

CEACOP seminar

Political Theory in Japan (*seiji riron*)

: Towards Japanese Political Theory

Date: 24 February 2023

Time: 2:00 pm (HKT)

Venue: Online (This talk will be held via ZOOM)

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Abstract

This paper looks into the non-Western side: *seiji riron* (political theory in Japan). The discipline is deemed the archetypal non-Western framework of PT that serves as an importer of Western political theories. By referencing the best-known Japanese political theorist Maruyama Masao, the paper argues that the disciplinary “sterility” of *seiji riron* stems primarily from the discipline’s traditional difficulty called “fatal weakness,” which illuminates its complete indifference to actual problems. From this perspective, it deduces that the marginal positionality of “Japanese political theory” in an anthropological sense, separate from *seiji riron*, is not due to PT’s Eurocentrism, colonialism, imperialism, centralism, and parochialism, but rather due to the latter discipline’s trajectory and position as a *yu’nyū-gaku* that has marginalized the former *per se*. Apart from this deduction, the paper attempts to find out the idea of “democracy” in Japanese political theory, not in the sense of *seiji riron* but in the sense of a socio-cultural scheme of PT predicated upon Japanese theoretical ingredients.

Short Biography

Dr Takamichi Sakurai specialises in social and political theory in global terms. Sakurai is the founding co-editor-in-chief of the peer-reviewed journal Comparative Political Theory (Brill: <https://brill.com/cpt>) and a member of the Advisory Council of the Association for Global Political Thought (Harvard University). He is appointed to co-editor of a new Routledge book series Political Theorists beyond the Canon. He has been devoted to comparative research on the sociologist Erich Fromm’s and the Japanese intellectual historian Fujita Shōzō’s social theories. The key themes Sakurai works on include fascism, postfascism, authoritarianism, alienation and political narcissism. His articles have appeared in international high-quality journals including Constellations, Distinktion: Journal of Social Theory, Global Intellectual History, History of European Ideas, Japanese Journal of Political Science, Polity and Theoria: A Journal of Social and Political Theory.

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