

Yaoi: Fan Art in Japan

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Self-Introduction

First of all, let me introduce myself. My name is Yu Ishikawa. I belong to a doctoral course in the Department of Culture as Representation, the Graduate School of Literature and Human Sciences, Osaka City University.

I am studying the issues of reading and creation of narratives by women in modern Japan, more specifically, fan art in Yaoi. Generally speaking, fan art is activities and productions of fans that borrow characters and settings of the original work such as Manga, Anime and so on. Yaoi is artwork that focuses on the relationship between males written or drawn by and for women. Both of them are subcultures that were originated around Otaku culture in Japan. I think most of you here know the term Otaku.

There are two reasons why I selected this subject of study. Firstly, I have liked these subcultures. Secondly, I have been interested in the process of narrative produce.

What type of narratives do you like? Science fiction, detective stories, love romance or fairy tales? Do you like Manga, Anime, movies or novels? I assume most of you are students of the Faculty of Literature and Human Sciences and have read many narratives. I have also read quite a few.

How do we interpret narratives? There are various ways of interpreting narratives. For example, someone reads it sympathizing with the characters and another is absorbed in the storyline or analyzing it objectively.

Women who enjoy Yaoi fan art read the original text and interpret the relationship between the male characters as a romantic one. It is inappropriate to simply claim that this is just the wild imagination of women. Our reading and interpreting narratives should not be superficial but rather a complex interaction between reader and text. I think that the activities of Yaoi have possibilities of various interpretations. So I have not regarded Yaoi as a SUB culture literally but selected as an object of study. And I have done research on the mechanism of desire of women who could not help interpreting the relationship between male characters as lovers and textualizing this interpretation as fan art.

Now, that concludes my self-introduction. Let's start the presentation. The title of my presentation is *Yaoi: Fan Art in Japan*.

1. Introduction

In this presentation, I am going to examine the cultural

phenomenon of Yaoi in modern Japanese society. I will define Yaoi as the work generally written and read by women and which treats love and eros between males.

Yaoi is now gaining attention as a kind of subculture both abroad and in Japan. The term Yaoi is well known as well as Manga, Anime and Otaku in the world today. We must admit that Yaoi culture plays an important part in modern Japanese culture.

Though Yaoi has a lot of subgenres, it is generally classified into two genres. One of them is original artwork and the other is fan art. The former is also called Boy's Love, Shonen-ai, June and so on. The latter, fan art, is a parody of the original work remade by fans. My presentation will concentrate on Yaoi fan art as a case study.

The aim of my presentation is to examine what Yaoi fan art is by analyzing its text and referring to interpretations about it.

The preceding studies on Yaoi have mainly discussed the reasons why Yaoi attracted women or what it meant to them and what types of women favour Yaoi in terms of gender studies and feminism. I will deal with Yaoi fan art as a subgenre of Yaoi in detail rather than considering it from these viewpoints.

I would like to divide my discussion into three parts. First of all, I will try to define Yaoi fan art and survey its present condition. Second, I will demonstrate how Yaoi fan art has been interpreted from outside of the Yaoi fan community and analyze Yaoi fan artist's motive. Finally, I will examine What Yaoi fan art is. Now let us start with the first part.

2. Definition and Outline

2.1. The Definition of Yaoi Fan Art

First, I would like to define Yaoi fan art. In Japanese, Yaoi is an acronym for “**Y**ama nashi, **O**chi nashi, **I**mi nashi”. It is often translated into English as “No Climax, No Resolution, No Meaning”. This term first appeared in the Manga fan community during the late 70s.

The definition of Yaoi can change depending on the situation or the researcher. Yaoi can be in the broad sense defined all artworks, mostly Manga or novels, including both the original and fan art that deal with male/male love story written or drawn by and for women. It can also be defined as fan art that has such tendencies in a narrow sense. Fan art itself is defined as activities and productions that borrow

characters or settings from the original works by fans. In my presentation, I will use the term Yaoi when referring to both the original and fan art that focus on a male/male relationship and the term Yaoi fan art when referring to Yaoi in a narrow sense. My focus of attention here is on Yaoi fan art. As the diagram shows, Yaoi fan art is a subgenre of both Yaoi and fan art.

Also, fan art takes various forms such as Dojinshi (Coterie magazine), Kosupure (Costume Play) and so on. I will deal with Dojinshi drawn by Manga.

2.2. The Outline of Yaoi Fan Art

Now I would like to outline Yaoi fan art. The original text is selected from Manga, Anime, video games, novels, movies and so on. The two male figures who are not always loving each other in the original text are transformed into romantic lovers in fan art. It may be said that Yaoi fan art finds some erotic factor in the original homosocial relationship and develops another narrative by giving another interpretation to it.

In Yaoi, two males are paired together. This pairing is called a Coupling. The two participants in relationship are referred to as Seme (Attacker) and Uke (Receiver).

I will explain the history of Yaoi fan art. In the 70s, the Year 24 Showa Era Group (Nijuyon-nen Gumi) was highly popular. This group refers to female Manga artist group such as Moto Hagio, Keiko Takemiya, Yumiko Oshima, Ryoko Yamagishi and so on. Their artwork sometimes deals with boy's love.

The younger generation who read it began to draw Mangas that focus on male/male relationship in the Dojinshi community. In the 80s, Yaoi fan art of *Captain Tsubasa*, *Saint Seiya* or *Yoroiden Samurai Troopers* became highly popular and its scale was expanded rapidly.

Who are its artists? Though some professional artists participate, most are amateurs who produce it for fun. With regard to their age, they range widely from teens to sixties. Those artists publish their works by what is called Circle, an individual or group of fans. Dojinshi are distributed at the comic exhibition and sale, specialty book stores and through mail order.

The Comic Market is the largest comic exhibition and sale in the world. It is held twice a year in Tokyo Big Sight. This is a picture of the 73rd Comic Market last winter. 35,000 Circles and 500,000 people participated. This is the image called a Circle Cut. You can see these Cuts on the Comic Market Catalog and find your favorite one. Circles are arranged according to popularity of Circles or genre. The Comic Market is primarily the place to exhibit and distribute not only fan art but original artwork. However, according to the 74th Comic Market Catalog, fan art Circle accounts for

half of all Circles at least today (Comiket2008: 32-33). That is, Yaoi fan art also represents a major presence at the Comic Market.

However, strange enough, though it has a major presence, its members and their activities are invisible to community outsiders.

Generally, members of Yaoi fan art do not like to confess their hobby in public spaces such as schools and offices and it is shared only in the closed community. In this connection, it could be pointed out that fan art has been regarded as illegal in terms of copyright, those fans enjoyed the pleasure of sharing their hobby in a closed community and at the same time defended themselves against being called homophobic.

3. Analysis

3.1. How Do Outsiders Interpret Yaoi Fan Art?

In this part, I will analyze Manga Dojinshi as an example of Yaoi fan art by referring to interpretations of the outsiders.

As I mentioned earlier, Yaoi fan art is defined as a production that interprets a relationship between the male characters of the original text as a romantic one. Critics mentioned such characteristics of Yaoi fan art as the following: "the story is quite different from the original text." (Otsuka1989/2001:16), "women are not interested in parody, they just steal characters and minimum settings of the original text to create homosexual stories." (Ajima1987/2004:104) These critics are actually outsiders of Yaoi fan art.

Please take a look at these images. These are *Captain Tsubasa*, a Manga by Yoichi Takahashi, and its Yaoi fan art, by Miyako Takano entitled *Tobu Yume Wo Shibaraku Minai (I Have Not Seen a Dream of Flight for Some Time)*. *Captain Tsubasa* focuses on Japanese youth football and serialized in *Weekly Shonen Jump*, a Manga magazine for boys, between 1981 and 1988. It had a high popularity in the Yaoi community as well as among young boys.

In Takano's fan art, two boy characters, who are teammates in the original text, are transformed into lovers. As you see, the touch of drawing is also different from that of the original text. Moreover, this fan art is doubly parodied by quoting the storyline from the love story by Taichi Yamada entitled *Tobu Yume Wo Shibaraku Minai (I Have Not Seen a Dream of Flight for Some Time)* and borrowing characters from *Captain Tsubasa*.

Eiji Otsuka known as an editor and a critic of Japanese subcultures thinking this fan art as "a strange work" mentions as follows: "Contrary to our expectations that such a parody intends to be comical, the artist Takano is quite serious. She makes her work rather like that of Taichi Yamada by using characters from *Captain Tsubasa*."

(Otsuka1989/2001: 81) He thinks that Takano aims at emotional love story. To quote a storyline from a novel is not to caricaturize the Manga characters in the context of love romance but to represent more dramatically their romantic relationship. In this sense, Otsuka concludes that Takano's fan art not only deviates from the original text but is neither a parody as a critical act.

3.2. How Does the Yaoi Fan Art Community Interpret the Genre?

Next, I will discuss Yaoi fan art from inside of the community. First, I will think about the motives to produce fan arts.

While the critics point out the deviation from the original text, the deviation is not always important for Yaoi fan artist. Those artists do not make Yaoi fan art just because they wish to criticize the canon as a primary aim. What are meant essential in the artists are the attachment to the male characters and their relationship.

I will take fan artists' remarks as examples. Yun Koga began her career as Yaoi fan artist in the 80s and has been active there since. She says that the attachment to the original artwork or characters and the wish to convey its attachment are the motives of making fan art (Yonezawa ed.2001: 81). This attachment prompts her to make fan art, and it is, as it were, textualized through the transformation of the relationship between the two male characters.

What is the connection between the attachment and the desire for making fan art? I would like to give one of the reasons here, that is, dissatisfaction of the original text. For example, Yayoi Takeda, popular Yaoi artist since the early days, states that she has ambivalence toward the attachment and the dissatisfaction of the original text when she wants to make Yaoi fan art (the Comic Market Preparatory Committee ed.2005: 231).

The original text does not always show the ideal story for them. As a means to reduce their dissatisfaction, they textualize their own desires and fantasies, and they make their own ideal story, without following the situation or context of the original work.

4. Conclusion

4.1. Summary

Now, I would like to summarize what I have discussed as follows: The aim of Yaoi fan art is to make the ideal story for fan artists, including the transformation of a relationship between male characters such as friendship into a romantic one. Therefore, opposed to the original text, Yaoi fan art deviates from the original text in terms of drawing touch, storyline and setting. And this process of making fan art has been regarded as a strange phenomenon by community

outsiders. It is sometimes said that Yaoi fan art is too deviant to be a critical work of the original text.

4.2. Conclusion

In my opinion, Yaoi fan art is not bound by the canon. Yaoi fan art remakes a different narrative in a different way by extracting male characters and transforming of their relationship from the original text.

This example shows possibilities of Yaoi fan art. This is Yaoi fan art of Manga, *Hagane No Renkinjutsushi (Fullmetal Alchemist)*. It borrows the two boys from the original Manga, and also borrows episodes from the novel, *Ginga Tetsudo No Yoru (Night on the Galactic Railroad)* by Kenji Miyazawa. Though Yaoi fan art of *Captain Tsubasa* as a former example quotes the storyline of a novel faithfully, this fan art spreads fragments from both of the original texts. It is intertextual fan art, so to speak, by borrowing, transforming or mosaicking the two original texts.

To end, I will conclude my presentation by saying that Yaoi fan art has possibilities for new interpretations that are not limited to the original text.

4.3. Outlook

As an outlook, the issues involved in why the Yaoi fan art community concentrates their interpretations on the male/male relationship, not female/female nor heterosexual relationship, is still to be discussed. And considering to a rise of male readers of Yaoi today, I must work on reviewing the definition and present condition of Yaoi. Thank you very much for your listening.

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How Street Fashion Is Shaped in Horie, A Commercially Regenerated Area.

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1 Introduction

In the past 15 years in Japanese metropolises, a number of new fashionable areas attracting young people have appeared in the vicinity of old shopping centers: Ura-Harajuku in Tokyo and Osu in Nagoya are just two examples. These new or renewed spaces have a lot of dress shops and cafés, drawing well-dressed, fashion-conscious young people. One of the major characteristics of these new fashion areas is that the whole landscape and even land use are transformed in a way that is more acceptable to ever-increasing young people. The other characteristic is that well-dressed young people shape their own street fashion and bring vitality to this area.

Therefore, in this presentation, I would like to provide an insight into the interrelationship between urban space and practice of young people. First of all, I will describe the process of developing commercial space in which fashion holds the key to development. Then, I will discuss how young people have shaped street fashion based on the narrative data collected from young people.

1.1 A Review of Recent Studies and My Viewpoints

Let me first review recent relevant studies and discuss my own viewpoint before moving on to the main part. Urban transformation to commercial space has often been addressed from the point of view of city planning. However, there have appeared studies which stress the importance of the roles of the part played by urban culture. In sociology, Mita (2006)¹ notes that young designers, DJs, and dress shop staffs have contributed to the development of Uraharajuku. Nakamura (2007)² also stresses the importance of taking street fashion into account to examine the transformation of commercial space. These studies are of value in that they see the impacts of urban culture on regional transformation. However, they are not concerned with the roles played by young people who actually practice urban culture.

In this regard Yamaguchi (2002)³ and Miki (2006)⁴ in

the field of geography are of great importance in that they focus on street performers in Osaka. The former addresses how they make use of and find meaning in urban space, and the latter puts them in the light of time geography and analyze them in terms of social network. I sympathize with these studies because they discuss urban space from the viewpoint of young people.

I will take, however, a closer look at street fashion which young people take part in creating in actual social context. As Kawamura (2004)⁵, who also analyzes street fashion in the light of Symbolic Interactionism, points out that teenagers in Tokyo do create street fashion actively and exert a great influence on the fashion industry, I also make a point of young people's roles played in fashion-conscious urban areas.

1.2 Study Area

Fig. 1 shows the district of Horie, which is a part of Nishi ward located in the southwest of Osaka City. This area is now one of the most fashionable areas in the Kansai region. Dress shops for young people, cafés, smart furniture and goods shops began to concentrate around the east side of Tachibana Street in late 1990s. It had once been a famous agglomeration of wholesale and retail shops of bridal furniture and Buddhist altars since. However, this area started to decline between 1970s and the early 1990s. Adjacent to the east side of Horie is America-mura (American Village), which has proved successful as a new fashionable area for youths since around 1970, and just to the north of America-mura is Minami-senba, which has also come to be prosperous since the late 1990s. Horie in this paper refers specifically to 1-chome Minamihorie (1 South Horie) because this area has shown the most dramatic change recently.

1.3 Research Method

First, I will show three town maps drawn in 1964, 1997 and 2003 in order to examine the varieties of shops observed in Horie in each year, and trace the changes in land use during the period. Second, I will present and analyze the data which came from an interview I carried out with the editor of *Cazi Cazi*, a popular fashion magazine in Kansai. Third, I will examine the interview data from young passersby in Horie.

¹ Mita, T. 'Subculture-led Local Development : A Case Study on "the Street Culture of Self-employed Shops" in Shibuya, Aoyama, and Harajuku, Tokyo', *The Annals of Japan Association for Urban Sociology*, 24, 2006, pp.136-151

² Nakamura, Y. 'Urban Consumer Space Becoming 'Street': To Consider Something Like 'Ura-Harajuku' as Consumer Society Theory', *Tsukuba Journal of Sociology*, 32, 2007, pp.95-110.

³ Yamaguchi, S. 'Street Performers and Street Artists in Minami, Osaka', *Japanese Journal of Human Geography*, 54, 2002, pp.65-81.

⁴ Miki, K. 'The Activities of Street Performers and Their Social Networks in Kita, Osaka' *Japanese Journal of Human Geography*, 58-5, 2006, pp.57-71.

⁵ Kawamura, Y. 'Japanese Teens as Producers of Street Fashion', *Current Sociology*, 54, 2006, pp. 784-801.

2 Spatial Transformation in Horie

First, let me show the spatial transformations that occurred in Horie between 1964 and 2003, especially from 1997 to 2003. Maps in the following represent the distribution of shops in the east part of Tachibana Street in 1964 (Fig. 1), 1997 (Fig. 2), and 2003 (Fig. 3).

In 1964, we can see 36 bridal furniture and Buddhist altar shops; most of them are lined along Tachibana Street. This map shows the old Horie.

In 1997, in contrast, there are 28 bridal furniture and Buddhist altar shops. During those 30 years, more or less small shops were closed, while some shops were demolished to build 14 parking lots in this small area. In the 1970s retailing activities of bridal furniture had declined. Especially noteworthy is the appearance of first two clothing shops.

Although there were only two clothes shops in 1997, we can see, in 2003, 60 shops for clothes and accessories and 10 shops for interior decor. Meanwhile the number of furniture shops decreased to just 12. It is a decrease of more than 50% since 1997. These maps show the dramatic changes which occurred in Horie from 1997 to 2003.

Two reasons may be pointed out for this dramatic change to fashionable district during the years. First, the local shop owners made efforts for the revitalization of the whole area: in the late 1990s several shops there started to provide entertainment, apparel goods and fashionable furniture for interior decoration. Second, attractive apparel shops from Tokyo squeezed in. Many companies came to realize that Horie is near the central shopping districts, Nanba, Shinsaibashi, which have the power to draw crowds of young people, and that therefore Horie's future prospect looked positive.

As observed above, we have traced the urban transformation of the whole landscape and even land use to fashion-specific district in Horie, confirming the process fashion-related shops have appeared remarkably. Next, I will turn next to street fashion which transforms the atmosphere of Horie. I will discuss how street fashion is shaped in this fashionable district and how they are interrelated.

3 What Is Street Fashion

To begin with, I will describe the concept of street fashion. What is street fashion in the first place? A dictionary defines it as "a fashion that automatically comes into existence and grows naturally among young people in urban streets, not one created by professional designers and

businesses."⁶ This definition may be supplemented by two more characteristics of contemporary street fashion. First, the media takes an important role. Second, as Polhemus⁷ insists, this generation of young people are equipped with a wide knowledge of fashion and an ability to pick out, mix, and tailor different styles to their own tastes.

3.1 The Role of The Media

Consider first the role of print media.

Figs. 5 is a picture called "street snap". We often see this type of pictures in contemporary fashion magazines for youth. In actual fact photographers now go out of their studios to real fashion areas, taking pictures of ordinary young people who they consider cool. An interview with the editor of *Cazi Cazi* confirms that "street snaps" are very popular, suggesting that young people do like to know the real state-of-the-art fashion style, not the artificial styles which fashion magazines recommend from the studio. Young people would not like to know the latest styles from ordinary fashion magazines but rather to learn directly from the real state of streets.

3.2 Real Actors of Street Fashion

Next, Fig. 6 shows a young man who walked around Horie on November 13th, 2003. He is probably in his twenties. With medium length hair with a wave, he is wearing womens' accessories. He is also wearing work clothes. This working class wear forms a part of the fashion he has taken in. It shows that young people have the ability to sample and mix multiple styles and adopt them to suit their own style. In addition, they communicate through their styles and influence each other. Thus they can create an alternative fashion on their own.

4 Street Fashion in Horie

The interviews I conducted with young people in Horie demonstrate a number of things: among others, how young people like to dress themselves and how they contribute to fashion production and/or reproduction in Horie. 14 young passersby were interviewed from July to November in 2003. They are A to N in the following. Mainly, they were in their twenties and particularly part-time workers and students were remarkable. I asked them what they thought of as important to produce their own styles and how they dress up when they visit Horie.

4.1 Plenty of Knowledge Which Young People Share with One Another

⁶ Onuma, J. et al. "Fashion Dictionary", Bunka Publishing Bureau, 2006.

⁷ Polhemus, T. "Streetstyle: From Sidewalk to Catwalk", Thames & Hudson, 1994.

Now let me focus on what the above-mentioned 14 young people talked about (Table 2). First, they seem to have much knowledge of subcultural styles and the meanings.

For example, A samples the styles of his favourite music and M's style represents the genre of "old-school". H says "I love anything to do with rock styles and London fashion". They seem to have a deep knowledge about the genre of music which they love and how they can express their taste in fashion.

In addition, they know much about the context and the atmosphere of Horie. M notes that although he loves music he would never like to be considered that he is showing off his DJ hobby just by carrying records. He knows what kind of meaning is attributed to record-carrying in the context of Horie. C observes an important point: Horie is now the center of fashion with an exciting atmosphere where there are crowds of young people who wear smart and cool clothes.

It may be concluded from these observations that young people coming to Horie have knowledge of the meanings of styles and the atmosphere of Horie.

4.2 The Imitation of Others

Let us go to Table 3, which shows that young people visiting Horie try to dress themselves by watching and sampling others' appearances on the basis of their general knowledge mentioned above. A says, "I usually steal others' skills of dressing when I meet cool people". C raises motivation for new fashion by being in Horie and watching peoples' appearances. C also tries to steal someone's dressing technique when she thinks the person is worth observing. D seeks good samples and uses them in, if any, so that she could make some adjustments in her own way.

In this way young people often "steal" or sample others' clothes, what is more, "street snaps" are also samples and clues to know the atmosphere of street. However, we also have to pay attention to the fact that they do not simply imitate one another. They consider carefully whether a piece of clothing, an item or a combination of them is smart enough and evaluate them accordingly. They are coming and going between imitation and creation in order to get to the best possible individual expression. Anyway, even someone who is imitated by others no doubt imitates still another, thus exerting subtle influence on one another as is happening in the whole district. As a result, street fashion in Horie tends to flow in one direction slowly to which we will turn in the next section.

4.3 The Motivating Power to Renew the Fashion (Table 4)

However, the street fashion doesn't change? It may be said

that young people in Horie are in a sense greedy for fashion and they have sophisticated their styles. A says "I steal all the high skills of others if I like them". For example, he samples not only the styles of his favorite music, but also passersby's new fashion in the streets, and keeps an eye on designers in Tokyo who he favors. He seems to be always searching for anything new to inspire him and he is eager to build up his own style. For I, her current style is the result of ever-lasting quests for the best for her. They seem to have developed sophisticated senses of fashion tastes and styles by continual trials and learning.

However, if street fashion flows in one direction and the current becomes more or less stable, it may become less interesting and even disappointing for some young people who are full of fashion knowledge but still ever-hungry for something new. For I the fashion in Horie "looks the same" and "not original", and she criticizes the young in Horie. Similarly, M regards the fashion in Horie as "too stable" and N points out "You find a lot of mere copycats there". There should be a certain number of young people who are really radical and revolutionary, i.e., those who are willing to go out of stable fashion and disturb the stagnant water, thus contributing to the ever-lasting renewal of fashion. For example, M wears sunglasses which he like and they are not in fashion. By so doing he ventures to call the current state-of-the-art fashion into question. He feels himself a pioneer offering alternatives to the things now in fashion. Thus street fashion is produced and reproduced dynamically, i.e., through active interactions between mainstream and anti-mainstream.

4.4 The Uniqueness of Horie

Lastly it is important to note that the street fashion raises the uniqueness of Horie by changing the atmosphere. As I mentioned above (in 4.2), many young people, just as print media and businesses, consider Horie a special fashionable area.

On the other hand, this atmosphere strengthens the uniqueness of Horie as fashionable district increasingly. Visitors act to attend the atmosphere which young people dressed up and shops make and Horie draw the smartly dressed people increasingly.

J says, "When I visit Horie, I shouldn't dress myself in such a way that someone tells me 'Don't come here with those frumpy clothes'", and she seems to think that Horie demands a style of its own because "most people in Horie are young, smart and sophisticated". L and K wear make-up neatly and they are more conscious of their own appearances in Horie than they are in their hometown. And they feel uncomfortable and embarrassed and want to run back home immediately if they are not satisfied with their

own clothes. It can be said that street fashion makes the uniqueness of Horie and it also makes street fashion somewhat.

What is more, now, it is difficult for shop owners to maintain their shops without being conscious about young people and fashion.

5 Conclusion

Finally, I will collect the main points of the presentation here:

(i) I have discussed the change of land use. Horie spatially transformed itself to a new fashionable area, especially between 1997 and 2003.

(ii) I have reconstructed on the basis of the narratives collected from young people in Horie and editor of fashion magazine how young people interact and make their fashion. They observe and imitate each other, causing a slight adjustment of the current fashion. In a similar way, young people sample styles on magazines and tailor them to match themselves and their practice creates street fashion in Horie.

(iii) Young people improve their fashion by combining clothes and accessories in a unique way, thus suggesting alternative styles of fashion for others in Horie. It contributed to the renewal of street fashion.

(iv) Street fashion increasingly attributes a unique characteristic to Horie increasingly.

Waldensians—Why were they judged as Heretics ?

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Introduction

Who were the Waldensians ? Perhaps, most of you here today have not heard this name.

This is one of the Protestant sects in the Christian Church and the subject of my research. Today, there are 45,000 followers in the world, especially their numbers are concentrated in the Piedmont region of Northern Italy. In the autumn of 2006, I visited their community which is situated near Torino in order to research their history. They are relatively unknown as a Protestant sect that has continued since the Middle Ages, and there are few records about them. So I would like to spread their name in Japan by using the opportunity of this presentation.

I will introduce the history of the Waldensians at this point. Unfortunately, I have no time to explain their complete history, so at present, I will only talk about their origin.

1. The founder (1173)

First, I will present the founder of the Waldensians. In the Middle Ages, there was a rich merchant in Lyon, France. His name was *Pierre Valdès (Peter Waldo)*. One day, he heard the ancient history of a saint which was narrated by a troubadour in the road. He was entranced and then turned to the Bible. But, he didn't know how to read Latin, because he was illiterate and the Bible was written in Latin during this period. So he decided to translate it from church Latin into the common language (his native language was most likely Occitan). After he studied it, he started to preach on his own with this translation of parts of the Bible which he financed.

2. The birth of a new order (1179~1180)

Many people came to follow Valdès since he started to preach, presently, they organized one of the group of preachers. But, the Catholic Church criticized their actions. There are two reasons for this declamation. First, the Catholic Church interdicted that, except the clergy, no one may preach without permission. Second, there was a risk that Valdès and his followers represented an indiscriminate evangelical without learning the Bible well. So, in 1179, they visited the Pope in Rome, and requested the permission of preaching at the Third Council of the Lateran. The Pope,

Alexander III, permitted their preaching with reserve : Preaching in episcopate by the authority of the bishop. And then, at the Council of Lyon in next year, the group of Valdès was admitted as an official order of Catholic Church. This is the birth of a new order : The Waldensians.

3. The causes for condemnation (1184)

The Waldensians were no isolated case. Many lay people in the 12th and 13th centuries chose the “Vita Apostolica” (the apostolic life). Vita Apostolica means “live like the poor as did the ancient apostles”. In this way, they hoped to reform the Catholic Church from the inside. Even if the Waldensians were officially admitted, they were unwilling to give complete obedience to the Pope : “We must obey God rather than men”. They were always faithful to God and the Bible only.

So they preached without permission of the bishop. Because of this disobedience towards the church authorities, the Waldensians were condemned at the Council of Verona in 1184.

4. The period of schism (1205~1218)

After the condemnation, the Waldensians divided into two grand groups : “The Poor of Lyon” and “The Poor of Lombardy”. As they could not stay in Lyon, they had to remove from there to any other place. One group removed to the South of Lyon, the region of “Provence” in France. Another group removed to the East of Lyon, the region of “Piedmont” in Italy. And the people called the group in France “The Poor of Lyon”, and the other group in Italy “The Poor of Lombardy”.

There are some differences between them. For example, the leader of The Poor of Lyon was Pierre Valdès, and the leader of The Poor of Lombardy was *Giovanni di Ronco (John of Ronco)*. The Poor of Lyon were moderate, and The Poor of Lombardy were radical. Although both groups belonged to the same Waldensians, their character was rather different.

5. Excommunication (1215)

Between 1206 and 1207, Pierre Valdès, the founder of the Waldensians, died. But his followers kept their movement alive as an underground group. They participated in the Catholic mass in the daytime and they secretly organized their unique masses in caves, the forest and their home in the night. However, as some people informed the Catholic Church of this activity, Pope, Innocent III, called them up to the Fourth Council of the Lateran.

The Pope was warned of the danger of the disobedience of Waldensians towards the church authorities. Thus, in this Council, they were not only condemned but also excommunicated from the Catholic Church, and finally judged as heretics. From that moment, the Waldensians came to be persecuted by the Catholic Church. The Poor of Lyon were completely massacred and destroyed. But, in the case of The Poor of Lombardy, they were massacred like The Poor of Lyon, however, they survived the persecution and exist until today.

Conclusion

At the end of the Middle Ages, the most important center of the Waldensians was located in the Cottian Alps, a region of the Alps between southern France and northern Italy. When I visited their central community “Torre Pellice”, I found many monuments about their history and memories there. “LUX LUCET IN TENEBRIS” this phrase written in Latin means “The light shines in darkness” and represents their faith. Like this torch which can never be extinguished, the memory of the medieval Waldensians is preserved to this day.

