

Meiji Centennial as a Media Event: Ideas for Upcoming Turkish Republic Centennial

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Abstract : The Meiji Restoration was a chain of events that restored Japan in 1868 and considered as the beginning of Japanese Modernization by many scholars. In 1968, to honor its modern incarnation, Japan celebrated Meiji Centennial as one of the biggest Media Events in the country after the World War II. It was celebrated all around the country throughout the year following with a central event in Tokyo. Meanwhile, Japanese scholars started an opposition movement and claimed that Government was using this event to raise nationalism, pointing at Government's statement on the meaning of Meiji. Most of the scholars, unfortunately, were hooked into the ideological problem of the Government's way of planning and evaluated it as a failure. However, scholars missed out an important point that apart from the central event in Tokyo, each city planned its own event and celebrated it on a different date, also with a different theme. For example, Kyoto showed a regional characteristic and focused on Kyoto's own culture, tradition etc., and highlighted a further past than 100 years. This was mainly because some areas/cities had a different 'memory' for Meiji Restoration than Tokyo which was reflected through the way they celebrated Meiji Centennial. On the other hand, 2023 will be the year of Turkish Republic Centennial. A year which will be marked by national and maybe even international events. Although an official committee has not been announced yet, The 2023 Vision, a list of goals has been released by the Government to coincide with the centenary of the Republic of Turkey in 2023 and there are some ongoing projects that are planned to be completed by then. By looking at the content of these projects, it is possible to say that Government is aiming to focus on Modernization through the Centennial. However, some of the projects are already showing some interesting characteristics such as the Istanbul New Airport whose design is inspired by Selimiye Mosque's Islamic-Ottoman figure. It is true that Turkey and Japan have different historical backgrounds and the timeline of the Meiji Restoration and Foundation of Turkish Republic are different. Therefore, a particular comparison between these two events is not justified. However, they may have more in common than we are up to think because, each country marked the start of a new nation conceived on modern principles. For that reason, it is important to understand the similarities or differences between Meiji Centennial and Turkish Republic Centennial as a media event. This study introduces Meiji Centennial as a media event and analyses opposition movement along with the meaning of Meiji Centennial. Additionally, it explains regional characteristic differences and gives Kyoto as an example. Moreover, it introduces some of the ongoing Centennial projects in Turkey and analyses the meaning of the Turkish Republic Centennial through these projects. Without comparing Japan and Turkey, it explains the case of Japan but the discussion centers on deepening our understanding of Centennial as a Media Event and remarks some important aspects for Turkey's upcoming Centennial events.

Keywords : media events, Meiji centennial, the 2023 vision, Turkish republic centennial

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