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CONTENTS

The Rise of Wooden Sculpture in the Early Heian Period	<i>Takeshi Kuno</i>	1
A Metamorphosis of Greek Art—About the Formation of the Classic Styles	<i>Hisayasu Nomura</i>	5
The Buddhist World Maps in Japan	<i>Nobuo Muroga and Kazutaka Unno</i>	10
A Research on Edo Dialect and Tōkyō Dialect	<i>Akira Matsumura</i>	14
Japanese Accent Study	<i>Teruo Hirayama</i>	19
Studies in Teika Fujiwara	<i>Yoshisada Ishida</i>	25
The Study of Naturalism	<i>Yoshikazu Kataoka</i>	29
A Study of the <i>Shih ching</i> (詩經) (The Chinese Ancient Poetry) with Reference to Its New and Old Strata and Development of Thought	<i>Masaaki Matsumoto</i>	33
Phonology of Chinese Language	<i>Akiyasu Tōdō</i>	37
Hermann Hess: His Life and Works	<i>Kenji Takahashi</i>	39
A History of Ancient Greek and Roman Drama	<i>Ryōzō Niizeki</i>	41
A Historical Survey of English Literature	<i>Takeshi Saito</i>	44
A Note on the Fenollosa—Pound Translation of Japanese Noh	<i>Hōjin Yano</i>	47
The Social Status of Women as Revealed in A Modern Japanese Novel	<i>Kenichiro Hayashi</i>	51
A Study of Chinese Buddhism in T'ang and Dynasty	<i>Ryoshu Michihata</i>	54
The Fundamental Structure of Thought of Mahāyāna Buddhism	<i>Yoshifumi Ueda</i>	57
Quintilian	<i>Takehide Yokoo</i>	61
Human Factors in Rebuilding Village	<i>Kiyoo Tomeoka</i>	67
A Study on Retirement Institution in Connection with Family System	<i>Akira Takeda</i>	69
Ancestor-Worship in Japanese Folklore and History	<i>Chōshū Takeda</i>	73
An Ethno-Historical Investigation of the Minority People in South-Western China	<i>Yoshiro Shiratori</i>	76
A Study of Patri-Clan Systems in the Mainland of Southeast Asia	<i>Tsuneo Ayabe</i>	80

Foundations of English Philology	<i>Chikahira Kobayashi</i>	83
A Study of the Sonority in Pronuciation	<i>Naomichi Kaneko</i>	87
A Study of Tato (田堵)	<i>Yasuhiko Murai</i>	94
Travels of a Japanese Buddhist priest in 13 century to Yüan China	<i>Shinji Maejima</i>	97
Chü-yung-kuan (居庸關)	<i>Jiro Murata</i>	102
The Art in Italian Renaissance and Its Social Background: Especially in the Case of Firenze	<i>Yuji Aida</i>	105
The thought of Bushido and its circumference	<i>Tetsushi Furukawa</i>	109
The Principles of Urban Sociology	<i>Eitaro Suzuki</i>	111
Hierarchical Structure of Visual Functions; a Study of Visual Functions by Electro-Convulsive Shock Method	<i>Torao Obonai and Kōyū Arai</i>	116
Systematic Social Psychology	<i>Hiroshi Minami</i>	120
A Bibliographical Survey on Buddhist Sanskrit Texts	<i>Ryujo Yamada</i>	126
The Critical Study of the Roman Law Texts Protecting Christianity	<i>Yoshiro Saeki</i>	129
A Study of the Personality Traits of the College Student Athlete	<i>Yoshiyuki Noguchi</i>	131
A Higenic Study on the School Camp	<i>A. Kitahama, Y. Kitahama and K. Ueda</i>	137
The Philosophy of Immanuel Kant	<i>Masakazu (Shoiti) Yamazaki</i>	141

APPENDIX	149
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The Principles of Urban Sociology

*Eitaro Suzuki**

The author investigates especially on the following three points in this book.

I. The city, same with the agricultural village, is a community in which everybody cooperates for the defence against common enemy at a time of emergency and helps each other for getting living at everyday life. The city, however, carries besides the above character the function of distributing centre for the circulation of culture and goods within a nation. The function of distributing centre is the only trait which differs city from village.

II. Among all social groups, accumulating on the site of an urban community, or composing a city life as a whole, family group and office group are the basic. School group is secondarily important group in the social construction of urban life. Other various associations contributing for amusement, for culture, or for life improvement are but leisure-time associations, however brilliant they may appear in our urban life.

Our urban life as a whole is composed of above-mentioned groups, that is (1) family groups (2) office groups (3) school groups (4) leisure-time groups. And among these groups, family groups and office groups are fundamental, school groups being less important. Leisure-time groups are but superficial in the social construction of urban life.

III. Urban people preserve order in their lives as a whole, expressing regular movements in their daily lives. We can observe spatial regularity and time regularity in urban life. Spatial regularity can be observed for instance in trade areas and service areas inside and outside a natural city. Time regularity in urban life can be observed daily, weekly, monthly, or yearly in business hours, the time for rest, or settling day.

On the above three topics the author discusses in this book, and almost nothing more is treated there. The three topics are, in short, I. on the function of city, II. on the social construction of city, and III. on the regularity of urban life in time and space. These three topics mean, no doubt, the most fundamental questions to be solved by urban sociologists.

No book on urban sociology ever published has tried to deal with these questions. The present author shows the result of his study on these questions in this book. He explains his opinion not metaphysically but on the

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results of social surveying.

A little more in details will be explained his opinions about these three questions.

I. *On the function of city, or the concept of city*—The author's conclusion on this topics is that the city differs from agricultural village only for its function as a distributing centre for the circulation of culture and goods within a nation.

The fact that city grows up on the site of agricultural village can clearly be observed on existing villages with various grades of urbanization. Historical studies on the origin of city by historians affirm the same fact.

The author learned from the study of villages with various grades of urbanization, that with the increase of urbanity in a village so much increase of the number of those whose occupations are not agriculture can be observed. Again, the study on such non-agricultural occupations led the author to the conclusion that non-agricultural occupations generally contribute directly for collecting or spreading commodities or culture patterns.

Non-agricultural occupations are, in short, serving for unifying the culture patterns and commodities within a nation.

There is a city there, where many institutions of those assemble whose occupations serve for distribution of commodities or culture. A city may be said a disiributing centre, because many distributing institutions are found there.

Distributing institution is kept sometimes by a person, sometimes by thousands or more of persons. A large manufacturing factory of so many as ten thousand employee is one distributing institution and a small tabaco store carried on by an old widow with herself is another. To get livelihood anyone must keep or belong to some institution whatever his occation may be. While occupational institutions do not always contribute for the circulation of culture or goods, those seen usually in the city have generally functions of distribution. No distributing institution or occupation, however, can be found in a small rural community where all the dwellers are peasant farmers.

The author observes the following nine kinds of institutions contributing directly for the distribution of goods or culture patterns within a nation.

1. Selling institutions.
2. Technical expert institutions.
3. Transportation institutions.

4. Communication institutions.
5. Governmental institutions.
6. Public peace institutions.
7. Educational institutions.
8. Religious institutions.
9. Amusement institutions.

The author ovserved these nine kinds of institutions are completely gathered in every city, if called a city popularly. There are various grades of quasi-city, where the nine kinds of institutions are not gratified. With the increase of number and scale of each of these nine kinds of institutions gathering in it, a city carries higher urbanity.

II. *On the social construction of a city*—The author's conclusion on this topic is that household group and office group are the basic groups of all urban groups. The author certifies his opinion with the help of his theory on normal life of normal population. Urban society as it stands is too much complicated and confused to be analyzed scientifically.

This is, according to the author, due largely to the fact that it contains large quantity of people, normal and abnormal, gathering in a small area. And we must put away first of all abnormal lives and abnormal population in the urban society, before we try to analize it.

The normal life of normal population can be understood from our common way of living in our life. Man, while he remains a child before school age, live under the protection of his parents in their household. After his school age he attends school day after day. After his graduation from the school, he carries on some occupation, keeping a position in an office. When he becomes too old to stay on his post, he retires from it and becomes under the protection of his children or public service.

The above course of life is the normal course, and anyone who is on such course of life is, no doubt, a normal man. Abnormal man means that his life is not on the above course. Abnormal life will be observed naturally with abnormal man, but even normal population often may be thrown off the line.

We can easily understand that the social construction of urban society must be constructed fundamentally upon the normal life of normal people, for no body can doubt our society is supported by normal activities of normal population.

Abnormal population will not be able to support our urban society even for a single day.

Now, for the normal life of normal people, the life in household and the life in office are essential. With such reasons, the author is convinced

that household group and office group are the basic groups in all urban groups.

The school group must not be neglected, because the school life is a preparatory stage to office life. It is however not so indispensable for our present life as office life.

And we may say household group and office group are the basic groups, school group being secondary. Other various groups for amusement, culture, or life improvement are all but leisuretime groups and are not so important in the social structure of urban life, however flourishing they may appear in our modern city life.

III. *On regular movements in urban life*—The author's conclusion on this topic is that regularity in urban life can be observed in time and space.

As to the regularity in space or on geographical area, many urban sociologists have discussed. This is the only topic the present author investigates in common with other urban sociologists, especially with American urban ecologists.

One of his new opinions on this topic is that the social unity of natural city can be ascertained only on the whole stretch of grouping areas, an area named 'the first livelihood-making area' by the author. 'The first livelihood-making area' is the area within which all the service giving stores or shops a citizen makes use of rather regularly in his daily life are observed. Such areas may not be same with each citizen. Each citizen will have his own area privately, which is slightly different from his neighboring citizen's but for the most part same with it. As our living houses stand continuing from house to house and covers the whole site of a city, so the first livelihood making areas' will cover all the area of a natural city.

As in the case of the first livelihood making area, daily activities of urban people are rather monotonous and repeated day after day on the same geographical area.

As to the regularity in time, the author should illustrate it from the initiation, because it is a new idea in social sciences.

We know time tables of business activities obeyed by all the members of an office. There is a fixed day of rest every week. There is a fixed day of salary or wages every week or month.

The forms of activity in an office are repeated regularly every day, every week, or every year. The same can be said with the activities of a school. The author observes only these two groups, office group and school group, have strict time-tables of activities obeyed faithfully, but no others do. Again, while many kinds of activities have their own time-tables, as

to labour, payment, and rest, time rules are obeyed regularly more than others. And among labour, payment, and rest, labour is done most punctually. Time rule for labour is, it appears, the basic and the other two depend upon labour. Salary is paid regularly, because labour is done so much regularly. Our fixed leisure time is the time for rest of fixed amount of labour. The regularity can be observed in many cases in our life, but it is most rigorous and stable in the case of labour in office and in the case of lesson in school. Hence, the time-table for labour in office and the time table for lesson in school are the primary schemes of all our urban life, so we may say.