Article

The Formation Process of the “National Orthodoxy” Regime in Contemporary Russia*

MIYAKAWA Shinichi

Abstract

Through dramatic domestic and international changes resulting from the Soviet Union’s extinction, Russia has powerfully reappeared on the world’s stage. Although contemporary Russia does not have a firm unification principle, a “National Orthodoxy” regime is being formed. The “National Orthodoxy” corresponds to the “state religion” as the core element of national unification. Separate from the “private Orthodoxy” as a living faith, the “public Orthodoxy” emerged as a principle to unify the people. The “National Orthodoxy” regime is a national idea that the Russian Orthodox Church should unify with the people of Russia, and it is a political-religious system to realize national unification. Under this regime, the values of the Orthodoxy apply to all the people of Russia. The Russian Orthodox Church promotes a harmonious agreement between the Russian state and society. While the movement from the bottom, known as the “private side,” mixes with the policy from the top, known as the “government side,” the “National Orthodoxy” regime formation process in Russia is promoted. In addition, it is observed that the “centralization of the Orthodoxy” assumes that the Orthodoxy is a unification principle. And at the same time, the “marginalization of the non-Orthodoxy” suppresses and removes all religion except the Orthodoxy. In this country, this dual structure exists separately, while the various schools of religion in the private sphere overlap with the “National Orthodoxy” in the public sphere. The contemporary Russian national identity may have been reconstructed with the principle of
unification known as the “National Orthodoxy” regime at its core.

**Introduction**

The dramatic change in Russia and overseas, such as revival of nationalism and religion at the end of Soviet period, the end of the Cold War, disappearance of the Soviet Union, independence of each ethnic republic in the former Soviet Union, Russia has appeared on the stage of world history again. The principle of integration in Russian Empire was “Autocracy-Orthodox-nationality,” the principle had been changed to “Communist one-party dictatorship, communist ideology, the Soviet people” during the Soviet era. But Russia, which was born after the disappearance of the Soviet Union, has failed to have a firm principle of integration. In both of private sphere and public sphere, Russia is in the state of identity crisis. In the former Soviet Union and the Eastern European countries, the majority traditional religions in each country have gained power as integral principle of national integration after the conversion of regime at the end of 20th century. Rise of the Russian Orthodox Church as the majority traditional religion is remarkable in Russia Today. De-secularization of politics is also in progress in this country.

The Russian Orthodox Church is emerging in state level and the social level in contemporary Russia. In addition, it is possible to see that church and state fuse each other in this country. I use my original term “National Orthodoxy” regime as a keyword in this paper. The “National Orthodoxy” means “state religion” as a core element of national unity. Apart from the

* An earlier version of this paper was presented at the RC22 Sociology of Religion, Roundtable II: Religion, State, and Law, XVIII ISA World Congress of Sociology, Yokohama, Japan in July 2014.

1 For details on national identity in contemporary Russia, see the following. Kristof (1968); Guroff and Guroff (1994); Shenfield (1994); Szporluk (1994); Тышков (1995); Chulos and Piirainen (2000); Miyakawa (2006b).

2 Fox (2008: 140-180).

“private Orthodox” as a living faith, it refers to the “official orthodoxy” as a principle of national integration. The “National Orthodoxy” regime is a national idea that the Russian Orthodox Church should unify with the people of Russia and is a political religious system where national unification is realized by the idea. Under this regime, the value of the Orthodoxy applies to all the people of Russia. The Russian Orthodox Church promotes a harmonious agreement between the Russian state and society.

While the movement from the bottom known as the civil side mixes with the policy from the top known as the government side, the “National Orthodoxy” regime formation process in Russia is promoted. In addition, it is observed that the “centralization of the Orthodoxy” assumes that the Orthodoxy is a unification principle. And at the same time, the “marginalization of the non-Orthodoxy” suppresses and removes religion except the Orthodoxy. In this country, dual structure exists separately while the various schools of religion in the private sphere overlap with the “National Orthodoxy” in the public sphere. And it seems that as the “National Orthodoxy” has established in the public sphere, freedom of religion in the private sphere is threatened. I want to raise a hypothesis here that the “National Orthodoxy” regime as a principle of integrating Russia is being formed. The purposes of this paper are to follow the process of formation of the “National Orthodoxy” regimes as a unified principle of contemporary Russia, and to elucidate content of national identity, which has been rebuilt in the process.

Previous research surrounding the theme of this paper has been found from around 1997, when religious law was amended in Russia. Hirooka Masahisa has pioneered research in this theme in Japan. And at the beginning of the 21st century, these studies are progressing further in other countries, including Russia. Approach from political science, religious studies, sociology is mainly observed, then law studies and civilizational studies are seen here.

4 As a representative study, Hirooka (2000).
and there. Various keywords appeared in the previous studies as follows: “principle of integration,” “civil religion,” Byzantine traditional “harmony,” “state church de facto,” “politics of the Orthodox Church,” “Orthodox nationalism,” “public religion,” “political Orthodoxy,” “partnership,” “national identity,” “national idea” and so on. The “National Orthodoxy” regime which is used in this paper is a new term that has not been submitted in previous research.

1. The Russian Orthodox Church to Rise

In contemporary Russia, Orthodox has increased significantly. According to Table 1, as compared to the fact that percentage of Orthodox was 31% in 1991, it jumped up to 69% in 2011. Approximately 70% of Russian people are self-proclaimed Orthodox. Islam has increased slightly in the non-Orthodox, but table 1 shows that other religions are almost flat. As it can be seen from Table 2, the Church has earned trust from society gradually.

In August 2000, the local Council of the Russian Orthodox Church has adopted a document entitled “The Basis of the Social Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church” (hereafter the Social Concept). It has been determined by the Bishops’ Council of the Church, according to Father Superior Veniamin, preparation of a draft of the Social Concept had a semi-enclosed nature. The Social Concept is the first official programmatic document of similar sort in the history of the Russian Orthodox Church, it has become of interest from the Russian Orthodox Church inside and outside. The social concept consists of all 16 chapters, and it is written as follows in chapter 2 which is entitled “Church and nation.” “When a nation, civil or ethnic, represents fully or predominantly a monoconfessional Orthodox community, it can in a certain sense be regarded as the one community of faith – an Orthodox nation.” Here, it can be considered that the position of the Russian Orthodox Church is shown that the Russian nation is the Orthodox nation because Orthodox accounts for

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5 For details on previous research surrounding the theme of this paper, see the following. Miyakawa (2013).
The Formation Process of the “National Orthodoxy” Regime in Contemporary Russia

According to Vsevolod Chaprin of the Russian Orthodox Church, by the establishment of the 1997 religious law, a solid legal foundation has developed for the relationship between the state and religious organizations in the Russian Federation. The Moscow Patriarchate argues to develop actively the partnership of a church-state and a church-society. The Russian Orthodox Church is ready to cooperate with the state and secular society. Cooperation between church and state should be free, devoid of pressure or coercion. Such cooperation will guarantee success. Chaprin hopes that the search for a practical model of church-state partnership in

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Table 1. What is your religion?

<table>
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<td>56%</td>
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<td>58%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>22%</td>
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<td>1%</td>
<td>7%</td>
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Table 2. How Church worthy to trust

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<td>37%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worthy to some extent</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worthy not at all</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Difficult to answer</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


7 Пейков (2001).
8 “Основы социальной концепции Русской Православной Церкви.”
Russia will take precisely this path in the spirit of good will and wise concern for the welfare of every citizen in Russia.

In 2007, the world Russian People’s Council was held to discuss the “Russian Doctrine” in Moscow. Metropolitan Kirill gave a high evaluation of this doctrine, which expressed the position of the Moscow Patriarchate. Basic propositions of the doctrine in the field of social system are as follows: (1) the legal norms such as the principle of the separation of powers, supremacy of human rights are not essential; (2) Russia is not considered to be a multi-religious state; (3) Upper leaders belongs to Orthodoxy; (4) Subjects of religious learning should be introduced into the compulsory program in state and municipal schools; and (5) The Russian holidays should be modified to take into consideration the calendar of the Orthodoxy. Major proposition is to foresee the possibility of transition to religious state regime from the secular state regime.

2. Russian Politics to De-secularization

The Russian Federation religious law was enacted in 1997. Other Orthodox, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Judaism are described as “traditional religions” in the preamble. Chapter 2 provides for the “religious association.” It distinguishes “religious group” (Article 7) and “religious organization” (Article 8), provides for “religious association” (Article 6) as a concept to comprehend both. Central religious organization is recognized as a religious organization composed of three or more local religious organizations, central religious organization which has been working legally in Russia for more than 50 years can be branded the “Russia.” There is not a registration system to religious groups, which do not have legal personality. Religious organization can be founded on the condition that it has been in existence for more than 15 years in

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10 Андреева (2008: 71).
11 For details on 1997 religious law, see the following. Davis (1997); Miyakawa (2011).
The Formation Process of the “National Orthodoxy” Regime in Contemporary Russia

Russia (Article 9), can be registered to the state, and can be a legal personality (Article 11). Foreign religious organization can set up a representative office in Russia, but can’t do religious activities (Article 13). Article 14 provides for dissolution of religious organization and prohibition of activities of religious organization and religious group. Under the new religious law, hierarchy of religion is formed in Russia. Alexander Agajanian analyzed it as shown in Table 3. Mainstream Orthodox, Islam, Buddhism, Judaism, which are mentioned in the preamble of the religious law, are located in the high rank of the hierarchy, the Roman Catholic as non-Orthodox Christian, Protestant denominations are located in the middle rank of the hierarchy. Above mentioned are treated as traditional religions. Old Believers, other Protestant sects, new religious movements, occultism and Paganism etc. are located at the lowest rank of the hierarchy, and these are treated as other religions, or sects.

It is clear that the rulers of contemporary Russia attach importance to religion in order to build national identity. The reasons, according to Alexander Verhovsky, are as follows: (1) the images of the imperial government and the Orthodox are inseparable to reconstruction of Russia; (2) the historical role of the Orthodox which divide the Western Europe and Russia is important; (3)

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12 The full text of the 1997 religious law, see the following. Российская газета, 1997-10-01, 3-4.
the Russian citizens trust in the Church; (4) Putin individually is Orthodox; and (5) fear to Islamic terrorism and the rise of radical political Islam\textsuperscript{14}. The 1997 religious law of Russia declares what type of religion is Russia-specific in the preamble. According to Nikolas Gvosdev, alongside Orthodox as a living faith, there is an emerging “civic” Orthodoxy, which can stand as a basis for unifying society. Putin sent a message of blessing for Christmas in 2001. Putin said that Orthodox values apply not only to believers but to all members of society, and that these common values promote societal consensus and harmony. Thus, religious-philosophical pluralism in Russia is managed by having the various non-Orthodox groups adapt themselves to the hegemony of Orthodox values and institutions\textsuperscript{15}. Russia is provided to be a secular state in the Constitution, the Church in fact has intervened in all areas of social life. According to Je Toshichenko, Russia is a secular state, but is positioned in the form of the revival of the religion. Religion has gradually become not a personal matter in Russia, the Church has already cooperated fully with the state. In general, processes of clericalization and even realization of theocracy occur in contemporary era in many states. As far as church and state relations in Russia are concerned, the model of the dominant (state) religion country has gradually appeared\textsuperscript{16}.

3. Introduction of Orthodox Education in Public Education

In this section I take up a case of introduction of Orthodox education in public education as representative of the formation process of the “National Orthodoxy” regime from the top and centering process of the Orthodox\textsuperscript{17}. In the early 1990s, the Russian Ministry of Education has determined the

\textsuperscript{14} Верховский (2006: 166-169).
\textsuperscript{15} Gvosdev (2002: 78-82).
\textsuperscript{16} Тощенко (2007: 6, 14).
\textsuperscript{17} For details on the introduction of Orthodox education in public education in Russia, see the following. Miyakawa (2006a).
introduction of religious learning emphasizing the morals and ethics of Christianity in the curriculum of Russian schools. Three officials of the Russian Ministry of Education visited Christian educator’s convention in California in November 1992. On behalf of the Russian Minister of Education, they requested that more than 8,000 educators to participate in “CoMission”. The CoMission was formed by a group of more than 80 Christian organizations to guide Russian teachers the teaching method of Christian ethics in public schools. In December 1992, executive committee of the CoMission with the Russian Minister of Education signed the “Protocol of intention.” The protocol described the CoMission as a “Christian social project” and stated that “in order to develop cooperation in the field of education and the spiritual renewal of society,” both groups would cooperate for five years to develop morals and ethics programs and curriculum for Russian public schools. In early 1995, however, an Orthodox priest learned that a CoMission member taught the Christian Ethics and Morality during regular school hours. The same priest also obtained documents, which was written the CoMission’s intent to send 12,000 missionaries to Russia over a five-year period to start Bible studies that would eventually form churches. The priest sent a photocopy of the materials to the speaker of the upper house of the Parliament, and the Prime Minister. They then sent the material to the Minister of Education. The “Protocol of intention” between the executive committee of the CoMission and the Russian Minister of Education signed was canceled in February 1995.

In substitution for the CoMission, partnership of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Russian Ministry of Education has progressed afterwards. In February 1999, along with the proposal of the Moscow Patriarchate, secular-religious committee on education was established in the Ministry of

18 Bill (2002).
19 Glanzer (2002: 3).
20 Glanzer (2002: 5).
Education. The education was called to release state educational standard, school program, textbooks and teaching aids from the manifestation of militant atheism. In addition, in August 1999, the Minister of Education Filippov and Patriarch Alexii II signed “Contract on cooperation with the Ministry of Education Russian Federation and the Moscow Patriarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church.” The Contract includes following matters: exchange informations, interaction in matters of learning and teaching methods, analysis and summary of accumulated experience in the collaboration in the field of spiritual and moral upbringing, making proposals with reliable arguments about the modification and addition of the current law on education, freedom of conscience and religious associations. During 1997-1999, subject of teaching the Orthodox doctrine in public junior high schools in capital of the provincial government agencies in some regions of Russia began to be introduced. For example, “Basics and values of the Orthodoxy” (Belgorod), “Basics of the Orthodox culture” (Kursk), elective subject about the “law of God” (Voronezh, Kaliningrad), “Basics of the Orthodox culture and morality” (Novosibirsk, Smolensk), “History of the Church” (Voronezh, Rostov-na-Donu), selective subject about basics of the Orthodox (Kemerovo) etc. were introduced. Kursk province was the most notable, which has introduced teaching of “Basics of the Orthodox culture” in 300 out of 800 schools in the province.

In the early 2002, a textbook “Basics of Orthodox Culture” written by Ara Borojina was published. Official seal of “Recommended by Adjustment Council on transaction of the Ministry of Education Russian Federation and the Moscow Patriarchate Russian Orthodox Church” has been pressed on this. Borojina became the head teacher of the Moscow school No. 1148, and the expert of teaching method at Moscow Institute for faculty re-education in Moscow committee of education. She has prepared this course from 1996,

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have proposed the idea of introducing a new subject that spans all grades in school programs as well as textbooks. In October 2002, the Minister of Education Filippov signed the letter that granted a summary of the exemplary teaching methods planning for the subject “Orthodox culture.” This letter was sent to the Education Bureau of the region, which was to initiate intensive introduction of “Basics of the Orthodox Culture” in schools. Vice-minister of Education Grebnev also revealed the idea in January 2004 that the course “Basics of Orthodox culture” in the compulsory program of junior high school should be introduced. Minister of Education Filippov reiterated its policy of introducing the Orthodox education as an elective in junior high school at a press conference in February 2004.

As a result of this policy of Ministry of Education, supporters and opponents to the introduction of the Orthodox education in secondary education have been formed. The proponents, aside from the Russian Ministry of Education and the Russian Orthodox Church which are parties concerned and promoters, consist from mainly three forces: a part of the local and federal power agencies; some of the social and political organization of the Russian nationalist; and small groups of teachers who are Orthodox or materially concerned teachers. The opponents are composed of mainly four groups: children who feel a new burden with a heavy load; parents who do not want teaching of fanaticism for children; majority of the teachers who have own insight into morality; and liberal social-political organizations which consider that growing influence of the Russian Orthodox Church in the social institution is a threat to democratic development of Russia and is infringement of rights of other religions and denominations. Members of a human rights organization (Ponomarev and others) accused Borojina of anti-Semitism and made an attempt to initiate criminal investigation against her. More than ten court

25 Митрохин (2005). For detail about the course “Basics of Orthodox Culture,” see the following. Основы Православной культуры.
26 Митрохин (2005).
sessions took place in Moscow concerning this matter. In educational sites, however, teaching of “Basics of the Orthodox Culture” has infiltrated gradually. This course became compulsory in fifth grade at the school in Tula in 2002, the consent of parents and desire of children have become the conditions in 2003. In the proletarian district of the city, this elective subject is being implemented at five schools out of 30. In March 2004, the “Basics of the Orthodox culture” was taught as an elective subject in 70% of the school in Kursk province. In 2004-2005, the “Basics of the Orthodox Culture” and courses that is similar to it were taught at a School in District Krasnodar and Stavropol regions, Udmurt Republic, Samara, Kaluga, Kaliningrad, Smolensk, Kursk, Voronezh, Nijini Novgorod, Vladimir, Kirov, Kurgan, Sverdlovsk provinces. In this way, the formation process of the “National Orthodoxy” regime from the top and the centralization of the Orthodoxy are progressing in public education.

4. The Second Chechen War and the Anti-Islamic News

In this section, as one aspect of the formation process of the “National Orthodoxy” regime from the bottom and the marginalization of the non-Orthodoxy, I take up the case of the Second Chechen war and the anti-Islamic news in Russia. The failure of the First Chechen war which Russian public opinion opposed, unilateral expansion of NATO, NATO air strikes to Serbia

29 Митрохин (2000: 54).
30 Козырев (2004); Религия и СМИ, 2003-07-17.
31 REGIONS.RU, 2003-10-27.
32 ПРАВОСЛАВИЕ.RU, 2004-03-04.
33 Луховский (2005).
34 For further progress of the Orthodox Education in public education in Russia, See the following. Межрегиональная правозащитная группа (2010).
35 For details on anti-Islamic coverage and the Second Chechen War, see the following. Miyakawa (2010).
hurt a great deal of Russian nationalism. The Second Chechen War was progressed to the Russian side predominance in the background of support of public opinion. The victory in Chechnya was a “glorious event” that marked the end of the confusion and humiliation of the 1990s. Since the U.S. terrorist attacks in 2001, Islamophobic climate has also been growing in Russia.36

In contemporary Russia, hate speech has been spreading as nationalism became exalted.37 In Chechen coverage in Russia, expressions such as “Chechens are gangs and terrorists,” “a word ‘Chechen’ has a well known synonym called ‘Wahhabist’” are seen.38 Furthermore, Chechnyaphobia has been changing to Islamophobia. Some Russian journalists and politicians have interpreted the developments in Chechnya according to Samuel Huntington’s concept of the clash of civilizations, that is, as a war of “Orthodox soldiers of Christ” against “aggressive Muslim fanatics and separatists.” In the eyes of the ordinary Russian citizen, the image of Islam is an “evil Chechen.” One of the Russian political elite has written that foreign Islamic fundamentalists were identified as those who “took control of Chechnya.”39 For many Russians, a bearded man holding a Kalashnikov automatic rifle and wearing a green headband has become the symbol of Chechen separatism and the stereotypical image of a Chechen. Today in Russia the word “terrorism” is rarely used without the adjective “Islamic.”40

Table 4 shows the analysis of hate speech in the mass media in Russia during 2001-2005. Chechen, Caucasian whole, and Muslim hold the highest position here. The total according to race and ethnicity are enumerated

36 For detail about the Chechen war, see the following. Ueda (2004); Politkovskaya (2004); Trenin (2004).
37 For the hate speech in Russia, see the following. Rancour-Lafriere (2000); Brinks (2006); Laruelle (2009).
38 Ахметьева (2007: 203-204). For the Chechnya coverage in Russia, see the following. Ахмадов (2006); Ибрагимов (2006).
sequentially Caucasian, Westerner, Asian, Slav, black, Central Asian, Arab from the high rank. In these results, Caucasian show a tendency of increase, Westerner decrease, Asian decrease, Slav maintenance, black maintenance, Central Asian decrease, and Arab decrease. The total according to religion are enumerated sequentially Islam, Judaism, new religious movements, Catholicism, Orthodoxy from the high rank. In these results, Islam shows a tendency of increase, new religious movements maintenance, Judaism, Catholicism, Orthodoxy tend to decrease. Thus, among objects of the hate speech according to race and ethnicity, Caucasian centering on the Chechen is

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<td>11</td>
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<td>3.29%</td>
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<td>Westerner</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4.67%</td>
<td>4.19%</td>
<td>0.98%</td>
<td>4.09%</td>
<td>2.79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>other Asian ethnic</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2.55%</td>
<td>4.77%</td>
<td>3.41%</td>
<td>3.18%</td>
<td>2.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>other (Trans) Caucasian ethnic</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.61%</td>
<td>4.67%</td>
<td>2.44%</td>
<td>1.82%</td>
<td>2.51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Non-Russian</td>
<td>12.14%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2.43%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Верховский (2002: 31-32); Верховский (2005: 82); Кожевникова (2004a: 15); Кожевникова (2004b: 13-14); Кожевникова (2005: 13-14). The author made this table based on the findings of five above. Each number indicates the percentage of the overall hate speech observed in the five studies. 45 in all, this table displays the top 15.
the most, and it is only the Caucasian that hate speech increases. In addition, among objects of the hate speech according to religion, Islam is the most, and hate speech increase only in the case of the Islam. In this way, the formation process of the “National Orthodoxy” regime from the bottom and the marginalization of the non-Orthodoxy could be observed in the mass media.

**Conclusion**

National identity of the new Russia was chaotic. In contemporary Russia, the Russian Orthodox Church has restored and risen. Along with it, de-secularization of Russian politics is in progress. The “National Orthodoxy” regime is a national idea that the Russian Orthodox Church should unify with the people of Russia and it is a political religious system where national unification is realized by the idea. While the movement from the bottom known as the civil side mixes with the policy from the top known as the government side, the “National Orthodoxy” regime formation process in Russia is promoted. In addition, it is observed that the “centralization of the Orthodoxy” assumes that the Orthodoxy is a unification principle. And at the same time, the “marginalization of the non-Orthodoxy” suppresses and removes religion except the Orthodoxy. In Russia, dual structure exists separately while various schools of religion in the private sphere overlap with the “National Orthodoxy” in the public sphere. And it seems that as the “National Orthodoxy” has established in the public sphere, the freedom of religion in the private sphere is threatened. Thus, as I have described above, the contemporary Russian national identity has been reconstructed, with the principle of unification known as the “National Orthodoxy” regime at its core.
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