A Re-examination of Theories on *Fuzoku* in the Modern Era —a Theoretical and Historical Study—

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Since the end of the Second World War, the word *fuzoku* (social customs) has been used as a word indicating ways of life that are easily changed, and as such has been distinguished from the term *minzoku* (folk customs), that are not easily changed. However, this distinction is not a continuation of usage that pre-dates the modern era. From the Edo period through to the mid 1880s, the term *fuzoku* did not contain the connotation of something that was easily changed, and was simply a word that indicated ways of life that were merely observable.

From the late 1880s onwards when there was a sudden inflow of policies aimed at the westernization of Japan, social customs changed at a dizzying pace. It was in response to this that *fuzoku* came to be recognized as something that changed.

With the aim of returning to tradition, people who were opposed to this shift studied the historical changes in customs and sought to use them in nationalistic education activities. In doing so they emphasized the Japanese ethos over western civilization, and as a result the parameters indicated by the word *fuzoku* came to include intangible things.

From the end of the 19th century through to around the mid 1920s, research into customs fell into decline. The reason for this was that the advancement of westernization led to a disinclination to pay attention to the traditions of Japan.

However, by the mid 1920s educational activities aimed at a return to Japanese traditions once again gained momentum under political and economic pressure applied by the West. Taking advantage of these activities, and with their own different objectives, artists, Marxists, and people of religious faith resumed research into the history of *fuzoku*. Although they did so with the objective of expanding their own organizations and with the ostensible motive of educating and uniting the people, their attempts proved to be far from effective. However, the educational activities of this time ascribed a meaning of rule or control from above to the word *fuzoku.*
Yet, research into the history of customs since the end of the Second World War reflects little of the fruits of research carried out in the 1920s, although there is continuity with methods in use in the late 19th century. At the same time, it is precisely because research into the history of customs from this period occupies an important place today, that the usage of *fuzoku* prior to this time has been forgotten.