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UEKI EMORI
AND
THE USE OF HISTORY

A sub-thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the degree of Master of East
Asian Studies in the Australian National University

By

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To Pei Ling

Affirmation

This thesis is the sole work of the author, Loh Kwok Cheong, and except where due acknowledgement is made in the text, does not, to the best of my knowledge, contain material previously presented, published or written by another person.



Loh Kwok Cheong

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Abstract

German historian Michael Sturmer ascribes a functional role for historical consciousness: "in a country without history, he who fills the memory, defines the concepts and interprets the past, wins the future."¹ Although Sturmer was concerned with the way in which understanding of history shapes contemporary discourse in post World War Two Germany, his statement also aptly described the manner in which history has been used in Japan since the advent of the modern century. With my long-term goal of a study of the "use of history" by intellectuals in Japan and, perhaps later, a comparative study of Japan and Germany, I felt a need to embark on a smaller study to lead the way in. As history is a continuum of accumulated experience, it is necessary that I should look at an earlier attempt at historical construction in Japan. The present study was conceived upon this premise.

In this study, I have restricted myself to looking at a "lesser name" in Meiji intellectual history, Ueki Emori (1857-92). Situated in a time marked by the breakdown of the traditional order and influx of new Western ideas, Ueki and his peers were confronted with the task of relating their discredited past to their present and the need to define new paradigms for the future. I shall be investigating the intellectual formation of Ueki and how it was shaped by his social upbringing, the prevailing ideology and Western liberal ideas. After identifying the source of tension in Ueki's thought as the conflict between traditional values and new Western ideas, I intend to argue that he attempted to resolve it through the "use of history." While Ueki was not known as a historian, I find a conspicuous historical dimension to his writings. His "use of history" involved reinterpreting historical symbols, portraying the Japanese "people" and "rights of resistance" as traditional sources of democracy in Japan, and thus inscribing democracy as part of its history. Through such historical reconstruction, Ueki ultimately wanted to promote democracy and liberty as universalistic principles consistent with the notion of a "world without boundaries."

Rather than judge the "intellectual legacy" of Ueki in Japanese thought, I am more

¹Sturmer, "Suche nach der verlorenen Erinnerung," quoted by Jurgen Habermas, "Settlement of Damages," in *New German Critique*, 44 (Spring/Summer 1988): 28.

concern with the problems faced by him and other Meiji intellectuals in that age of immense social and ideological upheaval, in redefining their past and defining the future, and in relating their ideas of *bunmei kaika* to the social context of their times. This study is, therefore, not an intellectual biography. It is not a conclusive appraisal of the thought of Ueki either. Instead, I believe this study would assist in understanding of problems that confronted Japanese intellectuals in the immediate postwar period. Disillusioned by the trauma of the Second World War, they too, in Sturmer's words, through the "use of history," tried to reinterpret Japan's relationship to its past, redefine their culture and identity, and construct a new national self-consciousness to guide future actions. The significance of this study lies in such understanding.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The Dawn of a New Era

The driving force behind the Meiji Restoration - confrontation between Western civilization and Japanese culture, confrontation between the ideas of progress and traditional ideas brought forth a new era in Japanese history. Along with the government's declaration that "knowledge would be sought throughout the world" and the "discontinuance of former base customs," there was a sudden rush of Western knowledge and culture into Japan. Traditional practices and ideas were readily abandoned in favour of modern (Western) science and civilization. *Bunmei Kaika* was the key phase of the day and Japanese looked forward to the application of reason and science in constructing a new social order that would rank Japan among Western nations. But despite the rhetoric, not all of Meiji Japan was "new;" traditions persisted and along with the new knowledge, created a distinct phase in the history of Japan. The interaction of these two forces was to shape the nature of Meiji history.

The arena where the most intense interaction took place was understandably - politics and society. From this background appeared a number of self-appointed political theorists, moralists and social reformers prescribing what they felt should be the political, social and moral reforms that Japan needed to adopt in order to carry itself into the future. One such attempt was the *Jiyu Minken Undo* (Popular Rights Movement). Heavily influenced by French liberal ideas, the leaders of this movement attempted to challenge the ruling oligarchy and prescribe a new political and social order for Japan based on individual rights and freedom. At the same time, these leaders made extensive use of traditional values and symbols: loyalty, national strength, emperor, etc., to articulate their imported ideas.

Numerous Japanese intellectuals appeared on this platform of Popular Rights, espousing various political theories and programmes, among them Itagaki Taisuke, Nakae Chomin, Baba Tatsui, and left their mark as founding members of the movement and leaders

of the "Meiji Enlightenment." However, most of the lesser figures have been forgotten due to various historical circumstances. Many proponents or supporters of democratic reforms in Japan had all along been belittled and suppressed by official historiography. Taking a cue from one of my favourite authors - E. H. Norman, who took delight in looking at some of the lesser figures, but who nevertheless provided important contributions to history, I intend to explore one of these figures who would have otherwise remained unknown had he not been "discovered" by Ienaga Saburo.

From the late Meiji years, Ueki Emori (1857-1892) had been obliterated from official historiography because of his radical political views and only appeared in Japanese historical studies when the various censors had been removed after the defeat of war. Other than a few of his articles, which were collected into the *Meiji bunka zenshu* by Yoshino Sakuzo in 1927, there was no *zenshu* of Ueki; neither was there any proper study of him before the war. Suzuki Yasuzo was the first postwar Japanese scholar to attempt an academic study of him. It was said that Suzuki was greatly influenced by Ueki's original constitutional draft when he submitted his own draft constitution to the SCAP.¹ Although more studies of Ueki appeared after the war, most of these have been restricted to analysing his political views and his activities as part of the Popular Rights Movement. Examples of these studies are those by Ike Nobutaka, Joseph Pittau and Roger Bowen that analyse the thought of Ueki in terms of its Western origin, the prevailing intellectual currents and social conditions. Such perspective tended to see Ueki's thought in general terms and ignored the inherent contradictions and tensions in his ideological disposition. Only Ienaga's studies of Ueki attempted to view his thought in this light.

I feel, therefore, that there is a need for a study of the ideas of Ueki, the tensions involved and his efforts in resolving them, coming as they do from an intellectual trapped in the great flux of Western knowledge and cultural traditions. I intend to look at one aspect that was not dealt by Ienaga, which is Ueki's view of the past and his attempts at relating the past to the present, in the light of the demands of creating new political and social paradigms with the breakdown of the traditional order in early Meiji.

¹Ienaga ed., *Minshu shugi*, Gendai nihon shiso taikēi, vol. 3, (Tokyo, 1965), p. 15. Hereafter cited as *Minshu*.

The Argument

It is claimed that Ueki's political ideas were indebted to Herbert Spencer's *Social Statics*.² But how did Ueki perceive his own intellectual debt and what was the relation between his ideas and the existing intellectual climate? This study will be an attempt to investigate how Ueki rationalized his political and social thoughts, and how he utilized and reinterpreted historical examples of popular democratic traditions in the West, China and Japan to substantiate his ideas. The aim of this paper is to show that Ueki, despite the foreign origins of his ideas, attempted to internalize democracy through "the use of history" as part of Japanese tradition, long suppressed, and through this process subscribed to a belief in democracy as a universal principle of all mankind.

This study will be divided into five chapters. Chapter one will discuss the reasons for this study and its significance. I will also sketch out my framework and methodology. Chapter two will trace the major events in Ueki's life and examine how these events together with the social and political conditions of his time shaped his thought and conditioned his behaviour. As I am not writing a biography of Ueki, I will be relying on studies by Ienaga for most of the biographical data supplemented by readings of Ueki's autobiography and diaries. The following chapter will discuss some of the main political and social theories proposed by Ueki. I will attempt to trace the foreign origins of his ideas and compare his ideas with those of his contemporaries so as to highlight the characteristics of his thought. As ideas are never independent of the person and his intellectual surroundings, the tensions and contradictions in Ueki's thoughts will also be discussed. The study will be based primarily on Ueki's original essays. Due to the limitation of space of this study and availability of Ueki's writings in print, I will look only at the more representative writings of Ueki's political and social thought. Chapter four will cover the main theme of this sub-thesis in which I shall look at how Ueki made use of historical examples to substantiate his ideas. While Ueki cannot be termed a historian, he made extensive use of historical examples in his writings. I intend to examine him as a concerned intellectual of his time with a self-appointed mission to lead the Japanese

²Ienaga, *Ueki Emori kenkyu*, (Tokyo, 1960), pp. 349-58 and Bowen, *Rebellion and Democracy in Meiji Japan: A Study of Commoners in the Popular Rights Movement*, (Berkeley, 1980), pp. 200-12. Hereafter cited as *Ueki and Rebellion*.

towards what he perceived as the correct political and social order of the future. Through his interpretation of histories of popular and democratic traditions not only in the West but also of Japan and China, I intend to argue that Ueki attempted to internalize them in Japan and universalize democracy and freedom as commonly shared principles of mankind. In my concluding chapter, I shall discuss the effectiveness of Ueki's attempts and will examine my belief that Ueki's actions were not singular but rather a product of the conditions of his time; that we can see parallel attempts by Japanese intellectuals in the immediate post-1945 era. Lastly, I intend to reappraise Ueki's contribution to the Japanese intellectual heritage and perhaps argue for a more positive assessment that has for so long been denied to him.

Sources in Japanese

The primary sources on Ueki available to me come in the form of his diaries and his writings. Ueki Emori meticulously recorded almost every detail of his life. He wrote two autobiographies, *Ueki Emori ten* (1879) written in *Kanbun* and *Ueki Emori Kun Ryakuten* (1890) written in Japanese.³ The latter is reprinted as *Ueki Emori Jijoden* in Ueki's *Senshu*.⁴ He also maintained a diary that dated almost continuously from 1873 to the 3rd of January 1892, just twenty days before his death at the age of thirty-five. Besides the diaries, he maintained separate accounts of events like hospitalization, jail sentence, travel and the numerous public speeches that he undertook. His obsession with detail is reflected in a record of book purchases that detailed the cost and date of purchase and a diary concerned with recording the books that he had read.⁵ In addition, Ienaga had compiled a reference list of Ueki's remaining books in *Ueki Bunko Moroku*. It is therefore not difficult to retrace in an objective manner the details of Ueki's activities.

³The first autobiography was attached to the front of Ueki's original diary and detailed his childhood days to 1874. According to his diary, this was written on the 8th Sep, 1879, most probably due to his desire to fill up the initial phase of his life not covered by his diary. This autobiography was omitted from the published version of his diary, *Ueki Emori nikki*, (Kochi, 1955). The second autobiography was published as a serial in the *Toyo shinbun* in 1890. See Ienaga, *Ueki* p. 18.

⁴Ienaga ed., *Ueki Emori Senshu*, (Tokyo, 1974), pp. 201-92. Hereafter cited as *Senshu*.

⁵These accounts are published in Ienaga ed., *Ueki Emori nikki zoku*, (Kochi, 1960). See also Ienaga, *Ueki*, pp. 19-20.

Not all of Ueki's writings are published however. The major political essays are reprinted as *Nihonkoku Kokken An* in Volume Three, *Minken Jiyu Ron* and *Tenpu Jinken Ben* in Volume five and *Mujo Seiho Ron*, *Ikkyoku Giin Ron* and *Kokkai Shoshiki: Kokumin Daikaigi* in Volume Seven of the *Meiji Bunka Zenshu*. Most of the above works are also reprinted in *Ueki Emori Senshu*, *Meiji Bungaku Zenshu* Volume Twelve and *Gendai Nihon Shiso Taikei* Volume Three along with some of his lesser known political and social treatise. In addition, most of Ueki's untitled articles are collected in *Muten Zatsuroku*. While the writings available are limited, they are sufficiently diverse for me to comprehend most of Ueki's thought as reflected in them.

The main secondary source that I will be relying on is Ienaga's *Ueki Emori Kenkyu* and *Kakumei Shiso no Senkusha*. Both provide a comprehensive survey of Ueki's life and thoughts. I will also look at Hijakata Kazuo's article which deals with Ueki's intellectual debt to Fukuzawa Yukichi and the difference between their thought. Matsunaga Shozo's *Nakae Chomin to Ueki Emori*, on the other hand, contrasts Ueki with Nakae Chomin and argued how differences in their education and age led to different understanding of Western liberal ideas and activities in the Popular Rights Movement. Lastly, Fukuchi Shigetaka's and Emura Eiichi's studies provided the general social and ideological background of the early Meiji period.

Translations of names of political organizations and works have been checked with the *Concise Dictionary of Modern Japanese History*,⁶ *The Cambridge History of Japan: Volume 5* and Kosaka Masaaki's *Japanese Thought in the Meiji Era*. All translations in this paper, unless otherwise stated, are mine and I, therefore, take responsibility for any errors.

⁶Jane Hunter compiled, *Concise Dictionary of Modern Japanese History*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984.

CHAPTER TWO

Ueki's Life and Intellectual Formation

In Ienaga's study of Ueki, he has divided Ueki's life into five phases based on major events in his life. They are the early years (1857-74), the formative years (1874-77), the political activist's years (1877-85), the social thinker years (1885-88), and the parliamentary politician years (1888-92).¹ Although these phases do not necessarily correspond to major shifts underpinning Ueki's intellectual formation, they do provide a useful guide in delineating the major phases in Ueki's life. In this chapter, I will be adopting Ienaga's periodization to delineate the main phases of Ueki's life. However, Ienaga's aim was to sketch the chronological development of Ueki's thought, my focus, thus, differs from his. As individuals are products of their experiences, I shall be looking at how Ueki's attitudes and behaviour were motivated and conditioned by his time.

The Early Years (1857-74)

Ueki Emori was born on the twentieth of January, the fourth year of *Ansei* (1857), in Tosa, the present day Kochi prefecture. He was the only child born to Ueki Naoe and Inagaki Kame. Naoe was a medium-ranking samurai and served as an administrator to the han's daimyo. He was well versed in *kokugaku* (national learning) and although Ueki had no formal training in *kokugaku*, Naoe's academic flair probably rubbed off on his son, especially, in terms of Ueki's literary skills and passion for learning. From his childhood days, Ueki displayed an independent and rebellious character. Ienaga related that he was not afraid to stand up to authority and question it if he felt that any issues were not according to principles.² Such self-confidence and self-righteousness of Ueki quite likely accounted for his later attitude towards the Meiji government.

Ueki began formal education with a private tutor at the age of ten in 1866. The

¹Ienaga, *Ueki*, pp.41-2.

²Ienaga Saburo, *Kakumei shiso no senkusha*, (Tokyo,1955), p. 11. Hereafter cited as *Kakumei*.

following year, he entered the Bunbukan (domainal school) where he studied Chinese classics. This early education in Confucian classics profoundly shaped his attitude towards Meiji politics and society. As we shall see in the next chapter, his perception and understanding of Western liberal ideas and conditions in Japan were often coloured by the lens of a Confucian scholar. In 1871, he was sent to the newly named prefecture school - Chidokan to study *kangaku*. Ironically, this was also the place where he first came into contact with Western learning, through copies of *Yochi shiryaku*, *Seiyo jijo*, *Seiyo kakukoku seisui kyojyaku irranbyo*, etc., which introduced him to conditions in the West and Western ideas.³ Although Ueki never learned any foreign language apart from Chinese and never venture abroad, unlike his contemporaries Nakae Chomin and Kato Hiroyuki for example, he was very impressed with Western knowledge. Along with his interest in Chinese studies, Ueki read widely on Western affairs although he had to rely extensively on Japanese translations of Western books.

Chidokan was closed down in 1872 forcing Ueki out of school. One year later he was sent to the Kainan Shigaku that was maintained by the Tosa clan in Tokyo. However, he withdrew from the school six months later after learning that the school was set up to train prospective military soldiers and returned to Kochi. There he studied diligently on his own and from his reading diary, we notice his enthusiasm for reading. By 1872, Ueki had read all the Confucian classics and Chinese histories up to the Ming dynasty besides the above translations of Western knowledge. In 1874 alone, Ueki read a total of thirty-seven books ranging from economics, physics to world history and geography to politics, constitutional, civil and commercial law. The significant ones were Samuel Smiles' *Self Help* (translated by Nakamura Masanao as *Saikoku Risshi hen* in 1871) and Fukuzawa Yukichi's *Gakumon no susume*.⁴ Ueki's wide repertoire of books is clearly manifested in his ability to draw on ideas of various traditions and synthesize them into his own unique views. This strong knowledge foundation prepared him greatly to become one of the most articulate theorists of the Popular Rights Movement.

³*Yochishi ryaku* (Short World Geography) was translated by Ochi Rinso, *Seiyo jijo* (Conditions in the West) written by Fukuzawa Yukichi, and *Seiyo kakukoku seisui kyojyaku irranbyo* (Survey of Conditions in the West) written by Kato Hiroyuki. See Ienaga, *Kakumei*, p. 12.

⁴Ienaga ed., *Ueki Emori nikki zoku*, pp. 87-92.

The following year, 1874, marked a turning point in Ueki's life with the return of Itagaki Taisuke to Kochi after quitting the Meiji government over the Korean incident. We shall see in the next section the transformation of Ueki from a young man, only seventeen years of age, still unsure of his own future to a political idealist who was eager to plunge into the mainstream of political activism took place in this year.

Ienaga describes this phase of Ueki's life as one of *zenshi no jidai* (prehistory) in that Ueki grew up like other Japanese children of his time and had yet to develop his later interest in political activities.⁵ Although he had a precocious understanding of politics, his enthusiasm reflected a general restlessness and uneasiness among the declassed samurai attempting to redefine their political and social status. Thus, this period can be summarized as the developmental stage of Ueki's personality, rebellious and self-confident, and one that marked his keen interest in Western knowledge.

The Formative Years (1874-77)

Shortly after his return to Kochi, Itagaki formed the *Risshisha* as a political base to fight for self government, local autonomy, natural rights, the establishment of a legislative assembly and equality of all classes.⁶ There the young Ueki, only 17 years' old, was deeply moved by the political idealism of the *Risshisha* when he attended their first public lecture and he resolved to involve himself in politics from then on. The first activity he undertook was drafting an essay titled "Kokkai ron," (On National Assembly, 1874) in which he argued for the establishment of a popularly-elected national assembly. Ueki circulated it in his neighbourhood to interest the people in national politics. He also actively organized and participated in various local political discussions. This marked the beginning of an intensive learning period for Ueki and these activities at the local level prepared him for national politics subsequently.

⁵Ienaga, *Ueki*, p. 41.

⁶The *Risshisha*, comprising mainly ex Tosa samurai, was the earliest organization to champion constitutional government. For a description of the formation of *Risshisha* and its activities, see Ike, *The Beginnings of Political Democracy in Japan*, (Baltimore, 1950), pp. 60-71 and Scalapino, *Democracy and the Party Movement in Prewar Japan: The Failure of the First Attempt*, (Berkeley, 1953), pp. 57-96. Hereafter cited as *Beginnings and Democracy*.

In the spring of 1875, Ueki again travelled to Tokyo. According to his autobiography, Ueki wanted to be at the cultural centre of learning, and Tokyo then being in the midst of rapid Westernization was the logical destination for him.⁷ There he studied on his own and despite his shoestring allowance from his family, Ueki bought many books representing the latest ideas then. A browse through his collection of books reveals the scope of his readings, stretching across politics, law, history, economics, philosophy, biographies, social sciences, etc., half of them Western in origin.⁸ Needless to say, the extensive range of Western books that he had read was in Japanese translations. Among the notable authors in his readings were translations of John Stuart Mill's *Representative Government* and *On Liberty*, Alexis de Tocqueville's *Le democratie en Amerique* and Francois Guizot's *Histoire de la civilisation en Europe* read in 1875. Jean Jacques Rousseau's *Social Contract* and Herbert Spencer's *Social Statics* (Ozaki Yukio translated) in 1879. Spencer's *Representative Government* in 1880. In 1882, Ueki read Guizot's book and Spencer's *Social Statics* (Matsushima Ko translated) again, and Thomas More's *Utopia* and Edmund Burke's *A Summary of Political Theories*.⁹

Considering that the quality and quantity of Japanese translations of Western ideas in the early Meiji years were still in their early stages, it is remarkable that Ueki could absorb and apply many leading Western concepts of politics and society to conditions in Japan in the later part of his life based merely on his readings of these Japanese translations. A significant question here is, who, among the many Western authors that he had come into contact with, was to exert the greatest influence on Ueki's thoughts? Though Ueki often quoted from Rousseau in his own writings, both Ienaga and Bowen claimed that Ueki's greatest intellectual debt was to Herbert Spencer, particularly, the thoughts of Spencer as reflected in his *Social Statics*.¹⁰ While I agree with their arguments that many of Ueki's ideas - natural rights, freedom of action, sexual equality, right of revolution, etc. - originated from Spencer, I will attempt, in the next chapter, to show how Ueki perceived his own intellectual debt and ultimately argue that Ueki drew more inspiration from the American, French and English revolutions, and a

⁷Ienaga, *Ueki*, p. 72.

⁸Ienaga et al, eds. *Ueki bunko mokuroku*, (Tokyo, 1975), pp. 1-28.

⁹This list was compiled by Ienaga. See *Ueki*, p. 349-51 for names of their Japanese translations and their authors.

¹⁰For example Ueki cited from Rousseau in his *Minken Jiyu Ron* and *Ako Shijushichi Shi Ron*. See also Ienaga, *Ueki*, pp. 351-2, and Bowen, *Rebellion*, pp. 202-9..

perceived universal world view, and did not just regurgitate Spencer's ideas. Suffice it is to say presently that Ueki fully acknowledged his appreciation of the various Japanese translators who facilitated his understanding of the West in his article "Yo no honyaku sensei ni tsuguru bun," (An Announcement to All Translators in the World, 1876).¹¹

While studying on his own, Ueki attended the various public lectures of the Meirokusha and those of Fukuzawa Yukichi. He did not attend passively as a listener, instead Ueki made full use of these occasions to ask questions and clarify his doubts. He even visited members of the Meirokusha like Nishimura Shigeki, Tsuda Mamichi, Nishi Amane and Sugi Koji for personal discussions. Such enthusiasm indicated that Ueki was deeply inspired by the ideas of Meirokusha, and most authors would add, especially those of Fukuzawa.¹² This can be seen from a song written by Ueki, *Minken inaka uta* (Country Song of Popular Rights, 1877), a section that goes: 'All men being created equally by heaven, therefore no one is above another and no one is beneath another.'¹³ Compare this to Fukuzawa's 'Heaven sets no man above his fellows, nor does it set any man below them,' (*Gakumon no susume*, 1872) and the similarity becomes even more apparent.¹⁴ Although Fukuzawa's ideas greatly shaped Ueki's, as the years go by, we can see a divergence in opinions. They came to differ in their views of and attitude towards the Meiji government. While Fukuzawa later became an apologist for the Meiji oligarchs, Ueki displayed a deepening mistrust of the ruling elite and constantly took an antagonistic stance.

Ueki also attended church regularly during this period and claimed to be a Protestant. Ienaga maintains that Ueki was attracted to Christianity not so much for the religious thought but perhaps by a belief in a supreme being that endowed men with freedom and equality, and by the Protestant asceticism and ethic of progress.¹⁵ I would like to add that the church offered

¹¹Ienaga, *Kakumei*, p. 12.

¹²Ienaga, *Ueki*, pp. 75-9, and Hijikata, "Ueki Emori: Jinmin shuken no shucho," (hereafter cited as "Ueki") in *Shinpan Nihon no shisoka*, vol. 1, (Tokyo, 1975), pp. 127-30.

¹³This song is reprinted in Ienaga, ed., *Meiji bungaku zenshu*, vol. 12, (Tokyo, 1972), pp. 128-9.

¹⁴Translation of Fukuzawa quoted from Kosaka, *Japanese Thought in the Meiji Era*, (Tokyo, 1958), p. 76. See also Ienaga's and Hijikata's analysis of Fukuzawa's influence on Ueki in *Kakumei*, p. 14-16 and "Ueki," pp. 128-30.

¹⁵Ienaga, *Ueki*, pp. 87-93.

another source of Western culture and knowledge for Ueki.¹⁶ This infatuation with Western civilization could be seen from Ueki's rejection of Christianity when he later developed inclinations towards Buddhism.

From August 1875 Ueki took up a favourite activity of intellectuals of that time - contributing articles to newspapers. He wrote prolifically under various pen-names to leading newspapers in Tokyo, *Choya Shinbun*, *Yubin hochi Shinbun*, *Tokyo Nichi nichu Shinbun*, totalling almost thirty articles from 1875 to 1877.¹⁷ In these articles, Ueki wrote feverishly about the autocratic Meiji government, of the desire for greater democracy and freedom, and of political emancipation for the ordinary people. Faced with increasing dissent from intellectuals, the Meiji government enacted the 'Libel Law and Newspaper Regulations' in 1875 to try to rein in the aggressive newspapers. An article written by Ueki in 1876, 'Enjin Seifu' (A Government that Makes Monkeys of Men), a satire in which he equated the authoritarian Meiji government to a monkey trainer, controlling every aspect of its people's lives to the extent that freedom of expression was even suppressed, was deemed to have breached the regulations and Ueki was sentenced to two months jail in March, 1876.

Having personally suffered the oppression of the Meiji authorities, Ueki related in his autobiography that this prison sentence did not deter his opposing the government but instead strengthened his faith in *minken* and convinced him that the existing political conditions had to be changed.¹⁸ Upon release from prison, Ueki immediately wrote another article 'Jiyu wa senketsu o motte kawazaru bekarazaru ron,' (Freedom must be purchased with blood), demonstrating his hardened resolve and disgust with his government. From then on, Ueki's political thought became more radical and he began to argue for continued hostility towards the government and the rights of people to resist and revolt against any autocratic rule.

Lacking proper employment, Ueki accepted the job of tutor to Itagaki's daughter in

¹⁶Takeda Kiyoko. "Japanese Christianity: Between Orthodoxy and Heterodoxy," in *Authority and the Individual in Japan: Citizen Protest in Historical Perspective*, edited by J. Victor Koschmann, (Tokyo, 1978), p. 101.

¹⁷Ienaga, *Kakumei*, p. 20.

¹⁸"Ueki Emori Jijoden," in Ienaga ed., *Ueki Emori Senshu*, (Tokyo, 1974), p. 216.

September and moved in with the Itagaki family. Ueki subsequently followed Itagaki when the latter returned to Kochi the next year (1877). Thereupon, Ueki was approached by Hayashi Yuzo and he agreed to join the *Risshisha*. Thus, an intellectual concerned with the undemocratic nature of the Meiji government up to this point in time, Ueki at the age of twenty took the leap into political activism and attempted to apply his political theories and ideas to society. This marked yet another turning point in his life.

Up to this point, Ueki was still in his learning stage. We have traced Ueki's intellectual debt to Japanese translations of Western books, Christianity and the Meirokusha, and to Fukuzawa who exerted the greatest influence. Studying on his own allowed Ueki to develop a discerning and independent character while the non-rigid method of learning opened his mind to the prevailing intellectual climate in Tokyo. This factor combined with his reliance on translated works and his age, being less exposed to traditions and thus more receptive to radical ideas, accounted for differences in the political outlook between Ueki and Fukuzawa.¹⁹ Activities like political activism at a local level and writing to newspapers allowed him to digest and apply his newly-found Western thoughts while developing his own ideas. Moving in public circles widened his intellectual contacts and allowed him to improve his public speaking. It would appear that the real world had provided the best form of practical education for Ueki. This "practical orientation" and the ability to relate to society is very evident when we turn to the next chapter to examine his ideas.

Towards the end of this period, Ueki's health began to deteriorate. After falling ill in the winter of 1875, he was constantly plagued by fever, diarrhoea and insomnia that later took its toll when he commenced his next phase of political activity. In spite of this, he continued to study and participate in political meetings, demonstrating his determination and perseverance in sticking to a political career. The last distinguishing characteristic of this period is that most of his activities were carried out in isolation. This changed in the next phase when we see him joining the mainstream of the popular rights movement.

¹⁹Matsunaga, *Nakae Chomin to Ueki Emori*, (Tokyo, 1972), p. 15. c.f. Pyle, *The New Generation in Meiji Japan: Problems of Cultural Identity, 1885-1895*, (Stanford, 1969), pp. 23-5. Hereafter cited as *Nakae* and *New Generation* respectively.

The Political Activist (1877-85)

Working in isolation as a student of Western political ideas and a writer until this stage, the entry of Ueki into the *Risshisha* brought him into the real world of politics where he could seek to apply and to give effect to his own political ideas. He contributed greatly to the various activities of the *Risshisha* and was instrumental in outlining the objectives of its many political campaigns. He also drafted or wrote many of Itagaki's speeches and articles, so much so that Yoshino branded him Itagaki's "wisdom bag."²⁰ Through the party's barnstorming activities, he gave numerous public lectures that brought him to various parts of the country. By 1890, Ueki was to have given a total of five hundred and three speeches all over the country.²¹ Along with these public speaking engagements, Ueki continued to write actively, putting to use much of the skill he had mastered in the earlier years. The first article he wrote after joining the *Risshisha* was a draft of the 1877 memorial of *Risshisha*. Written immediately after the Satsuma rebellion, the tone of the memorial was understandably antagonistic towards the Meiji government. In this memorial, Ueki pointed out that too much power had been concentrated in the central government and that it had continually ignored the 'will of the people' thereby leading the country towards internal strife. Moreover, it was incapable of handling the foreign crisis. He repeated his demands for liberty and a representative form of government. This memorial was printed and circulated throughout the country and gained tremendous support from various levels of Japanese society.²²

In addition, Ueki helped in setting up a newspaper, *Kainan Shinshi*, and a magazine, *Toyo zasshi*, in 1877 for the *Risshisha*. He was editor for the former until the two were amalgamated as the *Toyo shinbun* five months later in early 1878. Through these vehicles, Ueki continued to write actively for his belief in political reforms and freedom of expression. Public response to his writings was overwhelming and the *Toyo shinbun* achieved a record

²⁰Yoshino Sakuzo, ed. *Jiyu minken hen*. Meiji bunka zenshu, vol. 5, (Tokyo, 1927), p. 27. Ueki played a similar role to Itagaki when the latter was leader of the Jiyuto, see Norman, "Feudal Background of Japanese Politics." In *Origins of the Modern Japanese State: Selected Writings of E. H. Norman*, edited by J. W. Dower, (New York, 1975), p. 417. Hereafter cited as *MBZ* and "Feudal" respectively.

²¹Ienaga, *Kakumei*, p. 26.

²²Ienaga, *Kakumei*, p. 26 and Ike, *Beginnings*, pp. 66-7.

circulation of twenty thousand copies.²³ Due to their strongly anti-government stance, editors of these publications were often arrested and jailed under the Newspaper Act. In March 1878, the newspaper was ordered to close down by the authorities. This did not deter Ueki and he continued to espouse his ideas through other newspapers. Some of his most representative political ideas were conceived at this stage - *Kyokuron Seiji* (Extreme Argument of Politics, 1877), *Kaimei Shinron* (New Theory of Enlightenment, 1878), *Minken Jiyu Ron* (On People's Rights and Liberty, 1879), *Horitsu Ippan* (On Laws, 1879), *Genron Jiyu Ron* (On Freedom of Expression, 1880), *Tenpu Jinken Ben* (In Defence of Natural Rights, 1883) and *Ikkyoku Giin Ron* (On Unicameral Assemblies, 1884). The party activities and the social circles in which he moved most likely stimulated his thoughts.

Representing the *Risshisha*, Ueki visited the Nankai, Sanyo and Sanyin districts to give political speeches and appeal for support for the revival of the *Aikokusha* (Society of Patriots) in 1878.²⁴ Due to the heartwarming response, an *Aikokusha* conference was organized in Osaka. Simultaneously numerous smaller conferences were held in Kochi prefecture to support the *Risshisha's* demands for popular representation in government. In all these activities, Ueki strongly influenced the planning and organization. Here, we can see the capabilities and drive of this extraordinary young man of twenty-one.

The next activity that Ueki embarked on was in July 1878, when the people of Kochi took on the task of organizing their own Tosa People's assembly in defiance of the centralization of power by the Meiji government. Ueki played a major role by petitioning and writing the manifesto of the assembly. He was, naturally, elected as one of its members.²⁵ In the same month, however, the Meiji government instituted the prefectural system of local government and allowed the formation of prefectural assemblies. To think that the Kochi people preempted the government's action is indeed remarkable. Nevertheless, the self-proclaimed Tosa prefecture assembly was disbanded due to the pressure exerted by the

²³Ienaga, *Ueki*, pp. 136-7.

²⁴Founded by Itagaki in 1875 to oppose the Meiji government but was abruptly disbanded when Itagaki rejoined the government. See Ike, *Beginnings*, p. 65.

²⁵Ienaga, *Kakumei*, p. 29.

officially-nominated prefectural governor, Koike Kunitake.

In January 1879, at the invitation of Toyama Mitsuru, Ueki travelled to Fukuoka, Kumamoto, and Saga to establish ties with the popular rights movements in Kyushu. During this trip, Ueki wrote one of his most representative works, *Minken Jiyu Ron* and had it published in Fukuoka. In this writing, based on French liberal ideas, Ueki argued that freedom is a natural right and no government had any right to deprive its people of their freedom. Soon, Ueki assumed the editorship of *Aikoku shirin* (changed later to *Aikoku shinshi*, both party organs of the Aikokusha) along with Nagada Ichiji. Ueki continued his writings, contributing to almost every issue. This was followed by *Genron jiyu ron* in the later part of the year.

At the third conference of the reestablishment of the Aikokusha in November 1879 in Osaka, the participants mooted the idea of forming a society to petition for a national assembly and Ueki's task was to draft the petition. He soon came up with the *Kokkai kaisetsu no ganbo o itasu ni tsuki shiho no kokujin ni tsuguru sho* (Petition Informing All Citizens the Desire of the Establishment of a National Assembly).²⁶ This petition was circulated among interested parties and generated immense fervour and support for the establishment of parliamentary politics. By the fourth general conference in Osaka, March 1880, a hundred and fourteen delegates, "who claimed to represent some 87 000" supporters from among the two *fu* and twenty-two *ken*, attended and decided to rename the Aikokusha as *Kokkai Kisei Domeikai*, League for the Establishment of a National Assembly.²⁷ In this conference, Ueki spoke passionately on the need for the establishment of a national assembly and assisted in the drafting of *Kokkai o kaisetsu suru no inka o jogan suru sho* (Petition Requesting the Establishment of a National Assembly) which was to be presented to the emperor by Kataoka Kenkichi, president of the *Risshisha*. Nevertheless, the attempt ended in failure as the authorities refused to accept the petition, arguing that there were no grounds for accepting political petitions.

Alarmed by the magnitude of political opposition, the government enacted the "Law

²⁶Ienaga, *Kakumei*, p. 31.

²⁷Scalapino, *Democracy*, p. 62.

of Public Meetings" in April 1880 to suppress the liberal movements. Rebuffed by the government, Ueki urged a change in political tactics at the second meeting of the League in November 1880. Arguing that the autocratic government would not budge even with more petitions, he stressed that political efforts should instead be directed towards garnering popular support from the *kokumin* (masses).²⁸ To achieve this, he proposed that League be dissolved and a political party be formed. His suggestion was rejected however. But in December that year, his ideas were accepted and the *Kokkai Kisei Domeikai* was subsequently disbanded. The activists began planning to form what was to later become Japan's first genuine national political party, the *Jiyuto* (Liberal Party).²⁹ Based on Ueki's proposal, the *Jiyuto*'s covenant was published in December the same year. Consisting of three short articles, the *Jiyuto* proposed to work towards extension of civil rights and liberties, constitutional government and cooperation with like-minded people.³⁰ The Popular Rights Movement which until then had been predominantly restricted to ex-samurai began to spread to the various echelons of society, ranging from urban merchants to village notables and informed farmers. Therefore, Ueki had played an important part in expanding the base of the movement and in putting his call for class equality into practice.

Just when the leading political activists were pushing for the formation of political parties, the political fervour generated by their rhetoric stimulated public opinion on what constitutional form the government should take, including numerous private constitutional drafts. Ueki wrote his in May 1881 after consulting established constitutions of countries like America, France, England, Prussia, etc. Arguing that constitutions protect the rights of citizens and strengthen the country, it was one of the most "democratic" drafts to appear and contained the most number of articles, two hundred and twenty articles in total of which thirty-five were concern with "rights of human liberty."³¹

²⁸Fukuchi, *Shizoku to samurai ishiki: Kindai Nihon o okoseru mono-horobosu mono*, (Tokyo, 1956), p. 121.

²⁹Ike, *Beginnings*, p. 101 and Akita, *Foundations of Constitutional Government in Modern Japan: 1868-1900*. (Cambridge, 1967), p. 21.

³⁰The *Jiyuto* 1881 manifesto is reprinted in Mason, *Japan's First General Election, 1890*, (Cambridge, 1969), p. 216. See also Scalapino, *Democracy*, p. 66.

³¹Reprinted in Ienaga ed., *Minshu shugi*. *Gendai nihon shiso taikai*, vol. 3, (Tokyo, 1965), pp. 74-90.

Along with the escalating public discontent with the ruling elite and awareness of constitutional demands, the period following the formation of the Jiyuto was marked by greater political agitation and popular unrest. Popular support for constitutional government resulted in sixty petitions and quarter of a million signatures by the end of 1880. This situation so alarmed the ruling oligarchy that Yamagata Arimoto, then the chief of the army general staff, said: "every day we wait, the evil poison will spread more and more over the provinces, ... and inevitably produce unfathomable evils," therefore, "intelligent people know that sooner or later there must be a national assembly. I feel with respect to that unless the objective of future policy is defined, it is inevitable that the ship of state will lose its course."³² Such sentiments were compounded by the strife within the Meiji oligarchy between Ito Hirobumi and Okuma Shigenobu.³³ In order to be able to dictate the terms of future politics, the government announced on 12 October 1881 an Imperial Rescript promising the establishment of a parliament in 1890. This announcement antedated by five days the official establishment of the Jiyuto in Tokyo. Though, the Imperial Rescript can be considered as a minor victory for the popular rights movement, in effect it was to later divide and splinter the activities of the Jiyuto, which was established on the basis of bringing forth a constitutional government.

With the formation of the Jiyuto, the Popular rights movement began to make inroads into Japanese consciousness, especially in central and northern Japan. Hundreds of local organizations sprang up eagerly to discuss political forms and alternatives. Ueki can be said to have been instrumental in bringing about this phenomenon. After assisting in the formation of the Jiyuto, Ueki stepped up his political profile by calling for a Sake Brewers' Conference in Osaka in response to the government's doubling of the *zoseki* tax, a kind of yeast stone used in brewing. Ueki's call attracted immense response and support from various quarters and in December 1881 the government ordered the arrest of Ueki and other vocal supporters of the Brewers Conference. Although Ueki was subsequently released, the plan to hold the Conference could not be carried out as the governor of Osaka banned it from being held in Osaka. Ueki, however, defied the ban and met secretly with some brewers on a boat on a river

³²Translation from Ike, *Beginnings*, p. 93.

³³Okuma as Minister of Finance, eager for constitutional change, petitioned directly to the court for a English-style parliament in March, 1881 precipitating a political struggle between him and Ito Hirobumi. Okuma was forced to resign from the government as a result of that struggle. See Akita, *Foundations*, pp. 31-67.

in Osaka in May 1882. After that meeting, another petition, *Jyusei heiken jyogan sho* (Petition for the Reduction of Brewers' Tax) was presented to the government.³⁴

Ueki spent almost two months in Fukushima during 1882 when he was editor of *Fukushima Jiyu Shinbun*. This was the period when the local Jiyuto activists were having a confrontation with the governor, Mishima Michitsune. According to Bowen, 'Ueki's witnessing of the Fukushima Incident firsthand embittered him all the more against the tyranny of the absolutist government.'³⁵ Ueki subsequently participated in more political meetings, giving several talks to interest groups and parties like the *Shakaito* (Rickshamen's Party), and from 1882 to 1884, he travelled to Chiba, Saitama, Kanagawa, Ibaragi, Tochigi, and Gunma while in the three months from April 1884, he visited the Tokaido and Hokurikudo regions, to be followed by Kansai, Hiroshima, Okayama. He was extremely influential in promoting the cause of the popular rights movement. In January 1883, Ueki wrote his *Tenpu jinken ben* (In Defence of Natural Rights). He was, therefore, enthusiastically promoting his political ideas and spreading them throughout the whole of Japan. According to Ienaga, from the timing of the Gunma and Kabasan uprisings that occurred after Ueki's visits, we can speculate that they might have been prompted by the revolutionary ideas of Ueki.³⁶ While we may not be certain that Ueki incited those uprisings, one thing is for certain, Ueki actively supported the various uprisings as seen from his writing the manifestoes of the Fukushima and Iida uprisings.³⁷ Nevertheless, Ueki was never personally involved in those uprisings despite his support for them. It would appear that he was more an instigator of radical ideas than a practitioner. We shall later see how this limitation was reflected in his thoughts.

The failure of the Fukushima uprisings and the frequent crackdown by the government effectively curtailed the political aspirations of the Jiyuto members.³⁸ Faced with declining

³⁴Ike, *Beginnings*, pp. 103-4.

³⁵Bowen, *Rebellion*, p. 192.

³⁶Ienaga, *Kakumei*, pp. 41-2.

³⁷Bowen, *Rebellion*, p. 193-5.

³⁸According to police records, 131 political meetings were disbanded in 1881 and 282 in 1882. In addition, countless editors and journalists critical of the government were fined or jailed. See Vlastos, 'Opposition movements in early Meiji, 1868-1885,' in *The Cambridge History of Japan: Volume 5, The Nineteenth Century*, edited by M. B. Jansen, (Cambridge, 1989), p. 412. Hereafter cited as "Opposition."

membership, internal divisions within the party, and enticement from the government, Itagaki made an about turn by agreeing to go on a government-sponsored European trip and disbanded the Jiyuto, claiming that the party was not able to control its radical factions. Thus, ended one of the most fruitful political movements capable of bringing forth democracy in Japan. In the words of Baba Tatsui who criticised the actions of Itagaki, 'Thus everything was going favourably for this popular movement. But one serious mistake which we made was the election of a leader who was utterly incapable of the management of a political party.'³⁹ The disbanding of the Jiyuto marked an end to the first phase of Ueki's political activism. Betrayed by Itagaki and disillusioned by the failure of Jiyuto, Ueki returned to Kochi in March 1885 and took up work as a journalist with the social editorial column of the *Toyo Shinbun*. From here, Ueki refocused his political energies onto social problems and wrote many articles espousing his social theories of individual freedom and equality.

Ueki's activities in this phase were marked by increasing hostility towards the Meiji government and attempts to coopt the commoners into the Popular Rights Movement. It was also a period where his major political ideas were formulated. While Ueki was active in Tokyo and Osaka, the bulk of his barnstorming activities was carried out in the regional areas. I would interpret this as due to his interest in promoting local autonomy vis-a-vis the central government also it allowed him the opportunities to reach out to the rural poor. As we shall see, from this period onwards, Ueki became more concerned with the problems of the poor and the weak.

The Social Thinker (1885-88)

Ueki's return to the journalistic world did not suggest a break with the previous period. Indeed his writing activities had not stopped since his very first contribution to the press ten years before. Nevertheless, his writings during this period showed characteristics not apparent in his earlier works. First, from his main preoccupation with politics and constitution, Ueki's topics became wider and he discussed issues like social problems, family structures, ethics and customs, displaying his transformation from a political thinker to a social thinker. His works

³⁹Quoted by Ike, *Beginnings*, p. 153.

during this period included *Hinmin ron*, *Dodoku Taihai Kyuchi ron*, *Oyako ron*, *Kyodai ron*, *Danjyo oyobi Fufu ron*, *Konin ron* and *Ikuyo ron*.⁴⁰ In these writings, he argued for the emancipation of the self and women, class and sexual equality, abolition of prostitution, changing the traditional family system, etc.

Second, while this phase might seem like a withdrawal phase compared to the earlier period of political participation, Ienaga maintains that Ueki kept his sharp observation and analysis of prevailing social problems and suggested radical and revolutionary social reforms. Therefore, it is possible that Ueki might have come to the understanding that in order to carry out his political ideals, the basic structures in society had first to be reformed along with the "slavish mentality" of the ordinary people.⁴¹ The third characteristic of his writings in this period would be his emphasis on the need for modernization of social life, which is a need to eradicate old forms of tradition and superstition and to inculcate in people a modern attitude, especially with regard to the requirements of modern man. This would tie in with his keenness to deplore the slavish mentality of Japanese towards rulers. Therefore, while Ueki dealt with social problems, they actually reflected his prime concern with politics.

In addition to writing, Ueki was elected to the Kochi prefecture assembly in 1886. He participated frequently in the prefecture meetings putting forth suggestions for establishment of a woman's college, and the prohibition of prostitution. He also actively supported the women liberation movements that were being promoted at that time. As a so-called leading "feminist" of his time, Ueki even published two books *Toyo no Hujo* (Women of the East, 1889) and *Hujo no Kenri* (Rights of Women, no longer existing) and other articles to educate women about their rights and freedom.⁴²

Relevant here is a notable shift in Ueki's private behaviour. Ienaga noted that Ueki led a rather decadent life during his political activist phase, frequently visiting brothels and even

⁴⁰Ienaga, *Kakumei*, p. 56.

⁴¹Ienaga, *Kakumei*, p. 57.

⁴²Ienaga, *Ueki*, pp. 533-4.

once taking a young woman by force.⁴³ Even after he contracted gonorrhea, Ueki continued to frequent the gay quarters as can be seen from the records in his diary.⁴⁴ Ienaga described him as living just like the *shishi* during the bakumatsu days - "When drunk, the fair lady's lap I shall pillow. When awake, the world's power I shall hold."⁴⁵ However, after his return from political activity, Ueki experienced a metamorphosis, stopped his freewheeling life and started to become involved in the women's liberation movement. Perhaps we see here a true-blooded social reformist who was willing to apply what he preached to his own actions.

As for political activity, Ueki met a low phase in his life in that he was unable to exercise much influence in the prefectural assembly. In fact, he argued with the speaker of the assembly so much that he was barred from public speaking for a year in the prefecture from May 1886. Nevertheless, his continual activities in the prefecture and the women's liberation movement signalled his longing for political action at the national level. Meanwhile in 1887 at the national political level, after Goto Shojiro's *Daido Danketsu* (Unionist League)⁴⁶ criticism of the government's delays and weakness in ratifying the extraterritorial treaties attracted a large following and the proclamation of the Peace Preservation Law, anti-government sentiment in the country began to escalate once more. Inspired by the success of Goto's *Daido Danketsu* rally at Osaka, Ueki left Kochi in 1888 and embroiled himself again in politics and began yet another chapter in his life.

Ueki's achievement in this phase was his prolific writing, totalling four hundred plus essays and articles.⁴⁷ These included his autobiographies, diaries, political and social essays, prose and poems, and even songs. While they were not of equal quality, especially the poems, his prose was well written and often expressed ideas in simple colloquial language that enjoyed

⁴³Hane Mikiso. "The Movement for Liberty and Popular Rights." In *Japan Examined: Perspectives on Modern Japanese History*, edited by Harry Wray and Hilary Conroy, (Honolulu, 1983), p. 96.

⁴⁴His association with prostitutes covered the period from 1880-5. *Nikki*, pp. 156-272.

⁴⁵Ienaga, *Kakumei*, pp. 43-5.

⁴⁶For a description of the Union, see Ike, *Beginnings*, pp. 182-7 and Steele, "Integration and Participation in Meiji Politics: Japan's Political Modernization Reconsidered." In *Asian Cultural Studies*, vol. 14, February 1984, pp. 125-34.

⁴⁷Ienaga, *Kakumei*, P. 61.

a larger readership. We can see this in the example of the *Minken Inaka uta*.⁴⁸ Despite the Western origins of most of his ideas, he was able to express them in a local context and with his strong training in Chinese classics, his writings can hold their own against better known writers like Fukuzawa Yukichi or Nakae Chomin.

The Parliamentary Politician (1888-92)

Ueki's reentry into politics was characterized by the declining popularity and support for the liberal movements. This decline was due to the intense government suppression, inadequate leadership and its quality (as seen from the defections of Itagaki and Goto to the government service), lack of grassroots support and the improving economic conditions of the people.⁴⁹

Ueki participated in the Osaka rally of the *Daido Danketsu*. However, the defection of Goto resulted in the splintering of the group and nothing was to come out from the movement. This was followed soon by the promulgation of the 1881 Meiji Constitution, which effectively stifled the opposition parties as they were all built upon the formation of a constitutional government. To oppose the constitution and government at this point would be construed as rallying against the Emperor, something that most Japanese were reluctant to do. Nevertheless, Ueki criticised the constitution and reiterated that "despite all the petitions and appeals from the people, still such an unsatisfactory constitution was promulgated. It would have been better had the people not wasted their efforts in the first place." "Rather than celebrating the promulgation of the Meiji constitution, we should organize a national mourning for the death of liberty!"⁵⁰ He joined the *Daido* club (a faction of the former *Daido Danketsu*) and continued to agitate against the government, giving public speeches, lashing out at Okuma's failure at treaty ratification, urging greater political participation, etc.

In October 1889 while Ueki was barnstorming in Tohoku as a representative of the

⁴⁸See Bowen's comments and translation of this song in *Rebellion*, pp. 206-8.

⁴⁹The various reasons for the decline of the popular rights movement have been documented in Ike, *Beginnings*, Scalapino *Democracy*, and Vlastos, "Opposition," p. 425.

⁵⁰Quoted by Ienaga, *Kakumei*, pp. 65-6, translations mine.

Daido Club, Itagaki invited Ueki to assist him in reforming the *Aikoku Koto* (Public Party of Patriots). Forever Itagaki's trusted lieutenant, Ueki resigned from the *Daido* club and helped Itagaki to recall the earlier party members. In May the following year, the *Aikoku koto* was reestablished and Ueki delivered the prospectus of the party in its opening ceremony, thus underlining his importance in the party. Subsequently, the party campaigned actively in Kochi and in the very first prefecture election in July 1890, Ueki was elected as one of the Kochi representatives to the Diet. His victory was 1202 votes against his opponent's (a government supporter) mere 283 votes.⁵¹ This was followed by the regrouping of the former factions of the *Jiyuto*, resulting in the formation of the *Rikken Jiyuto* in August, 1890. Nevertheless, the newly formed *Jiyuto* was not able to revive the ambitions and political aspirations of the earlier period. The new covenant, however, stated that the *Jiyuto* would seek to preserve the glory of the Imperial institution while expanding the rights of the people. Internal differences remained and lack of integrity among its members was to appear later and split the party again.

The first Imperial Diet was opened in November of 1890. Then, the Diet comprised 300 seats out of which the opposition occupied 170 seats. The first task that the opposition agreed upon was to reduce the administration budget by 10 percent in order to exert pressure on and influence government's policies. Ueki was nominated as a member in the budget review subcommittee. His original intention was to criticise the administration budget, arguing that "we should not forget the martyrs who had suffered in the hands of the government, its suppression of liberty and to bear in mind our desire to fight for the freedom of our future generations." As such "there is a duty to maintain our watch, criticise the government and point out its mistakes."⁵² However, when the Diet was convened, Ueki changed his mind and instead argued for progressive changes in view of the infant stage of parliamentary politics and the need to effect those changes within the established systems. Such sudden changes in attitude were not untypical of Ueki as we shall see later.

Cooperation among the opposition managed to prevent the original administration budget from being passed in the First Diet. In the second round of Diet discussion when a

⁵¹Ienaga, *Kakumei*, p. 67. For a description of this election see Mason, *Japan's*, pp. 130 ff.

⁵²Ienaga, *Kakumei*, p. 69.

revised budget was proposed, however, in what was known as the *Tosa ha no uragiri* (Betrayal of the Tosa Faction), a group of 29 members of the Jiyuto switched sides at the last minute and voted with the government in passing the amended budget.⁵³ Our hero so far, Ueki, was one of them. While Ueki defended his decision by saying that any delays in approving the administration budget would disrupt their ability to persuade the government to reduce the land tax and even if they were to influence the government, they did not have to delay the budget at the first diet. Nakae Chomin rebuked him for his dubious integrity.⁵⁴ Although, Ueki resumed his confrontation with the government during the Second Diet, November 1892 urging for freedom of speech, gathering and party organization, the damage to his reputation had already been done.

Nevertheless, we will never know how Ueki would have progressed in the Diet as just after the suspension of the Second Diet, Ueki suffered another attack of colitis catarrh and after a brief period of hospitalization, died on the 23rd January 1892 in Tokyo.⁵⁵ Thus, ending his second period of political activity and an active career in politics and journalism.

As with most unsolved mysteries in history, Ueki's transformation from a staunch liberal thinker campaigning for people's rights to a collaborator with the Meiji government has remained unaccounted for right up to this day. There could be several reasons - his clique"ish" mentality in following the decisions of the Tosa group of activists; the political climate consisting of strong arm tactics by the government and failure of the Popular Rights Movements; personal integrity, as seen by the numerous defections of leaders of the Popular Rights Movement to the ruling party. From what Ienaga and Ike have said, Ueki remained very much 'a product of his time,' his thoughts reflecting the bourgeois mentality and concerns of the ex-samurai displaced from mainstream political power.⁵⁶ In fact, had Ueki lived a normal span of life, he might have ended up like most of his contemporaries, Itagaki, Goto, Kono, or

⁵³It was claimed that this group of defectors were bribed as they apparently switched sides after a visit to the finance minister's residence. See the description of this event in Scalapino, *Democracy*, pp. 157-8.

⁵⁴Ienaga, *Kakumei*, p. 71.

⁵⁵The first attack occurred on 16th November 1875, see *Nikki*, p. 37, Ienaga, *Ueki*, pp. 661-2 and *Kakumei*, pp. 72-3.

⁵⁶Ienaga, *Kakumei*, pp. 74-5 and Ike, *Beginnings*, p. 131.

Kataoka, who either joined the government or worked with it. Whatever the reasons, Ueki was not able to break out of the prevailing political circumstances and was only able to propose a political framework based on existing Western liberal ideas. Furthermore, other than expounding ideas of representative government, freedom, equality, etc., Ueki was not able to suggest concrete plans of action to translate his ideas into actual political and social practices. Nevertheless, we shall discuss these issues at greater length in the later portions of this study. Meanwhile, we shall go on to the next chapter to examine his ideas, their limitations and tensions.

CHAPTER THREE

Ueki's Ideas as a Reflection of his Time

Having surveyed the major events in Ueki's life, we shall now look at some of his political and social thoughts. Many authors have pointed out the tremendous influence of Western liberal ideas on Ueki's intellectual formation, the main contributions coming mainly from translated works of Rousseau, Spencer, and Mill.¹ On the other hand, Ienaga and Hijikata have reminded us that Ueki was just as deeply influenced by the thoughts of Fukuzawa Yukichi, the Meirokusha and Christianity.² However, when stressing the various origins of Ueki's thought, we should not overlook the fact that much of this thought was also profoundly shaped by his upbringing as a Confucian samurai and the social climate he was in. Situated in a time when profound political and social changes were taking place in Japanese society, Ueki's political and social ideas reflected his concerns and attitudes to the prevailing conditions. These were manifested in the form of a tension, between the awareness that the source of his knowledge was Western and his own Japanese "ness," between the ideas that he was advocating and his social origin as a declassed samurai from Tosa.

Political Theories

With the collapse of the traditional political order, Ueki attempted to define a new paradigm based on freedom and equality. Quoting from Rousseau, Ueki stressed the *a priori* principle that "man is born free, liberty is a heavenly endowment" and is the source of man's happiness.³ Based on this idea of liberty, Ueki went further to claim that man therefore had naturally endowed rights - the rights of freedom, actions and expressions that "no man can take away." As these rights come naturally from heaven, therefore, they override all man-made laws including the government's. He refuted the traditional idea that "ignorance is bliss," pointing

¹Bowen, *Rebellion*, pp. 200-12, Pittau, *Political Thought in Early Meiji Japan, 1868-1889*, (Massachusetts, 1967), p. 112, and Ike, *Beginnings*, pp. 134-7.

²Ienaga, *Ueki*, p. 74-5 and Hijikata, "Ueki," pp. 127-30.

³Ueki, *Minken Jiyu Ron* reprinted in Yoshino Sakuzo, ed. *Jiyu minken hen*. Meiji bunka zenshu, vol. 5, (Tokyo, 1927), p. 186. Hereafter cited as *MJR*.

out that they were merely tools employed by rulers to maintain their autocratic rule and lamented that Japanese had traditionally been too contented with minding their own affairs and their families, and preferred not to bother about politics. He criticized this apathy and argued that since freedom and rights are naturally endowed, not to take what is given by heaven is a sin and brings shame upon oneself. At this point, however, Ueki appealed to utilitarianism by stating that the aim in life is the pursuit of happiness.⁴ This can be achieved only through freedom, he thus reiterated the need for people to demand and defend their rights.

Of the many natural rights, Ueki spoke most strongly in defence of the right of expression. This was a natural response considering that he was jailed because of writing against the government. In *Genron Jiyu Ron* (1880), Ueki located the source of freedom of speech and thought in nature.⁵ Heaven had endowed man with tongues so that they can have the freedom to give expression to their thoughts, therefore, men should defend themselves against anything that impedes their rights of expression.⁶ Following J. S. Mill's defence of freedom of speech, Ueki disagreed that 'uncontrolled speech would lead to prejudiced opinions and heretical views.'⁷ Rather, only through exchange of ideas can true knowledge be attained. To rule a country effectively, the government must know the desires of its people and this can only be achieved if the people can express their will. By virtue of this collective expression of will, there will be unity in the country and therefore national strength.

Historically, countries were formed by groups of people gathering together. Because of the need for collective management, governments were formed as a trust to exercise the will of those people. Since governments and countries cannot exist without the constituting people and not the other way round, said Ueki, the people are thus more important than the country. The government is merely an agent of the people, and it is duty-bound to ensure that the freedom and rights of its people are protected. Among the responsibilities of the government, one of them is to make the people energetic and strong. This can be achieved by giving people

⁴*Hinmin Ron* reprinted in Ienaga ed., *Senshu*, p. 123.

⁵Quoted by Ike, *Beginnings*, p. 136. An excerpt of this essay is translated in Norman, "Feudal," p. 444.

⁶*Tenpu Jinken Ben*, reprinted in *Meiji Bunka Zenshu*, vol V, p. 567. Hereafter cited as *TJB*.

⁷Ike, *Beginnings*, p. 136.

their freedom, rights and allowing them to be *jiriki* (self-reliant). Only when the people are strong can the country then be strong. He likened the country to a chain and its people to the links in that chain, if the links are strong, so is the country.⁸ A country whose people are autonomous and self-reliant would also have unity as its citizens will defend their country against any adversaries who may deprive them of their status. Conversely, if the country is autocratic, foreign powers will make excessive demands as the country would not have the united strength to resist them.

While Ueki insisted that people are the foundations of any country, he admitted that this is an ideal situation. In reality, Japan and China have had despotic governments and rulers that often enacted laws that were contrary to the spirit of the people. The people, therefore, need to be concerned with politics in order to safeguard their rights and not leave these matters up to heaven.⁹ When a government does not heed the will of the people and infringes on their rights, Ueki maintained that the people have the right to resist, to revolt and replace it with a new government that can carry out the wishes of the people.¹⁰ Citing the well-known Chinese proverb that "water can float a boat and also sink it,"¹¹ he warned those absolutist government of the immense power of the oppressed people and envisaged that a popular struggle will ultimately triumph and restore democracy to its rightful place in society.

From Ueki's insistence on popular sovereignty and rights of resistance, he differed from his "teacher" Fukuzawa who subscribed to ideas of national strength and "moral action and self-sacrifice" against an oppressive government.¹² As mentioned earlier, because of his youth and unorthodox education, Ueki was more receptive to radical ideas and they were to shape his uncompromising attitude towards the autocratic Meiji government.

⁸*MJR*, p. 193.

⁹*MJR*, p. 192-3.

¹⁰Quoted by Ienaga, *Kakumei*, p. 89.

¹¹Untitled article, reprinted in Morishita Sugamoto ed., *Muten zatsuroku*, (Kochi, 1957), p. 35. Hereafter cited as *MZ*.

¹²Craig, "Fukuzawa Yukichi: The Philosophical Foundations of Meiji Nationalism," in R. E. Ward ed., *Political Development in Modern Japan*, (Princeton, 1968), p. 110-1.

Since the people have rights of resistance, Ueki argued that rebels who stand up against the government because of its oppression should not be branded as traitors. He expressed this in his writing *Nan o ka Kokuzoku to iuka* (What do you term a traitor?, 1888), and said that as an employee of the people, if the government failed in its job and oppressed its people, then it loses its legitimacy and does not deserve the respect of the people. Consequently, when its people rise against it, they are merely exercising their rights in correcting the breach of trust by the government. Thus "rebels are not traitors of the country, rather the rulers are the traitors."¹³ In line with this thought, he strongly rejected death sentences, claiming that the deterrent value of death sentences do not justify the harm that they cause. Death sentences, according to Ueki, were often exploited as tools of oppression by the rulers. Other than for treason against the liberty and natural rights of a country, Ueki insisted that death sentences should be abolished.¹⁴

From the argument that people form the basis of a country, Ueki stressed that the best form of government is that of a popularly-elected constitutional government. His ideas of the constitution are expressed in his draft constitution written in 1881, titled "Nihonkoku Kokken An" (Draft Constitution of the Japanese Nation).¹⁵ Reminiscent of the declaration of the French constitution in 1793, Ueki's draft stated that "the supreme power of the Japanese nation resides in the whole Japanese people, and is one and indivisible, inviolable, and inalienable."¹⁶ A constitution guarantees that liberty be upheld and it should take the form of a contract between the people and the government that they had chosen, the terms of it should be negotiated between the people and the government.¹⁷ This was precisely the reason why Ueki insisted on freedom of speech, so that the people have a say in the running of the country. The constitution would ensure that the powers of the government be circumscribed so that it would not turn to authoritarianism and disobey the will of the people.

¹³Ienaga, *Kakumei*, pp. 89-90.

¹⁴*Sekai no Mankoku wa danzen Shikei o haisu beki o ronzu*, (1881) quoted in Ienaga, *Ueki*, pp. 313-4.

¹⁵Reprinted in Ienaga ed., *Minshu shugi*. Gendai nihon shiso taikēi, vol. 3, (Tokyo, 1965) pp. 74-90. Hereafter cited as "NKA".

¹⁶Translation from Pittau, *Political*, p. 103.

¹⁷*MJR*, p. 190.

Ueki insisted that the constitution should provide for a popularly-elected parliament. In order to achieve democracy, the base of eligible voters should be as wide as possible and he proposed that all taxpaying citizens should be allowed to vote, unlike the Meiji government's intention to only allow landowners to vote. Ueki reasoned that while as individual, the poor may pay lesser tax compared to the rich, collectively the poor contribute more than half of a country's taxes.¹⁸ By allowing even the poor to vote for the government, Ueki, therefore, argued that this would be the best way to ensure that the rights of the poor are safeguarded. Therefore, unlike the elitist mentality of most "enlightened" Meiji intellectuals, Fukuzawa or Kato Hiroyuki, Ueki displayed a concern with the rights and liberty of the lower classes of society. Nevertheless, Ueki's proposed franchise still depended on the paying of taxes and he did not reach the extent of advocating universal suffrage. The reason could be his reservations with the political maturity of the uneducated masses, this could be seen from his suggestion that voting be carried out by means of signed ballots so as to enforce prudence among voters.¹⁹

Another issue relating to the constitution is the locus of a country's sovereignty. For Ueki, sovereignty of the state meant popular sovereignty. As the government and the ruler are creations to exercise and protect the rights of their people, one should not confuse the exerciser of sovereignty with the legitimate holder of sovereignty, which are the people. He made a distinction between *minken* (people's rights) and *kokken* (national rights) and, as pointed out earlier, in order for *kokken* to be strong, *minken* has to be strengthened first. Ueki's position was totally different from that held by Fukuzawa, that the national interest is paramount for the purpose of *fukoku kyohei*, despite the tremendous influence the latter had on the former.

Ueki envisaged a constitutional monarchy for Japan, as the symbol of the state, the emperor should be called *Kotei* (emperor) and not *Tenno* (Heavenly emperor) and his powers were to be derived from the legislature.²⁰ He even suggested that since all men are created

¹⁸Quoted by Ienaga, *Kakumei*, p. 147.

¹⁹Tke, *Beginnings*, p. 134.

²⁰Ueki listed the definitions and powers of the emperor in chapter five of the "NKA," pp. 78-81.

equal, the emperor should be a human being just like any commoner. Although Ueki indicated that he did not support instituting a 'divine' emperor that presides over the country but not bounded by the constitution, he did not develop clearly his ideas as to what is the expected role of the emperor, for example whether he is to "rule" or "reign."²¹ Based on his ideas of liberty, equality and local autonomy, it would appear that Ueki much preferred Japan as a federal republic.

The constitution would allow for a federal system of government, so that the localities could exert a limiting effect on the central government and thus prevent absolutism. This arrangement reflected Ueki's concern with the growing strength of the central government at the expense of powers in the local regions. He would have felt it most acutely considering his involvement in forming the Tosa local people's assembly and campaigning for local autonomy. According to chapter two of Ueki's draft constitution, the federal government is responsible for national issues like external defence, foreign affairs, banking and currency, customs and duties, postal services, and etc. However, when it comes to issues concerning the various states, the federal government's power should be limited to making laws governing relations between states and it has no power to interfere in the internal affairs of the states neither can it forfeit lands from the states nor change state boundaries arbitrarily.²² Ueki's support for a federal system was also predicated on his belief that the smaller a political entity is, the better it can cater to the demands of its people.

Concerning the military, its role would primarily be to protect the constitution and defend the people's rights, both against external and internal enemies to their democracy. Ueki felt that too often in history military strength was raised officially to strengthen the country but in effect was used against the people.²³ The more powerful the military is, the more autocratic is the government and the more difficult it is for the people to have their rights. This idea of Ueki certainly strikes a chord when we look at the various autocratic regimes at the present today. His suggestion for the military similarly resembles closely their constitutional role in

²¹Ike, *Beginnings*, p. 137.

²²"NKA," pp. 75-6.

²³Ienaga, *Ueki* p. 291. Hijikata describes Ueki's ideas as "unique" in "Ueki," pp. 132-3.

most democratic countries today. Thus, Ueki's ideas can be said to be very advanced for his time. Ueki inscribed the military's role in his draft constitution as "Gunhei wa Kokken o Goei suru mono to su" (Military Forces are Protectors of the Constitution).²⁴ He also advocated reduction in the size of the army and that it should be made up of volunteers, instead of conscripts, so as not to burden the ordinary people economically and physically.

In an article written when he was only fifteen, titled "Sen wa Ten ni taishite Daizai aru koto majietari" (War is the Greatest Crime against Heaven, 1872), Ueki spoke out against wars and the immense sufferings that they brought onto people.²⁵ Thereafter, Ueki continued his opposition to wars, advocating a reduction in the size of the army since they were often tools of aggression and repression.²⁶ Ueki's attitude towards the military and wars could be seen as extensions to his belief in popular rights and freedom. For men being naturally autonomous and free, they would have the ability to regulate their relations among each other. So if every country was to value freedom and people's rights, then between different countries, there will similarly be mutual respect for each other's liberty and rights. Conflicts and wars will reduce and, therefore, there will be no need for an arms race or large standing armies. This was the reason why Ueki was adamant in his criticism of the *Seikanron*, arguing that "whether Japan or Korea, we are all Asian brothers," there was no grounds for Japan to wage wars against its neighbour.²⁷

Following this line of argument coupled with his suggestion of small autonomous states, a logical conclusion would be that nations will eventually evolve into smaller and smaller units, and finally people would not need states or countries at all. The reason was in whatever form of government, there will be some groups whose interests would not be adequately cared for. And representative governments happened to be only the least of all evils. Since liberty is the highest virtue for mankind, "men can only be truly free when they are

²⁴"NKA," p. 88.

²⁵Reprinted in Ienaga ed., *Minshu*, pp. 102-3.

²⁶Ienaga, *Ueki*, p. 314.

²⁷Quoted by Ienaga, *Kakumei*, p. 114.

free from the restrictions of governments and their laws."²⁸ Ueki believed that as "mankind becomes more civilized, the country systems ought to be dismantled." It would not be anarchy though, for if all men desire liberty and promote it among themselves, there would not be conflict of interests. Even if it was anarchy, Ueki maintained that it is still better than to live under absolutist rule.²⁹ Therefore, Ueki's final destiny for all men is a utopia where all men live harmoniously with each other regardless of class, gender, and nationality. This view is similar to that of Fukuzawa in his earlier work *Gakumon no susume* in which he wrote: "A country is a gathering of people. Japan is a gathering of Japanese and England is a gathering of Englishmen. Japanese and English alike are members of a common humanity; they must respect each others' rights."³⁰ We can see the influence of Fukuzawa's view of the world on Ueki's thought. So while being a pacifist, Ueki was also an idealist with a cosmopolitan view of the world.

However, Ueki did realize that what he envisaged was an ideal, a final destination for human societies. Meanwhile, there is a need for an interim measure with regards to regulating and policing international relations. Drawing heavily from Bluntschli's *Allgemeine Staatsrecht* (translated by Kato Hiroyuki as *Kokho Hanron*) and Vissering's *Volkenregt* (translated by Nishi Amane as *Mankoku Koho*), in his own article, *Mujo Seiho Ron* (On Supreme Politics, 1880), Ueki suggested the setting up of an international legislative council to protect the liberty and constitutional rights of its member countries. Its powers and functions modelled closely on his federal government - states relations, for example regulating international relations, drawing up laws to protect liberty, encouraging and assisting democratically less developed countries, powers to punish recalcitrant countries, etc.,³¹ Ueki asserted that by regulating relations among countries, this supreme council would reduce the need for wars and arms buildup, and eventually eliminating that need when all nations have reached the ideal stage of liberty and democracy. Ultimately, we will have a "world without borders." While other intellectuals of his time, Nakae Chomin's "Tocho Hei" (Indigenous Soldiers) for example,

²⁸MZ, pp. 183-4.

²⁹"Muho musei to Yuho yusei no songai o hikakushite ronzu," quoted in Ienaga, *Ueki*, p. 281.

³⁰Craig, "Fukuzawa," p. 118.

³¹*Mujo Seiho Ron* reprinted in Ienaga ed., *Meiji bungaku zenshu*, vol. 12, (Tokyo, 1972), pp. 158-9. Hereafter cited as *Mujo* and *Meiji* respectively.

espoused similar pacifism in their thoughts, none went as far as Ueki's vision of internationalism nor his understanding of the goal of democratic developments.³²

The above are some of the more representative political ideas reflected in Ueki's writings. Although they were formulated over a long span of time, most of them had been crystallized during his involvement with the *Risshisha* and *Jiyuto*. After 1885, most of Ueki's energy was devoted to social reforms. We shall now look at some of his social ideas and how his concern with political reforms was translated into these ideas.

Social Theories

Along with his political theories, Ueki came to realize that fundamental change in Japanese society was required in order to ease the transition to a democratic country. This would involve cultivating a new view of humanity, new value system and ethics that were in tune with the requirements of democracy.

In *Hinmin Ron* (The Poor People Question, 1885), using very "Spencerian language," Ueki argued that all men are created equal by heaven, therefore, everyone ought to have equal rights and freedom and there should be no differentiation along class or gender lines.³³ Unlike some of his contemporaries who still regarded the ex-samurai as an elite, Ueki made an attempt to treat the commoners as equals and incorporate them into the mainstream of the people's movement. In his introduction to the *Minken Jiyu Ron*, Ueki wrote "Excuse me for a moment while I speak, honourable farmers, merchants, artisans, fellow samurai, doctors, boatmen, horsemen, hunters, hawkers, wet-nurses, and the new commoners of Japan. ... All of you have a very valuable possession, ..., which is your right to liberty."³⁴ Since the common folk are not well educated or informed, it is the duty of the country and any civil-minded intellectual to educate them and ensure that they are aware of their political and civil rights.³⁵ This was very

³²Goto Masato. "Ueki Emori no *Mujyo seihoron*." In Tabata Shinobu ed., *Kingendai Nihon no heiwa shiso*, (Tokyo, 1993), pp. 12-14.

³³Bowen, *Rebellion*, p. 205. *Hinmin Ron*, reprinted in Ienaga, *Senshu*, pp. 201-92.

³⁴*MJR*, p. 183.

³⁵Ienaga, *Kakumei*, p. 143.

likely the reason that most of Ueki's essays were written in simple colloquial Japanese, that even a non-native speaker like myself could easily understand his writings, and his extensive use of analogies to illustrate his theories, for example comparing a person without freedom to a bird in a cage and the building of a country to that of building a house. Ueki even wrote simple songs, for example the *Minken inaka uta* that I quoted in the previous chapter, to educate the rural folks on liberty and their rights.³⁶ This clearly epitomizes his sincerity in reaching out to the common people and involving them in fighting for their rights. As we have seen in the earlier chapter, Ueki was indeed one of the earliest proponents of mass participation in the popular rights movement.

In addition to his concern with the lower echelons in society, Ueki argued for gender equality and abolition of prostitution. In Kochi, Ueki spoke strongly on behalf of women's liberation, appealing for monogamy, the rights of widows to remarry, education for women, rights of inheritance, and political participation. While he is said to be a leading feminist for his days, looking at his earlier decadent life, one cannot help but question his qualification to speak on behalf of women, especially the issue of prohibiting prostitution. Ienaga remarks that we have a case of personality split here, in the sense that while Ueki was readily receptive to Western ideas, his behaviour was not able to overcome the ingrained traditional lifestyle of the *shizoku*.³⁷ Nonetheless, we cannot deny that Ueki did try to mend his ways, he stopped visiting brothels after 1885, during his "temporary retirement" from politics. Furthermore, if he were insincere, it is rather hard to believe that he could win the trust and respect of leading feminists like Okazaki Tomoko and Kageyama Hideko.³⁸

Influenced greatly by the optimism of the Enlightenment and Western individualism, Ueki believed in a humanism that stressed rational positivism and the ultimateness of man. Since all men are created equally by heaven and naturally endowed with rights, man can find his worth and value in his own existence. Based on this view, he further pointed out that all institutions, religions, societies, and material culture were all manmade. Taking the maxim from

³⁶Bowen, *Rebellion*, pp. 211-2.

³⁷Ienaga, *Kakumei*, p. 164.

³⁸His associations with the woman liberation movement is recorded in his *nenbu*, see Ienaga, *Ueki*, pp. 747-50.

Smiles' *Self Help*, "Heaven helps those who help themselves," Ueki firmly believed that one's future lies in one's own hand and one should apply oneself vigorously to benefit not only the self but also society. The goal is, of course, liberty for all mankind. Simultaneously, this application of the self to the world was as much a Confucian understanding of the world. It would appear that Ueki was trying to rearticulate a new value system so as to rid Japanese of their traditional apathy towards politics.

Most of these ideas were obviously inspired by the asceticism of the Protestant ethic and even though he had professed to be a Christian, Ueki nevertheless proclaimed that "Heaven is within liberty, Amitabha is within liberty," "I am God," "Ueki, god of omniscience and omnipotence, Ueki, bodhisattva, god of nature and heaven, Ueki, Nammu Amitabha!" "Eat Ueki Emori's shit and the world shall be rich and prosperous."³⁹ Although we may treat this as self-aggrandizement of a conceited man, on the other hand, if we were to follow Ueki's argument that man is the creative force of this world, would it not then be the case that "man is the world, man is not beneath the world. No matter how vast the world may be, it is still man's world."⁴⁰ Ueki thus comprehended the idea of positive rationalism fully and was able to develop it to its logical conclusion in his view of humanity.

Due to his belief in *Bunmei Kaika*, Ueki along with most intellectuals of his times spoke out against the stifling traditions that were imposed on the people. It was natural for him, then, to argue for the abolition of outdated traditions that were not in tune with the modern requirements of civilization and liberty. Pyle has mentioned that this was a common trait among the younger generation of Meiji intellectuals who felt less attachment to traditional values.⁴¹ Some of those practices that Ueki attacked were deference to authority, hierarchy, traditional extended families, bowing, subordination of women, etc. Take the traditional family for example, Ueki urged Japanese to form nuclear families consisting of only parents and children. He reasoned that in traditional family system, the Japanese were deprived of their

³⁹Ienaga, *Kakumei*, pp. 181-2.

⁴⁰"Sonjin Setsu" reprinted in Ienaga, *Meiji*, p. 194.

⁴¹Pyle, *The New Generation in Meiji Japan: Problems of Cultural Identity, 1885-1895*, (Stanford, 1969), p. 15. Hereafter cited as *New Generation*.

individuality and independence, by that enhancing authoritarianism in the family and its corollary, the country.⁴² By freeing the individual from traditional social controls, they would be able to cultivate self-support, expression and responsibility, thus, fostering the creation of a democratic and free society.

The Tensions in Ueki's Thought

Following the Meiji Restoration, most Japanese were faced with the breakdown of the traditional order and the need for new paradigms to guide them towards the uncertain future. One of the most acute tasks was to explain the loss of the samurai's privileged position in society. By appealing to Western ideas of equality and liberty, the declassed samurai could rationalize their loss of status and wealth by elevating those values as universal principles or *tenri*. Furthermore, they could continue to agitate for political reforms as though they were acting in accordance with those universal principles and not out of their own plight.⁴³ This was the main reason that most of Ueki's ideas stemmed from the *a priori* premise of "heavenly endowed" rights and freedom.

From the above discussion, however, Ueki's political and social theories, far from coherent, were filled with numerous contradictions in themselves, due to the fact that most of his ideas were not original but inspired by liberal ideas from the West. For example the notion of individual autonomy and pursuit of self-interest conflicts with the need for self-regulation in order to coexist with your fellow men; his advocacy of equality did not extend to universal suffrage; and his ambivalence towards the Imperial authority. Hence, his writings reflected the various tensions that he faced in adapting those foreign ideologies to actual political and social conditions in Japan. It was not simply an issue of transplanting Western ideas to Japan, Ueki had to work within the confines of the prevailing intellectual climate to construct a new view of humanity, politics and society for Japan. Even though, as pointed out by Gluck, the Meiji ideology of *tennōsei*, and authoritarianism did not fully develop until the late Meiji period,⁴⁴

⁴²Ienaga, *Ueki*, pp. 537-8.

⁴³Najita, *Japan: The Intellectual Foundations of Modern Japanese Politics*, (Chicago, 1974), pp. 94-6.

⁴⁴Gluck, C., *Japan's Modern Myth: Ideology in the Late Meiji Period*, (Princeton, 1985).

the intellectual climate at that time already did not favour the full scale acceptance of all Western liberal ideas. This can be seen from the tendency of those intellectuals to espouse national strength and the imperial institution no matter which school of political thought they subscribed to.

The Meiji Restoration was carried out in the name of restoring imperial rule and strengthening the country. In urging popular rights and representative government, Ueki had to resort to nationalism and had to steer a careful course in view of the imperial tradition. To garner popular support, Ueki even resorted to claiming that the Popular Rights Movement was fighting for the uncompleted agenda of the Meiji Restoration. This placed Ueki in a precarious position with regards to the *minken* and *kokken* issue. Many of his associates like Itagaki or Goto stressed *kokken* at the expense of *minken*, although Ueki argued that it is more important to work for popular rights than to be too obsessed with national strength; *minken* should not be turned into a handmaiden of *kokken*.⁴⁵ Yet because of the appeal and pervasiveness of the need for national strength in the early Meiji, Ueki ultimately could not escape from the prevailing intellectual mood and having to argue that boosting popular rights enhances national power rather than the benefits to the individual. Thus, his political programmes were limited by this appeal to national strength and could not be used effectively to curtail the rapid centralization of power and autocratic rule by the Meiji oligarches.

While favouring a federal republic, Ueki did not openly challenge the principles of absolute monarchy and instead chose to denounce the despotic oligarchy who stood between the emperor and the people. His predilection could be seen from his defence of Rousseau's republican ideas against Burke's pro-monarchy and conservative stance.⁴⁶ Also despite his assertion that the terms of a constitution should be negotiated between the people and the government, Ueki did not expressed any reaction to the Imperial Rescript of 1881 when it was announced. His criticisms came after the promulgation of the Meiji Constitution in 1890 and

⁴⁵Hane, "Movement," p. 95.

⁴⁶Norman, E. H. "Feudal Background of Japanesse Politics." In *Origins of the Modern Japanese State: Selected Writings of E. H. Norman*, edited by J. W. Dower, (New York, 1975), p. 417.

even then it was directed at the high handedness of the Meiji oligarchs.⁴⁷ Ienaga termed this "shokyoku kyowa shugi" (passive republicanism).⁴⁸ This could be one of the reasons as to the later change in his attitude towards the Meiji government, that there is a dislocation between his ideal of a federal republic and implementing that ideal in the prevailing intellectual and political climate of his time.

Another problem that Ueki had to overcome was his own social background. First, as a declassed samurai, Ueki was not able to transcend the concerns of his fellow samurai. Most of his writings expressed his disgust with the Meiji government for driving the ill-prepared samurai to poverty and most of his political programmes were invariably tied with resurrecting their livelihood and political status. For example, his insistence that political participation should not be restricted only to land owners could be interpreted as an attempt to reinstate the declassed samurai, including himself, in politics. Ike says that Ueki was more concerned with the majority of the declassed samurai that possessed neither wealth nor land to qualify for participation in the political system than genuine emancipation of all classes.⁴⁹ This might be the reason why Ueki did not advocate universal suffrage in his theories. It appears to me to be a limitation in his thoughts, since the logical conclusion to all men being born equal and possessing natural rights would be universal suffrage. Yet at the same time, I feel that we should not doubt the sincerity of Ueki's efforts to include the lower classes in his theories. He even renounced his *shizoku* title for *shinpeimin* (new commoners) so as to be affiliated with the commoners.⁵⁰

At the same time, Ueki's roots in Tosa that had traditionally enjoyed relative autonomy from the central government and its tradition of loyal activism during the Tokugawa era, profoundly shaped his attitude towards political centralization. It could also have stemmed from Ueki's desire to reinforce his own position in the local assembly. Many of Ueki's political proposals were, therefore, founded on the basis of local autonomy, presumably that local

⁴⁷The Imperial Rescript promising the establishment of a constitution was announced on 12th October 1881. There was no mention of any response in Ueki's *Nikki* (pp. 200-6) or was anything written about it in his *MZ* (pp. 207-16).

⁴⁸Ienaga, *Ueki*, pp. 324-35.

⁴⁹Ike, *Beginnings*, p. 131.

⁵⁰Fukuchi, *Shizoku to samurai ishiki: Kindai Nihon o okoseru mono-horobosu mono*, (Tokyo, 1956), p. 121.

governments would allow more avenues for political participation and the flexibility to manage its own local welfare. The "han mentality" of the Tosa ex-samurai similarly affected the effectiveness of Ueki's participation in the Popular Rights Movement, and the effectiveness of the movement itself. Pyle mentioned that while most of the Meiji intellectuals espoused individualism of one form or other, "it was not a self-sufficient individualism but one which depended on the group's existence, since it was primarily a desire to secure recognition and admiration from the group."⁵¹ I think that this is an observation that can be readily applied to Ueki's relationship with his peers from Tosa. Vlastos further indicated to us the amount of infighting between the various factions in the *Risshisha*, *Daido Danketsu* and the *Jiyuto* of which they were frequently dominated by ex-samurai from Tosa.⁵² The cliquish *Tosa ha* appeared to me the main reasons for his compromising attitude during the First Diet.

Lastly, Ueki was very much "a product of his time." From the many examples of leading actors in the Popular Rights Movement who abandoned the boat whenever a lucrative offer came from the ruling elite, the entire popular rights movement could be viewed as a contest for power between the political in's and out's. From Ueki's continuous association with Itagaki despite his numerous betrayals and his political turnaround in the Diet, Ueki would not be very much different from Itagaki as a political opportunist, had he been given the opportunity. While his ideas were fairly advanced and demonstrated his receptiveness to *bunmei kaika*, his political and social theories seemed to stop short at the conceptual level. They were seldom carried to their logical conclusion. Nor did Ueki make any attempt to propose a concrete action plan for these theories. It seemed as if Ueki were merely using them to criticize the faults of the Meiji government. Looking at most of his political activities, they were restricted to mostly speech-making, petitions and pamphleteering. Other than organizing and participating in political gatherings and stirring up public sentiments, Ueki did not participate in any uprisings or rebellions against the government. Perhaps Ueki still retained the elitist mentality of the samurai. While espousing Western liberal ideas, his life style and behaviour still smacked of traditional practices and beliefs, resulting in a discrepancy in what he preached and what he practised.

⁵¹Pyle, quoting from Kamishima Jiro's concept of *taigunshuteki* in *New Generation*, p. 15.

⁵²Vlastos, pp. 413-4.

I have discussed in the preceding sections, the tensions in Ueki's thoughts. They took the form of difficulties in translating Western ideas into Japanese context and relating his beliefs into his actions. While the dislocation between his ideas and his actions was a limitation that Ueki found most difficult to resolve, he was able to make an attempt to overcome the tension of foreign ideas versus Japanese traditional beliefs. As the following chapter seeks to argue, Ueki sought to resolve his difficulties by using historical examples to give his theories legitimacy. Using the traditions of peasants' uprisings in Tokugawa Japan and China, he argued that the source of freedom and democracy could be located in Japan's own history and was not necessarily a Western import. At the same time, utilizing historical examples from the West coupled with those from Japan and China, Ueki attempted to universalize liberty and democracy, making them a common human experience and destiny. Ultimately, Ueki visualized a utopia of mutual respect and coexistence among humanity.

CHAPTER FOUR

Ueki's Use of History

In the 1950's, Fukuchi Shigetaka, in his study of samurai consciousness in the Meiji period, commented that "it may be said that there are no people who respect history more than the Japanese and that there is no nation that emphasizes the study of history as does Japan."¹ I feel that this concern of Meiji intellectuals with their past was aptly demonstrated by Ueki's use of historical examples in his political and social writings. In this chapter, I intend to look at the various historical examples that Ueki used in his theories and to delineate the ways he reinterpreted those historical signs and symbols to legitimize his arguments. After I have done that, I will look at some characteristics of his use of history and how these characteristics relate to his ideological disposition. In order to elicit empathy from his audience, the ordinary man in the street and fellow intellectuals, to his political cause, Ueki attempted to construct a democratic past in Japan, one that had been suppressed due to historical circumstances. By portraying the Japanese "people," and all men by extension, as an embodiment of freedom and rights, Ueki wanted to argue for the universal nature of democracy. This investigation will be carried out by examining his use of history in some of his major writings. While it may not be a comprehensive survey and might not do justice to Ueki, I believe the writings selected are sufficiently diverse for us to grasp the whole of Ueki's efforts at historical construction.

The Historical Importance of People

Ueki's arguments hinge on the premise that the common people are central to any state or country. So Ueki starts by arguing that the location of a country's sovereignty is in the people. This, he claims, is observed from the fact that since antiquity, rulers could only form countries when there were followers, but that without the people, no matter how brilliant a ruler might be, there was no way he could create a country. Such understanding was already present in ancient China, the *Shang Shu* stated that *min* (people) were the foundation of states, *Mencius*

¹Fukuchi *Shizoku to samurai ishiki*, translated by Akita, *Foundations*, p. 215, nn. 74.

said that people are the most valuable, followed by the state and lastly, the ruler, and *Ti Fan*, stated that the people come before the state.² From these quotations, Ueki pointed out that the ancient sages had long recognized the importance of people in state-building and the people as the source of a country. As mentioned in the earlier chapter, this understanding of the importance of people was enhanced by his appeal to Heaven as the source of creation and natural rights. Ueki furthered his argument that governments were the tools of the people and should serve the needs of the people and not the other way round.

Since the people are the foundation stones of a country or state, the powers of government should therefore come from the people. It is written in the *Lao Tsu* that one should "hold on to the powers of the country, for it must not be lent to anyone else."³ Following what the sage had prescribed, if the source of a country is in the people then the power to rule should be in the hands of the people. This was further reinforced by Napoleon when he said that one can only achieve satisfaction in a job when it was done by oneself.⁴ To ensure that government policies are in their favour, the people must have a say in the running of the country. Therefore, Ueki maintained that every person has a right in the country and not just the rulers, the king or emperor.

Since sovereignty lies with the people, it was therefore wrong for rulers to think that a country is their personal property. But most rulers had failed to understand this and instead we observe rulers like Emperor Sui of China who declared that the *tenka* (world) belonged to him and his consorts. In France, King Louis XIV claimed that "I am the country and the country is I, and there is no land in this country that is not mine."⁵ History has presented us with many examples of rulers who harboured this type of mentality and treated their subjects cruelly and oppressively. Ueki listed the following cruelty imposed on the innocent people by their rulers:

²*MJR*, p. 189.

³Untitled article, reprinted in Morishita Sugamoto ed., *Muten zatsuroku*, (Kochi, 1957), p. 154, hereafter cited as *MZ*.

⁴*MZ*, p. 219.

⁵*MJR*, p. 188.

Emperor Qin of China buried Confucian scholars alive and burnt all books that were deemed antagonistic by the regime. In Rome, King Nero set whole villages on fire while enjoying the scene from a vantage point surrounded by beauties and music. Emperor Caligula beheaded so many people that the whole of Rome wanted to do the same thing to him. And the cruelty of Emperor Marius, who executed anyone opposing him, reached such an extent that the people were reluctant to hear any more of his atrocities. In England, King John squeezed every penny out of his people using all kinds of excuses and those who were unable to pay were tied up and tortured by having a tooth pulled out each day.⁶

From these examples, we can see that Ueki was opposed to the conventional wisdom that advocated the people remain subservient and expect to receive wise and benevolent rule from above. Rather than being just contented with minding their own livelihood, everyone should take a keen interest in politics. Because, if a ruler turns out to be cruel, even if the people work hard all their life accumulating valuables, these would not be secured and may be taken away by a tyrant and people may even lose their lives in that process. Thus he pointed out those instances when Hideyoshi built the Osaka castle and when Peter the Great shifted the capital to St. Petersburg at the Baltic Sea, all the rich merchants and artisans were forced to uproot themselves from Sakai and Moscow to move to those new cities while those who disobeyed were severely punished.⁷

The History of Rights and Freedom

From another Chinese Classic, *Da Xue* (Great Learning), Ueki quoted the saying that "the true way lies in laying the right foundations," to reinforce the importance of recognizing the source of sovereignty in a state. Just as the quality of a river's water is traced to its source, the health of a tree to its roots, and the sturdiness of a house depended on its foundations, the strength of a country is determined by the quality of its people.⁸ There is a need to make the people strong in order that the country could be strong and to achieve this, the people must be given their rights and freedom and allowed to develop their autonomy and self-reliance. From the earlier analogy cited by him, the country is a chain and only as strong as the weakest link in it.

⁶*MJR*, p. 184.

⁷*MZ*, p. 194.

⁸*MJR*, p. 187.

The strength of the free people is immense and could overcome any adversary. We can see this from the example of the English-Spanish War of 1588. When the invading Spanish Armada of a hundred and thirty-odd ships with more than twenty thousand troops appeared on the English horizon, England had barely thirty-four combat ready ships and just fourteen thousand troops in the whole country. However, because the English people were free, the whole country was able to unite and support the navy in its war effort. In the end, England could defeat Spain because its people were free.⁹ Ueki thus argued that the strength of the country comes from the strength of the people and they can only be strong when they are free and self-reliant.

If people were given freedom, they must be given rights too. The reason is to ensure that their freedom would be safeguarded. Much too often the plight of the commoners depended on the benevolence of the rulers. A peaceful rule did not mean that the people were happy and did not suffer. He cited the Tokugawa era, which heralded two hundred and fifty years of peace in Japan. But, he asked, were people free and happy? No, it was in fact a period of great calamity for the people.¹⁰ Moreover, the benevolent rule of a ruler normally did not outlast his lifetime. In China for example, a remarkable leader would rise in times of strife and chaos, unite the country and establish an empire under his rule. Once united, the country would prosper and the people could live peacefully. However, no matter how benevolent the ruler was, his rule would not endure for more than a few generations. Soon a despot or an inept would appear and the people suffer once more.

One of the rights that Ueki strongly fought for was the freedom of expression. He cited the stifling laws imposed on the Japanese populace curtailing their rights to assemble, form societies and express ideas, of which suppressing speech is the worst form of oppression. It was as if the government had cut away the tongues of everyone. Ueki claimed that such oppression could be compared to Anthony of Rome who cut Cicero's tongue just to prevent him from talking and Emperor Qin of China who buried all the Confucian scholars alive

⁹*MJR*, pp. 191-2.

¹⁰*MJR* p. 188.

because of their anti-government stance.¹¹ In returning the people their natural rights, one of the first things that any government should do is to grant the people their freedom of expression. Freedom of expression is essential so that the ruler can know the problems faced by his subjects. In the West:

We have the public debates in ancient Athens where the people can seek redress or criticize any rules deemed unfair to the people. Russia is an autocratic government but they have a jury system to ensure that the legal system is not abused. Korea may not be civilized but they follow the laws of Yao and Shun. China since the old days practised presenting petitions to the throne and their rulers listened to any grievances from his subjects. Even when some rulers did not heed the advice of their subjects, there was still a belief in retribution from heaven and the avenues of appeal were never closed. However, the present Meiji government not only simply ignores the will of the people, it even ignores the will of the ancients and heaven.¹²

History has again demonstrated the precedence of self-expression and exercising of rights by the people and of consultative politics between rulers and their subjects. Nevertheless, Ueki did not just stop at demanding the rights of expression.

The Historical Roots of Rulers

Unlike most supporters of the imperial tradition among adherents of the popular rights movement, Ueki argued the historicity of rulers and governments. He pointed out that all of them derived their power and legitimacy through an accumulated process of warfare and political struggles in history, and not from some metaphysical forces or divinity. The present rulers were mainly the survivors of that process. In an article written in 1881, Ueki said:

Even for those states that had a consultative form of government since antiquity, most social groupings were formed by the strong conquering the weak and the victors then imposing their will on the conquered. These groupings, therefore, did not represent the volitions of the weak majority but nonetheless were

¹¹*Iida Jiken Gekibun* (Manifesto of the Iida Incident) reprinted in Ienaga ed., *Minshu shugi*. Gendai nihon shiso taikēi, vol. 3, (Tokyo, 1965), p. 95, henceforth *Minshu*.

¹²*MZ*, p. 270.

labelled as collective governments by the strong.¹³

If we were to look at the histories of Europe, said Ueki, all the existing monarchies started as tribal chiefs in the medieval age and were the ones who managed to maintain their rule over many generations.¹⁴ And in the case of Japan, the emperor system came about because:

In the beginning when the Heaven and Earth parted and men came into existence, there were no rulers nor ministers. Our present political system was instead a custom due to the two thousand-odd years of imperial rule since Jimmu days. It was never the law of nature nor the principle of the universe.¹⁵

If Japanese *Kokugaku* scholars criticized Emperors *Tang* and *Wu* of China as thieves because they usurped the rule of *Jie* and *Zhou* and establish their own dynasties, then Emperor Jimmu who started from Hinata and eventually conquered the whole of Japan should be branded likewise as a thief or a scoundrel.¹⁶

This is the strongest statement Ueki made about Imperial rule. From this statement, I do agree with Ienaga that Ueki was principally not supportive of the monarchy in his political outlook, and this made Ueki extremely rare among the many liberal thinkers of his time.¹⁷ Yet, for reasons that I have explained earlier, Ueki did not develop this idea fully and instead chose to play on the theme of national strength. Anyway, by recognizing the historicity of political rule, and not treating such rule as a timeless entity, Ueki could argue that despite the different political systems existing in the world, all countries will eventually adopt civilized principles of freedom and equality, and evolve eventually along similar paths. While he did not state this specifically, I detect such sentiments when we later see his views of pacifism and internationalism.

Since Ueki maintained that everyone is created equally by heaven, he faulted those rulers who had thought of themselves as superior to their subjects. For example, the Roman

¹³MZ, p. 212.

¹⁴Quoted by Ienaga, *Ueki*, p. 326.

¹⁵*Kokkai Kaisetsu Ronsha Mitsugi Tanbunsho*, quoted by Ienaga, *Ueki*, p. 327.

¹⁶MZ, p. 195.

¹⁷Ienaga, *Ueki*, p. 327-30.

emperor Caligula said that the people were the sheep while the emperor was the shepherd, therefore, the ruler was superior. Expecting to be revered because of their superiority, some even deified themselves. Such distinctions were often abused and used to justify inequality. The situation was the same in China, which was why there were sayings like "to rule a country is like looking after a herd of sheep."¹⁸ Ueki insisted that there should be no such differences when everyone is created equally and free by heaven. He suggested that we should instead drag the remains of Caligula from his grave and whip them for saying things that were against the will of heaven.

Ueki thus laid out his framework for arguing his case for representative government. By using Heaven as the creator of man and provider of natural rights and liberty, and using the various historical examples and ancient sayings that stressed the importance of people, tracing the historical formation of political entities, Ueki could legitimately locate the sovereignty of a country in the people. In order for the people to exercise their sovereignty, it therefore necessitates the setting up of popular-elected government that represents their interests.

Argument for a Constitution

While some rulers in history had granted their subjects freedom and rights, this was often subjected to their whims and fancies. Therefore, there must be a proper system to ensure that the rights of the people are protected. Ueki suggested that this should take the form of a contract. Since the sovereignty of the country is in the people, then governments would merely be the tools of the people, created by the people to serve their needs. To ensure that the governments thus created have rules to follow and an objective yardstick by which the people could measure its performance, a constitution must be put in place. This constitution must be drafted collectively by the people and their government. Constitutions are essential to democracy and benefit the countries and their people. This could be seen from historical examples. When the American president Lincoln was assassinated, the country did not fall into chaos or break up because it had a constitution. In fact the constitution ensured the smooth

¹⁸*MJR*, p. 187.

transition of power to another democratically-elected president.¹⁹ This was the reason all the advanced and strong Western countries had constitutions. Even a small and young country like Belgium was able to ensure the freedom and rights of their people because it had a constitution.²⁰ On the other hand, in China, the Greek and Roman empires, and all autocratic states, whenever the emperor or king died, chaos prevailed and the dynasties often declined.²¹ The constitution is therefore the only safeguard that the people could have against such displacements.

Ueki also attempted to argue that representative government was not some Western fad but had its precedents in Japan. During the foreign crisis of 1853, the Tokugawa Bakufu had invited the various daimyo to suggest options to meet the Western challenge. Furthermore, the *kobu-gattai* system was implemented on the basis of consultative government by the court, Bakufu and the various daimyo. Even the Charter Oath after the Meiji Restoration proclaimed the "establishment of an assembly and matters of state to be decided by public discussion."²² Therefore, the existing government had betrayed the aspirations of the Restoration and Ueki reiterated the need for a popular representative government.

Traditions of Resistance and Revolution

Although Heaven had endowed all men with rights and liberty, it is wishful thinking to expect that the various ruling groups would voluntarily "bestow" such rights and liberty on its people. Ueki maintained that freedom and rights do not come easily, that there must be a price to be paid. Throughout history, the democratic countries have shown that liberty and democracy had to be demanded and fought for. For example, while we now envy the freedom enjoyed by the Americans, Ueki pointed out that colonial America suffered constant repression and unequal treatment from England in the eighteenth century. In order to achieve independence from England and to regain the liberty and rights that were denied to them by the oppressive English

¹⁹*MJR*, p. 192.

²⁰*Minken Jiyu Ron Nihen Kogo*, reprinted in Ienaga ed., *Meiji bungaku zenshu*, vol. 12, (Tokyo, 1972), p. 133, hereafter cited as *MJR A* and *Meiji* respectively.

²¹*MJR*, p. 191.

²²*MZ*, p. 208.

rule, all thirteen states of the colony had to unite, sacrifice with blood and fight a war of independence.²³ The colonial master was no match for the aspirations of freedom and equality by the oppressed people. Ueki was obviously very impressed with the American War of Independence as he even incorporated it into his song *Minken kazoe uta*:

Think of once upon a time, the American flag of independence. If the rain of blood is not shed here, the foundations of liberty will never be strong.²⁴

This expression of popular will was demonstrated again in the case of the Magna Carta when the people forced King John to sign the Great Charter of England guaranteeing the constitutional rights and privileges of the people.²⁵ Since the French Revolution of 1791 which set the precedent, all Western countries now have the rights of resistance and revolution inscribed in their constitution.²⁶ Ueki therefore urged his fellow men to insist on their rights and be prepared to make sacrifices for it. Furthermore, they have every legitimate reason to do so since liberty is endowed by heaven. To protect their freedom and rights they have the right to resist and revolt against any autocratic government that deprived them of such privileges. It was Ueki conviction that democracy had to be sought for that rendered him the label of a "radical liberalist."

Ueki, however, was aware that the sacrifices involved would be great. Still he insisted that it would be better to be dead than be deprived of liberty and was convinced that in the end the will of the people shall prevail. Those rulers that refused to respect the rights and liberties of their people often ended in tragedy. For example, Caesar of Rome, King Louis XVI of France and King Charles I of England were all assassinated or beheaded and their rule dismantled because the wrath of the people turned against them and they revolted.²⁷ The ends justify the means, therefore to achieve their natural rights, people had the right to rebel. Ueki

²³*MJR*, p. 186 and *MZ*, p. 35.

²⁴Quoted in Ienaga, *Ueki*, p. 360.

²⁵*MJR*, p. 186.

²⁶*MJR A* in Ienaga, *Meiji*, p. 132.

²⁷*MJR*, pp. 186-7.

was most impressed by the French Revolution as could be seen by an entire article, *Buruku o korosu* (I Slay Burke, 1882), devoted to defending the spirit and principles of the French Revolution.

Turning to Japan, Ueki pointed out that the right to resist and revolt was present in its history. Take for example the forty-seven ronin. Many people assumed that it was just a case of chivalry and loyalty of forty-seven masterless samurai avenging their master by killing the Bakufu official who ordered the death of their master. But according to Ueki's reinterpretation, he insisted the truth be that the forty-seven ronin were dismayed by the arbitrariness of Tokugawa rule and the injustices that were carried out by the Bakufu. They therefore felt that they had to resist the authorities and act according to the principles of nature and righteousness.²⁸ This spirit of resistance was also exemplified by people like Yoshida Shoin and the Mito warriors in their opposition to the Tokugawa Bakufu. Ueki glorified the acts of these people in his article "Shishi no shinjo" (The Feelings of the Shishi, 1885), and through it expressed his deepest admiration for the martyrs of the Fukushima Uprising.²⁹

Throughout their rule, the Tokugawa abused their authority and disregarded the Imperial family. Most of the Bakumatsu shishi were inflamed by such disrespect to the Emperor and therefore rose against the Bakufu and eventually toppled its rule. "When England made excuses (to increase taxes) to America, the Americans resisted. When the Tokugawa's made excuses to suppress the shishi, the shishi toppled the Bakufu."³⁰ However, the Meiji government that replaced the Bakufu merely continued the legacy of the Tokugawa. The ruling clique did not respect the Emperor and deprived the people of their liberties and rights. Instead they intended to make all Japanese like the Chinese people of the old days, fearful of the rulers, subservient to their whims and fancies, to be manipulated like monkeys on a leash.³¹ Ueki strongly urged his fellow men to fight for their rights and not to be manipulated by the Meiji authorities. He further argued that such acts should not be conceived of as subversion as the

²⁸Ako *Shijushichi Shi Ron*, reprinted in Ienaga ed., *Meiji*, p. 145.

²⁹Quoted by Ienaga, *Kakumei*, pp. 50-1.

³⁰*MZ*, p. 201.

³¹*MJR*, p. 187.

tradition of resistance and revolt was well ingrained in Japanese history, In his words: "Since the fall of last year, *hyakusho ikki* (peasant uprisings) has been taking place everywhere. These uprisings should be taking place, because they are the only effective form of resistance."³² This being the case, Ueki stressed that "Yamato Ikki wa Meijiishin daijigyo no Senku nite ariki" (Japan's Peasant Uprisings are the Forerunners of the Meiji Restoration, 1886).³³ Ueki thus reinterpreted the Meiji Restoration as the result of an uprising by the "people" and their aspirations for freedom and rights. Resistance to the Meiji authoritarianism is rather to continue the true spirit of the Meiji Restoration. Though Ueki did not participate in the Satsuma Rebellion, he showed deep admiration for the deeds of Saigo Takamori and defended Saigo by claiming that he was "fighting for enlightenment and national spirit" and the "suppression of the rebellion was in fact woe to the people."³⁴ By reinterpreting historical cases of resistance against oppressive rule, Ueki thus tried to reify his ideas of resistance and revolt in the history of Japan while maintaining that they were merely suppressed due to the oppression of the Tokugawa Bakufu and now continued by the Meiji authorities.

Through this argument, Ueki asked "are popular rights something introduced from the West and does not have their seeds in our history?" Of course not, because Ueki answered "after all should not the uprisings of the people (in Japan) be considered as the seeds of democracy?"³⁵ Thus, Ueki attempted to present the traditions of popular movements in the West and also in Japan as universal attempts to secure democracy and liberty for the people. By locating the source of liberty in man and then arguing the inherent rights of man to resist any impediment to freedom, Ueki could effectively state a case that democracy was not a foreign import but an indigenous, and simultaneously, universal value.

Historical Argument for Pacifism

A responsible government and a constitution serve the purpose of ensuring greater rights and

³²"Yo ni Ryoseifu naru mono naki no setsu," quoted by Ienaga, *Ueki*, p. 359.

³³Ienaga, *Kakumei*, p. 51.

³⁴*Nairan Chitei no Ensetsu*, 1877 quoted by Ienaga, *Ueki*, p. 126.

³⁵Quoted by Ienaga, *Ueki*, p. 359.

freedom for everyone. But they are temporary measures only. Since freedom and rights are naturally-endowed values, theoretically, all men share them and so should be able to live in harmony and respect each other's rights. Nevertheless, he knew that in reality as civilization needed time to develop, reason had yet to prevail and so governments and constitutions were needed to facilitate and lead all societies towards reason and ultimately freedom. Ueki, therefore, envisaged the ultimate goal for humanity would be a utopia in which reason prevails and everyone can live together peacefully.

If we were to look at the history of the world, there frequently appeared some ambitious rulers who attempted to conquer the whole world. Alexander the Great of Greece, Julius Caesar of Rome, Napoleon of France were but some to name. Even if the overt aim was not to conquer the country, the strong countries used a variety of reasons to subdue and exploit the weaker ones. Thus we have Russia invading Turkey on the pretext of protecting the Caucasians in its borders, this was repeated in the Prussia and Austria invasion of Poland. England on behalf of its Anglo-Saxon race and the Spanish Jesuits "converted" many parts of the world to its superior civilization while exploiting their resources. Whether in Africa or Australia, the advent of the white people led to drastic reduction in indigenous populations.³⁶ Rather than allowing the world to turn into a battle for survival of the fittest, there is a need to regulate relations among countries and protect the weaker countries in particular.

Ueki thus argued for the formation of a supreme council to ensure that the smaller countries are protected and democracy is promoted among the less-developed societies and countries. As mentioned earlier, this supreme council aims to regulate relations among member nations, mediate any international conflicts and punish any member country that breaches its constitutional rights and oppresses its people. But since the powers of the council proposed by Ueki rest only on reason and not military might, this council will most likely not be able to effectively carry out its task (not very unlike the present UN). Ueki, however, maintained that Heaven will be the ultimate arbiter and judge of societies in their adherence to the universal principles of reason, liberty and democracy.³⁷ When all societies reach that ideal condition

³⁶*Mujo* in Ienaga, *Meiji*, pp. 151-2.

³⁷Ienaga, *Ueki*, p. 299.

where reason prevails, while freedom and rights are cherished, then there would not be any need for governments or constitutions. Here, we can see that Ueki was truly an idealist in his view of international relations as he appealed to pure abstraction and did not take into consideration the actual international condition confronting countries in the late nineteenth century, especially with the heyday of imperialism, and it is also difficult to see how his proposed council could work based merely on a set of universal laws and principles.

Reasons for Inequality

Ueki was also concerned with social problems in Japan. Among them, the most crucial issue would be that of social inequality. Ueki made the point that in all societies, poverty came about for historical reasons of unequal wealth distribution not inferiority of the poor. As the ancient saying goes "those who have country and home, worry not about scarcity but about inequality, worry not about poverty but about unrest. When there is equality, there will not be scarcity. When there is peace, there will not be poverty. Ensuring equality and peace should therefore be the tasks of the government."³⁸ A government is therefore created to regulate and protect the rights of the people. This can be seen from the case of England and France. Before the revolutions, the governments were autocratic and oppressive. But after the constitutions were implemented, although there are still inequalities, the poor's rights are protected and the rich could not exploit them.³⁹ If the poor are allowed political participation, then they would have the means to ensure that their rights would be protected.

Ueki spoke strongly against hierarchy. He cited the example of the Hindu caste system and questioned how people could treat their fellow men as if they were animals when everyone was created equally with the same attributes and abilities by heaven.⁴⁰ In line with this, Ueki refuted Fukuzawa's view that knowledge should be a judgement of a person's worth and status in society. Elaborating on his argument that poverty and knowledge should not be a measure of a person's worth, Ueki introduced the comparison that while rulers often branded their

³⁸MZ, p. 202.

³⁹MZ, p. 274.

⁴⁰MZ, p. 186.

people as humble and stupid:

it is actually rare to find a humble and stupid person in this world. The peasants from the mountains and the fields may be called foolish but they can turn wheat into flour better than Napoleon and lash a rope better than Genghis Khan. The servant may be stupid but he can cook better than Alexander the Great. The bath attendant may be ignorant but he can make fires for the bath better than Taiko Hideyoshi. The hunter may be uneducated but he fishes and hunts better than Oda Nobunaga, Emperor Han Gao Zu, Washington, or *Kurinton* (name could not be ascertained). A day labourer may not be clever but he can lay a paddy field, build a house better than Mill, Burke, Plato or Newton.⁴¹

Therefore, while these people may not be well educated or rich, they possessed skills that are far superior to those educated and rich people. Knowledge and wealth should not be a measure of superiority, traditional branding of people as "joto jinmin" (superior beings) or "kato jinmin" (inferior beings) as such is meaningless and should be stopped.⁴² Being able to freely pursue the abilities that heaven had given them, the underclass may in fact be the superior people. Ueki thus proposed equality for all people and that no distinction should be made between the poor and the rich, the uneducated and the educated.

In urging recognition of the rights of the common people, Ueki also stressed that the poor must unite to demand for their rights as unity is strength. The reason why the common people were exploited was mainly due to their inability to take collective action to fight for their rights. But history had shown that as long as the people unite in purpose and determination, freedom and rights are attainable. The Magna Carta, America's War of Independence, French Revolution, etc. proved his point. He emphasized "unity is strength, unity is victory, the way to progress in this world."⁴³

Along with his belief in equality, Ueki subscribed to rational positivism and limitless progress of mankind. He cited the examples of Emperor Han Gaozhu of China and Toyotomi Hideyoshi who were from humble origins but because of their efforts, became leaders of their

⁴¹"Gufu Gufu no setsu" reprinted in Ienaga, *Meiji*, p. 197.

⁴²*Hinmin Ron*, quoted by Ienaga, *Ueki*, p. 511.

⁴³"Jiyu Ronko" quoted by Ienaga, *Kakumei*, p. 149.

times.⁴⁴ Since heaven endowed every man equally, there should be no limit to what man could achieve, he thus urged his fellow men to exert themselves for their own future. Having full faith in the ultimateness of man, he argued that historically, all the great heroes, whether "Napoleon, Washington, Zhougong, Confucius, Emperor Han, Hideyoshi, Newton, Watt, Stevenson, Galileo, or Franklin," were merely men who had worked hard for their fame.⁴⁵

As I have mentioned in the previous chapter, Ueki's view of humanity was an extension to his emphasis on the people and natural rights. In contrast to his political theories, Ueki's use of history in his social theories highlighted the negative aspects of history and traditions. For example he cited the poverty suffered by the acquiescent peasants in the Tokugawa era: "clothes were in the pawnshop, too poor to have meat even for festival celebrations, or visit a doctor when they were sick, or afford a haircut even when their hair was lice-infected and some had to resort to selling their wives and daughters."⁴⁶ He also castigated the rigidity of traditional families and values by pointing out the suffocating effect they had on the development of individual autonomy and self-reliance. Ueki's attempt to disparage traditional value systems is understandable in view of his perceived need to create a new ethic for the individual self that commensurate to the requirements of modern democracy.

I have attempted to highlight some of Ueki's attempts to make use of history to illustrate and substantiate his arguments for democracy and social reforms in Japan. We shall now look at some of the characteristics of his use of history.

Democracy as a Universal Principle

From the above discussion, Ueki was acutely conscious of the foreign nature of his liberal ideas of freedom and rights, and had tried to frame them as part of Japan's history. He made use of the traditions of popular uprisings in Japan and the sayings of ancient sages to support his claims. Concurrently, he tried to cite historical examples from different countries in the world

⁴⁴*Sonjin Setsu*, in Ienaga, *Meiji*, p. 193.

⁴⁵*Sonjin Setsu*, p. 196.

⁴⁶Ienaga, *Kakumei*, p. 146.

so as to argue a case that democracy was not a Western fad but rather a universal principle for all mankind. Nevertheless, based on the historical examples that he used in those writings that I have read, it is apparent that while Ueki was able to argue convincingly that democracy could be a universal value, he was not so successful in arguing that Japan had a strong tradition of resistance and revolution. The number of examples he used were mostly Western in origin and even though he tried to disguise some of the examples from China as belonging to Japan, evidently he had limited himself to Japanese examples to a period no earlier than the Tokugawa era, and even then, it was restricted to attacking the absolutism of the Bakufu or the Meiji government.

Why did Ueki do this? Scalapino has suggested that it was due to Ueki's reliance on the "national power theme" to argue his case for greater freedom and rights and thus he could not effectively criticize the Imperial role in the Meiji and previous eras.⁴⁷ This could be one of the reasons but if we look at the bulk of his anti-monarchy writings, Ueki clearly favoured the abolition of the monarchy and setting up of a republic in Japan. The reasons as to why he did not develop this line of argument fully could be the influence of his fellow activists, who were mostly pro-monarchy, the prevailing ideological appeal of the imperial institution and his reluctance to openly defy the Imperial institution. Or perhaps, it was a case of what Irokawa termed as "weight upon the eyes" exerted by the emperor system on Ueki in the sense that the emperor system was a subconscious "sickness that had permeated ... intellectual's thought process at their very core."⁴⁸ That was also the reason why Ienaga labelled Ueki as a "passive republican."

Nonetheless, I would like to advance the possibility that Ueki was not well versed in Japanese history. This can be seen from his readings of books. In his reading diary, he read *Kokushi ryaku* (An Outline of National history) when he was fourteen or fifteen (1871-2), *Toyoshi ryaku* (Outline of Oriental history) in 1873, reread *Kokushi ryaku* in the same year and subsequently he did not read any more histories of Japan until 1885 when he read *Kokushi an*

⁴⁷Scalapino, *Democracy*, pp. 70-1.

⁴⁸Irokawa Daikichi, *The Culture of the Meiji Period*. Translation edited by M. B. Jansen, (Princeton, 1984), pp. 9-15.

(Excerpts of National history).⁴⁹ Based on his diary, it is evident that he never read the Kojiki or Nihon Shoki or any histories of the Sengoku period. From his remaining collection of nineteen history books, only two of them were on Japan, covering only the Meiji period, while the rest were all on Western and Chinese histories.⁵⁰ Ueki was definitely much better trained in and had better knowledge of Chinese Classics and Western history from the books that he had read. This I believe explains his lack of historical examples from Japan.

The degree of Western liberal influence on Ueki's mental formation was quite substantial. Despite their foreign nature, Ueki made several attempts to reinterpret those ideas as Confucian thoughts. This could be seen from his use of the "people as foundations of a state" analogy and his reliance on petitions and appeals to the authorities as one of the legitimate avenues for seeking political participation and redress. This characteristic reliance on quotations and anecdotes from Confucian writings and Chinese history betrayed his own training. As such, many of Ueki's political and social views stemmed from a Confucian perspective of the world.⁵¹ For example his belief in natural endowment, the primacy of man, progress through one's efforts, application of self to society and politics, etc., were as much Confucian ideas as they were Western liberal ideas. In many of his own writings as we have seen from above, he even resorted to citing the ancient practices of petitions to emperors, using Heaven as the authority and source of liberty and rights, and appealing to the wisdom and benevolence of rulers to buttress his arguments for democracy. All these clearly indicated his ideological inclination to a Confucian understanding of society and politics. Ueki's inability to transcend his traditional modes of cognition explains why while he appealed to universal values in his theories, he similarly resorted to particularistic traditional symbols.

Most of the traditional practises of consultative rule and petitions in Japan tended to be rather passive measures and depended on the benevolence of the ruler. Ueki, therefore, attempted to cite the various uprisings and rebellions in Japan and China to argue his case for

⁴⁹Ienaga ed., *Ueki Emori nikki zoku*, (Kochi, 1960), pp. 88, 90 and 120.

⁵⁰*Ueki Bunko Moroku*, pp. 7-8.

⁵¹Matsumoto Sannosuke compares the thought of Ueki and Nakae and concludes that their views of Heaven stemmed from a Confucian perspective. See Matsumoto Sannosuke. "The Idea of Heaven: A Tokugawa Foundation for Natural Rights Theory," in Najita and Scheiner eds., *Japanese Thought in the Tokugawa Period, 1600-1868: Methods and Metaphors*, (Chicago, 1978), p. 184.

the right of revolt and resistance. Though clearly influenced by the ideas of John Locke's *Second Treatise*, Ueki cited the Chinese proverb of the ability of water to float and sink a boat to illustrate the power of resistance. Resorting to democratic traditions in Japan was, however, not very successful as Ueki's examples were extremely limited although he tried to reinterpret peasant uprisings, resistance movements and the Meiji Restoration as attempts at democracy by Japanese. Ueki's reinterpretation of the Meiji reforms was understandably critical and he emphasized only the debilitating effects on Japanese, particularly the peasants, while ignoring the positive effects. Such one-sided interpretation would have great appeal to the commoners during those time of economic upheaval, like the tax and land reforms in early Meiji but not with the improving living conditions from the mid-1880's. This was one reason for the decline of the Popular Rights Movement and the reduction in Ueki's political essays.

Ueki also had to turn to examples from the West to beef up his arguments. Apparently Ueki had a wide knowledge of Western history, summoning examples from Rome to America, from the Classical age to his own time. While he used historical examples from the West, Ueki insisted that whether the "social contract theory of Rousseau or the utilitarianism of Bentham are not the sole property of Europeans but could also be commonly found as universal truths in the traditions of the East."⁵² This was evident in his claim that the traditions of resistance and revolution existed in Japan and China, and that they were the seeds of democracy in this part of the world.

In the end, Ueki must have recognized the lack of meaningful democratic movements in both Japan and China, and thus had to rely on arguing the universal nature of his liberal ideas. By arguing a metaphysical origin for freedom and rights, Ueki successfully placed them as universal values which are not restricted to Western peoples but applicable to all mankind. The basis of all of Ueki's arguments stemmed from the primacy of the "people" in nation-building and national strength. Appealing to the creative powers of heaven, he was able to derive ultimate authority and universal application. The "people" thus became a historical symbol that he could manipulate and use to legitimize his political and social theories. Making the "people" with their inherent natural rights a universal sign and principle, Ueki was able to

⁵²Quoted by Ienaga in *Kakumei*, p. 25.

construct a new view of humanity and the world, democracy thus became a *tenri*. All his suggestions for political and social reforms could then be understood as supporting the achievement of this universal principle in Japan.

So, as a logical extension of this premise, Ueki developed the rest of his theories like equality, representative government, local autonomy and pacifism along those lines. Ueki was, therefore, not what Ike claims when he argues that he took "a considerable body of Western political thought" and "clothed it partly in Japanese dress."⁵³ Ueki displayed a firm commitment to the universalism of democratic ideas and endeavoured to effect them in Japan. The goal for Ueki would therefore be returning to that ideal original state in which reason and liberty prevailed. Possessing such natural attributes, men would be able to live as autonomous beings and at the same time coexist with his fellow men peacefully. As such, Ueki was not only a liberal thinker, an idealist but also very cosmopolitan and international in his outlook. In my opinion, Ueki was the strongest advocate of a "world without boundaries" among the Meiji intellectuals. If we leave the issue of the effects of Ueki's efforts aside and judge him according to his political and social thought, Ueki understood the basic premises of the natural rights theory and through his use of history, was able to convincingly argue the universal nature of democracy. Seen in this light, Ueki deserves a place among the leading intellectuals of the "Japanese Enlightenment."

To sum up this chapter, let us take a look at Ueki's petition for the Iida uprising and see how he appealed to various universal principles and traditional symbols to argue his case. In this petition, Ueki listed out most of the above historical examples, arguing that freedom and rights belonged to the people and history had always proven the strength of the people's will. The Tokugawa Bakufu had oppressed the people and usurped the Imperial authority. The people therefore rose against it and brought about the Meiji Restoration. While the Meiji government had claimed that they were restoring "imperial rule" when they overthrew the Tokugawa Bakufu, in reality they continued the oppression of the Bakufu in the name of the Emperor. These included stifling the people's will and freedom, heavy taxes, suppression of dissent, limiting participation in politics, inhumane laws, disrespect of the Emperor and

⁵³Ike, *Beginnings*, p. 137.

tarnishing his virtuous rule, and lastly, blunders in foreign affairs and selling out the country. Therefore, the Meiji government was actually blocking the Emperor from ruling and loving his people. Ueki urged the Emperor to grant people their rights and freedom, and to allow the formation of a constitutional government so that the Emperor could have access to the will of the people. He concluded his petition by reiterating that the Meiji government was tyrannical to its people, treating them:

like fish in a pot and leisurely looking at them suffering. How cruel can such oppression be? This kind of tyranny, not even (Emperor) *Jie or Zhou* did it, not even (Emperor) *Yu or Lei* did it, nor (Emperor) Qin, nor (Emperor) Wu reached this extent, neither had (Emperor) Nero nor Caesar learned to do that, not even (King) Charles (I) or Louis (XVI) was bold enough to do it. Even the oppressive rule of King George of England over America did not reach this level of tyranny. Even Li Shi, Wang An Shi, Yan Sung, Han Tuo Zhou (all oppressive officials of China) and their peers paled in comparison. (Meiji government) Greatest traitor of the country, ruining the country and the people. ... We, thirty million *Nihon teikoku no ryomin* (loyal citizen of Imperial Japan) ... stand up to restore the Imperial honour and rescue thirty million suffering fellow men... rise up my comrades, march on my comrades, start a revolution now for we shall rid our country of these traitors.⁵⁴

So based on all the above arguments, Ueki appealed to traditional notions of loyalty, morality and urged the people to follow the steps of past political activism, resist the Meiji government and repossess the natural rights and freedom that were denied to them. At the same time, he also appealed to the Meiji emperor to stop the government from doing all those things that not even the ancient tyrants would do and to grant the Japanese people their freedom and rights.

Despite his attempts at constructing a universal view of democracy, we can see that Ueki ultimately relied on traditional symbols of loyalty, morality, national strength and Imperial authority to argue for political actions. It could be interpreted as limitations imposed on Ueki by the prevailing ideologies or we could take the view, as I would be more inclined to do, that Ueki merely succeeded in disguising Western ideas as universals; his universal symbols of "people" and "rights of resistance" were perceived through the traditional Confucian mode of understanding.

⁵⁴Ienaga, *Minshu*, p. 101.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion

In the above study, I have attempted to investigate the influence of Western liberal ideas on the intellectual formation of a Meiji person, Ueki Emori. After highlighting how his responses and understanding to these Western ideas were shaped by his social background and the surrounding intellectual climate, I argued that Ueki made an effort to assimilate those foreign ideas into Japan's traditions. This was necessary as the Meiji Restoration brought about the destruction of traditional political and social paradigms, and the corresponding need to create new ones. He did this by resorting to reinterpreting historical symbols as roots of liberty and popular rights and constructing a new view of humanity and society based on individualism, autonomy and self-reliance. The historical reconstruction was achieved by portraying the "people" and "rights of resistance" as the traditional sources of democracy in Japan. I have also argued that through his use of history, Ueki ultimately wanted to universalize democracy and in that he held a vision of a utopia for mankind.

Ueki's understanding of Western liberal ideas was rather superficial and as a result, most of his political and social thoughts were not original and lack depth. They certainly pale in comparison to the thoughts of Fukuzawa Yukichi, Nakae Chomin or even, Baba Tatsui. Ueki's ideas also often contain contradictions as he failed to allow for public sentiments and the actual social and political conditions of Japan in his zeal to disparage traditional ideas and espouse new ones. While Ueki could muster sufficient historical examples to illustrate his theories and reinterpret them as symbols of democracy, he was not able to effectively create new symbols that were capable of reification. Instead those symbols had to be understood through traditional views of loyalty, national strength and the Imperial institution. His suggestions for political and social reforms, therefore, could only stop at the conceptual level and was not able to develop into concrete programmes of political and social action. In the end, Ueki's ideas were not able to break out of the bounds of traditional ideology and this could explain the reduction in his polemic writings after the failure of the Jiyuto.

In trying to relate the past to the present, Ueki was not alone in the Meiji period. Fukuzawa Yukichi, Nakae Chomin, Tokutomi Soho, and even the Meiji oligarches attempted to reinterpret Japan's past to the requirements of the modern age.¹ Nevertheless, unlike most of his contemporaries, Ueki did not resort to creating a timeless entity of Japanese culture or the Imperial symbol to agitate for political and social reforms. In contrast to the ethnocentrism and conservatism of some of his peers like Tokutomi, Nishimura Shigeki or Motoda Eifu,² Ueki made an attempt at universalizing values of democracy and liberty. Among all the Meiji "enlightened" intellectuals, I feel that Ueki was the strongest and most articulate advocate of a universal value system and world view based on freedom and rights. However, his universalism and internationalism could not disguise the fact that it consisted of rehashed Western values and ideas. Lacking a critical understanding of those values and ideas and failing to create new paradigms to replace the traditional ones he so despised, his interpretation of universalization merely suggested the adoption of westernized political and social theories. Naturally his efforts could only have limited appeal among Meiji Japanese.

Nevertheless, Ueki's attempt to internalize Western ideas and create new paradigms for Meiji Japan was not singular. Instead it reflected the general attempts by most intellectuals of his time. Nevertheless, as Kosaka, Ike, Pyle et al., have pointed out, most of these intellectuals failed to comprehend the diverse nature of Western ideas or their inherent contradictions and problems associated with their implementation, for example the excesses of individualism and pursuit of self-interest and the alienation of the individual due to application of science and specialization in knowledge. In the end, this period of intellectual development had been described as "low and superficial" by the above writers.³

Despite the failure at universalizing Western ideas and the shallowness of his theories, nevertheless, Ueki's ideas profoundly influenced many of his contemporaries as seen by the

¹Craig, "Fukuzawa," p. 108, Ike, *Beginnings*, pp. 124-9, Akita, *Foundations*, p. 28, and Pyle, *New Generation*, p. 55.

²Kenneth Pyle discussed the reaction against the universalizing of Western values by Ueki and his associates in "Meiji Conservatism," in *The Cambridge History of Japan: Volume 5, The Nineteenth Century*, edited by M. B. Jansen, (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 674-720.

³Kosaka ed., *Japanese Thought in the Meiji Era*, (Tokyo, 1958), p. 136..

many radical political activists who applied his ideas of resistance and revolt into their political agitation. For example, in a Jiyuto rally in Ishikawa, August 1881, an activist brought up the example that English misrule had brought on the American Independence movement to argue that repressive government bred revolution.⁴ Such use of history certainly rings a familiar note. Ueki's idea of the "people" and their primacy in state formation were also substantially used by activists, like Kinoshita Naoe, of the Socialist movements that appeared in the Taisho period.⁵ Furthermore, Ueki's draft constitution still stands as one of the most democratic and comprehensive attempts at constitution-making down to the present day. Based on this, despite the shallowness and incompleteness of Ueki's thoughts, Ienaga maintained, and I do agree with, that he deserved a place in the intellectual heritage of Meiji Japan.

Unlike most writers who tend to paint a larger than life picture of their subjects, I am more incline to view Ueki as an average Japanese caught in a time of great change. Influenced by his traditional upbringing as a Confucian samurai with the ethic of service to society and the country, at the tender age of only seventeen, he had already took on a self-appointed task of prescribing for his country what he perceived should be the ideal political and social conditions that were in tune with the requirements of a modern age. While he was driven by altruism, he was also motivated greatly by the desire to achieve fame and leave a name for himself in history. This can be readily seen by his meticulousness in writing all those autobiographies and diaries. In applying himself to society, Ueki displayed his ideological disposition towards Western liberal ideas and yet at the same time he was very much a traditional Japanese with all those strengths and deficiencies. What has impressed me most about Ueki, the person, was his attempt at matching his ideals to his actions and his failure at achieving that. We are not be able to know how Ueki would have proceeded in his intellectual formation had he lived longer. Clio, the muse of history, had laid an "intractable seamless web" in the path of this study. But it suffices for us to know what problems were faced by Meiji intellectuals in their attempt at setting the ideas of *bunmei kaika* in the social context of their times and in relating to their past.

⁴Vlastos, "Opposition," p. 415.

⁵Ienaga, *Ueki*, pp. 688-90.

conditions were similar in the sense of a breakdown in established modes of understanding and certainty while confronted with the need for constructing new paradigms to guide future actions. In the writings of Kobayashi Hideo, Eto Jun, Yoshimoto Takaaki and Takeuchi Yoshimi, all self-appointed moralists with a passion to guide Japanese society towards a new future, we can see attempts to assimilate Western ideas and, create universal modes of understanding of humanity. Through their efforts, they all appeal to various kinds of history, Kobayashi to Japanese indigenous culture, Eto to Imperial traditions, Yoshimoto to the Japanese people and Takeuchi to the Meiji Restoration. Perhaps it is as Fukuchi has suggested - the traditional respect of history by the Japanese that is paramount or maybe this is a phenomenon common to all people confronted with the task of facing an uncertain future. I believe more work is required on the "use of history" and the problems faced by various intellectuals in different places and times for me to come to a more settled conclusion.

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