

So-called 'Conversion' from Left to Right among Marxists in Pre and Postwar Japan

Although Japan can't be considered as a former socialist country, Socialism and Marxism had had a profound impact on his intellectual history. Thus, Japanese Intellectuals had to handle a variety of theoretical issues not only as a translation necessity, but also as its practical and political consequences, especially after Komintern's creation (1919). This is not a particularity, however, political manipulation put aside, what is interesting lies in the mechanism and the "incommensurability" of such an allegiance to USSR orthodoxy, inasmuch as it led to a series of mutual political exclusion or "changes of orientation" named "*tenkô* 転向", as well as a rich debate on the definition of the Nature of Japanese State.

The present lecture will try to clarify, in this complex context, how the definition of a theoretical interpretation of Marx or Lenin in the 20' became gradually an ideological issue in 30' named as *tenkô* and how this polysemic term concentrates several connotations as : 1st the synonym of treason or recantation for Marxists ; 2nd at the same time the result of authorities systematic coercion ; 3rd the expression of a "return to (genuine) Japan" in general; 4th a symptom of unachieved Japanese modernity among certain post-war interpretations. This will allow us to establish the difference between the usual terms "conversion" or "recantation" and the factors of such "change of orientation".