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Author	横山, 寧夫(Yokoyama, Yasuo)
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Conservatism and Social Structure

Yasuo Yokoyama

It is said that the human nature is afraid of unknown future or change and wishes maintenance of status quo. However this kind of tendency cannot be found in an original nature of man. Instead, this trend of conservatism is usually derived from the social characters that is based on some social structure. In this article I assume that a change is the normal process of society. From this point of view it is my task to identify the factors that interfere with this normal process: that is the so-called power of tradition. Up today, people were searching for variables that caused the process of change in society. I believe that by taking a factors that I have stated above, I can analyze the problems more dynamically.

The Attitude of Conservatism When human beings take a conservative point of view, this basic attitudes may be divided into the following kinds: (1) real-orientation type (the maintenance of status quo is to be directly man's advantage), and (2) value-orientation type (based on "ought to conserve some value contents). Moreover, there are two types of people who take a conservative attitude: (a) ruler and (b) masses.

The Types of Society First I view social relation in two categories: they are "spontaneous" and "institutional" relations. Secondly I want to emphasize the difference between "collectivity" and "individuality" of social principles. If we combine these two categories into one system, they become (A) collectivity-spontaneous (B) collectivity-institutional (C) individuality-spontaneous (D) individuality-institutional.

Lastly, I should like to integrate the attitude of conservatism [I classified them with the symbols of (1) & (2) and (a) & (b)] with the types of society [I used the symbols of (A) (B) (C) & (D)].

(A) takes (2) (b). This is a most extremely closed type that is

most repugnant to the innovation of culture.

(B) takes (I) (a). Here an acceptance of culture is to be decided by an opinion of its leader who adheres to tradition. However, the adaptation to novelty will be rapid when this system begins to fall.

(C) takes (I) (b). In this case a tendency of conservation is most weak. However, as a reaction to its extreme progressivism, a conservatism is tend to arise.

(D) takes (2) (a). This is a closed type. But this is not so much resistant to change as (A) above. It does not run after novelty. But a reinterpretation of the tradition will be highly appreciated among the people.