

English Summaries

New Paradigm of World History Did the 'Fertile Crescent' exist only in Mesopotamia?

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The world needs a view of science that stands in awe of nature. The kind of science developed in European and American civilizations adopted an anthropocentric view. Prof. Dr. Shuntaro Ito pointed out the limitations of such a view fifty years ago. The anthropocentric view of nature was nurtured within the lifestyle of the peoples who cultivated wheat/barley and bred livestock. They ate bread, made butter and cheese, and obtained protein from the meat and milk of their livestock. They exploited nature unilaterally and transformed the surrounding terrain into the desert. There was a dark side in such a lifestyle. It unilaterally exploited natural resources and especially destroyed forests. The Industrial Revolution began in Europe in the eighteenth century, and it was founded upon principles that derived from the wheat/barley-cultivating and pastoral civilizations. It also led to a manner of production that unilaterally exploited natural resources. As humankind entered the twenty-first century, it became increasingly clear that we could no longer continue to pursue such a lifestyle. On the other hand, in the rice-cultivating and fishing civilizations, people eat rice, make fermented foods and obtain protein mainly from the seafood. We need a new civilization with principles that place ultimate value on continuing to exist on this beautiful planet for tens of thousands of years. In order to create a new paradigm of world history, we need to re-evaluate the Japanese lifestyle within its rice-cultivating and fishing civilization. In this civilization, the role of water is especially important. In rice cultivation, water guided into a rice paddy that belonged to one farmer had to be restored to its original clear state before returning to the environment and being used in the next paddy field. The next farmer did the same, as did the farmer before him. Thus, a rice-cultivating and fishing society was formed among the people who lived from upstream to downstream along the rivers. In order to survive in such a society, one had to restrain his own desires, refrain from taking all, and consider the happiness of others in society as well as the well-being of all living creatures. Such a 'spirit of altruism' was required for members of the rice-cultivating and fishing societies. In my lecture, I emphasize the importance of such altruism.

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“Spiritual Revolution” in Israel (I) - the Age of Prophets

Shuntaro Ito

This article is a sequel to the author’s previous studies on “Spiritual Revolutions”, namely, “The Age of ‘Spiritual Revolution’ - Part I ” which treated Socrates’ achievements in Greece, “Confucius’ ‘Spiritual Revolution’ in China” and “Gotama Buddha’s ‘Spiritual Revolution’ in India”.

These three articles were published in *Journal for Comparative Study of Civilizations* No.13 (2008), No.18 (2013) and No.20 (2015). This series will be completed in the next article “ ‘Spiritual Revolution’ in Israel (II) - the case of Jesus”.

This begins with the review of history of society in the ancient Israel. Then it describes the thought and religion there, concentrating in analysis of the two important concepts *Contract* (b^orith) and *Law* (Tôrâ). It proceeds to examine the contents in the Old Testament about main prophets, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah and Jeremiah and ends in appointing the fundamental difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament which proves Jesus’ innovation.

The History of Private-Sector Exchanges between India and Japan from 1890s to 1960s: Centering on Cultural Exchanges between Bengal and Japan

Sudipta Das

In this paper I have made endeavor to highlight the private exchanges between India-Japan (focusing on Bengal) after the historical encounter of Tenshin Okakura and Rabindranath Tagore. I take up Indians and Japanese like P. Hariharan, Mukul Dey, Horiprova Takeda, Shitoku Hori. They are not known to us, but they contributed to exchanges between India and Japan. There is few research on them both in India and Japan.

I highlight the history of private-sector exchanges starting from Swami Vivekanda who visited to Japan in 1893. In India-Japan history, he is the first Indian Hindu monk visited Japan and impressed Japanese intellectuals including Okakura. Okakura later visited India moved by his ideas. After the encounter of Tagore and Okakura, the exchanges between India and Japan became fruitful.