

Tentative translation

“Q&A Communism and Freedom: *Das Kapital* as a Guide”

Shii Kazuo

This publication contains additions and revisions to the lecture “Human Freedom' and Socialism/Communism: *Das Kapital* as a Guide” given by Japanese Communist Party Central Committee Chair Shii Kazuo on April 27, 2024, at the “Student Online Seminar Vol.3” organized by the Democratic Youth League of Japan.

Preamble

(1)

What do you think when you see the title of the book, *Q&A Communism and Freedom: Das Kapital as a Guide*? Many people may think that “communism” and “freedom” are completely incompatible.

The contradictions of global capitalism, such as the tremendously widening gap between the rich and the poor and the increasingly serious climate crisis, are glaring. These realities have raised serious questions about whether the capitalist system can survive into the future. However, many people may say that socialism and communism oppose freedom.

However, if we are familiar with the works of Karl Marx (1818-83) and Friedrich Engels (1820-95), who laid the foundations of scientific socialism, it becomes clear that they repeatedly used the phrase “freedom of humans” as the most important characteristic of socialist and communist societies, consistently pursued the form of society that would make this possible, and fought for its realization. The future society that we, the Japanese Communist Party (JCP), are striving for -- a socialist and communist society -- is nothing but a straightforward inheritance and development of the original position of Marx and Engels with modern eyes.

“Human freedom” and “socialism/communism” are literally and in every sense

one and the same, and this linkage is finally coming into being in the 21st century -- this is the central point I wish to make in this book.

(2)

This book contains a lecture I gave to a group of young people. How can I speak about the themes of “human freedom” and “socialism/communism” in a language that can be logically understood by a large number of people? This has been a major challenge for me over the past few years, and the members of the Democratic Youth League of Japan (DYLJ) gave me the opportunity to take the first step toward meeting this difficult challenge. The discussion was based on the suggestion of the DYLJ members: “Please talk about this topic in a way that even a beginner can understand. Let's talk about this issue in a Q&A format. The Q&A should be basically “one story, complete” and can be read from any part of the book that interests you.”

On April 27, 2024, such a project was realized in the form of a “Student Online Seminar” (hosted by the Democratic Youth League of Japan), in which I gave a lecture entitled “‘Human Freedom’ and Socialism/Communism: *Das Kapital* as a Guide.”

The “Online Seminar for Students” proceeded in the form of a series of 35 questions asked by members of the DYLJ about socialism and communism, as well as questions raised in their studies within the League, and Nakayama Ayumi, vice chairperson of DYLJ, asked the questions and I answered each of them. The lecture lasted for more than three hours, including two breaks followed by additional questions that were asked on the day, and we were very happy to see that the audience, both at the venue and throughout the country via online viewing, listened intently and attentively to the lecture.

What I strongly felt during these activities was that a new interest in socialism and communism is now spreading among Japanese youth. More than 10 students from one university came to the Communist Party headquarters to listen to my lecture after seeing the “Online Seminar for Students” signboard that was set up by the DYLJ members on campus. During the break time in the middle of the lecture, they asked me penetrating questions, and their written impressions were filled with comments such as, “My image of communism has changed 180 degrees.” I felt that I had discovered a new vein where the ideals of many young people and our party platform and ideas resonated with each other.

I prepared my lecture with “human freedom” as the keyword, and with this keyword as the axis, I tried to clarify the true nature of the socialism and communism we are striving for from various angles - this was my main focus in preparing my lecture.

The greatest guide to this process is Karl Marx's lifetime major work, *Das Kapital*. This book is not only a thorough and critical elucidation of capitalism, but also Marx's richest description of the future society: a socialist and communist society. The

lecture proceeded with an introduction to Marx and his works, but as Marx's *Das Kapital* and the original text itself can be difficult for beginners, I tried to introduce it in my own words by putting it in plain language.

Please note that the entire lecture has been revised in this publication.

(3)

In my lecture, as an “Introduction” I asked the question, “Does capitalism really guarantee ‘human freedom’?” Before considering the issue of “socialism/communism and freedom,” I first asked whether the capitalist society in which we live really guarantees “human freedom” in the true sense of the word.

There is no doubt that the age of capitalism has witnessed an era of revolutionary development in freedom, equality, democracy, and individuality compared to its predecessors, slavery and feudalism. At the same time, can a society in which at present a handful of wealthy individuals and global corporations enjoy prosperity on the basis of the growing poverty of 5 billion people really be called a “free” society? Isn't capitalism, in the form of the climate crisis, endangering the very foundation of “freedom,” the freedom of human existence? The lecture begins with this question, and then introduces the emergence of a global movement that could be called the “restoration of socialism.”

(4)

The lecture then discusses our vision of “human freedom” and socialism/communism from three angles based on the resolution of the 29th Congress of the Japanese Communist Party held in January 2024.

The first angle is freedom from the “profit first” principle. The lecture clarifies what the “profit first” principle means and the harmful effects it brings about: the expansion of poverty and inequality, a “post festum” economy [an economy which gets disturbed regularly and adjusted always too late], and the mechanisms that cause these problems. I then explain that the way to eliminate these negative effects lies in the “socialization of the means of production.”

In this lecture, I focused on the relationship between the “socialization of the means of production” and “human freedom,” with one emphasis on the deep connection between the two.

- That “socialization of the means of production” will free human beings from the “profit first” principle and pave the way for the realization of a society in which “free producers play the leading role.”
- By being free from the “profit first” principle, human beings will finally be free from poverty and inequality, free from the “post festum” economy. That means, instead of a society where the “social reason” works only after the “festival” (periodic economic crisis, climate crisis, and other disturbances brought about by anarchic production) is

over, it will be a society that the “social reason” always works.

- That the overwhelming period of human history was a free and equal community in which producers shared the means of production, and that socialist and communist societies have the human historical significance of reviving at a high level the natural connection between producers and the means of production.

-In the “Preamble to the Programme of the French Workers’ Party,” which Marx prepared in his latest years (1880), Marx used “freedom” as a keyword and formulated the “socialization of the means of production” by employing a very concise logic.

(5)

The second angle is the free and full development of humanity.

The Communist Manifesto, written by Marx and Engels in 1848, characterizes socialist/communist society as “an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all.” How can we create a society in which “free and full development” is guaranteed to all human beings? Marx and Engels continued to explore this theme throughout their lives.

In the process of preparing my lecture, I made an effort to follow in the footsteps of Marx's quest by rereading *Das Kapital* (1867-94) and *the Economic Manuscripts* (1857-63). In doing so, I found that in *the Manuscripts*, Marx repeatedly emphasizes the importance of “time at one's disposal”- time that you are free from all external obligations and can spend completely freely. The “freely disposable time” is the “true wealth” of humankind and society, and “gives people a place for free development.”

What is deprived by capitalist exploitation? In his discussion of this question, Marx makes clear that what is being deprived by exploitation is not merely the fruits of labor - “goods” and “money” - but that the entirety of working time is being placed under the control of the capitalist, thereby depriving people of the “time at their disposal” that they are originally entitled to have, that is, “free time.” We will make it clear that “time” - “free time” - that people can freely dispose of is being usurped by the capitalist class. The message of *the Economic Manuscripts* is to create a free society that enables the “free and full development of human beings” by restoring and expanding the “free time” that has been stolen from them.

Marx's exploration of these issues in *the Economic Manuscripts* culminated in his theory of socialism and communism in Chapter 48, Part VII, Book III of *Das Kapital*: the time that you have at your disposal, the time in which the purpose is to develop your strengths freely and spontaneously. This theory of a society of the future will culminate in the expansion of a “the true realm of freedom” in which “the free and full development of humanity” is guaranteed, and in which “the shortening of the working day is its basic prerequisite.”

The reality in Japan is that death from overwork is still a serious problem, and

there is a sincere desire to have enough “free time at one's disposal.” I believe that Marx's clarification will resonate with many young people and citizens who have such a desire and will greatly encourage them in their fight for shorter working hours.

(6)

The third angle is that there exists tremendous and rich potential in terms of “human freedom” when moving from a developed capitalist country to socialism and communism.

In our program, which was partially revised at the 28th Congress of the Japanese Communist Party held in 2020, we identified the following “five elements” that have been created in advanced capitalism and can be inherited and developed in the future society: (1) high-level productive forces, (2) a system to socially regulate and manage the economy, (3) rules to protect people's lives and rights, (4) institutions of freedom and democracy as well as historical experiences of people's struggles, and (5) the rich individuality of human beings. It states, “Social changes in a developed capitalist country are the high road to socialism or communism.”

In my lecture, I discussed each of the “five elements” with a new emphasis on the fact that they can not only be “inherited” but also “developed” in a future society.

For example, what does it mean to inherit and develop “high productivity”? In my lecture, I emphasized that high productivity itself is the indispensable material foundation for building the society of the future, and I pointed out, “a future society, a socialist /communist society, would not simply inherit productive forces which had been shaped under capitalism. It would be a society where productive forces are developed with a renewed character, not like a capitalist society where people are driven to ‘produce for production's sake’ by the ‘profit first’ principle, aiming for infinite quantitative development of productive forces.” I emphasized several aspects of the new society, including: (1) it will be carried out by people who have “free time”; (2) its quality will be in harmony with the improvement of workers' lives; (3) its quality will be compatible with environmental preservation.

By discussing the “five elements” with emphasis on the angle that each of them can be “developed” in a future society, I believe that in many cases their specific contents are deeply related to the essential characteristics of the future society in which everyone will have enough “time at his/her disposal” and “free and full development” will be guaranteed.

In my lecture, I answered the question, “What is the guarantee that we will not end up with a society like the former Soviet Union or China?” I emphasized that the basic problem common to both, besides the mistakes of the leading forces, was the “delayed starting point of the revolution.” I also pointed out that the biggest guarantee that the future of socialism/communism in Japan will not be a society without freedom lies in the fact that social reforms will be carried out on the basis of a well-developed capitalism. The historical failure of the former Soviet Union in no way diminishes the

brilliance of Marx and Engels' theory of a future society. It is our conviction that it will only shine in its true brilliance in the project of social transformation in the developed capitalist countries we are working in.

(7)

We want to convey the vision that socialism and communism, which Marx and Engels had been working for throughout their lives and which we, the Japanese Communist Party, uphold in our program, are the exact opposite of “the oppression over human beings” and “the suppression of freedom,” and that they are societies in which “human freedom” flourishes in all its fullness. I want to convey the hope that humanity has the power to overcome the contradictions and suffering inherent in capitalism and move forward to a society beyond it. This is my sincere message that I wish this book would convey to you.

I would be very happy if this book is read by many people who are seriously exploring the future of humanity and the course of Japan, and if it serves as a reference for finding hope for the future in some way.

In closing, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the members of the DYLI for giving me this wonderful opportunity to speak on this topic, and I hope that this youth organization, which is irreplaceable for the present and future of Japan, will continue to grow and develop even further.

May 23, 2024
Shii Kazuo

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“'Human Freedom' and Socialism/Communism: *Das Kapital* as a Guide”

Student Online Seminar
Shii Kazuo
Chair, Central Committee
Japanese Communist Party
April 27, 2024
Tokyo

Introduction - Does Capitalism Really Guarantee “Human Freedom”?

Nakayama Ayumi (Democratic Youth League of Japan Vice Chair): The speaker for the seminar today is Mr. Shii Kazuo, Chair of the Central Committee of the Japanese Communist Party. Thank you for joining us.

Shii Kazuo (Japanese Communist Party Central Committee Chair): I am Shii Kazuo with JCP. Just relax and enjoy yourself while listening to our discussion. Thank you for your attendance.

Nakayama: Today, I would like you to talk to us in simple terms and easy to understand language about socialism and communism. We are often asked “Why?” or “What?” questions about socialism and communism in the conversations we have with students and young people in general and through the learning process of the Democratic Youth League of Japan (DYLJ). So today, I am going to throw at Mr. Shii a lot of questions the DYLJ has compiled through our activities and learning. We have 35 questions to ask in total. We will also have a session at the end to answer questions submitted by email. Let’s start.

Q1. Is it true that today’s speech is going to change how we think about socialism and communism?

The keyword is “human freedom”

Nakayama: I heard that you were going to speak today to change how we view socialism and communism.

Shii: Yes. I prepared this speech, hoping to reshape everyone's understanding.

Now, under the system of capitalism, we are seeing domestically and worldwide the wealth gap widening and the climate crisis deepening, and these various worsening problems are making us question "Should we go on with this capitalist system?" On the other hand, many people still think that "Socialism has nothing to do with freedom," pointing to China and the former Soviet Union. Is this correct?

Nakayama: That's what we are asked about.

Shii: So, the title of today's lecture is "'Human Freedom' and Socialism/Communism: *Das Kapital* as a Guide." The keyword is "human freedom." With this keyword in mind, I would like to think through the concepts of socialism and communism with you all.

Nakayama: The keyword will be "human freedom."

Shii: Yes. I am going to speak from various viewpoints while emphasizing this key concept.

Q2. When we talk about capitalism, or even socialism and communism, is it a matter of economy?

We grasp a society by looking at economy as foundation

Nakayama: We often hear discussions of capitalism, socialism, or communism as essentially tied to the matter of the economy. How different are they in regard to democracy or totalitarianism? Please explain in simple terms, as we have a lot of beginners here.

Shii: Whether it is about capitalism, socialism or communism, I am going to speak about economic matters as the foundation of the talk today.

Karl Marx (1818-83) and his ally Friedrich Engels (1820-95), the founders of scientific socialism, found that economic activities such as producing and procuring clothing, food and housing constitute the foundation of human society. They saw how the society produces the basic necessities such as clothing, food and housing as well as essential social services, and under what relations people link with each other to form the "basis" on which its society and history develop.

On that "basis" stand various forms of human consciousness including politics, law, ideology, religion. That's what Marx called the "superstructure." The "basis"

ultimately determines how the society develops while interacting with the “superstructure.” This is the way Marx discovered how best to analyze a society based on the concept of the “historical materialism.”

I think it is now part of conventional wisdom to understand human society by looking at the economy as the foundation. You can see textbooks describe human history in terms of advances from slavery to feudalism and then to capitalism. They basically describe transformations in economic matters.

Nakayama: You mean the division into these periods is based on their economic structure?

Shii: Yes. That’s why I am going to speak today about economic matters as the foundation of society. Democracy and totalitarianism are a matter of political forms still deeply connected with economic matters as well. So, I would like to speak today with that in mind too.

Nakayama: Okay. You are saying that we are going to reexamine capitalism and socialism from an economic viewpoint at present in which we are living, aren’t you? So exciting.

Q3. Can you say that capitalism guarantees freedom?

It has negative aspects while giving some freedom

Nakayama: Before we get into socialism and communism, I would like to ask you about the present status of capitalism in which we are living. When we talk about it in the DYLI, some people often ask “Can you really say that capitalism guarantees freedom? It’s not actually giving us freedom, is it?”

Shii: “Can capitalism really guarantee ‘human freedom’?” “Is it not actually giving us freedom?” I think these questions are very important. When I think it through, I would say the current situation surrounding young people in Japan is far from a society where each person can live with ease and freedom.

It’s true that capitalism has given people more freedom than before. As many of you learned in high school world history classes, when the United States became independent from Great Britain in 1776, it issued its Declaration of Independence. Then in 1789, the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen was issued during the French Revolution. These Declarations solemnly state liberty, equality, democracy and human rights. It is undeniably the fact that people’s movements around the world have

expanded “human freedom” thereafter, though there has also been a lot of back and forth.

But, at the same time, it is also true that capitalist system is now creating and expanding various hindrances which prevent “human freedom.” I will show these hindrances by examining through two major issues: the widening wealth gap and the worsening climate crisis.

Q4. What is the current state of the widening gap between rich and poor?

The super-rich enjoy unprecedented prosperity at the expense of five billion people

Nakayama: I think both issues are of great interest to young people. I would like to start by asking about the first one: the widening gap between the rich and the poor is a hot topic in many places nowadays. How far has this gone?

Shii: It is extreme. Oxfam, an international non-governmental organization (NGO) that passionately denounces the reality of the situation of widening inequality around the world, published a report in January 2024 entitled “INEQUALITY INC.” Please look at the slide (Slide 1).



This figure is reproduced from the Oxfam report. It reveals that over the past few years, the super-rich have gained unprecedented wealth, while the poor have become poorer and poorer, as follows.

“Since 2020, the five richest men in the world have seen their fortunes more than double, while almost five billion people have seen their wealth fall.”

“The wealth of the five richest men has increased by 114 per cent, from \$405 billion in 2020 to \$869 billion in 2023.”

The figure of \$869 billion does not ring a bell at all, does it?

Nakayama: It’s greater than the national budget of Japan!

Shii: Yes, that’s right. The Oxfam report states, “If each of the five wealthiest men were to spend a million US dollars daily, they would take 476 years to exhaust their combined wealth.”

The report states, “The other big winners in this period of crisis are global corporations.” The world’s largest corporations found an 89% jump in profits for the year 2021 and 2022, compared to the 2017-2020 average. The biggest beneficiaries of this increase in profits of the large global corporations have been the super-rich. Look at the next slide (Slide 2).



“Of the ten biggest corporations in the world, seven either have a billionaire CEO or a billionaire as principal shareholder. The total value of these companies is \$10.2 trillion.”

It reveals that the increasing profits of mega-corporations are making billionaires increasingly wealthy.

This has happened in the first half of 2020s, a time when many people around the world and in Japan faced unprecedented difficulties in their lives, including living through “a global [COVID-19] pandemic, war, a cost-of-living crisis, and climate breakdown.” (Oxfam report). At the time, the super-rich and large global corporations enjoyed unprecedented prosperity.

The Oxfam report points out that this has pushed down workers’ wages, particularly forcing women into the poorest-paid and least secure jobs. Oxfam strongly denounces the fact that many women and girls are forced into unpaid care work.

This is the reality of the capitalist world. No matter how hard each individual tries, he or she cannot escape this reality. Is this a society that guarantees “human freedom”? I believe that a major social change is required. This is one of the biggest issues.

Nakayama: It is sometimes said that the confrontation between capitalists and workers is out of date, however in reality, capitalists do exist.

Shii: Yes, that is right. Very powerful capitalists exist in a living form.

Q5. The climate crisis is very worrying. How far has the crisis come?

Climate tipping points (CTPs) - the danger of reaching uncontrollable climate changes

Nakayama: Another issue - the climate crisis is very worrying. In Japan, we are also experiencing various weather disasters such as heat waves, devastating typhoons and agricultural decline. How far has the crisis come?

Shii: Last year, 2023 was the hottest year in recorded history. In January 2024, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) officially confirmed that the annual average global temperature in 2023 was 1.45°C higher than the pre-industrial levels. The 2015 Paris Agreement - a legally binding international treaty on climate change - stipulates that we must aim to limit long-term temperature increase to no more than 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. We are already on the verge of reaching that tipping point.

One of the most alarming things for scientists is that if the temperature rise crosses a certain point - the climate tipping points (CTPs) - the entire global

environment will undergo rapid, large-scale, and irreversible changes that will be beyond human control.

The journal *Science* published an article on the climate tipping points (CTPs) entitled “Exceeding 1.5°C global warming could trigger multiple climate tipping points” (September 9, 2022). The paper provides a shortlist of a total of 16 key global “core” phenomena and regional “impact” phenomena that could trigger the climate tipping points, and estimates the temperature increase at which each phenomenon reaches the tipping point. Look at the slide (Slide 3).

Slide 3

Phenomena at imminent risk of crossing the multiple CTPs and the potential for a negative chain of reactions

	Possible	Likely	Reactions
Greenland Ice Sheet (collapse)	0.8 °C	1.5 °C	Cessation of oceanic general circulation
West Antarctic Ice Sheet (collapse)	1.0 °C	1.5 °C	
Low-latitude Coral Reefs (die-off)	1.0 °C	1.5 °C	Increase in atmospheric CO ₂ concentration
Boreal Permafrost (abrupt thaw)	1.0 °C	1.5 °C	Rapid increase in atmospheric methane concentration

Compiled from the *Science* (03)

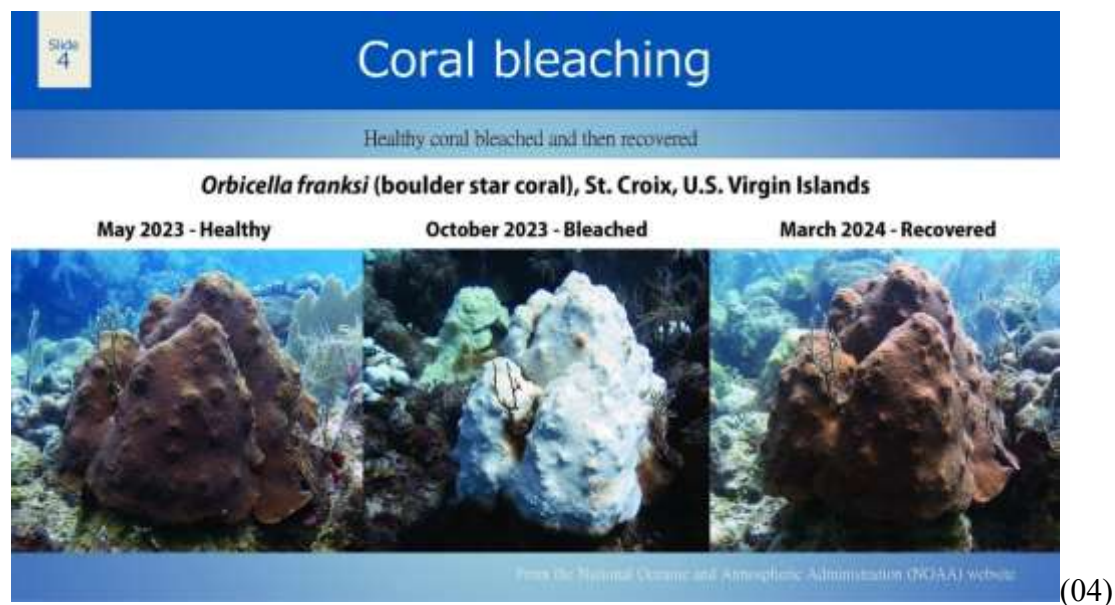
This is a table of 4 of the 16 phenomena (tipping elements), which are in imminent risk of crossing the multiple CTPs - collapse of “Greenland ice sheet (GrIS)”, collapse of “West Antarctic ice sheet (WAIS)”, die-off of “Low-latitude coral reefs (REEF)”, and abrupt “Boreal permafrost (PFTP/PFAT)” thaw. Current global warming of 1.45°C above the pre-industrial levels has already crossed the “possible” tipping point threshold of 0.8°C to 1.0°C. It is approaching the “likely” tipping point threshold of 1.5°C. These phenomena are said to be extremely dangerous.

Another frightening thing is that, according to Wada Takeshi, former chair of the Japan Association on Environmental Studies and representative of the People’s Association for Renewable Energy Promotion, once one of these phenomena occurs, others can follow in a domino-like chain of reactions.

For example, the melting of the Greenland ice sheet is accelerating at a tremendous rate. What will happen if this process continues? Large quantities of fresh water - water that is lighter than salty seawater - will flow into the oceans. This could affect the general circulation of the entire global ocean and eventually stop the needed circulation. If this happens, it could trigger the CTPs.

Then there is the abrupt thawing of Boreal permafrost - the thawing of northern frozen ground in Russia, Canada, Alaska and elsewhere has recently gained momentum, and as a result, large amounts of methane gas are beginning to spurt out. Methane gas is about 20 times more potent as a greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide. Therefore, if the concentration of methane gas in the atmosphere increases rapidly, global warming will rapidly accelerate.

Look at the slide here (Slide 4). This touches on the issue of coral reef loss at low latitudes. Rising seawater temperatures around the world are triggering coral bleaching and coral death. It is predicted that a temperature rise of two degrees Celsius will result in near coral extinction. Corals absorb carbon dioxide dissolved in seawater and fix it as calcium carbonate. If that function is weakened, the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere will rise further.



In this way, if a single phenomenon crosses the climate tipping points (CTPs), a negative chain of reactions will be seen one after another. If the increase is not stopped at a minimum of 1.5 degree Celsius, the global environment will deteriorate at an accelerating rate and a negative chain of reactions will be witnessed, which will lead to an uncontrollable and irreversible situation, like falling dominos. Humanity is on the verge of witnessing that catastrophe.

All this is a societal catastrophe caused by capitalism. The very survival of humanity, a fundamental issue concerning "human freedom," is seriously threatened. We will continue to fight, strongly demanding an urgent response with the greatest possible wisdom and strength, even within the framework of capitalism, but at the same time, I believe the climate crisis also calls into question whether it is acceptable, let alone wise, for the system of capitalism to be allowed to continue.

Nakayama: That's right. Especially for the youth gathered here, it would be a matter of life and death if something like this were to happen in the decades ahead.

Shii: I think that's true. For young people, it means that they are literally being deprived of their future.

Q6. I sense new attention being paid to socialism here in Japan. What about in the rest of the world?

In central Europe, there is also a trend towards what should be called the "restoration of socialism"

Nakayama: You talked about two issues, and during the dialogue that members of the DYLI have had with young people, along with those who say that there is no freedom in socialism, we have seen an increasing number of young people who say that they have expectations of socialism and want to learn more about socialism. In fact, a lot of students applied to participate in today's discussion at this venue after seeing the flyers and billboards. The number of new friends who have joined the DYLI is also rising because of this issue. I sense an increase in attention being paid to socialism here among the youth in Japan. What is happening elsewhere in the world?

Shii: I am happy to hear that. While the contradictions of capitalism are deepening, many new changes are taking place around the world. In a public opinion survey conducted in the autumn of 2022 in the U.S., the U.K., Canada, and Australia (about 1,000 respondents in each country, opinion survey carried out by Leger Marketing et cetera on behalf of the Fraser Institute), "agreement" exceeded "disagreement" in all four countries for those aged 18-34 when asked whether respondents agree with socialism as an ideal economic system.

Nakayama: So, the "agree" responses outweigh the "disagree" responses.

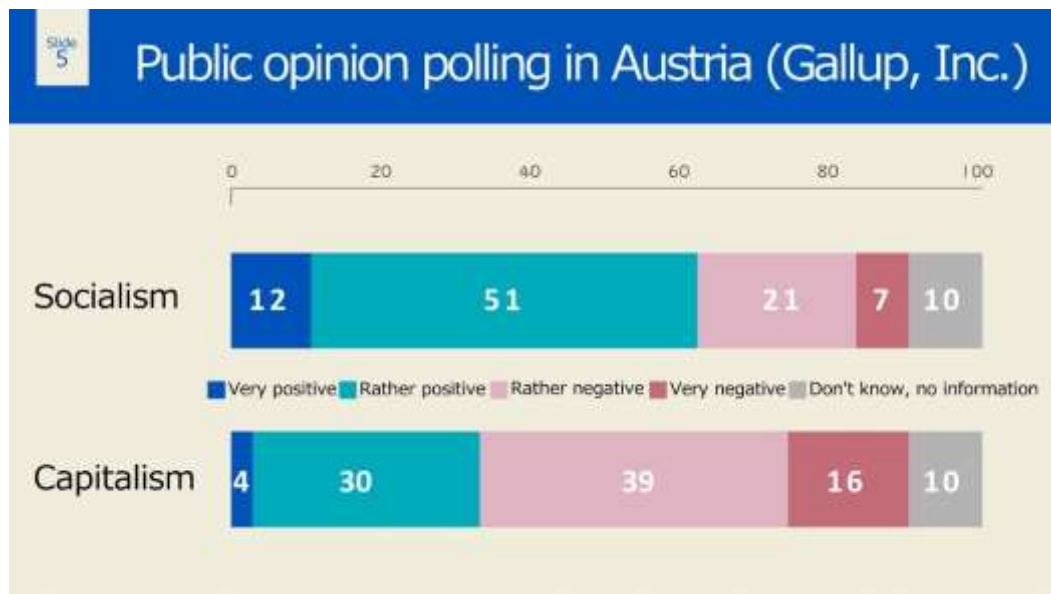
Shii: Yes, that's right. I would like to share a piece of recent good news with you all. The Communist Party of Austria (German: Kommunistische Partei Österreichs, KPÖ) has made a great advance recently and is attracting a lot of international attention. In September 2021, the KPÖ became the first party in the city council of Graz, Austria's second largest city, winning 29% of the votes in the city council elections and the position of mayor. Then, in March 2024, the KPÖ became the second largest party in the city council elections in Salzburg, the capital of music, with 23% of the vote. In the

final vote for mayor, a 35-year-old Communist candidate won 37.5% of the vote and was elected deputy mayor. Salzburg is the city where Mozart was born and I love Mozart, so I would like to visit the Salzburg Festival if the opportunity arises.

In Salzburg, housing rents are the highest in Austria due to the current government's preferential policy of promoting real-estate speculation. In the context of the alarming ongoing drift of population to other cities, the KPÖ's consistent appeal for "housing is a human right" has led to its great advance.

In November 2022, when a delegation of the Japanese Communist Party led by its Vice Chair Ogata Yasuo visited European countries, they also visited Austria and had in-depth discussions with the leadership of the KPÖ, who agreed to strengthen exchanges between two parties. When we talked with them there, we found that they were making a lot of efforts. Firstly, the KPÖ has a history of losing public support in the past because it took a posture of following the former Soviet Union. However, it overcame that mistake and established a line of self-reliant independence. Second, in terms of the party organization, it has maintained the principle of democracy and unity of action, and has moved forward as a party where party members unite and work hard together. Third, the anti-communist attacks have been very severe in Austria, however, the KPÖ has not changed the name of the party, even in such circumstances. The party has maintained this name and has put forward the perspective that because it is the Communist Party, it is able to protect the interests of working people with a view to establishing a future society for the benefit of all.

At the same time, please look at this slide (Slide 5). Underlying the KPÖ's advance may be the growing expectations for socialism. This is a Gallup public opinion poll conducted in Austria, and the combined figure for "positive" towards socialism is 63%. On the other hand, the number saying they are "negative" towards capitalism is 55%. The fact that a trend of public opinion that favors socialism is also at the root of KPÖ's advance.



Kay-Michael Dankl, who is set to become the new deputy mayor of Salzburg, said in an interview with the Akahata newspaper:

“Profit first capitalism is well illustrated in the housing issue” and “Housing, which is the cornerstone of life, must not be left to market competition. Capitalism has clearly failed. I think the growing support for the Communist Party is a sign of the growing call for an alternative economic system that does not pursue unjustified profits.”

A trend towards a “global restoration of socialism” is also taking place in central Europe. I would like to do my best with the determination that the idea of socialism can attract more people in Japan, too.

Nakayama: I was also surprised that there were so many applications for this online seminar, and I wondered why, but I thought it might have something in common with the global trend.

Q7. The subtitle of the lecture is “*Das Kapital* as a Guide.” What does this mean?

Das Kapital contains a rich description of theories dealing with a future society as well as scientific studies on capitalism

Nakayama: The subtitle of today's lecture is “*Das Kapital* as a Guide.” What does this

mean?

Shii: *Das Kapital* is Karl Marx's major work. What is this all about? Today I have brought a new Japanese translation of *Das Kapital* (12 volumes, 2019-21, Shin Nihon Shuppansha), *the Economic Manuscripts* (9 volumes, 1981-94, Otsuki Shoten), and Fuwa Testuzo's *Reading All Three Volumes of Das Kapital New Translation Edition* (7 volumes, 2021-22, Shin Nihon Shuppansha). My lecture today is based on these books.

First, let me tell you what kind of book *Das Kapital* is. As the name suggests, it is a thorough scientific study of the economic system of capitalism. The term “capitalism” originated with Marx, who was the first to use it to analyze it as an economic system.

Nakayama: Now we commonly use that term, don't we?

Shii: Right. The term “capitalism” first appears in *the Economic Manuscripts*, written in 1861-63. Marx first officially used the term capitalism in an address to workers delivered in 1865, later compiled into a pamphlet entitled *Value, Price and Profits*. So, the coiner of the word “capitalism” is Marx. Prime Minister Kishida is talking about a “new capitalism,” but I wonder if he knows with whom the term originated.

At the same time, I want to emphasize that Marx's method of study employed in *Das Kapital* is not to regard the system of capitalism as a perpetual cycle and to examine this or that phase of it. Marx regards capitalism as a historical stage in the development of human society, and he scientifically clarified his theory that the capitalist society has the inevitability of being replaced by the next stage of development, which is socialism and communism. Herein lies the quintessential essence of *Das Kapital*.

As a matter of fact, in *Das Kapital* Marx left rich descriptions on what kind of society socialism and communism could be from multiple viewpoints. It appears already in Chapter 1, Volume 1, “the Commodity.” The theory of future society is discussed in various places and developed in a coherent form in Chapter 48, Volume 3, “Trinity Formula.” In this way, throughout *Das Kapital*, you find his various descriptions on the formation of a future society. This is why the lecture today on socialism/communism is guided with *Das Kapital*, which is a masterpiece packed with fascinating visions of the potential future of human history.

Today, I will cite a lot from *Das Kapital*. But the original text of *Das Kapital* itself can be challenging for first-time readers. I still wonder why he uses such difficult words and phrases. Therefore, I hope you will forgive me if I introduce the references in today's lecture in my own way of putting them in plain, easy to understand language. I'll be speaking in a sort of Shii Kazuo version of translation, but I'll be delighted if today's talk leads you to take on a study of the original text of *Das Kapital*.

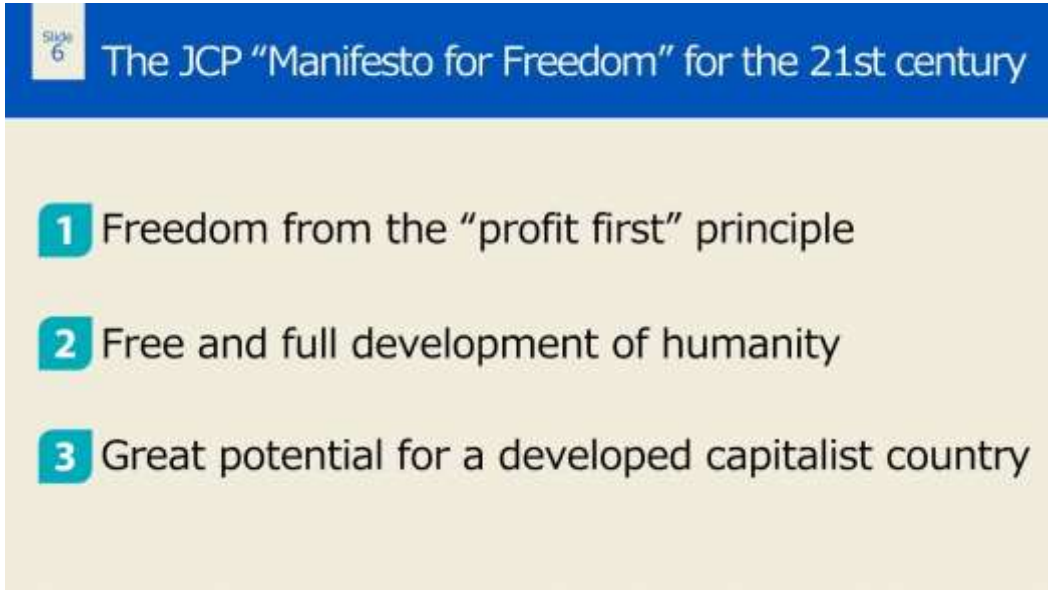
Q8. The JCP Congress clarifies the theory on “human freedom” and future society, doesn’t it?

The JCP “Manifesto for Freedom” for the 21st century

Nakayama: The 29th JCP Congress held in January of this year (2024) adopted a resolution that has a new in-depth clarification on theory on “human freedom” in socialism/communism.

Shii: We call the clarification of the envisioned future society in the Congress resolution “the JCP ‘Manifest for Freedom’ for the 21st century.”

The kind of socialist/communist society we are aiming for will be such that “human freedom” is fully guaranteed and flourishes in every sense of the word. The resolution asserts that human freedom is the goal and the greatest characteristic of socialism and communism from three angles. Please refer to the slide (Slide 6).



Slide 6 The JCP “Manifesto for Freedom” for the 21st century

- 1 Freedom from the “profit first” principle
- 2 Free and full development of humanity
- 3 Great potential for a developed capitalist country

(06)

From now on, we enter the main body of today’s talk. I would like to talk about each of the three angles one by one.

First angle - Freedom from the “profit first” principle

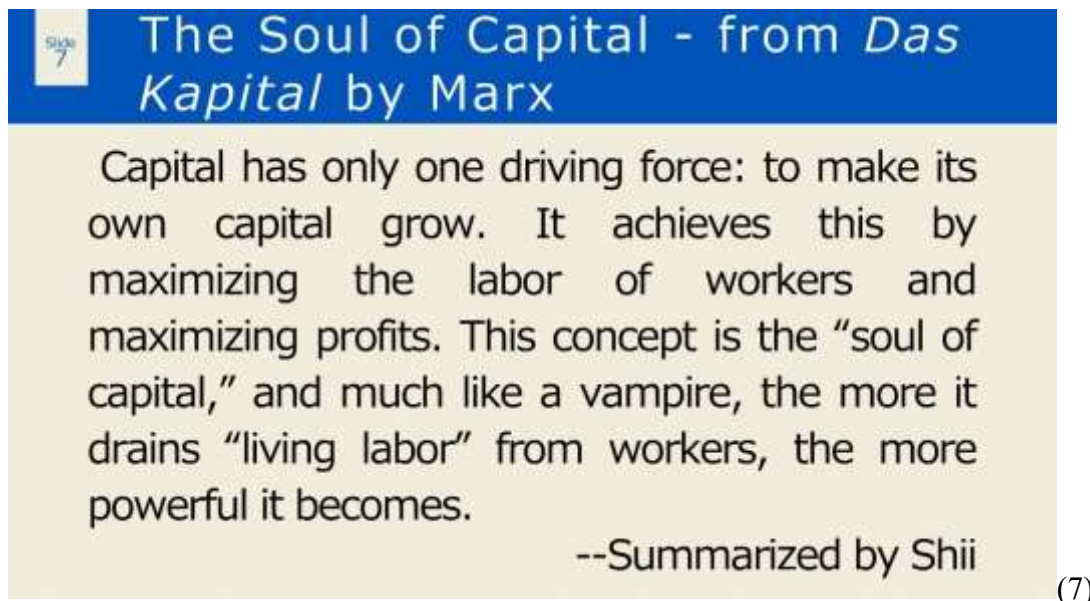
Q9. What does the “profit first” principle mean?

The endless impulse to make more money is the driving force of capitalist production

Nakayama: Now let me ask you about the first angle - freedom from the “profit first” principle. To begin with, what do you mean by the “profit first” principle?

Shii: What is the purpose of production in Capitalism? Marx, in *Das Kapital*, repeatedly states that “the unlimited impulse to increase the profits of capital is the driving force of production - the motive and purpose of production in capitalism.” We call it the “profit first” principle.

Marx used the term the “soul of capital” to describe it in *Das Kapital*. See the slide for my version of translation (Slide 7).



Slide 7 The Soul of Capital - from *Das Kapital* by Marx

Capital has only one driving force: to make its own capital grow. It achieves this by maximizing the labor of workers and maximizing profits. This concept is the “soul of capital,” and much like a vampire, the more it drains “living labor” from workers, the more powerful it becomes.

--Summarized by Shii

(7)

Marx even used the word “vampire,” and I think the term “vampire” would aptly apply to the greedy accumulation of the wealth by the super-rich described in the report of Oxfam that I mentioned earlier. The point here is that Marx does not accuse individual personalities of the super-rich people but makes clear that the capitalist is driven by the “soul of capital” to maximize profits.

Nakayama: So, this is not about whether you have a good or bad personality. You must

operate under the law of capitalistic impulse if you are to survive as a capitalist.

Shii: No matter what kind of personality a corporate executive may have in everyday interactions, as a capitalist, he or she acts in accordance with the “soul of capital.” Marx uses the word “impulse” to mean that the capitalist is driven by an irresistible force.

Q10. Is the “profit first” principle a phenomenon unique to capitalist society?

The “profit first” principle is far more intense in capitalist society than in the exploitative societies of the past

Nakayama: Is the “profit first” principle a phenomenon unique to capitalist society?

Shii: To answer that question, let’s look at human history.

The first form of human society was the primitive community (primitive communism), a society without exploitation, which lasted for a long time before its collapse. Then, it was replaced by exploitative societies, such as under slavery, feudalism, and capitalism, in which humans exploited humans. Just as in capitalist society, the rulers in pre-capitalist exploitative societies, such as slavery and feudalism, tried to gain as much wealth as possible by making producers work as hard as possible. But in capitalist society, this impulse is especially intense compared to the exploitative societies of the past. Look at the slide (Slide 8).

Slide 8

In capitalism, the “profit first” principle is especially intense

- 1** The wealth to be pursued is the amount of “money”
- 2** A society of free competition in which people compete in the market for profits
- 3** “Production for production's sake” is the motto

(08)

The first is: The wealth to be pursued is the amount of “money.” In other words, the wealth to be pursued is different. In exploitative societies in the past, wealth was about material goods and procurement of a greater amount of goods was pursued. For example, during the era of absolute monarchy in Europe, luxurious palaces such as the Palace of Versailles in France were symbols of wealth. Going back even further, to the era of slavery, the huge tombs of kings - the pyramids of Egypt and the huge burial mounds of ancient Japan - were symbols of wealth. There is a natural limit to the accumulation of wealth in the form of goods. We don't need a lot of luxurious palaces or huge tombs. One Palace of Versailles is enough, not two or three. In a capitalist society, however, the wealth sought is the amount of “money.” You can never have too much money. The more, the better. Therefore, the urge to accumulate money has no limit and is endless.

Second, capitalist society is supposedly a society of free competition in which capitalists compete in the market for profits. Those earning less profit will fall and be eliminated. It is a life-or-death struggle among the capitalists. Therefore, they are forced to compete regardless of whether their intentions are good or bad. They are compelled to do so. Never in history has there been a society in which people compete so blatantly for profit.

Third, “production for production's sake” is the motto. In capitalist society, wealth accumulation does not mean simply having more money. If money is simply hoarded, it will not generate profit. Once the capital invested by a capitalist generates a profit, the capitalist will supposedly invest all or part of it back into production to earn more money. Fresh capital is constantly being invested in production. In this way, they keep going with “production for production's sake,” as the motto goes.

In capitalist society, the “profit first” principle manifests far more strongly and broadly than in other societies in the past. Marx saw here the most fundamental pathology of capitalism.

Nakayama: The urge to make a profit is particularly strong.

Shii: That's correct.

Q11. What harm does the “profit first” principle do?

Japan, a country with a high poverty rate - “Poverty has grown at a rapid pace, and the bottom of society has fallen by the wayside”

Nakayama: What harm is the “profit first” principle doing?

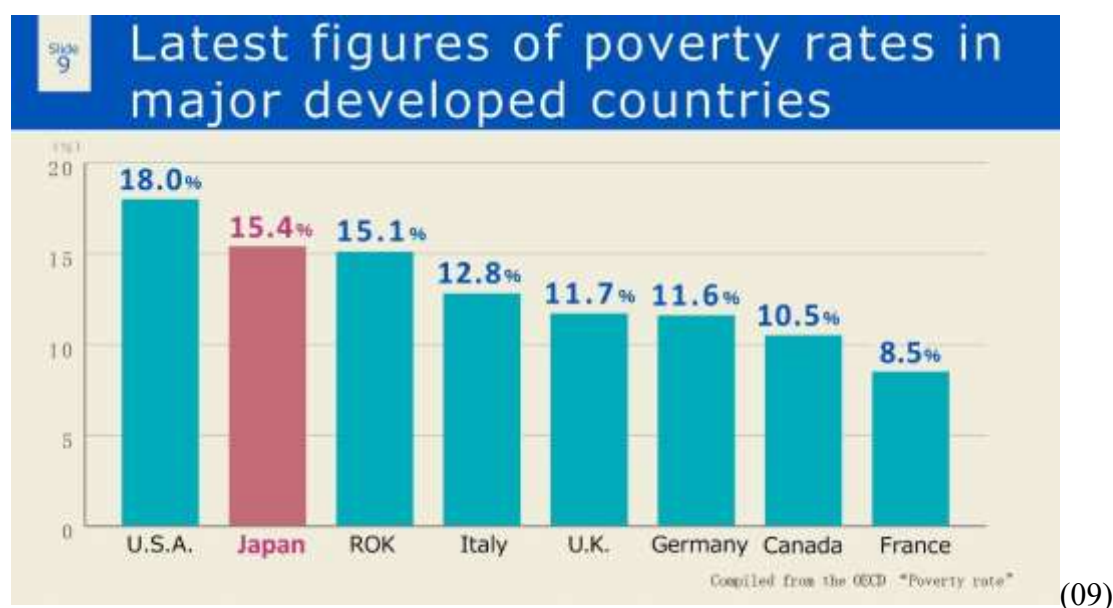
Shii: There are two major categories of harm.

The first is the spread of poverty and inequality.

The second is the economy of “post-festum [“after the fact,” or “too late”].”

You may not be familiar with this term. I will explain it later.

First, let me talk about the growth in poverty and inequality. It is the working people, the workers, who bear the brunt of “profit first” principle in its harshest form. This manifests itself in the form of increasing poverty and inequality. Earlier, I mentioned the tremendous increase in poverty and inequality on a global scale. What about the situation in Japan? Look at the next slide (Slide 9).



I did some research and graphed the latest figures of poverty rates in major developed countries. Japan's relative poverty rate in 2021 was 15.4%. While this is not as high as the 18.0% of the U.S., which is notorious for its high poverty rate, Japan has surpassed South Korea to mark the second highest figure among the major industrialized countries. The relative poverty rate is the percentage of people who earn less than half of the median annual equivalent disposable income (take-home pay adjusted by the number of household members). In Japan, people earning less than 1.27 million yen are considered to be in relative poverty (2021), meaning that 1 in 6.5 people live in poverty.

Have you heard of the “Shinjuku Gohan Plus” project?

Nakayama: Yes. I saw it in the news.

Shii: It was featured in a recent issue of the evening edition of the Mainichi newspaper (April 24, 2024). The project provides free meals along with livelihood and health

counseling to the needy every Saturday in a space under the Tokyo Metropolitan Government office building. Tanigawa Tomoyuki, a doctor who has taken part in the Saturday event every week as staff and plans to run as a JCP candidate in a general election from the Tokyo electoral district for proportional representation, recently told me that he has noticed the following characteristics in recipients these days:

“After the COVID-19 pandemic, there was an explosion in the number of people who came to us for free food and counseling. Before the pandemic, most recipients were homeless. Now, many have a place to live, a job, or health insurance, but still cannot make ends meet. It seems to me that poverty has grown at a rapid pace, and the bottom of society has fallen by the wayside.”
“An overwhelming majority of young recipients are non-regular workers. Most of these workers are treated as disposable laborers who cannot resist or even complain about the termination of their employment contracts. I am keenly aware that the weakening of employment regulations has destroyed Japanese society from the bottom up.”

The Mainichi article noted that every night, glittering images are projected on the wall of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government building under which free food is served. It adds, “A more robust social safety net may be more necessary than glittering images at night.”

Nakayama: DYLIJ has been providing free food since the pandemic. Poverty among students is profoundly serious. Many pay the high tuition fees themselves. Most students work part-time jobs to cover daily expenses and have little money left over.

Shii: Let us work together to make a breakthrough.

Q12. Why do poverty and inequality keep growing in capitalist society?

The mechanism of wealth accumulation and poverty accumulation -
Break the chain of exploitation

Nakayama: Why do poverty and inequality keep growing in capitalist society?

Shii: In *Das Kapital*, Marx begins with a thorough analysis of how exploitation is intensified within a factory. He then broadens his perspective to include society as a whole and clarifies the mechanism by which inequality increases in society.

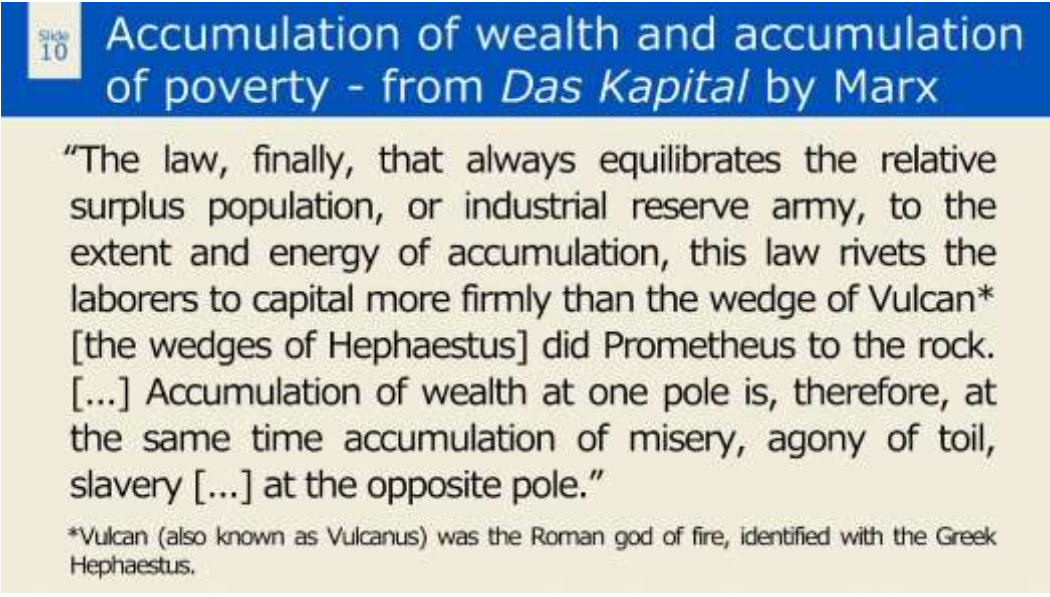
In *Das Kapital*, Marx makes it clear that as capital accumulates, technological innovation creates a “surplus” of workers, even in good economic times, and that the process of constantly pushing such a “surplus” of workers out of the workplace proceeds. In a capitalist society, it is commonplace for there to always be a large number of a “surplus” of workers who are out of work even though the economy is growing.

Marx called the “surplus” worker population created in capitalist society the “industrial reserve army.” The mechanism for creating such a horde of unemployed and semi-unemployed workers was revealed in *Das Kapital*. In capitalist society, unemployment never disappears. There is no capitalist country with zero unemployment, is there?

Nakayama: No, just as you say.

Shii: There is none. Marx said that while this is very unfortunate for workers who are pushed out of the workplace, there is nothing more convenient for the capitalists. They can say, “If you don't like these working conditions, that's fine. There are many people who are willing to work for lower wages. There are plenty of alternatives to replace you.” In other words, the existence of an “industrial reserve army” - a large number of unemployed people - gives the capitalists a huge advantage in their power relationship with labor.

Marx's *Das Kapital* contains the following famous passage. Look at the slide (Slide 10).



Slide 10

Accumulation of wealth and accumulation of poverty - from *Das Kapital* by Marx

“The law, finally, that always equilibrates the relative surplus population, or industrial reserve army, to the extent and energy of accumulation, this law rivets the laborers to capital more firmly than the wedge of Vulcan* [the wedges of Hephaestus] did Prometheus to the rock. [...] Accumulation of wealth at one pole is, therefore, at the same time accumulation of misery, agony of toil, slavery [...] at the opposite pole.”

*Vulcan (also known as Vulcanus) was the Roman god of fire, identified with the Greek Hephaestus.

(10)

Nakayama: So, it is a metaphor based on Greek mythology.

Shii: That's right. Prometheus is a giant figure in Greek mythology. Prometheus broke the laws of the heavens and stole fire from the forge of Hephaestus, the god of blacksmiths and gave it to mortals. For this, Prometheus incurred the wrath of Zeus, the supreme god, and was crucified with chains on the top of a mountain. It was Hephaestus who forged the wedges that drove the chain into the rock. The wedges were specially made so that they could not be removed by any force. Citing Greek mythology, Marx emphasized the strength of the forces that bind the working class to the domination of the capitalist class with permanent poverty.

Nakayama: It's a very impressive expression and conveys how impossible it is to escape.

Shii: I agree. And if we look at today's Japan, we see this law working to a frightening degree. Non-regular workers with low wages and unstable employment make up 40% of the working population and more than 50% among young workers and female workers. This is, so to speak, a "reserve army" among active workers. This situation not only puts non-regular workers under poor working conditions, but also allows employers to make their regular workers work even harder by saying, "There are plenty of people to replace you." So, the degree of poverty of the workers as a whole gets worse. This is how it works.

Of course, Marx did not mean to say that we need to endure the accumulation of poverty because it is a law of capitalism. "If capitalism imposes poverty and inequality on society and human beings through this mechanism, we need to transform capitalism itself. Let us stand up in the fight to break the chains of capitalist exploitation, the wedges of Hephaestus in our time." This was what Marx in essence was saying.

The exploitive working conditions of non-regular workers is a problem for all workers. Whether you are a regular worker or a non-regular worker, let's unite and work together to change the social structure that imposes poverty and inequality on us and work to effect structural transformation of society.

Q13. What do you mean by a "post festum" economy?

Periodic Economic Depression, Climate Crisis = "Great Disturbance of Material Exchange"

Nakayama: Earlier, you said that the second negative aspect of the "profit first" principle is the "post festum" economy. What does this mean?

Shii: In *Das Kapital*, Marx characterized “social reason” as always asserting itself only “after the end of the festival [post festum]” in a capitalist society. In other words, it is, what I call, a “post festum” economy.

Nakayama: The social reason works only after the festival?

Shii: In a capitalist society, planned control of production is possible only within individual businesses. On a social scale, competition is enforced, so “production for production's sake” takes place anarchically. This leads to all sorts of disturbances in production, and “social reason” asserts itself only after economic breakdowns. This is one of the characteristics of the society.

Nakayama: Could you be more specific?

Shii: Under capitalism, for example, bubble economies and depressions are constantly repeated and never disappear. It is true that people go hungry and destitute in pre-capitalist societies as well. However, the phenomenon of people living in poverty due to a lack of goods while society has an abundance of products is a unique phenomenon that began only with capitalism.

One pamphlet about American coal miners under the Depression told the following story.

A miner's son asked, "Why don't you turn on the stove when it's so cold?"

His mother said, "We don't have any coal. Daddy lost his job, so we can't buy coal."

The child: "Mom, why did Dad lose his job?"

The mother said, "Because there's too much coal."

The only reason people didn't have coal in their homes is because their society had too much coal. Isn't capitalism really a system full of contradictions? In capitalism, there is a periodic bubble economy - a time when you can sell as much as you want and make a huge profit, and then there is always a depression. Even though you know this, you have no choice but to repeat the cycle of alternating a bubble economy with an economic depression. You know this, but you cannot stop it. In the midst of a bubble economy, people are under the illusion that stocks will go up forever and the economic boom will last forever. However, the bubble economy always collapses. We are repeating this cycle. In capitalism, the social reason always works only after the economy goes bust.

Please look at the next slide (Slide 11). We have listed the years in which the major depressions in human history occurred.

List of Years of Major Economic Depressions		
1825 (UK)	1890	1974
1837-38 (UK)	1900	1980
1847 (UK)	1907	1991
1857 (world-wide from here on)	1920	2000
1866	1929 (Great Depression)	2008 (Lehman Brothers collapse)
1878	1937	
1882	1957	

(11)

Nakayama: It happens so often.

Shii: There have been nineteen major ones. Depression was initially a phenomenon only in the United Kingdom, but since 1857 it has gone global in scale and has been repeated. The most recent was the global depression that began with the Lehman Shock in 2008.

The Japanese economy experienced a bubble economy in the late 1980s. The economy swelled and the stock market rose. In the 1990s, however, the bubble burst and Japan entered a period of economic stagnation known as the “lost 30 years.”

In 2008, when Lehman Brothers collapsed, contingent workers lost their jobs in droves, and a “Haken Mura [a shelter for workers under extreme poverty provided by an initiative of a group of NGOs and labor unions]” appeared in the middle of Tokyo. On the one hand, the factories of large corporations were shut down. Workers were thrown out on the streets. If the two were united, they could work together, but they were not. This is a depression. Depression is the incurable disease of capitalism. Even if you wanted to eliminate it, you cannot.

Nakayama: Are you saying that if this continues, it will happen again?

Shii: I don't think it is possible to cure the disease under capitalism. However, I can say this. After a depression occurs, “social reason” kicks in and the economy gets back on a sane track, albeit only after things have already occurred.

In this regard, there is a big problem that is created by the “post festum [always too late]” economy but should never be too late to address. That is the climate crisis I

mentioned at the beginning of the lecture. We cannot stand idly by without tackling the climate crisis.

What did Marx think about the relationship between man and nature? Marx lived in an era not long after the “Industrial Revolution” of the 18th and early 19th centuries began. Therefore, it was a time when environmental destruction on a global scale was not yet an issue. Nevertheless, when you read *Das Kapital*, there is an important passage that gives you a clue to thinking about this issue.

In *Das Kapital*, Marx called human productive and economic activity “the material exchanges between nature and man.” The term “material exchange” [Stoffwechsel, metabolism] is originally a biological term. All living organisms take in nutrients and other substances from the outside world, transform them in the body into substances they need, use them as a source of energy, and then expel the unneeded parts from the body. This is called “material exchange.” Marx used this term to refer to the process of human beings taking in various substances from nature through labor and processing them into their own means of life as “the material exchange of matter between nature and man,” as if it were a living organism.

What is surprising in reading *Das Kapital* is that Marx is quick to denounce the destruction of the natural environment caused by industrial activities based on the “profit first” principle under capitalism. Marx describes this as “disturbance” of “material exchanges.” In *Das Kapital*, Marx addresses the “profit first” agricultural production under capitalism. The land loses nutrients and becomes a wasteland due to agricultural management that puts profit first and does not care about what happens to the natural environment. In this way, the land itself would become non-arable. Marx described such a situation as a “disturbance” of “material exchange.” This is an early warning about what is happening on a frightening scale today.

Nakayama: That's right. I was surprised at that.

Shii: The current climate crisis is a “major disturbance of material exchange” on a global scale. But you cannot stand idly by. The question is whether humanity can use “social reason” to resolve this worst social disaster before it becomes too late.

Even under capitalism, we need to use all the wisdom and power possible to solve the problem. However, if we cannot solve the problem, we must ask capitalism to leave the scene and give up its seat to the next society.

Nakayama: We must not let this be too late. We will keep this in mind as we continue our activities to overcome the climate crisis.

Q14. How can we get rid of the “profit first” principle?

“Socialization of the means of production” will create a society in which “free producers are the main players”

Nakayama: How can we get rid of the “profit first” principle, which is full of harmful effects?

Shii: We need a social transformation that changes the motive and purpose of production itself. Under capitalism, capital holds the means of production - factories, machinery, land, and other necessary means of production. Therefore, capital tries to maximize its own profit by making the best use of these means. This gives rise to the “profit first” principle that I mentioned earlier and creates a variety of harmful effects. How can we solve this problem? Marx's answer was to “socialize the means of production” - to transfer the means of production from the hands of individual capitalists to the hands of society as a whole.

Nakayama: I see.

Shii: Then the driving force of production will change. The purpose and motivation of production will change. It will drastically change. In other words, instead of the “profit first” principle, in which individual capitalists endlessly pursue profits, the purpose and motivation of production will be for “the development of humanity and society.” By doing this, human beings will be free from the “profit first” principle. This is our outlook. We place this “socialization of the means of production” at the center of the transformation from capitalism to socialism.

Nakayama: By “socialization” do you mean “nationalization”?

Shii: Many people may associate “socialization of the means of production” with “nationalization,” but we do not believe that “nationalization” is the only way. There are various methods and forms of transferring the means of production into the hands of society, and the most appropriate method or form should be chosen by the consensus of the majority of the people, depending on the situation. Marx and Engels believed that it was not possible or appropriate to draw up such a “blueprint” beforehand. We will find it together as we move forward on the path of social progress.

What I want to emphasize here is that even if “socialization of the means of production” is apparently taking place, a society in which the most important component, the producer, is oppressed, has nothing to do with socialism. This was the

case with the former Soviet Union that collapsed. There was “nationalization” in the former Soviet Union. There was “collectivization.” But what about the key producers? They were oppressed, suppressed, confined to concentration camps, and prisoner labor was positioned as part of the economy. Such a society had nothing to do with socialism, in terms of its economic foundation, and the JCP made such a historical judgment in its decision at the Party Congress. And we firmly promise in our Program that such a society “must never be allowed to reproduce itself.”

In *Das Kapital*, Marx called a socialist/communist society “a community of free individuals, carrying on their work with the means of production in common, in which the labour power of all the different individuals is consciously applied as the combined labour power of the community.” I would like to emphasize that a society in which “the free producers are the main players” is the socialist-communist society for which we are striving.

Nakayama: “The free producers are the main players” is different from the image of socialism and communism that we have been told to believe.

Q15. How will human beings and society change once they are freed from the “profit first” principle?

Free from poverty and inequality, free from repeated disturbances in economy

Nakayama: Then, how will people and society change once they are freed from the “profit first” principle?

Shii: We have talked about the two negative effects caused by the “profit first” principle. When we become free from the “profit first” principle, we become free from these two negative effects.

Nakayama: Liberated?

Shii: We will be liberated.

First, we will be free from poverty, inequality, and labor pains. When the means of production belongs to the whole society - to the human association, the whole of the product will belong to the human association. Man becomes free from exploitation, free from poverty and inequality.

The character of labor will also change dramatically. In 1864, when the International Working Men's Association was founded, he wrote in its Declaration as follows.

“Hired labor is ... destined to disappear before associated labor plying its toil with a willing hand, a ready mind, and a joyous heart.”

Inhuman labor suffering is inevitable when we work under someone else's means of production, for someone else's profit, and under someone else's direction. If, instead, we work under the means of production of an association created by the free will of each individual, labor in the future society will regain its original human character. This is our vision. And, as I will discuss in more detail later, when exploitation is eliminated, working hours will be drastically reduced, and people will be free from long working hours.

Second, it will be free from a economy with repeated disturbances. Capitalist production is characterized by anarchy, but in a future society in which the means of production are in the hands of an association of free producers, conscious and planned control of production will be possible for the first time. People will be free from depression and recession, and free from the environmental destruction that brought about the climate crisis. Instead of a society in which “social reason” works only after it becomes too late, it will be a society in which “social reason” works throughout.

Just thinking about this, we can have the prospect that freedom from the “profit first” principle will enable a wonderful expansion of “human freedom.”

Q16. Do you mean that socialization of the means of production closely connects with freedom?

The vast majority of human history was spent by free and equal communities in which the means of production were shared

Nakayama: You mean that socialization of the means of production closely connects with freedom, don't you? So, please tell us more about it.

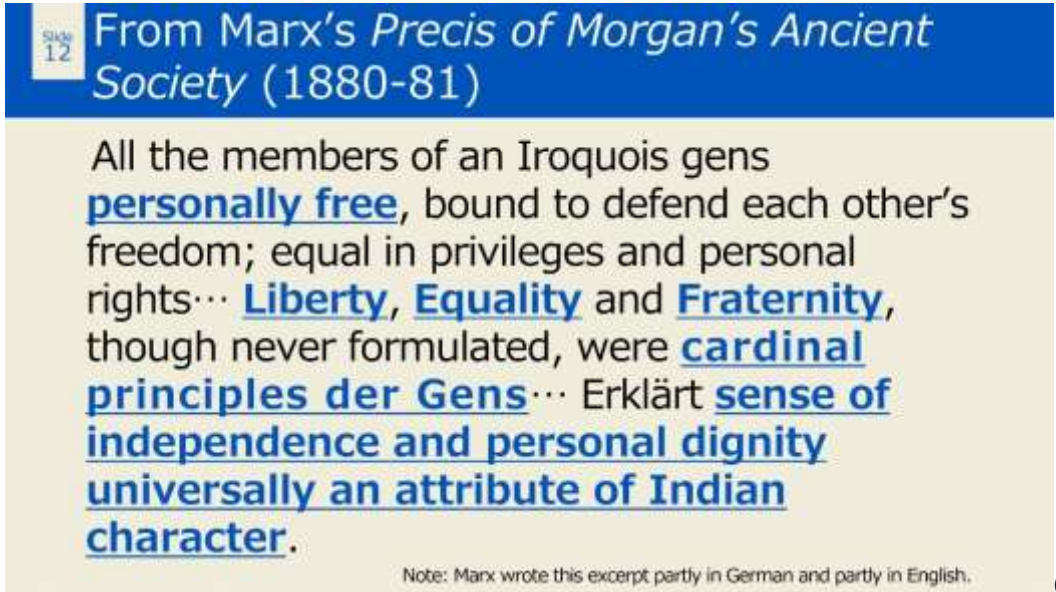
Shii: I was thinking about from what viewpoint I should explain about socialization of the means of production and freedom, but I would like to try from a viewpoint of human history.

When you look at the initial stage of human history, the era of so-called primitive community spanned at least tens of thousands years. In primitive societies, producers in the community acted on nature, using the shared means of production. It

was an egalitarian society free from exploitation of people by people. The productivity in this era was relatively low, but what did it actually look like?

In his final years, when Marx encountered a book titled *Ancient Society* (1877) by Lewis Henry Morgan (1818-1881), an American anthropologist, Marx was surprised and wrote a detailed analysis (*Marx's Precis of Morgan's Ancient Society*, 1880-81) on it. Marx passed away in 1883 and the brief analysis was found by Engels and its importance led him to write a book titled *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State. In the Light of the Researches by Lewis h. Morgan* (1884).

Morgan discovered what a primitive community looks like by researching Native Americans, especially the Iroquois who had settled in the area now known as the state of New York. The Iroquois were made up by five tribes and each tribe was divided into some gens, which constituted social organizations. A council of the gens, which is a democratic assembly that consisted of every adult male and female and each of them equally had a voice in it, was the paramount authority to decide everything, including to elect or depose a chief. I will show you an excerpt from *Marx's Precis of Morgan's Ancient Society* which described the character of this society. Please look at the slide (Slide 12).



Slide 12

From Marx's *Precis of Morgan's Ancient Society* (1880-81)

All the members of an Iroquois gens personally free, bound to defend each other's freedom; equal in privileges and personal rights... Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, though never formulated, were cardinal principles der Gens... Erklärt sense of independence and personal dignity universally an attribute of Indian character.

Note: Marx wrote this excerpt partly in German and partly in English.

(12)

The gens society of Native Americans was not patternless nor ruleless, but it was a cooperative association organized by free people with common disciplines. This is one of the forms of primitive communities which had existed for so long.

When it comes to primitive communities in Japan, after extensive research and excavations on the sites of the Jomon-period, researchers found that these communities existed for more than 10,000 years. The San'nai-Maruyama site is famous, which is located in Aomori Prefecture. It has been estimated that hundreds of people were living

together as a community at the site. Procured foods were equally shared with members whether they were workers or not, including elders, children, and people with disabilities. The economy was controlled and governed democratically.

The research on human remains from the Jomon-period sites show that the socially vulnerable people like an elder with a broken leg or a youth with an intractable disease were taken care of by the community. And the excavations have discovered this society was at peace without wars or weapons to kill people.

This is what the primitive human society looked like. The means of production belonged to every member of the community during the vast majority of human history. That is, the means of production were tied to the producers. And it was a society with free and equal human relations despite its low-level in the realm of production. But I would like to add that in this society individuals could not be truly independent persons because they were inextricably tied with their community by birth, and were part of it, thus must follow the norm and practices automatically. Despite all these limits, it is an exciting story that shows such a free and equal community existed at the outset of human history and might lead to a great vision for a future society, isn't it?

Nakayama: So they didn't live an undisciplined life, did they?

Shii: No. What human history shows us is that free and equal communities lived for so long in which producers and the means of production were linked together.

But, upon the emergence of class societies, they started changing fundamentally. Class societies are roughly divided into 3 eras; slavery, feudalism and capitalism, but what they have in common is that producers and the means of production are separate. In these class societies, the means of production have turned over to the exclusive sector of society, namely the rulers, and thus producers started to work for the rulers. In that sense, we cannot say class societies are free.

However, in long human history, class societies have persisted for only thousands of years. Compared with primitive communities that persisted for tens of thousands of years, their durations are much shorter. If we look at the long process of human history, we can say that free societies that co-possess the means of production are ordinary societies, because the means of production were co-possessed by everyone and linked to the producers in primitive communities.

Thus, from a perspective of human history, we can say that socialism/communism, where an association of free producers possesses the means of production, should be a society that recovers the link between producers and means of production at a higher level.

Marx wrote as follows, seeing capitalism as a final stage of human society of exploitation:

“The prehistory of human society accordingly closes with this social formation [capitalism]” (Preface of *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, 1859)

The prehistory of human society ends with capitalism. So, a transformation to socialism/communism leads to development toward the main chapter of human history - this was what Marx foresaw as a grand vision. I would like to say that the project of socializing the means of production has great significance for human history, as it would revive at a higher level a free and equal community with the means of production shared by everyone, the societies of which, in fact, had occupied the vast period of human history.

Nakayama: Now we live in the current class society, a society where a few exclusively possess the means of production, but from the viewpoint of human history I feel the full potential of humankind, knowing that capitalism has been present just for a relatively brief period in human history.

Shii: Good point.

Q17. Would you please tell us about Marx’s work which cover the relations between socialization of the means of production and freedom?

He focused on freedom in the “Preamble to the Programme of the French Workers’ Party”

Nakayama: Would you please tell us more about Marx’s work which covers the relations between socialization of the means of production and human freedom?

Shii: I would like to talk about the “Preamble to the Programme of the French Workers’ Party” that Marx wrote in 1880. In 1879, a Marxist socialist group in France established the French Workers’ Party. The leading figures including Jules Guesde asked Marx and Engels to help them draft a party program. In 1880, Guesde visited London where Marx and Engels lived, met them at Engels’ house and worked to draft the program. Marx drafted it by dictating to Guesde in front of Engels. Please see the slide (Slide 13).

From "Preamble to the Programme of the French Workers' Party" (Marx, 1880)

"The producers cannot be free unless they are in possession of the means of production;

There are only two forms in which the means of production can belong to them:

- 1) The individual form, ... which is increasingly eliminated by industrial progress;
- 2) The collective form, whose material and intellectual elements are shaped by the very development of capitalist society;

The French socialist workers,

Adopting as the object of their efforts in the economic sphere the return of all the means of production to collective ownership ..."

(13)

Firstly, Marx wrote, "...the producers cannot be free unless they are in possession of the means of production." The producer is separated from the means of production, made to work under someone else's means of production, under someone else's direction, and the results belong to someone else. Human freedom cannot be possible there, as exploitation and oppression arise. Only when producers possess their own means of production, can people be free. This is where he started.

From this point, he theoretically postulated that there are only two forms "in which the means of production can belong to them" - forms in which producers can possess their own means of production.

One is the individual form, which means an individual possesses a small-scale means of production. For example, it can be a small business like a farmer on her/his own small pieces of land or a craftworker with her/his own hand tools. But this form "is increasingly eliminated by industrial progress." In fact, this process is still underway.

The other is the collective form, which means a group of people possesses its own means of production. Marx wrote its "material and intellectual elements are shaped by the very development of capitalist society." What he meant is that when capitalism would develop into modern mechanical industry, one worker could not operate such a large-scale means of production alone, only a group of workers could do. In that sense of a group of workers operating its means of production, material elements of the collective form are being shaped. That's what he meant.

Thus, using "freedom" as a keyword, Marx derived "the return of all the means of production to collective ownership," or "the socialization of the means of production" in just a few lines of argument. "We need to possess the means of production to achieve freedom, but we cannot do this alone, so let's do it collectively." This is what Marx said socialization of the means of production was all about. It seems

to me that the word of freedom here means freedom from exploitation and oppression, but there is another implication.

Nakayama: What is that?

Shii: It is freedom leading to free and full development of human beings, which is what I would like to talk about next. I think this kind of freedom is also included here. And I believe it is of great significance that Marx discussed socialization of the means of production while focusing on freedom, So I would like you to keep it in mind.

Second angle - “Free and full development of humanity”

Q18. The meaning of freedom here is different from the freedom from the first angle, isn't it?

The thing is the brightness of true freedom in a future society is beyond that

Nakayama: Next, I would like you to talk about today's second angle, free and full development of human beings. You spoke at the DYLI Congress last November that the meaning of freedom here was different from the one from the first angle.

Shii: Freedom from the first angle - freedom from the “profit first” principle means you are free of harm by others. In this regard, you can say it is kind of defensive freedom.

On the other hand, freedom from the second angle - freedom of free and full development of human beings means you can freely express or attain your will. In this regard, you can say it is more active freedom as well.

What the JCP resolution adopted in the latest Congress emphasizes is that freedom in a future society - a socialist/communist society - is not limited to freedom from the “profit first” principle. As I said earlier, if you were only free from the “profit first” principle, you could attain richly expanded-human freedom. But the thing is the true brightness of true freedom in a future society is beyond that. I mean it is in free and full development of human beings. So, the logic our resolution is composed is that the real attraction of freedom is not limited to this, it is beyond this.

Q19. Could you please explain what you mean by “the free and full development of human beings”?

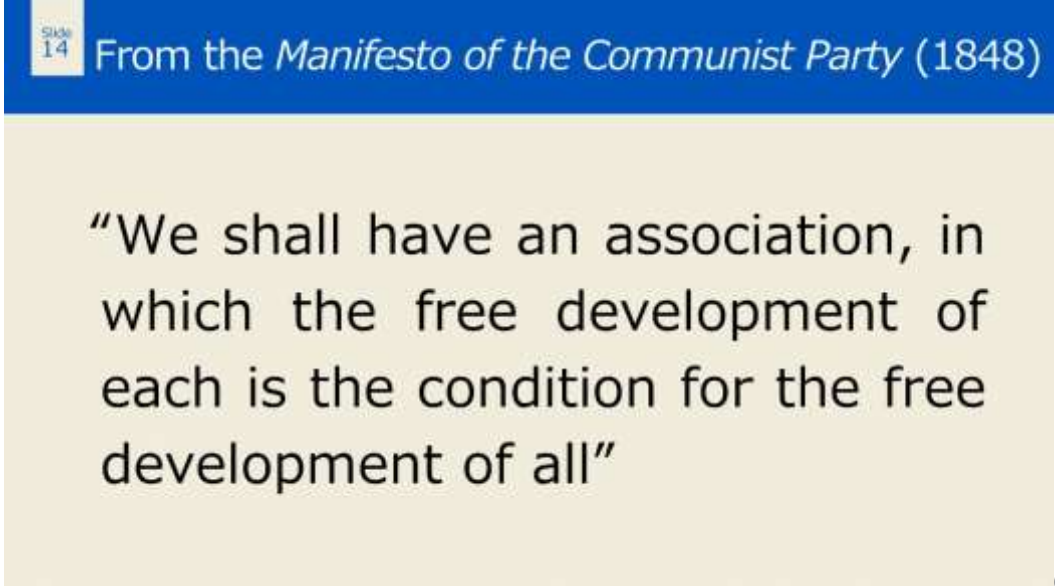
Continuing to search for a society in which “the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all”

Nakayama: First of all, could you please tell us what you mean by “free and full development of human beings” here?

Shii: In 1894, the year before Engels died, an Italian socialist named Giuseppe Canepa wrote to Engels and asked him to come up with a slogan that would express the basic principles of a forthcoming socialist society.

Engels wrote back to Canepa, saying, “It almost impossible to sum up the spirit of the new age of the future in just a few words,” and introduced the following passage

from the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, written by Marx and Engels in 1848, more than 50 years before (Slide 14).



Slide 14 From the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (1848)

“We shall have an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all”

(14)

“An association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all” is a socialist/communist society. What does this mean?

Here the phrase “the free development of each” appears. Every human being has great potential within him or herself. Some have the potential to become artists. Some have the potential to become scientists. Some have a great talent for manufacturing things. Some have the potential to become athletes. Every human being has great potential within him or herself. Not just one, but multiple possibilities. Such is our scientific socialist view of humanity.

However, under capitalism, even though they have such potential, the number of people who are able to realize and make full use of their potential is extremely limited. Of course, even under capitalism, there are many people who work hard and demonstrate their potential. But the reality of living in an advanced capitalist society is that there are many people who have great potential but it remains buried. Marx and Engels wanted to change this. How can we create a society in which “free and full development” is guaranteed to all human beings? This is what Marx and Engels pursued consistently from their early years until their deaths.

Nakayama: Did they pursue it all along?

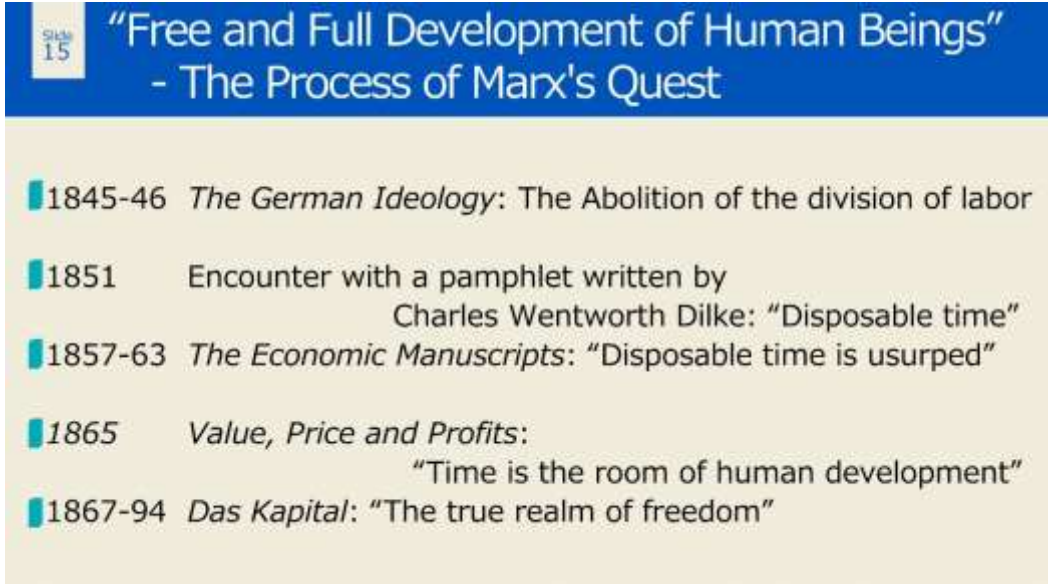
Shii: Yes, I think it is correct to say that they had been pursuing it all along. They continued to pursue a society that would allow “the free and full development of human beings.

Q20. Please tell us about the process of Marx's quest for “human freedom.”

“Disposable time” is the “true wealth” for human beings and society

Nakayama: How can we achieve “the free and full development of the human beings”? Please tell us about the process of Marx's quest.

Shii: Actually, in preparation for today's seminar, I read *Das Kapital* and *the Economic Manuscripts* again and noticed a few new things that I would like to talk about today. First of all, I have made a brief chronological table, which is really a crude one, so please listen to it while looking at it (Slide 15).



Slide 15	“Free and Full Development of Human Beings” - The Process of Marx's Quest
1845-46	<i>The German Ideology</i> : The Abolition of the division of labor
1851	Encounter with a pamphlet written by Charles Wentworth Dilke: “Disposable time”
1857-63	<i>The Economic Manuscripts</i> : “Disposable time is usurped”
1865	<i>Value, Price and Profits</i> : “Time is the room of human development”
1867-94	<i>Das Kapital</i> : “The true realm of freedom”

(15)

Shii: The first answer Marx and Engels gave was that we should abolish the division of labor from society.

At that time, the industrial revolution led to the development of modern mechanical industry, and workers were tied to a piece of machine-based production and forced to work all their lives. This division of labor is the “root of evil,” and if the division of labor were abolished, human beings would be free to develop. They first thought in this way.

Marx and Engels wrote *German Ideology* during their early years (1845-46). It was not published while they were alive. The manuscripts was abandoned “to the gnawing criticism of the mice” (Marx). It was published posthumously. In *the German*

Ideology, the same characterization of communist society as in *Manifesto of the Communist Party* is made: “A society in which the independent and free development of the individual is not an empty phrase.” The following words appear there.

“Thus makes it possible for me to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticize after dinner.”

We could abolish the division of labor and create a society where people would be able to do whatever they want exactly as they want. Then we would have “free development of each individual.” They envisage such kind of idyllic vision. *The German Ideology* was a work of epoch-making significance in that it was the first time that these two men summarized the idea of “historical materialism,” but it was written before they had seriously studied political economy. The idea of “abolishing the division of labor” soon proved to be impossible. Any society requires some form of a division of labor.

Then came the revolutions that swept across Europe in 1848-49. Marx and Engels joined the revolutionary movement, but it ended in defeat so they moved to London.

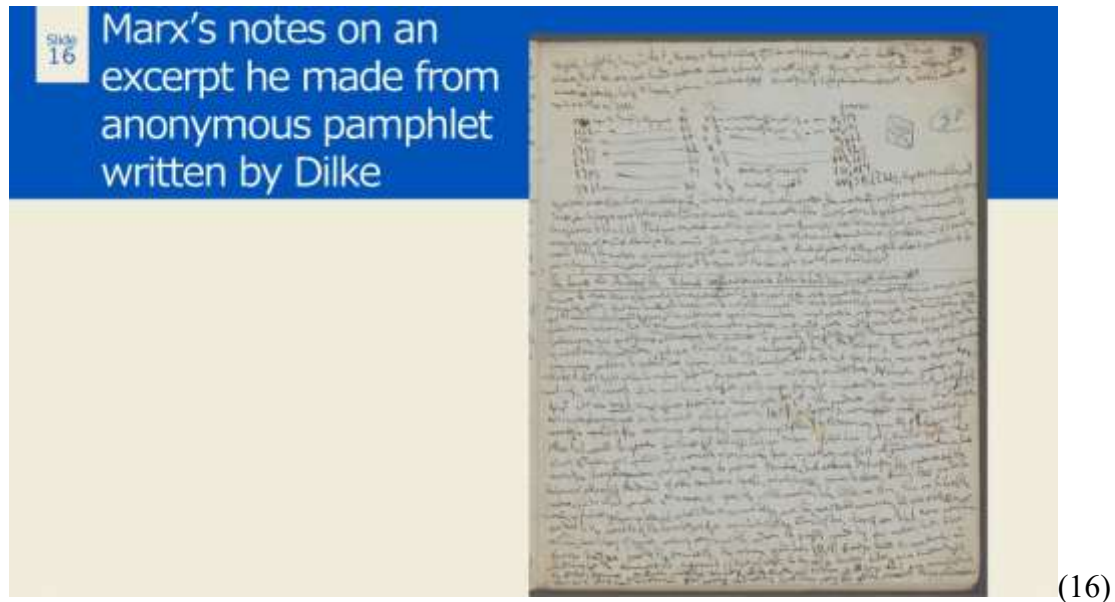
Marx began his studies on political economy in earnest in about 1850 in London, the capital of the United Kingdom, the country where capitalism was most developed at the time. He went to the British Museum every day, which at that time had the largest collection of books in the world. He always sat in the same seat where he made copious notes that became the draft for *Das Kapital*. In the course of such studies, Marx discovered that the key to a socialist and communist society is for everyone to have sufficient “disposable time.”

Nakayama: So, he focused on time.

Shii: Yes, he did. He uses the term “disposable time” with great importance. Yamaguchi Tomio, Director of the Institute of Social Sciences of the Japanese Communist Party, has published a detailed study of the process (see the May-July 2024 issue of the monthly magazine “Keizai”). It reveals that in 1851, Marx came across a pamphlet published anonymously by a British critic named Charles Wentworth Dilke at the British Museum. The pamphlet recommended reducing the daily working hours from 12 to 6 hours, claiming that “disposable time” for people is wealth in itself.

In those days, many anonymous pamphlets were published. Marx was a thorough student who read everything he could get his hands on. He not only studied the works of Adam Smith, David Ricardo, and other famous economists, but also took notes on everything he thought was important, whether it was anonymous or not. Take a

look at the slide (Slide 16). This is a copy of Marx's notes on an excerpt he made from an anonymous pamphlet (by Dilke).



Nakayama: Is that Marx's handwriting?

Shii: Yes, it is, and it is contained in a notebook called “London Notebooks,” which was made between 1850 and 1853. It is a notebook in which he wrote in great detail. Literally every inch of the notebook is used. Basically, these are excerpts from what Marx read in 1851.

Marx then went on to write *the Economic Manuscripts* during the period 1857-1863. There are two major manuscripts, *the 1857-58 Manuscripts* and *the 1861-63 Manuscripts*. In these studies, Marx thoroughly researched the mechanism of capitalism and elucidated the secret of the exploitation of workers by capitalists, the “profit first” principle. In the course of this elucidation, Marx pondered the question, “What is it that the workers are deprived of by their exploitation by the capitalists?”

Marx reexamined the excerpts from Dilke here and placed the idea of “disposable time” at the core of his theory. The conclusions Marx drew on this issue from his study of *Manuscripts* were, broadly speaking, as follows. Look at the slide (Slide 17).

From the study of Marx's *Manuscripts of Das Kapital* (1857-63)

Exploitation does not only deprive workers of the “products of labor”—such as goods and money. It also exerts control over their entire working time, usurping what should be their “disposable time” or “free time.” This “free disposable time” is the true wealth for both individuals and society.

(17)

These phrases appear in *the Economic Manuscripts*. Marx believed that “disposable time” - time in which each individual, free from any external obligations, can become the master of his own time and fully develop his abilities and activities - is the “true wealth” of human beings and their society.

Nakayama: The phrase “true wealth” has great weight, doesn't it?

Shii: I fully agree.

Q21. Is it not only “money” but also “free time” that is being taken away by exploitation?

We need to reclaim “free time” and create a society that enables the free development of human beings

Nakayama: Is it not only “money” but also “free time” that is being taken away by exploitation?

Shii: That's right. That is the key point. I think Marx considered this point to be very important. In *the Economic Manuscripts*, Marx accused the capitalists of “usurping” the workers' “free time” through exploitation, even using the word “usurp” to denounce the deprivation of “free time”.

For example, suppose a worker works 12 hours a day. If 6 of those hours are labor hours that produce the value necessary for the worker to provide for the livelihood

of himself and his family, that is, “necessary labor hours”, and the remaining 6 hours are hours in excess of the necessary labor hours, that is, “surplus labor hours”, then the calculation is that half of the day is exploited. If the remaining 6 hours are surplus labor hours, then half of the day is being exploited. So, what exactly is being exploited in that half of the day?

Of course, the wages that should be paid to the workers are not being paid, so money is being taken away from them. It means unpaid labor, which is of course an important fact. At the same time, Marx believed that the workers are deprived of not only money but also “free time,” and herein lies the major problem.

I believe that this is a very serious problem for young people. When I visited a gathering of students at a university in Tohoku and spoke with them about various topics, they expressed the following complaint.

“Tuition is too high. Scholarships are far from sufficient. Minimum wage is too low. I have to get a part-time job that pays better.” “I have to work late-night jobs.” “I work all-night jobs.” “My biggest problem is that I don't have enough time to study.”

Such appeals were made one after another by the students. These are truly painful statements.

If you consider it carefully, if what is being taken away from you is money or goods, you can get it back later. However, time is something that comes only once. Therefore, once time is taken away from you, you cannot get it back. For young people in particular, “time” is like an irreplaceable treasure. Young people are deprived of such “time.” Here, I believe, lies the biggest problem.

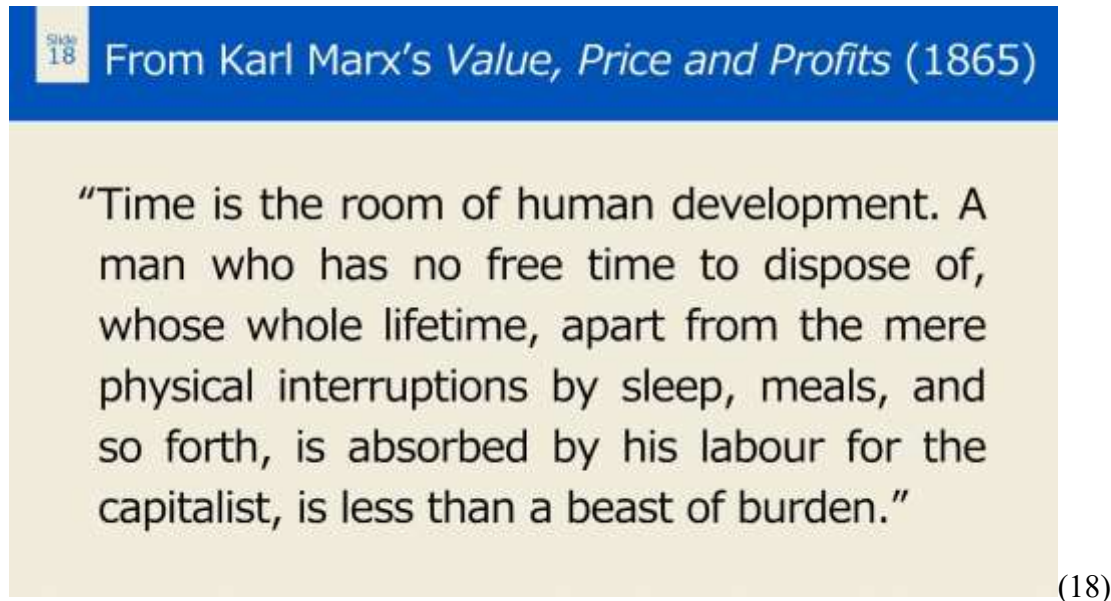
I believe that Marx, through his preparatory study shown in *the Economic Manuscripts*, was sending to us the following message.

“Time at our disposal” is the ‘true wealth’ for people and society. Let's take back the ‘free time.’ Let's greatly expand ‘free time’ by overcoming capitalistic exploitation. Let's open a free society that allows for the free and full development of the humanity.”

This was not just an idea Marx had in his head. In Britain at the time, there was a growing movement to win shorter working hours through the Factory Acts. The first act was passed in 1848 to legally established the 10-hour workday, then the regulation on labor time was strengthened gradually. Marx said that when factory acts were passed to regulate long working hours, the result would be a change in the workers. Workers would become physically energetic and develop intellectually. They would also gain “free time” to engage in social and political activities. He noted that they would gain new energy to change society.

Thus, I believe that Marx saw a vision for the "free and full development of human beings" not only in his theoretical studies but also in the actual progress of workers' struggles.

Marx left the following words in 1865 in a lecture to activists in the labor movement that would later be published in a pamphlet entitled *Value, Price and Profits*¹. Take a look at the slide (Slide 18).



These are powerful and impressive description. Human beings are not beings who just need to eat, sleep, and work. We all have the demand and the right to develop. But to do so, we need "free time." No matter how great your potential is, if you do not have "free time," it will end up being just a potential. Only when all human beings are guaranteed "free time" to develop themselves freely, can we create a society in which human beings can live as human beings. Let us aim for such a world. I believe that Marx made this passage with this in mind.

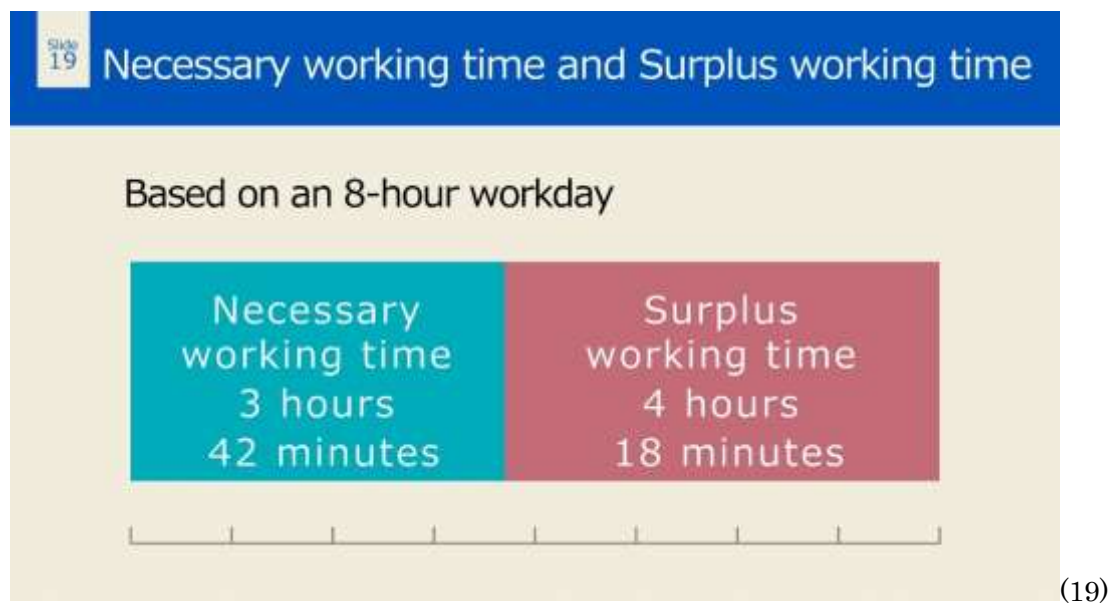
Q22. How much "disposable time" is deprived from workers in today's Japan?

Based on an 8-hour workday, the amount of "time deprived" is 4 hours and 18 minutes, according to a reliable estimate

¹ This work became widely known under a different title – *Wages, Price and Profit*. The English translation here follows the title adopted by *Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels: Collected Works*, Vol.20, published by Progress Publishers in 1985.

Nakayama: How much “disposable time” is deprived from workers in today's Japan?

Shii: Although there are many estimates (of the surplus value ratio), here I cite one by IZUMI Hiroshi, Professor Emeritus of Osaka University of Economics. It is for employees of all industries and is based on 2000 data. Based on an 8-hour workday, it is estimated that the amount of necessary working time is 3 hours 42 minutes, and the amount of surplus working time is 4 hours 18 minutes (Slide 19).



Nakayama: The surplus working time is longer.

Shii: Yes. Working 8 hours a day means that more than 4 hours of “disposable time”, which should have belonged to workers, is deprived by capitalists. I am not talking about overtime without pay. This is how it is even if working conditions are in full compliance with the law. This ratio varies depending on the industry or company you work for, so it is a rough number. Imagine how great it would be in a future where we could reclaim that time.

Q23. How does *Das Kapital* deal with the question of human freedom and future society?

“The true realm of freedom” lies beyond “the realm of necessity”

Nakayama: How does *Das Kapital* explain human freedom and future society?

Shii: In *Das Kapital*, Marx further developed and detailed the ideas he had outlined in *the Economic Manuscripts*. What is necessary for the “free and full development of human beings”? Marx eventually concluded that it is drastically reducing working hours, a very simple conclusion. Socialist/communist society enables a drastic shortening of working hours. That is what guarantees the “free and full development of human beings.” The results of Marx's long work on the theory of the future society are in *Das Kapital*.

This appears in Chapter 48, Part VII, Book III, “The Trinity Formula” of *Das Kapital*. Of the three Books of *Das Kapital*, Marx was only able to publish Book I by himself. Books II and III were published by Engels who had edited *the Manuscripts* left by Marx. A series of sentences concerning the theory of future society in Book III, which was edited by Engels, suddenly appears in the middle of a long paragraph without headings or line breaks. Research by [former director of the JCP Social Sciences Institute] Fuwa Tetsuzo found that these sentences are the core of Marx's theory of future society and emphasized their importance. In the new edition of *Das Kapital*, this part was moved to the beginning of Chapter 48, “The Trinity Formula,” based research on how Engels edited *the Manuscripts*. Look at the slide (Slide 20).

Slide 20

From Marx's *Das Kapital* - Two “realms” and their relationship

“The true realm of freedom”

- Time at the disposal of human beings
- The “development of human energy” is an end in itself
- The shortening of the working day (daily working hours) is its basic prerequisite

“The realm of necessity”

- Working hours for actual material production
- “Labour determined by necessity and mundane considerations”

(20)

Here Marx divides the time of human life into two “realms” - the “realm of necessity” and the “true realm of freedom.” The word “realm” is used, but it does not mean region. He divides human lifetime into the unique concepts of the “realm of necessity” and the “true realm of freedom.”

The “realm of necessity” is defined as working hours for “actual material production.” Why is it called the “realm of necessity”? It is because human activities in this sphere are “labour which is determined by necessity and mundane considerations “.

This expression may be a little difficult to understand. The term “necessity” here refers to difficulties in life, and “mundane considerations [äußere Zweckmäßigkeit]” refers to the various necessities of social life. It is defined as the working hours that are necessary and unavoidable to maintain the lives of oneself, one's family, and the society. Labor forced by “necessity,” or “mundane considerations” is not a truly free activity of humans. Hence, Marx called it “the realm of necessity.”

But it is not that there is no freedom in the “realm of necessity”. Marx argues that if we proceed to a socialist/communist society, labor transforms into one by the voluntarily associated producers which rationally regulate their interchange with nature under conditions most favorable to their human nature. Poverty and inequality, various labor hardships, recurring depressions, and environmental destruction causing the climate crisis will disappear. Labor will become a humane and rational activity. In other words, moving forward to the future society will open up wonderful “freedom” for human activity, even in the “realm of necessity”.

Having argued that much, Marx maintains that this labor is still obligatory labor, forced by “necessity” and “mundane considerations.” Therefore, it is still the “realm of necessity.”

And he says that the “true realm of freedom” begins beyond that. It is time which humans are completely free to use. Time in which they are completely free from all obligations to themselves and to society, and in which they are completely in charge. Time in which nurturing one's own capacity freely and spontaneously itself is a goal - time in which “development of human energy” is an end in itself. Marx calls this the “true realm of freedom,” and he found the most important characteristic of socialist/communist society to be a society in which all people can fully possess this “true realm of freedom.” He concludes with the very simple statement, “The shortening of the working day is its basic prerequisite.” I think that these words of Marx in *Das Kapital* are a condensation of his research on “disposable time” in *the Economic Manuscripts*.

If your working hours were radically reduced, for example, to 3-4 hours a day, 2-3 days a week, and the rest of the time was “free time,” what would you use it for?

Nakayama: I would like to play the flute, or read books.

Shii: I see. You would try to use it for various things to enhance your abilities. Please take a look at the slide (Slide 21). Marx, in his *Das Kapital* says the following about the time that workers have at their disposal.

"Time for education, for intellectual development, for the fulfilling of social functions and for social intercourse, for the free play of his bodily and mental activity"

(21)

Once a person has acquired enough "disposable time," they will use such time to freely develop the latent potential that lies dormant within them. They will use it to enrich their human cultivation and develop their personality holistically. They will also use it for their own intellectual development in the sciences and arts. What is important here is that it is also essential for humans, as Marx said in *Das Kapital*, to fulfil their social role, to enrich their social interactions, and to develop themselves through social activities. When we speak of "the free and full development of humans," we are not only talking about the development of each individual's capabilities, but also about the development of these capabilities in the context of rich social interaction.

It is then that the full potential of human beings will be realized. And the realization of "the free development of each person" will lead to "the free development of all." This will give power to the society as a whole, leading to the shortening of the "realm of necessity" and further extension of the "true realm of freedom."

In this way, a virtuous cycle of free development of humans and free development of society is created. I believe that this is where the brilliance of Marx's theory of a future society lies.

Q24. Could you please explain more about the relationship between the first angle of freedom and the second angle of freedom?

Freedom from the "profit first" principle creates the conditions for "free and full development of humans"

Nakayama: Could you please explain more about the relationship between the first angle of freedom and the second angle of freedom?

Shii: They are deeply interrelated.

First, freedom of the first angle - freedom from the “profit first” principle - creates the conditions for freedom of the second angle - “the free and full development of humanity.”

Why is it possible to radically shorten working hours in a future society? The following two points are important.

First, when the exploitation of people by people is eliminated through “socialization of the means of production,” all members of society will participate equally in productive activities, and working hours per person will be greatly reduced. Earlier, I mentioned that under capitalism, “people are deprived of their ‘disposable time’ - ‘free time’ that they are supposed to have at their disposal,” and that it is being “usurped by capitalists.” By taking back the “free time” that workers have been deprived of by capitalists, sufficient “disposable time” will become available to all.

Second, by moving toward a future society, the wastefulness inherent in capitalism will be eliminated. Capitalist societies may appear to be efficient societies, but no other societies in the history of humankind have been characterized by such gross waste. Repeated depressions and recessions are the worst examples of waste. Massive unemployment on the one hand, and many companies shutting down production on the other, is waste at its extreme. Under capitalism's “profit first” principle, the unstoppable cycle of “production for production's sake” leads to a repetition of “mass production, mass consumption, and mass waste,” which are also serious manifestations of waste. The most serious consequence is the climate crisis. If these wasteful expenditures were eliminated, the labor time wasted on them would become unnecessary, and the “true realm of freedom” would be greatly expanded.

Thus, it can be said that freedom from the “profit first” principle will create the conditions for “free and full human development.”

Q25. Wouldn't expanding “disposable time” help the current movement?

Expanding “free time” would be a major force for changing the capitalist system

Nakayama: Expanding “disposable time” would also be a force to develop our current movement, wouldn't it?

Shii: That's right. That is another important aspect.

The "true realm of freedom" will expand exponentially in a future society, but that does not mean we cannot get closer to it while still under the exploitive conditions of capitalist society. It can be developed through collective struggle. We are now fighting for shorter working hours under the slogan "a society where everyone can live a good and decent life with an eight-hour workday," which is also the struggle to expand the "true realm of freedom." Regaining and expanding "disposable time" is a decisive force for interacting with each other, expanding solidarity, and advancing the movement for social progress. The DYLI activities cannot be carried out without "free time," can they?

Nakayama: That's true. Even now, we are all working hard to make time for it, but I think we could do a lot more if we had more time.

Shii: Exactly. That is an important point. If everyone has "free time," even in a capitalist society, it will potentially provide a powerful force to transform this system.

In this respect, Karl Marx, in *Das Kapital*, describes regarding the British working class winning shorter working hours through the Factory Acts, with the factory supervisors saying that "[b]y making them masters of their own time', (the Factory Acts) 'have given them a moral energy which is directing them to the eventual possession of political power'."

In other words, the struggle to win "disposable time" toward "free and full human development" under the capitalist system becomes the energy for social transformation to win freedom from the "profit first" principle. Therefore, winning the second angle of freedom - "free time" for "free and full human development" - will be a condition for realizing the first angle of freedom - freedom from the "profit first" principle.

Thus, it could be said that the freedom of the first angle and the freedom of the second angle are mutually conditional and deeply related.

Third angle - Great potential for a developed capitalist country

Q26. Does the “profit first” principle only bring harmful effects?

The development of the capitalist system creates objective and subjective conditions for proceeding to a new society

Nakayama: We then move on to the third angle - the great potential for a developed capitalist country.

The JCP 29th Congress resolution states that there is tremendous and rich potential in terms of “human freedom” when it comes to the social changes from a developed capitalist country towards socialism/communism.

First of all, you mentioned earlier that the “profit first” principle brings great harmful effects, but does it only bring harmful effects? If so, then the more the capitalist system develops, the less prospects there are for the development of society. What do you think?

Shii: As I have mentioned, the “profit first” principle brings about harmful effects, but it does not only cause harm. When Marx looked at things, he saw both positive and negative aspects in everything. Such is the case with the “profit first” principle. In *Das Kapital*, Marx makes it clear in various ways that the development of the capitalist system creates objective and subjective conditions for proceeding to a new society.

First, the “profit first” principle drives capital into “production for production’s sake,” which creates various material conditions that support a future society, such as the creation of advanced productive forces as the foundation for shortening working hours. In other words, it creates the objective conditions for a new society.

Secondly, in confronting the various harmful effects brought about by the “profit first” principle, the workers and the general public will develop their struggle to protect their own survival and grow up to become the major actors who will shoulder a new society. In other words, the subjective conditions for building a new society are created. Objectively and subjectively, the “profit first” principle is preparing a new society, even against the will of capital.

In a letter to Russian writer Pavel Vasilyevich Annenkov in December 1846, Marx systematically clarified the concept of “historical materialism” - the view of society that he and his colleague had arrived at. “*The German Ideology*” (1845-46), which is co-authored by Marx and Engels, completed the foundation of the theory of historical materialism, however, this laborious work was published only posthumously and was therefore unknown to contemporaries. It was in the letter to Annenkov that he

first expressed his view of society using the concept of historical materialism to a third party.

In this letter, Marx says something very profound about human history. The development of human history is formed by the development of achievements acquired by the preceding generations, such as a certain development of productive forces, the corresponding relations between people in production (relations of production), and the corresponding political system, by succeeding generations overcoming their limitations and restrictions. A new society will not be created from this or that “universal reason, God.” Nor is man free to choose this or that form of society - the form of economic development. The development of human history is created based on the achievements of the actual social forms created by preceding generations, which are then developed by succeeding generations. This is the view of history and society Marx talks about.

Marx maintained and developed this position throughout his life. From this standpoint, I would like to consider the development and trajectory from capitalism to socialism/communism.

Q27. Could you please tell us about what has been created under the development of capitalism and will be passed on to future society?

The “five elements” created by capitalism - “inheriting” and “developing”

Nakayama: What exactly are the things that will be created under the development of capitalism and passed on to future society?

Shii: In the JCP Program, which was partially revised at the 28th Congress of the Japanese Communist Party in 2020, we listed the “five elements” to clarify that the advanced development of capitalism itself creates various objective and subjective conditions to enable progress toward a future society to be made and that these can be inherited and developed by the future society based on the socialization of the means of production. Please look at the slide (Slide 22).

Slide 22

"Five elements" that can be inherited and developed into a future society

- 1 High-level productive forces
- 2 System to socially regulate and manage the economy
- 3 Rules to protect people's lives and rights
- 4 Institutions of freedom and democracy as well as historical experiences of people's struggles
- 5 Rich individuality of human beings

(22)

In a developed capitalist country that goes down the path to socialism, these “five elements” are assumed to be developing fully. All of these elements can be inherited and further developed to build a new society. It is with this perspective in mind that the JCP Congress resolution stated that there is “immeasurable rich and great potential” in terms of “human freedom.”

Today, I would like to emphasize that as we move toward a future society, we will not only “inherit” the “five elements” but also need to “develop” them.

Nakayama: “Development” is the keyword, then.

Shii: Yes, it is. If we only “inherit” the achievements of capitalism, then where is the need to move toward socialism? I would also like to focus on the “development” unique to socialism.

Q28. I understand the importance of high-level productive power, but it is also the case that productive power gives us harm, isn't it?

The problem is the productive power of capital - productive power in a future society will take on rich, renewed characters

Nakayama: Then, I would like to ask you about these elements separately. I understand the first element, high-level productive power, will be passed down, but some people

might have the impression that productive power somehow gives us harm. What do you make of this?

Shii: I would like to think about this right from the start.

Firstly, the productive power itself forms the material foundation for a future society. Marx wrote in *Das Kapital* that capital ruthlessly forces the human race to “produce for production’s sake” to maximize profit, brings about the unprecedented development of productive power, and thus “creates those material conditions which alone can form the real basis” of a future society.

As I said earlier, fundamental conditions for ‘the full and free development of every individual’ are drastically reducing working hours. High-level productive power would constitute an essential condition to realize a drastic reduction in working hours. Additionally, they would become a condition to create as much material wealth as possible within the shortest working hours. So, I would like to emphasize first that in advanced capitalist countries, high-level productive power is already being shaped to form the material foundation for a future society and that we can take advantage of them to go forward.

At the same time, I would like to also emphasize that a future society, a socialist /communist society, would not simply inherit high-level productive power which had been shaped under capitalism. It would be a society where productive power is developed with a renewed character, not like a capitalist society where people are driven to “produce for production’s sake” by the “profit first” principle, aiming for infinite quantitative development of productive power.

When we think about what is meant by the term “productive power,” it originally means human abilities to produce something useful for people through interaction with nature. So, productive power originally means the productiveness of labor. But, in a capitalist society, however, the “productive power of labor” is placed under the control of capital and appears as if it is the “productive power of capital.” Then, it starts intensifying exploitation and exerting a disruptive impact on nature. When we achieve a future society, the productive power should regain its original character as that of labor as human abilities, and get out of that of capital. This is our vision.

I believe that the productive power in a future society would develop to take on the following new, rich characteristics. I would like to point out three of them. Please look at the slide (Slide 23).

New characteristics of productive power in a future society

- 1 Exerted by individuals with free time
- 2 Harmonious with the improvement of workers' well-being
- 3 Compatible with environment conservation

(23)

Firstly, the productive power would be exerted by individuals with free time. Marx wrote in *the Economic Manuscripts* that the working hours of individuals with disposable time are qualitatively much better than the ones just consumed by working individuals. He also wrote that an increase of free time would transform its possessor into an agent different from before and be able to maximize the productive power. The productive power exerted by individuals with disposable time, in other words, fully developed individuals are expected to take on higher quality. This means that people would be able to produce abundant necessities in shorter time than before.

Secondly, they would be harmonious with the improvement of workers' well-being. Under the productive power of capital, their development is always used as means to exploit workers more while creating social development. For instance, artificial intelligence (AI) itself can be used for social progress, but at the same time, it is said that AI can bring citizens and companies under control of the U.S. major corporations and lead to an increase in unemployment. If we move ahead to a future society, the hostile character of productive power against labor which the productive power of capital brings will disappear. Therefore, we can envision a benign character of productive power harmonious with the improvement of workers' well-being, can't we?

Thirdly, they would be compatible with environment conservation. As I said earlier, in a future society we would not have waste issues associated with mass production, mass consumption, and mass disposal which are inherent to capitalist societies. Eliminating waste would lead to significantly increasing the quality of the productive power. Even if the quantity of production is reduced, the total productive power, including quality, will develop into something richer. I also mentioned earlier that we need to get out of the "post festum" economy. By eliminating social waste, getting out of the "post festum" economy, and developing into a society where "social

reason” works before “festival,” productive power will have a quality that is compatible with the preservation of the environment.

Nakayama: I see. The problem is not the productive power itself, but the one of capital, is it?

Shii: Right. The problem is the productive power of capital, not the productive power in general. Marx strongly criticized the productive power of capital throughout his career. Let’s get out of the productive power of capital and restore the productiveness of labor as original human abilities. This is our vision.

Q29. What do you mean by a system to socially regulate and manage the economy?

Marx emphasized the role of credit and banking system as “a powerful lever”

Nakayama: What can you tell us about the second element, “a system to socially regulate and manage the economy”?

Shii: It was not just productive forces that Marx considered as elements to be passed forward from capitalist to socialist societies. As a capitalist economy advances, it develops into certain forms to manage the entire economy. Marx focused on them and wrote in *Das Kapital* about his vision that it will make progress toward a more advanced-economic system, or socialist system, by leveraging these economic forms.

In this regard, it was the credit and banking system that Marx focused on. Marx wrote that achieving high-level development of the credit and banking system in capitalist economy will serve as “a powerful lever” during the transition period to socialism.

Nakayama: What do you mean?

Shii: If you bring an account book here from one megabank and read it, then you will know where the bank gets its money from, and also where it offers to. Furthermore, if you bring all account books here from Japanese megabanks and read them, then you will know thoroughly in scale what the means of production actually looks like in Japan, including factories, lands, and machines.

So, Marx got this point and thought that the credit and banking system will be one of the “powerful levers” to shift to a future society, socialist/communist society, and

to socialize the means of production. It was a consistent idea of his that we can make progress by leveraging all the tools that have developed in the womb of capitalist economy.

At the same time, Marx harshly criticized in *Das Kapital* that the credit and banking system leads to fraud, gambling, and corruption. Bank capital never gains any profit with its own money. You can characterize it as profiting by other's money. As industrial capital profits by its own money, bank capital profits by money others' deposits. It can lead to uncontrollable and excessive speculation.

It is our vision that if we move ahead toward a future society, fraud, gambling, and swindles, efforts to irresponsibly obtain profit from others' money would go away and the credit and banking system would purely function as "a system to socially regulate and manage the economy."

But the casinos in question in Japan these days are on a different level compared to the above efforts. The casinos gain a profit not only by others' money, but by others' unhappiness. I would like to say that they are unacceptable even in a capitalist economy.

As I said earlier, in a future society where the means of production will be possessed by an association of producers, production control in a conscious, well-planned manner will be possible for the first time ever. How to control production in a conscious, well-planned manner will be a challenge for future generations to tackle and pioneer, but I can say with no doubt that we have "powerful levers" for that quest being already created in the development of the capitalist economy and that we can make progress by leveraging them. So, now we can see tremendous and rich potential here too, can't we?

Q30. Will the "rules to protect people's lives and rights" also be passed on to a future society?

Not only will they be passed on, but they will be greatly enhanced by abolishing exploitation in all its forms

Nakayama: I would like to move on to the third element. Will the "rules to protect people's lives and rights" also be passed on to a future society?

Shii: Not only will they be passed on, but they will be expanded.

What we call "rules to protect people's lives and rights" here represents the very issues that we are currently working on, such as a drastic reduction of working hours and other rules and regulations that allow people to work decently, social security that supports a humane life, a system that allows everyone to receive quality education

equally, the creation of a system that supports small and medium-sized businesses and family farmers, forestry management, and fishery industries as the foundation and backbone that support the economy, and the realization of a gender-equal society. In other words, the very issues of the struggle we are currently engaged in are indicated by the phrase “rules to protect people’s lives and rights.” While all of these are tasks to be realized within the framework of capitalism, our vision is that many of these achievements will be passed on to a future society.

At the same time, what I would like to emphasize here is not only that it will be passed on, but that it will be developed in abundance. As I mentioned earlier, the heart of socialist transformation is to abolish exploitation through the “socialization of the means of production.” I believe that the abolition of exploitation will open up revolutionary and prosperous prospects in terms of “rules to protect people’s lives and rights” as well.

The reduction of working hours is one of the most important issues in the struggle of workers under capitalism. In fact, reductions in working hours are being achieved step by step. At the same time, as long as there is a confrontation in society between those who are forced to work excessively and those who have the ability to work but spend their time idly, there are certain limitations to reducing working hours. Only when we can fully regain the “disposable time” that has been usurped by capital through the abolition of exploitation will we be able to pave the way for a drastic reduction in working hours, a drastic reduction that overcomes the limitations imposed under capitalism.

Besides, by abolishing exploitation, the main portion of products made by the producer will belong to the producer. Under capitalism, a handful of capitalists monopolize huge profits. This causes various oppressions in society as a whole. For example, social resources allocated for social services and education will be squeezed. Then there is a squeeze on social resources to provide for unexpected accidents and disasters. Such is the case in what we are witnessing at present. Of course, even within the framework of capitalism, it is an important task to increase the financial resources for these social expenditures, but if we progress to a future society and abolish exploitation, social resources for social services, education, large accidents and natural disasters, etc. will be much richer, free from the oppression of capital.

In this way, the “rules to protect people’s lives and rights” will inherit all the achievements made under the development of capitalism, and will have the prospect of becoming much richer through a major reform implemented in a future society that will abolish exploitation.

Nakayama: So, all people will be able to enjoy life to the fullest?

Shii: I think so.

Q31. Could you please talk about Marx's position on “freedom and democracy” and what would happen in a future society?

The origin of scientific socialism lies in the defense and development of freedom and democracy

Nakayama: That's excellent. Now let me ask you about the fourth element - the “institutions of freedom and democracy as well as historical experiences of people’s struggles.” Could you talk about what Marx and Engels' original position was, and what these institutions will be like in a future society?

Shii: First of all, let me talk about the original position of Marx and Engels. Marx and Engels began political activism and intellectual work in the first half of the 19th century, and if you look back at what kind of period it was, democracy was considered a dangerous ideology.

Nakayama: Democracy was considered a dangerous ideology?

Shii: A British politician, political scientist and historian named James Bryce (1838-1922) describes the world “a century ago” in his 1921 work, *Modern Democracies*. “A century ago,” around 1820, there were no democratic politics in Europe except in a few Swiss cantons. “Seventy years ago,” even around 1850, “then the word Democracy awakened dislike or fear.”

Nakayama: I am surprised to hear that democracy awakened “dislike or fear.”

Shii: It is really surprising from today's point of view. In the first half of the 19th century, there were no countries in Europe with universal suffrage and democratic republics based on it. Only the United States, on the other side of the Atlantic.

Nakayama: I see...

Shii: The time when Marx and Engels started their activities was such an era.

From the time when democracy was literally treated as a “dangerous ideology,” Marx and Engels consistently emphasized the fight for freedom of publication, association, and assembly as a central issue of the labor movement. Marx's first political work, included at the beginning of the first volume of *the Complete Works of Marx and Engels* published by Otsuki Shoten, is entitled “Comments on the Latest Prussian

Censorship Instruction” (1842), in which he bitterly criticizes the Prussian censorship system and argued that, “...the real and radical cure for the censorship would be its abolition.” It was a thesis calling for freedom of publication. Here, so to speak, was the starting point of Marx, the revolutionary.

Marx and Engels advocated the realization of popular sovereignty and consistently fought for universal suffrage and a democratic republic based on it. Marx wrote a congratulatory address for the International Working Men's Association (the First International) when Abraham Lincoln (1809-65) won reelection in the November 1864 presidential election, in which he characterized the United States as the birthplace of democracy as “where hardly a century ago the idea of one great Democratic Republic had first sprung up, where the first Declaration of the Rights of Man was issued, and the first impulse [was] given to the European revolution of the 18th century.”

The letter expresses strong respect for the United States as the first nation to realize a democratic republic on this earth and to issue the first Declaration of Human Rights. I would like to emphasize that it was Marx and Engels who fought for such a position throughout their lives.

In Japan, democracy was also considered a “dangerous ideology” during the prewar period when the Tenno (emperor) was the absolute monarch. It was a time when anyone who said anything about creating a democratic Japan with sovereignty of the people was oppressed and thrown in jail. In such an era, the JCP was the only political party that unyieldingly held up the banner of popular sovereignty, democracy, and peace at the risk of its own continued existence, along with the Communist Youth League of Japan, the predecessor of the Democratic Youth League of Japan.

Thus, I would like to emphasize first of all that the origin of scientific socialism lies in the serious defense and development of freedom and democracy.

We would like to state that our firm position is to take over and develop all of the systems of freedom and democracy, which have been richly developed through the struggles of the people of each country under capitalism, and to create a society in which freedom and democracy can truly flourish.

In doing so, I would like to emphasize that we are not only taking over from the past but also developing a new future. For example, in Japan, the Constitution guarantees the freedom of speech, publication, and the press. What then is the current situation of the huge corporate media? Are they fulfilling their original role as watchdogs of power? It is undeniable that in many cases this is not the case. Of course, we know that there are many people in the media who are doing their best with conscience and courage. At the same time, it is true that corporate media have various weaknesses, and it must be pointed out that the root of these weaknesses lies in the fact that many of them are under the strong influence of large corporations, with deep ties with the United States.

These external limitations must be broken even under capitalism, and efforts

must be made to win and maintain the freedom of speech, publication, and the press. At the same time, I think it can be said that by proceeding to a socialist/communist society, freedom and democracy are liberated from all such external constraints and become much richer.

The JCP, in its Program, makes a firm commitment to the people that “a socialist/communist Japan will inherit and further develop all valuable gains of the capitalist era, including those of democracy and freedom.”

Nakayama: In the world as well as in Japan, it was the communists who pioneered the struggle for freedom and democracy, and those who upheld scientific socialism, and you mean to develop them further in the future.

Shii: That’s exactly right.

Q32. Explain about the relationship between the rich individuality of human beings and capitalism/socialism.

“The individuality of human beings”, which has developed under capitalism, will flourish in a future society

Nakayama: Now for the fifth and final element. Could you talk about the relationship between the “rich individuality of human beings” and capitalism, and what will happen to human individuality in a future society?

Shii: In *the Economic Manuscripts*, Marx offers a penetrating analysis that outlines human history in three stages from the angle of “the development of human individuality.”

The first stage is a society which Marx called “relationships of personal dependence.” This includes societies of primitive community, slavery, and feudalism. The primitive community, as I mentioned earlier, was a society of free and equal human relations with a low level of productivity. However, there was a limitation: the individual was part of the community and could not truly be an independent individual. Under the eras of slavery and feudalism that followed, slaves and serfs were enslaved by the ruling class. Under slavery, slaves were bought and sold like property by their owners. Under feudalism, serfs were placed under personal servitude by feudal lords.

In those times, independent individuals, independent personalities did not matter much on a social scale. Within a small circle of the ruling class, various personalities were born, as well as art and culture. In “Hikaru Kimi e (Dear Radiance),” the current title of NHK’s historical epic series, the main character is Murasaki Shikibu

[a renowned female Japanese novelist from the 11th century]. Even in that period, such a wonderful personality was born, but she, too, belonged to the aristocracy. Within the ruling class, various personalities were born, as well as culture and art. However, among the majority of the oppressed people, the rich development of individuality was out of the question.

The second stage is what Marx called “personal independence based upon dependence mediated by things.” This refers to capitalist society. Capitalism changes the nature of society in terms of the “individuality of human beings.” Under capitalism, capitalists and workers are equal in terms of law and formality. Therefore, only under such a system can independent personality and rich individuality become a reality on a social scale. In terms of “human individuality,” capitalism has the historical significance of creating important conditions for the society of the future. That is how Marx saw it.

At the same time, however, I would like to emphasize here that although capitalists and workers are legally equal under capitalism, workers are in reality exploited and controlled by capitalists, as Marx used the term “dependence mediated by things.” This creates various restrictions in terms of the development of “human individuality.”

When humans exploit humans, it creates a relationship of domination and subjugation. In other words, the relationship it creates is not equal in the true sense of the word. This is the root of various forms of discrimination, and it also creates restrictions in terms of the development of “human individuality.”

Take the issue of gender equality, for example. There is now a growing movement for gender equality in Japan and around the world. We call it the “world historical comeback of the female sex,” and it is a truly hopeful trend. Gender equality must be pursued to the fullest even under capitalism, and I believe that much can be and has been achieved in this regard.

At the same time, however, I believe that gender equality will be fully realized only when human society advances toward socialism/communism, when the exploitation of human beings by human beings is eliminated, when all relations of domination and subjugation - power relations - are eliminated, when the root causes of discrimination are eliminated, and when truly free and equal human relations are established. This is what I believe.

Nakayama: Yes, I agree.

Shii: And here is one more thing. What is being taken away from us under the system of exploitation? As I mentioned earlier, “disposal time” is being taken away. This is a major restriction on the development of human individuality. If you want to develop any kind of individuality, you need to have “disposable time.” The free and rich

individuality of human beings will flourish in full abundance only when we progress to a future society where “disposable time” is guaranteed to all.

Nakayama: I see. This will create the possibility that a future society free from the “profit first” principle will remove various obstacles and open a way for the free development of individuality.

Shii: In his *Manuscripts*, Marx called the third stage “free individuality” and said that it would be realized under socialism/communism. Only in a society characterized by the free development of individuality, a society in which producers united by free will share the means of production and production is under conscious and planned control, can “free individuality” be realized in the true sense of the phrase. This was Marx's vision.

Q33. We can say that the current struggle is leading to the realization of a future society, can't we?

It is connected to the realization of a future society through several stages

Nakayama: You talked about the “five elements,” and now I can see that the current struggles are in line with the path toward a future society.

Shii: Yes, that's right. If we summarize the issue into the “five elements,” it will become clear that our current struggles are linked to the realization of a future society.

Nakayama: It is linked.

Shii: However, it is not a flat road. To get there, we need to go through several stages of major changes in society. The challenge we face now is to create a democratic Japan in which “people are sovereign” by building broad public consensus on the need to eliminate the abnormal distortions of “Japan’s extraordinary subordination to the United States” and “the tyrannical rule of business circles.” After completing this task, it will be also necessary to carry out a major socialist transformation centering on the “socialization of the means of production” with the consent of the majority of the people. In this way, we must go through several stages step by step by obtaining support from the majority of the people, but I would like to emphasize that “the current struggle is linked to the creating a future society.”

Some of the “five elements” are inevitable in the development of capitalism. The first element - “high-level productive forces” and the second element - “a system to

socially regulate and manage the economy” - are inevitable in the development of capitalism.

However, the third element - “rules to protect people's lives and rights,” the fourth element - “institutions of freedom and democracy as well as historical experiences of people’s struggles,” and the fifth element - “rich individuality of human beings” - None of these elements was inherent in society and human beings from the beginning. All of them were created by the struggles of workers and the general populace.

Our current struggles are linked to our future struggle to enter a future society. Having this in mind, I will keep going.

Q34. What is the guarantee that we will not end up with a society like the former Soviet Union or China?

The guarantee lies in the fact that we are promoting social transformation based on developed capitalism

Nakayama: You have given us very rich content that expands our image of the future society, however, I think there are still people who are skeptical. The experience of “former Soviet Union” and “China” come up quite often. What is the guarantee that the future society we are moving toward will be different?

Shii: I think there is concern about that. However, I think the answer is already present in what I have talked about so far.

Why did the Soviet Union collapse and why are various problems erupting in China? The direct cause lies in the path taken by the leadership, but there is a fundamental problem common to both. It is the problem of the “backwardness that the revolution faced at the starting point.” In other words, the “five elements” I have just mentioned - necessary preconditions for building socialism - were either absent at the beginning of their revolutions, or even if they were present, they were still very immature.

For example, in terms of productive forces in Russia, they started from a very backward state. In the case of the Russian Revolution of 1917, Vladimir Lenin, who led the revolution, left behind the words, “Communism is Soviet power plus the electrification of the whole country.” In other words, economic construction had to begin in a place where electricity was not yet available. Starting from such a backward state created many difficulties. In this context, Joseph Stalin committed the error of forced collectivization of agriculture, which deviated decisively from the desired path to

socialism, and led to the serious error of mass repression, and the former Soviet Union fall into a system that had little to do with socialism.

How did Russia fare in terms of freedom and democracy? Before the Revolution, the Tsar held all the power of the state and the people had no rights. There was a parliament, but it was only a formality and had no authority. In the case of China, the Xinhai Revolution took place in 1911-12, and the country became a democratic republic in form, however, there was no parliament because the warlords were in control while Japan was invading. Since Russia and China started with a relative lack of freedom and democracy, the leadership was required to make special efforts to establish institutions of freedom and democracy after the revolution, however, this was not done sufficiently. In the former Soviet Union, mass repression was carried out and the one-party system was fixed.

What about the point of development of human individuality? For example, how well the people could read, understand and write. In the case of the Russian Revolution, the literacy rate was recorded at 32% in the immediate aftermath of the revolution. Approximately 70% of the population could not read. Regarding the Chinese Revolution, the figure just before the revolution was 17%, and it is estimated that more than 80% could not read. Since this was the starting point of both countries, it is clear that this was a major obstacle to a development of “human individuality.”

In this respect, the conditions in Japan, where we live, are completely different. Under the development of capitalism, combined with the struggles of the people, the “five elements” I mentioned earlier have developed. Of course, there have been some setbacks and limitations. However, compared to the starting points of Russia and China, the starting point for Japan is incomparably higher. So we can utilise and develop all of the elements to build a future society.

The greatest guarantee that the future of socialism or communism in Japan will never be a society without freedom lies in the very fact that social transformation will be promoted based on a developed capitalist society. Therefore, I would like to say that there is no need to worry about this.

Nakayama: I see. It is very convincing that the answer lies in the facts.

Q35. Are there any examples of developed capitalist countries moving toward socialism?

Challenge for an unexplored new task with rich and great potential

Nakayama: Now for the last question.

Shii: Last but not least.

Nakayama: This is the 35th question. Have there ever been any other examples of developed capitalist countries moving toward socialism?

Shii: No, there haven't.

Nakayama: There haven't been any.

Shii: No nation has stepped forward to transition from a developed capitalist country to a socialist one. No nation has even taken the first step. It will be a challenge to take on this completely new task that has never been undertaken before.

The reason why this is not the case is that in developed capitalist countries, various conditions have been created to move forward to a new society, but there are also special difficulties in advancing to a new society. As capitalism develops, the contradictions in this system deepen, but at the same time, various mechanisms are developed to prolong the life of the capitalist system. The corporate media mentioned earlier is one such example.

At the same time, as I have said before, there is great potential there. The future society we are aiming for inherits all the valuable things we have acquired under the development of capitalism, develops them in abundance, and allows them to flourish, so we can truly say that it is a society filled with great potential.

We have written the following phrase into our JCP Program.

“Social changes in a developed capitalist country are the high road to socialism or communism.”

There is the high road here. Therefore, I would like to call on young people to work together to take the high road here in Japan.

First of all, I would like to call on you to carry out a democratic revolution that corrects the extraordinary distortions of the “subservience to the U.S.” and “business circles-first” policy, and then, with the agreement of the general populace, let us open the way together to a future society where no one has ever stepped before.

I hope that the younger generations will lead the way. Our generation may not be able to see Japan's future society - a socialist or communist society -, but I think there is a great possibility that your generation will be able to see it. Since capitalism has reached a point of deadlock, there is a great possibility of progressing to a revolution that will change society from the very core. I would like to end by calling on your young people to take the lead and set out on a path that no one has yet set out on.

Nakayama: Mr. Shii, thank you very much for answering the 35 submitted questions. I think that the content of your response to the questions was highly instructive. I think that it has thoroughly dealt with the misconceptions and anxieties about socialism and communism that everyone had until now, and has given us an image of it as something with very promising potential.

Shii: Thank you very much. I would be very happy if that happened. I know that some of the things I talked about today may have been difficult, but I cannot help but hope that this discussion will provide some incentive to promote and further your learning.

Nakayama: Thank you very much.

Shii: Thank you.

Questions from the Audience

The following is the text of Shii Kazuo's answers for some additional questions from the audience after he had finished his presentation in response to the thirty-five questions submitted in advance.

Question 1: I would like to know about the relation between socialization of the means of production and cooperatives.

Cooperatives can be a form of socialization

Nakayama: I have received many questions that were submitted today. I will read out three of them, introduce them, and ask Mr. Shii to answer them.

The first question asks, "I would like to know about the relation between the 'socialization of the means of production' and cooperatives."

Shii: I believe that cooperatives have immense potential as a form of socialization of the means of production. Especially for agriculture and small-scale businesses, it is absolutely necessary for everyone to spend a lot of time together to reach a consensus, but I believe that a shift to a cooperative-like structure is a very realizable form of socialization.

Vietnam has a policy of "socialism through a market economy" as part of its Doi Moi (renewal) project, and during a period of time not long ago, I walked around the country to observe various forms of "socialization" in action. One of them was a cooperative. It was a plastics factory, and all the members of the cooperative voted to elect the factory manager. If the factory manager was not qualified, he or she could be removed from office. We saw that kind of democratic decision-making system, and how it was practiced. It was some time ago so I don't know about the most recent developments, but I was impressed that they were working on such an initiative.

In terms of cooperatives, there was a current of utopian socialism that was a precursor to scientific socialism. Robert Owen (1771-1858), a British man, was one of its proponents, who ran his own communistic management and was the first to create the prototype for the kindergarten. He is the very originator of cooperatives. So now, when you go to an agricultural cooperative, you may see a picture of Robert Owen on the wall. When I say to cooperative members, "Robert Owen is also one of the sources of scientific socialism," they responded, "We have the same ancestor." Cooperatives are alive in Japanese society today in many forms.

Question 2: I heard that there is a movement to create a capitalism that does not cause a depression.

Keynesianism has failed and capitalism no longer has a guiding theory

Nakayama: The second question is: “I heard that there is a movement to create a capitalism that prevents depression. Would capitalism still be bad?”

Shii: The Great Depression occurred in 1929. After this Great Depression, the theory known as “Keynesianism” became the guiding theory of the capitalist economy for over 40 years. The theory was advocated by British economist John Maynard Keynes (1883-1946), who argued that capitalism was an “objectionable” economic system full of contradictions, but that if “wisely managed” it could be highly efficient. He advocated that the state, representing the entire capitalist system, could manage the economy and prevent depressions by “intervening” in the economy in a variety of ways, including by spending the state's finances to revive the economy. This theory became the guiding theory of economic management in many capitalist countries after World War II.

However, the occurrence of depression didn't go away even during the postwar period: in 1974, a worldwide depression occurred, starting with the oil shock. In Japan, the price of toilet paper skyrocketed, unscrupulous trading companies bought up all the available toilet paper, and there was a mass panic. In the face of such events, it became clear that capitalism was unmanageable under Keynesianism. Instead, from around 1980, “neoliberalism” swept over global capitalism. This is an economic theory that calls for removing all regulations on large corporations to ensure total winner-take-all. The result is the tremendous increase in poverty and inequality that we are now witnessing globally. Even after the supposed panacea of “neoliberalism” swept the capitalist world, depressions did not disappear, as in the worldwide depression that followed the Lehman Shock in 2008.

The last stopgap measure thought to prevent a depression was Keynesianism. That failed, and now global capitalism has no guiding theory. In this sense, the deepening contradictions of capitalism are profoundly serious. We are now in an era in which there is a great need for a new vision of society that will replace capitalism.

Question 3: What is most needed to realize socialism/communism?

To tirelessly build a majority of the populace who will work to help change society for the better

Nakayama: I will read out the third question. Is it correct to say that as long as humanity survives, it will surely reach the goal of establishing socialism and communism? If so, what is most necessary to achieve this transition? Also, do you think Japan has the potential to be one of the first countries in the world to transition to socialism and communism?"

Shii: This is a very thoughtful question. First, as long as humanity survives, I am convinced that we will surely one day reach the goal of establishing socialism and communism. As I have discussed from various angles today, capitalism, in its own development, creates both the objective and subjective conditions for advancing to the next society. Therefore, I believe that we will surely establish a new society.

However, there are steps that must be taken to reach this goal. In the case of Japan, it will take a democratic revolution to correct the distortions caused by the "US-led" and "business-centered" society, and then move on from there.

It is then very important that the person who asked the question wrote "as long as humanity survives." Since if humanity does not survive, we will never reach the future society. We now face existential threats to humanity: nuclear war and climate collapse. The climate crisis is precisely the present danger. Also, if a global nuclear war were to occur, we would not be able to survive. If it were a natural disaster, we would not be able to survive if, for example, a large meteorite fell on us. I hope that this will never happen, but I am convinced that we will be able to overcome and avoid these various crises and that the future society will become a reality "as long as humanity survives."

What is most necessary to achieve socialism and communism? Briefly, it is to make the objectives and ideals of socialism and communism the common goal of all people and to tirelessly work to build a majority of the people to support this aim. Of course, as I mentioned earlier, it is not our program to advance immediately to socialism and communism. With the agreement of the majority of the people, we must first achieve a democratic revolution to change the distorted politics centered on the U.S. and the business world. Once that is accomplished, with the agreement of the majority of the people, we will advance to socialism and communism. The struggle to build a majority that follows the laws of social development and realizes those laws is what is most necessary to achieve socialism and communism.

Like nature, human society has laws of development. What is different from the laws of nature, however, is that they do not progress naturally. The laws of nature work regardless of human will. There is no night that does not dawn, and the dawn always arrives. Even if we sleep, the morning will come. The laws of society, however, can only be realized when a large number of people join to fight for them. I believe that it is the role of the Japanese Communist Party to promote this, and I would like to work

together with the members of the Democratic Youth League of Japan.

Finally, “Do you believe that Japan may be one of the first countries in the world to transition to socialism and communism?”

As for the JCP, it was severely interfered with by Stalin and Khrushchev of the Soviet Union in the past. We also suffered severe interference from Mao Zedong of China. We have fought against such interference to consolidate our position of independence, and in terms of theory, we have overcome the old and erroneous theories which were derived from the days of Stalin and which have no close connection with scientific socialism. We have continued our quest to discover and interpret the original theories of Marx and Engels and to apply them to the present day. We are pioneering in achieving this kind of theoretical achievement in the field of envisioning a future society. In this respect, I believe that if the JCP, which has pioneered a new path both in terms of struggle and theory, advances its position and influence, and if the Democratic Youth League grows ever stronger, there is a great possibility that Japan will quickly reach the stage of transitioning to socialism and communism. Let us do it together.

Ask Why and learn and grow together

Nakayama: Thank you very much. Lastly, Mr. Shii, please give us your message and appeal for joining in the DYJL (Democratic Youth League of Japan).

Shii: After listening to what I said today, I would like to sincerely encourage you to join the DYJL if you have not yet joined the DYJL.

I myself joined the Democratic Youth League of Japan in 1973 when I was a first-year student in college and joined the Japanese Communist Party (JCP) at that time so I have been a member for more than half a century. As a graduate, I am very happy to see that during this time, the members of the DYJL have been making progress by adding new members to their ranks.

In my opinion, the DYJL has three indispensable strong points which attract young people.

The first strong point is that it is an organization that responds to the earnest wishes of young people and collaborates with them to realize them. The food aid for students was started by members of DYJL in May 2020. I have heard that this initiative has grown to more than 3,400 locations in forty-seven prefectures and 160,000 people have used it. During this movement, many students who were being supported have become volunteers who provide support to others after realizing the importance and joy of solidarity. I think this is a very wonderful thing. I also heard that they have created more than two hundred grassroots youth networks across the country in their efforts to oppose the massive military buildup and work for peace. I am also encouraged that you are trying to make the Youth Event for the Constitution an enormous success. I would like to say, first of all, please join DYJL and participate in efforts to realize the earnest wishes of every one of us together.

The second strong point of DYJL is that it is an organization that can deliver hope to the youth by showing that the way to realize the wishes of the youth is to create a Japan in which the people are truly sovereign, by correcting the two distortions in Japanese politics that I talked about earlier - the distortions of “doing what the U.S. dictates” and “catering to the business world.” I believe that the DYJL is an organization that can deliver hope to the youth.

Today, I spoke about the kind of socialist/communist society we aspire to be. However, our program is not an impatient one that aims to immediately advance to a future society. First, we will conduct a democratic revolution to correct the distortions in politics that are “at the mercy of the U.S.” and “centered on the business world.” As the next step, our program is to advance to socialism with the consent of the majority of the people, as I mentioned earlier. Let us follow this path together. I would like to appeal to you to join the DYJL and walk together with us as key players to help to create a new

Japan.

The third strong point, and I think this is the most attractive one, is that the DYLLJ is an organization whose purpose is to study the Program of the Japanese Communist Party and scientific socialism, which I have talked about today. Among all the youth organizations in Japan, only the DYLLJ is this kind of organization. I think this is the most attractive point of DYLLJ.

What I find wonderful about the activities of the DYLLJ youth is that they are an organization that openly discusses whatever they think is important and works together to find the answers. Today, the members of the DYLLJ asked 35 “why” questions after much discussion, and I answered them with a lot of huffing and puffing. But, in many cases, it is difficult to say “why” out loud, isn't it? There are so many unreasonable things. Why are these unreasonable things happening? But it takes courage to say “why” out loud. Then there is the problem of not having a place to say it. So, I think there are many people who are bewildered. I think that DYLLJ is a place where everyone can frankly and freely ask “why.” When I read the letter calling for membership, it says, “We are proud of the fact that we can learn from each other even from zero knowledge.” I believe that DYLLJ is an organization where everyone can freely express their opinions and learn together to find answers even from “zero knowledge.” I think this is the most attractive point of DYLLJ.

I think the question of “why” is really important for human beings. We received 35 “why” questions today and three additional “why” questions by e-mail from all over the country, and I think that asking “why” is already halfway to finding the answer. Asking questions is, in itself, a big step forward toward finding the answers.

Let us all ask “why” without overlooking the unreasonable. Through learning, let's learn how society works, and let's all grasp the joy of grasping the laws of social development. And let us all work together to advance these laws. I believe this is the most human way to live.

Please, if you have not yet joined the DYLLJ, I hope that today will be an opportunity for you to do so. Also, if you have not yet joined the JCP, making the Communist Party bigger will be the most powerful force to improve Japan and the world, and it will also be the force to make DYLLJ bigger. I appeal to you to join the JCP.

Today we talked about getting “free time” and using your potential to grow in freedom. There is a paper that Marx wrote when he was in high school. It is called “Reflections of a Young Man on the Choice of Profession.” This paper asks the question, “What is true happiness for man? The young Marx's answer was, “Experience acclaims as the happiest the man who has made the greatest number of people happy.” And only in this way, he says, can “your own perfection” be attained.

I think the subject today was how to grow as a human being. To that end, let's regain the “time at our disposal” - this was the keyword.

I hope that you will choose, with the encouragement of Marx's words from his

youth, a way of life in which you seek the happiness of others and find your own happiness in that.

Only through such efforts can we realize the “free and full development” of each and every one of us. I would like to conclude by making this appeal. Thank you.
(End)