

An interwoven relationship between universalism and colonialism: reconsidering postwar democracy in Japan

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Abstrak

ABSTRACT

This article reconsiders the postwar democracy in Japan in terms of a certain involvement between universalism and colonialism. Recently, some scholars have criticized the legislation of a new national security law in Japan as destroying the legacy of the postwar democracy. It seems, however, not to be allowed to regard this legislation as a fundamental turnover of the basic position in international policy of postwar Japan. As is well known, the Japanese government in the postwar era has kept its pacifism, whose ideal is explicitly expressed and realized by article 9 of the Japanese Constitution. Although the security law legislated in 2015 could be seen as breaking this ideal of pacifism, the Japanese government's official statement declared that the new security law inherited pacifism under the name of "provocative contribution to peace". This article tries to reinterpret the postwar democracy from this point. By critically reading ongoing debates regarding the issue of wartime comfort women and Nambara Shigeru's democratic thoughts, it seems a certain war, which has been a fundamental root of the postwar democracy in Japan - that is, "a war against the enemy of all" - has sustained itself in an interwoven relation between universalism and colonialism.