the excess labor force from primary and secondary industries. What is this expanding tertiary industry? What does it consist of?

A good deal of the expansion in tertiary industry has merely reflected the increasing appetite of the masses in the basic areas of food, shelter and clothing—proliferation of the "family restaurants," construction of "mansions," and increased availability of brand-name clothes, for instance. It is also important to remember that tertiary industry is concentrated in urban centers, where the kyōyō industry is also concentrated.

At the same time, much of the expansion has been in the area of kyōyō. I have already mentioned the mushrooming since the 1970's of "culture centers," whose primary purpose is to provide instruction in arts and knowledge that are meant for enrichment of life, not for acquisition of skills for greater earning power of workers. Since the 1960's, numerous pocket book series have followed the lead of Iwanami Bunko, including Iwanami Shinsho, Chūkō Shinsho, Kōdansha Gendai Shinsho, and Kadokawa Bunko, just to name a few. Availability of television in virtually every home has provided the opportunity for every Japanese to partake of Beethoven's symphonies or Chikamatsu's puppet plays, and be informed on esoteric topics in art, literature, music, and other subjects. More recent availability of inexpensive audio cassettes and rental video cassettes has made it even easier for the masses to have access to high culture. Museums, too, which have been establish-

ed in just about every city and town in postwar Japan, have allowed Japanese to gain first-hand knowledge about works of famed artists or local history—a knowledge which would otherwise have remained inaccessible to ordinary people. Lastly, an increasing number of Japanese—over four million in recent years—have been traveling abroad, thus gaining experiential knowledge about foreign countries, which in the past they merely read about or viewed on television. Pisa's Leaning Tower, the Incas' Macchu Picchu and China's Great Wall, which in the past only a privileged few could visit, now become topics of everyday conversation of a large segment of the Japanese population.

It is understood that viewership of the NHK educational channel, where many of the kyōyō programs are aired, is much lower than that of private channels, where programs on the whole are quite banal and have nothing to do with kyōyō. Yet, compared with the pre-television era, there is no doubt that a much larger number of Japanese now have exposure to high culture than before through television.

One of the areas of service industry that has expanded enormously is education, especially at the secondary and college levels. Since compulsory elementary education has been in effect since before World War II, the primary education population has not changed much; besides, the primary education curriculum does not involve high culture to any great extent. After the war three more years were added to compulsory education, leaving senior high school and college education voluntary.

In the last ten years or so, more than 90 percent of junior high school graduates have been enrolling in senior high school. Similarly, an increasing proportion and number of high school graduates—about one-third now—are receiving further education. It is in senior high school and higher institutions that "high culture" is being imparted. Thus, the population receiving kyōyō is rapidly expanding as higher education becomes increasingly available to a larger segment of the population. In the modern world, then, one no longer sees a sharp demarcation of the privileged and the non-privileged in terms of kyōyō. In other words, social classes are no longer divided into those with kyōyō and those without. Instead, possession of kyōyō is a matter of degree; those at the top possess most of the privileged knowledge and those in lower strata gradually share less and less of it. If ancient civilizations were characterized by a sharp demarcation between the cultured and non-cultured, the modern world is characterized by lessening of the sharpness of the line, or loosening of the barrier between the two strata, and a greater sharing of kyōyō knowledge by lower classes. To call this process "democratization of kyōyō" probably will help confound the issue more than help clarify it, although one is tempted to do so. "Greater sharing" merely implies changes in degree: lower classes sharing more than before; it does not imply complete and even sharing.

6. UPWARD MOBILITY OF "LOW BROW" CULTURE

So far, we have discussed "popularization" of kyōyō, or "high brow" culture:

its spread to an increasing proportion of the population and to those below the upper crust of the society where it was first monopolized. We might call it the downward movement of kyōyō. While granting this to be the dominant process, there is a reverse process of "low brow" culture that gradually becomes accepted or acquired by higher social classes, and becomes part of kyōyō.

Jazz, which began as the music of Black slaves in the southern United States, provides a case in point. As slaves' music, it was not considered proper music to be appreciated by the educated class of Whites. Jazz then was played out in the field and in the street, sometimes using instruments made of any available object, such as the laundry pail and broomstick. Jazz was an object of humor and ridicule to the "proper" segment of the society. But as time passed, jazz became more refined and came to be played by professionals in concert halls charging admission. By the middle of this century, jazz was no longer exclusively played by or for Blacks. Instead, White musicians began to join Black jazz bands and even form their own, all-White bands. Also, the audiences for jazz concerts began to include more and more Whites. By now, jazz has spread around the world. Jazz bands are found in Moscow and Tokyo, and jazz is appreciated abroad almost as much as in the United States. Elementary knowledge of jazz is genuinely part of one's kyōyō, at least in the United States.

Another example of cultural upward mobility is seen in the graffiti art of the New York area. Begun as mere scrawling on building walls and subway train cars, graffiti art has become a well-organized profession, in which well recognized masters are privileged to sign their art work and command the respect and following of many apprentices. The lowliest apprentices simply run errands, hand over paints to the master, and hold lights (since much of the subway car painting is done at night), while the master works on his masterpiece. Apprentices gradually work their way up from painting a small segment of a train to a larger segment. Passenger cars with many windows are not as desirable as freight cars, which are reserved for masters. At this stage, graffiti still remains the art of the oppressed, giving anti-social or anti-establishment messages to the world by defacing public property. Of late, however, graffiti masters are being commissioned by art dealers to paint on canvas, and their signed art work is displayed for sale in art galleries. Graffiti art has come of age, and it may not be long before it will adorn the homes of the wealthy and knowledge of graffiti art, like jazz, will be incorporated in the kyōyō of the "respectable" population of the society.

From Japan, one may point to kabuki as an illustration of cultural upward mobility. Initially played outdoors by street actors for pittances and at times banned by the government for the immoral influence of actors upon morally upstanding townspeople, by now, after three hundred years of history, a smattering of knowledge about kabuki and its actors is genuinely a sine qua non for those in the "in" crowd of high society.

7. POPULARIZATION OF KYŌYŌ AND CULTURAL STRATIFICATION

Earlier, I mentioned the concern of some of the symposium participants over popularization of kyōyō as privileged knowledge: when popularized, it will no longer be privileged, and hence no longer kyōyō. Would this happen? Would the entire corpus of kyōyō knowledge eventually disseminate so evenly throughout the society that everyone from top to bottom would share essentially the same pool of knowledge? I do not believe this will ever happen as long as a civilization is politically and economically stratified.

The reason is that ruling elites must have symbols of their status and power to help legitimate their position. If certain symbols, that is, a certain segment of kyōyō knowledge is usurped by those less privileged, elites are capable of creating new symbols to add to their repertory of kyōyō. In fact, the modern history of civilization has been one in which lower classes have continually taken over the kyōyō knowledge of the privileged elite while the latter have continued to add new repertories to sustain their claim on a privileged position in society.

8. KYŌYŌ IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

The generalization that kyōyō is always part of the privileged class is offered here as universally valid. This does not mean that cross-cultural variation is not recognized. Indeed, such variation is expected almost as a truism. At least in the most trivial sense, contents of kyōyō will vary from one civilization to another. Basic knowledge about the Kanō school of painting is expected of even a modestly "cultured" person in Japan, while in France or Germany, such knowledge would belong to the most esoteric portion of kyōyō. On the other hand, in France or Germany basic knowledge about baroque music is expected of even a modestly "cultured" person, while in Japan such knowledge is reserved for a more highly "cultured" segment of the population.

Civilizations vary also in the extent to which kyōyō is valued. In France, for example, business people and politicians are expected to possess a great deal of kyōyō, to be well versed in Greek and Roman classics, to be able to hold their own in discussing Saint Thomas Aquinas or Kant. Their respect is gained in their communities not merely by what they can do in business or politics, but by how much esoteric knowledge they command in areas outside their specialty. Or rather, they manage to command respect from communities because they are "cultured."

In comparison, American leaders in business and political worlds appear quite uncouth, almost devoid of "culture." In the United States, functional specificity is the cardinal rule: as long as you can do what you are expected to do, it does not matter what other attributes you do or do not have. If a business executive is astute in running a corporation, it does not matter whether he has ever heard of Shakespeare or is able to spell the name. Such knowledge is totally irrelevant in evaluating an American as a corporate executive. In France, such a person is not likely to suc-

ceed as a corporate executive to begin with.

This does not mean that in the United States, "Culture with a big C," as kyōyō is often called, is not at all important. The controversy that took place recently at Stanford University on the proposed revision of "Western Culture" requirements for undergraduate education is a case in point. The controversy became national news, with the New York Times reporting on it and Secretary of Education William Bennett of the Reagan administration declaring the proposed revision the decline and fall of classical education. One of the major issues of this controversy was whether or not the so-called "classics," such as Aristotle and Plato, are to be dropped from a list of required readings for undergraduates. Conservatives argued that a required list of classics should not be removed, while liberals favored making them "optional and recommended." The debate on this issue went on for over a year before it was settled. This indicates that kyōyō in the United States is not a dead issue, but is hotly debated. However, the fact that liberals could propose to make classics optional is an indication of the way in which classics are regarded. In France or in England, the necessity for students to read classics is so obvious that there would be no question and no debate. Part of the issue here is whether in the United States, Aristotle and Plato constitute appropriate kyōyō or whether they can be replaced by Hemingway and O'Neill as kyōyō material; it is not whether kyōyō as a concept should be done away with at Stanford. Perhaps French and English would laugh with derision at a suggestion that Hemingway and O'Neill can be ranked with or replace Greek scholars. But here we are dealing with relativity of kyōyō, where its contents of necessity vary from civilization to civilization. Still in all, I maintain that Americans consider kyōyō to be decidedly of less importance for the elites than do French or English. The Japanese situation is somewhere between France and the United States, perhaps closer to France and England than the United States.

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