

THE GOVERNMENT OF JAPAN

ARDATH W. BURKS



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The Government of JAPAN

Ardath W. Burks

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INTRODUCTION

This booklet describes the government of Japan, with emphasis on the period of readjustment since the peace treaty of 1952.

A generation ago, governments and politics of the Far East were relegated to picturesque appendices of standard treatises on more familiar Western states and political behavior. A handful of American scholars equipped with Asian languages were then only laying down the foundations for the understanding of un-familiar cultures, in which the governments and politics of East Asian countries were and are rooted. To understand the dynamic changes inherent in the modernization of Asia and particularly of Japan, this generation of observers has had to go into the field to see the transition firsthand, to break across orthodox disciplinary boundaries and, indeed, to begin to hammer out a whole new approach to the politics of developing areas.

After a brief sketch of historical background, this booklet picks up Japan's politics where the quiet but amazing Occupation of Japan (1945–1952) left off. The Occupation drama has, with few exceptions, been treated with Americans pictured in an active and Japanese in a passive role. Such an ethnocentric approach has, in any case, now been rendered completely academic because the Japanese, since 1952, have once again set about rediscovering their fading past, matching it against their dynamic present, and speculating about their uncertain future.

In this generation and the next, there need be no explanation for inclusion of a booklet on Japan in a series devoted to foreign governments. The reason is simple. To quote Kipling: He who only England knows, knows not England!

This booklet is essentially a distillation of the author's experiences: twenty years' study of East Asia; five years' involvement in civilian and military intelligence projects devoted to wartime Japan; a decade of teaching graduate students, undergraduates, and in-service teachers about postwar Japan; and, finally, four trips to East Asia, two (1952–1953 and 1958–1959) involving extended residence and research in the contrasting ways of life found in agrarian, rural and in commercial, urban environments within post-treaty Japan.

For support during the two most recent trips, the author is grateful to the Social Science Research Council; the University of Michigan Center for Japanese Studies (specifically, to Professors Robert B. Hall, John W. Hall, and Robert E. Ward); the United States Educational Commission in Japan; the Institute of Humanistic Studies, Kyoto University (specifically, to Dean Kosaka Masaaki and Professors Sakata Yoshio and Horie Yasuzo); and the Research Council and Calm Fund, Rutgers University.

In Japan the author has run up an enormous debt of gratitude: to Director Tanabe Sadayoshi, Tokyo Institute of Municipal Research (as well as his son, Tanabe Tatsuro, International House); to former Rutgers students, Professor Shibata Tokue and Mr. Takizawa Nobuo, for various data; to Mr. Toda Morikuni (in 1958–1959, Counsellor, Foreign Service Training Institute and member of the U.S. Educational Commission), for materials on the *Gaimusho*; to Dr. Richard W. Rabinowitz and Judge Tanabe Koji (Japanese Legal Training

and Research Institute), for materials on courts and law; and to Messrs. Kanagawa Buichi of the Liberal-Democrats, Fujimaki Shumpei and Kamigura Tetsu of the Social Democrats, for party materials.

Along with a generation of “Mishigan” researchers, the author is proud to have become an honorary citizen of Okayama Prefecture. Such acquired rights do not wipe out long-standing obligations: to Governor Miki Yukiharu, Mr. Araki Eietsu, and Mr. Ueda Chikao of the Okayama *Kencho*; and to Kawahara Yukuo of the Okayama *Shiyakuso*.

Back here in America, the author has regularly relied upon the services of the Japanese Consulate General, New York (and particularly, Mr. Alan Smith, Information Office) for numerous materials.

For opportunities both to listen and to sound off, the author has been fortunate in affiliations with the Council on Foreign Relations study group on Japan, 1956; with colleagues in the New Jersey Seminar on Asian Studies, 1960–1962; and with neighbors in the University Seminar on Modern East Asia: Japan, Columbia University. He has profited from several successive graduate seminars at Rutgers (specifically, from work by his Korean graduate student, Mr. Lee Soon-won, and by Mr. Frits Levenbach, who continued study at the University of Michigan).

Several of the author’s colleagues—Professors John Brush, John Hall, Eugene Meehan, Bennett Rich—read parts of the booklet; Dr. Nobutaka Ike, Stanford University, read the entire manuscript. All contributed valuable suggestions but none is in the least responsible for errors.

The reader should note that in citing Japanese names, the author has used Japanese style: the family name followed by the given name.

The author’s wife, Jane Burks, typed the manuscript and, following Editor Arnold Rogow’s precedent, helped the author to keep the dogs, Sumi-e (who has been to Japan) and Anzu (her *nisei* daughter), from tracking on the copy. To Riki-*chan*, who made his first trip to Japan in 1958–1959 and became the author’s skillful guide, this book is dedicated.

A.W.B.

New Brunswick, N.J.
June, 1961

NOTE TO THE SECOND EDITION

Since writing the First Edition of this book in 1961, the author has returned to Japan once, in the summer of 1962. Even such a brief trip provided confirming impressions, buttressed by the steady flow of scholarship produced by his able colleagues, and led to the decision to keep the over-all format of the Second Edition—and major themes—unchanged. There has been, of course, a conscientious attempt to update the factual data contained in the volume.

The author is grateful for the many kind comments, in formal reviews and informal conversations, as well as constructive criticism, elicited by the First Edition. As before, the author is solely responsible for any old and new errors which appear.

A.W.B.

October, 1963

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The Government of JAPAN

1—Background I: The Japanese Rediscover Their Past

Not long ago the Japanese public was startled by the dramatic protest of Prince Mikasa, 45-year-old youngest brother of Emperor Hirohito. The prince, a popular professor of orientology at a women's university in Tokyo, strode out of a general meeting of a historical society in disgust when a motion he had made was ruled out of order. His motion expressed opposition, originally circulated in a magazine (*Nippon Bunkazai*), to the revival of a holiday called *Kigensetsu* (National Foundation Day).¹

Sharp critics of the prince suggested that he should have voiced his opposition only after he had relinquished his title of Imperial Prince. The prince himself said that as a member of the imperial family, a former army officer, and a scholar, he had a responsibility to denounce the prewar holiday as “without historical foundation.” A close friend said the prince had worried over the fact that the emperor system had been exploited in prewar concepts of education. He was thinking more seriously than anyone else about the future of the Japanese imperial family. Despite these questions, emanating from a member of the family, gala *Kigensetsu* celebrations have been revived, particularly at the Kashihara shrine near Nara.

Origins

What the squabble involving Prince Mikasa may obscure is, in fact, the strong sense of continuity the Japanese continue to derive from their own history. The 1,200-year-old view of history—indeed, the 3,000-year-old prehistory, protohistory, and history of Japan—still casts a spell over the Japanese mind. The appeal is to the emotions rather than to the intellect and can be explained more easily in sociological terms of religion than of political science. Since the Japanese have never, save under alien prodding, separated religion from government, the semi-religious myth of Japanese origins obviously has had a persistent effect on politics. And, disregarding for the moment the plodding process of proving or disproving the legends, Japan is beyond doubt the country with the oldest continuous government in the world.

¹ In prewar Japan, before the frowns of Occupation authorities, February 11 had always been set aside to celebrate the day in 660 B.C. when, according to Japanese mythology, the first Emperor Jimmu ascended the throne eternal. Later, the prince compiled and sponsored a book of essays entitled *The Dawn of Japan*, written by twenty leading scholars including some who supported revival of the holiday even though they did not subscribe to the mythology. My distinguished colleague, microbiologist and Nobel Prize winner, Dr. Selman Waksman, told me that the last time he enjoyed a long talk with Prince Mikasa, the latter's burning interest in ancient history had led him into the study of Hebrew, so that he might read Biblical literature close to the original.

2 The Government of Japan

Most Japanese now recognize that the *Kojiki* (Record of Ancient Matters) and the *Nihon Shoki* (Chronicles of Japan), both compiled in the eighth century, were pieced together from tradition in obedience to an imperial command. In other words, the aim of this first historical writing was to establish cultural and educational policy on the basis of loyalty to the imperial family. In general thereafter, Japanese writing of history was regarded as too important an undertaking to be left merely to historians. As in China, historiography in Japan was regarded as a significant political instrument of the state itself. Space does not permit a survey of the 1,200-year pageant of Japanese written history, and so citation of one or two trends must suffice. Motoori Norinaga (A.D. 1730–1801), for example, successfully undertook a review of early Japanese classics with remarkably scientific method. Nevertheless, his *Commentaries on the KOJIKI* also contributed to the sanctions of nationalism and gave the ancient classics the authority of scriptures.²

It was not until after the Meiji Restoration in 1868, in theory a restoration of power to the throne, that Western historiography was introduced in Japan. A scientific view of history was usually reserved to the educated few, however, and popular understanding of history underwent no drastic change. Later in the age of militarism, Western culture which, on the one hand, enabled scholars to take a detached view of the past, strengthened, on the other hand, the power of the state as a menace to academic freedom. With Japan's surrender in 1945, a reaction to the official view of history set in and it became popular to debunk the glory of Japan and the imperial family. It has been gratifying to note, after the treaty of peace in 1951, that the Japanese have now set about the rediscovery of their past with a more mature attitude.

One difficulty lies, of course, in the fact that now Japanese biologists, anthropologists, and archaeologists debate fiercely the complicated ethno-historical origins of the Japanese people. After a careful survey of the wealth of new data, Professor Richard Beardsley came up with a tentative but useful chronology of ancient Japan:

<i>Dates</i>	<i>Period</i>	<i>Characteristics</i>
?B.C.–2500 B.c.	Early Prehistoric	Nonagricultural
2500 B.C.–250 B.C.	Middle Prehistoric (<i>Jomon</i>)	Nonagricultural; handmade pottery
250 B.C.–A.D. 250	Protohistoric (<i>Yayoi</i>)	Rice cultivation; social classes; copper, bronze, iron
A.D. 250–A.D. 750	Semihistoric; Historic (<i>Tomb</i>)	Earth-mound tombs; iron weapons; Buddhism; Chinese script ³

Since 1949, when stone implements were unearthed in the loam of Gumma Prefecture, it has been considered safe to push back Japan's prehistoric curtain to the Pleistocene

² Motoori Norinaga, *Kojiki-den* (Commentaries on the *Kojiki*). For a convenient overview of the spectrum of historical analysis, see Hugh Borton, "A Survey of Japanese Historiography," *American Historical Review*, XLII (October, 1937 and July, 1938).

³ Richard K. Beardsley, "Japan Before History: A Survey of the Archaeological record," *The Far Eastern Quarterly*, XIV, No. 3 (May, 1955), p. 320.

epoch. The finds indicated chipped but not polished stone, no ceramics and, doubtless, no agriculture. Beyond this, knowledge of early prehistoric Japan is hazy, but speculation does hint at both Siberian and Southeast Asian origins of the stone implements. It may be that the waves of migration out of the cultural heartland of Asia had already begun piling up on coastal areas and even spilling over into Japan.

The earliest Neolithic pottery culture, called *Jomon* (literally, “rope-mark”), was also of two distinct types, possibly emanating from Northeast and Southeast Asia. Among the some 15,000 Ainu in Hokkaido and Sakhalien are still some faint echoes of remains associated with *Jomon* but, as Dr. Beardsley has pointed out, it is entirely too simple to identify *Jomon* solely with Ainu culture.⁴ Certainly by the middle prehistoric period (*circa* 1000 B.C.), Japanese culture was well advanced. Then, about the third or second century B.C., began the first of those great and dramatic confrontations of culture which have successively reshaped Japanese life. Indirectly, the influence of the powerful Chinese Han dynasty (206 B.C.–A.D. 220) was felt in Japan. The relatively primitive nomadic peoples watched the intrusion of migrants who engaged in rice culture and who were metal experts. The two strains fused to provide the stuff of protohistoric (*Yayoi*) culture. Its main base was in Kyushu, closest to the mainland, but the early literary classics also illuminate socio-religious rites and a secret society complex somewhat similar to those found in Melanesia. Similarly, the earliest *taro* or yam culture appears to be connected with the South Seas. In any case, over the edge of Japanese history came the familiar rice paddy field, the root of Japanese culture.

Already too there began to appear the familiar outlines of Japanese social structure: father domination of the family; marriage outside the clan; village organization built around age and class; growth of Altaic languages; and even the myth of *Amaterasu*, the Sun Goddess. By the third or fourth century of our Christian epoch there had clearly emerged a people with considerable political genius, with a society built around a patriarchal clan (*uji*), with marked occupational specialization and slaves, with clan gods (*uji-gami*) and, most significant, with the legend of a chief clan god. Among the various myths which have obviously political characteristics the most important is this story of a deity who conquered the “middle land.” It forms the basis for the assertion of sovereign rights of the oldest imperial family in the world. Beyond doubt, it partially accounts for the publicity given the criticism voiced by Prince Mikasa of the doubtful historical foundations of the myth itself!

It seems that a grandson (*Ninigi*) of the Sun Goddess descended from heaven. (Although it is embarrassing to remind the Japanese of this, there is a close parallel here to the so-called Tankun myth of the founding of Korea.) The story merges with the myth of the Emperor Jimmu, whose existence is also problematical and who is supposed to have conquered and ruled the realm of Yamato. Beyond doubt a monarchy was established in Yamato, surrounding present-day Nara, by the fourth century. Thus was formed the oldest political tradition of Japan, the tradition of imperial rule under the *Tenno* (literally, the Sovereign of Heaven).

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 318. See also *Japan: Its Land, People and Culture*, compiled by Japanese National Commission for UNESCO (Tokyo: Ministry of Finance, 1958), pp. 116–118.

Techniques and Myths

Anthropologists have demonstrated that peoples everywhere are marked off, not so much by characteristics acquired through so-called racial strains, but by their differing social organizations. They are also distinguished by their differing systems of belief, their ideologies. These important weights on the scale of culture have been referred to by Professor Robert M. MacIver as techniques (for example, of governing) and myths (for example, of religion and politics). Incidentally, in this sense a myth is not necessarily an untruth. It is an entirely valid symbol possessing emotional appeal for a large group of people, or an unstated belief, the significance of which may or may not coincide with its historical origin.⁵ It is, of course, not the purpose of this book to recount in detail the political history of Japan.⁶ Before turning to modern Japanese government and politics, however, it will be useful to summarize some of the persistent and surviving Japanese techniques and myths for the governing of men.

It is obvious from the archaeological and legendary evidence, recounted above, that almost from the beginning, Japanese felt most comfortable when organized in the family and clan, or in what looked like the family and clan. The corollary is the tradition which dictates that Japanese will feel uncomfortable when forced to rely on individual initiative, when expected to operate an impersonal political party, when employed by a detached company, or when precipitated into what is called class struggle. It should be added here, since Japan almost from the beginning was agrarian, that from ancient times there has been a strong tradition which runs counter to individual land ownership.

What distinguishes Japanese from Western, more particularly American, society is the fact that the family group is traditionally larger and the web of rights and duties among members more tightly woven. To understand this phenomenon we must look in Japanese history, not to the individual or even to the small family, but to the household. The house (*ie*) thus becomes a useful bridge upon which we can cross from the family itself—always a significant training ground for politics—over to the family as a symbol for the entire society.

Familism in Japan is a product not only of traditional family structure but also of Japan's 250 years of isolation and experience with feudalism, from the early seventeenth to the mid-nineteenth century. As Professor Robert Scalapino pointed out, in his brilliant analysis of the failure of party democracy in modern Japan, feudalism set up points of profound influence and also of resistance.⁷

Influence, in that feudalism strengthened the hierarchical nature of the family and integrated it into larger social, economic and political units. Resistance, in that feudalism

⁵ See Robert M. MacIver, *The Web of Government* (New York: Macmillan, 1947).

⁶ This job the author has done in a collaborative comparative study of systems, historically applied: Paul M. A. Linebarger, Djang Chu & Ardath W. Burks, *Far Eastern Governments and Politics*, 2d ed., Part 2, "Japan" (Princeton: Van Nostrand, 1956). In the broader field of literature, humanities and thought the teacher's and student's opportunities to read from original sources (in translation) have been immeasurably expanded by publication of *Sources of Japanese Tradition*, compiled by Ryusaku Tsunoda, William T. deBary, and Donald Keene (New York: Columbia, 1958).

⁷ Robert Scalapino, *Democracy and the Party Movement in Prewar Japan; The Failure of the First Attempt* (Berkeley: University of California, 1953), esp. pp. 130–133.

saw the family blend into the larger social units, but it never saw the family completely absorbed by them. Where familism has not broken down, the side-effects of inequality, hierarchy and family structure on political behavior are striking. Even where it is in the process of crumbling, under the blows of industrialization, urbanization and atomization, there is a lag in the systems of belief behind the rapidly changing social organization. "In short," wrote Jean Stoezel in a remarkable UNESCO study,⁸ "Japanese culture has no real place for the concept of individualism."

Concepts of family, therefore, have provided the foundation for myths of social structure and political behavior. They have had a powerful influence on the myth of the state and on the techniques of government. How did the latter first appear in Japan?

According to partially provable history, Japan's first so-called constitution was written by a prince, Shotoku Taishi (A.D. 573–621). Little more than a policy statement, the prince's code actually rested on moral exhortation and contained no clear idea of a peculiar political structure. The words state and emperor were used, but the emphasis was interestingly upon superior and inferior officials rather than upon existent clan chieftains. In other words, by the sixth century Japanese were already reworking Chinese ideas.

In the seventh century, Japan felt the full impact of the cultural irradiation of a mighty Chinese dynasty. This time it was the T'ang (A.D. 581–618), one of the world's greatest empires, which inspired the Japanese to lay down the foundations of a state. The Taika reform (646) was a blueprint for a structure which was supposed to endure for years. In brief, it called for (1) the nationalization of clan-controlled property; (2) centralization of government; (3) registration of the population; and (4) taxation in kind for the benefit of the Imperial Court. The Taiho code (702) more practically and effectively provided detailed specifications for a Chinese-type system of public administration. Japan acquired, for the first time, departments of religion, war, treasury, and justice, a council of state, controlling boards, and counselors. The basic principles were both Chinese and Japanese, Chinese in organization of the bureaucracy and Japanese in the unique theory of sacred sovereignty. For these reforms were carried out in the name of successive emperors, although not necessarily by their personal acts. The system established was, of course, mongrel and was gradually revised in light of Japanese experience. Yet to this day some features of government can be traced back to their origins in this code.⁹

If government on the T'ang model is considered the first government of a truly civilized and literate Japan, the long period of shogunal government can be considered the second major governmental form.¹⁰

⁸ Jean Stoezel, *Without the Chrysanthemum and the Sword: A Study of the Attitude of Youth in Post-war Japan* (New York: Columbia University Press for UNESCO, 1955). The allusion in the title is, of course, to the wartime classic by Ruth Benedict, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword: Patterns of Japanese Culture* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1946).

⁹ In 1868–69, for example, the *Jingikan* (Bureau of Shinto worship) took precedence over the *Dajokan* (Council of State), even with modernization of government. In postwar Japan, the older Imperial Household Ministry has become a subdivision of the Premier's office. Two other human examples will suffice: Prince Saionji, last of the elder statesmen, and Prince Konoe, last Japanese prime minister of noble (*kuge*) rank, were actually family descendants of the early bureaucracy, as well as its political heirs. See Chap. 11, "The Japanese Model of a Chinese Empire," Linebarger, Djang, Burks, *op. cit.*, pp. 272

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 289.

Between these forms a peculiar Japanese brand of dualism in government had already appeared, in the years from the seventh to the twelfth centuries, and a concomitant feudalism which was to become firmly rooted in Japanese national character. The technique of putting aside the perfect, faultless reigning instrument, and establishing very practical, administering tools of government on the other side of perfection, was initiated with a civil regent (called *Kampaku*). The regency was, in theory, a spokesman for the emperor himself; as a matter of fact, from the tenth century on, this post too was inherited, by a member of the famous Fujiwara family. This phenomenon represented the persistence of clan politics. It also marked the beginning of characteristic dualism in government.

Add to these developments the collapse into order of the old, nationalized land system—with the rise of the characteristic Japanese *shoen*, or manorial estate—and the economic underpinnings of the Taika-Taiho reforms crumbled as well. Japan, unlike almost every other Asian state, was about to enter upon her long experience with feudalism.

The establishment by Minamoto Yoritomo of a military headquarters at Kamakura, a little city south of Yokohama, marked the beginning of shogunal government and the emergence of feudalism. In 1192, Yoritomo received the coveted commission of *Sei-i Tai-shogun*, the barbarian-subduing generalissimo. Here was Japan's first, frank "tent government" (*bakufu*). Civil dictatorship had merged into military dualism, with which Japan was to experiment off and on, until 1945. Meanwhile, in effete and detached Kyoto and in theory, the emperor continued to reign. The Kamakura era (1185–1338) was the dawn of Japanese feudalism; the Tokugawa period (1600–1868), the zenith and sunset of the system.

There is today a popular as well as Marxist notion, particularly encouraged by Chinese Communists on the mainland, that any political and economic system before socialism and capitalism is feudal. Territorial and personal relationships of a true feudal character, however, have been rare in the West and in East Asia. The late Asakawa Kannichi, formerly of Yale University and an outstanding authority on feudalism of a Japanese or Western variety, was a good deal more specific. Feudalism, he wrote, has the following characteristics: a ruling class chained together by links of loyalty, supported by a divided class structure reflecting tenures of land, wherein such land holdings condition the exercise of public rights and obligations—"...that is, in government, in finance, in military affairs, and in the administration of justice there should be a complete confusion or coalescence of the public and the private."¹¹

Feudalism did, as we have seen, accentuate Japanese familism and underlined rigid codes of conduct, social inequality and hierarchy. After a brief fusion of imperial tradition and shogunal power in Kyoto (in the Muromachi era, 1336–1600), marred by more than a hundred years of civil war, the Tokugawa family established (at Edo, modern Tokyo) an even more ruthless military dictatorship. Japan was cast in the unyielding mold of what its historians themselves call centralized feudalism, almost a contradiction in terms. Indeed, so well articulated was the Tokugawa *Bakufu* that doubt has been cast on the wisdom of

¹¹ Asakawa Kannichi, "Some Aspects of Japanese Feudal Institutions," *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan*, XLVI (August, 1918), 78–79. At Yale, Professor John W. Hall has ably carried on the Asakawa research tradition. See "Feudalism in Japan—A Reassessment," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, V, No. 1 (October, 1962).

using the term feudal for the system. Perhaps the most significant result, on the debit side, was that for 250 years Japan was practically isolated from the rest of the world. In truth many modern Japanese are unconscious heirs of one of the world's most autarchic and most efficient police states, Tokugawa Japan.

And yet in Japanese feudalism itself may lie significant clues to the political discipline and the strong emphasis on certain legal rights and obligations in Japan to this day. Japan developed a far stricter concept of law than did Old China, for example, because society as well as government rested entirely on the maintenance of feudal rights and obligations. Such historical factors have led Professor Edwin O. Reischauer shrewdly to guess that therein lay part of the explanation of the great difference between the Japanese and Chinese response to the Western challenge and process of modernization.¹²

Careful research, by Western and Japanese scholars alike, is just beginning to awaken an appreciation of the constructive side of the long Japanese feudal experience. Space permits only a sampling of the findings. American historians, for example, who have tried to account for Japan's spectacular rise as a modern power, have usually begun their narrative with the arrival of Commodore Perry's black ships; or they have continued with the largely fictitious account of the barbarian (Consul Harris) and the geisha. To overemphasize the role of the impact of the West is, however, to neglect dynamic changes which occurred in the latter half of the Tokugawa, changes which directed the emergence of Japan as a modern state.¹³

A most important change, so far as effect on government is concerned, was the steady shift of attention on the part of the *Shogun*, his *Bakufu* headquarters, the local lords (*daimyo*), and even the *samurai*, from the military arts to those of civil administration. The appearance by late Tokugawa of modern budgetary techniques and the influx into government service of experts, many with a nonmilitary background, meant that Japan had already built up a reservoir of skills and leadership required to run a modern state.¹⁴ Significantly, the last functions to be developed were those concerned with the conduct of foreign relations and diplomacy. But even in those fields, Japan came up to the Restoration in 1868 with a corps of dedicated, experienced negotiators, already tested under fire in dealing with the sea-borne barbarians. The modernization of Japan, as we shall see, was not a sudden or simple process. It is dangerous, in the case of Japan, to assume that the word Westernization can be a substitute for the more complex idea, modernization.

The Modernization, of Japan

It is true that, from the sixteenth century onward, dynamic change in Japan as in all of Asia was increasingly paced by the steady intrusion of the Western, secular, nation-state system.

¹² Edwin O. Reischauer, *The United States and Japan* (Cambridge: Harvard, 1950), pp. 166–167. Part 3, "The Japanese Character," is a thoughtful summary.

¹³ One of the first reconnaissance studies, lately subject to challenge and revision, was E. Herbert Norman, *Japan's Emergence as a Modern State: Political and Economic Problems of the Meiji Period* (New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1940).

¹⁴ Professor John W. Hall, to illustrate this thesis, made a study of *Tanuma Okitsugu, 1719–1788: Forerunner of Modern Japan* (Cambridge; Harvard, 1955).

To the Japanese themselves, however, the division between the Tokugawa (1600–1868) and Meiji (1868–1912) eras is not therefore as sharp as it has appeared to Westerners, who have been fascinated by the clash of two worlds from the nineteenth century on. Furthermore, as we survey this long and involved process, we cannot avoid the overwhelming impression that what finally occurred in the nineteenth century, so far as it was partially a product of Western influences, was more a Japanization of alien influences than a Westernization of Japan. In this sense, Japan's emergence from feudalism reflected a tradition of assimilation of Chinese influences in the past; it forecast an absorption of American influences in the future.

This process of modernization was so complex, in Japan, and is today so significant, for all of Asia, that we can safely say that we do not yet have a fully satisfactory interpretation. Japanese scholars themselves admit that their research until now has been occupied with isolated aspects of this transition. Not a few of their works have lacked objectivity, owing to prevailing ideologies. As cases in point, prewar studies concentrated on an emperor-centered historical point of view; many prewar and postwar treatises adopted wholesale dogmas of economic determinism and of the class struggle. There have been available monumental Japanese studies of government leaders and even of the leaders of the democratic movement which opposed the government. Only recently have Japanese scholars begun to study the so-called subleaders in Japan's modernization, the men who interpreted and promoted government policies and who channeled the creative energies of the people into official policies.¹⁵ American scholarship too is increasingly dedicated to an interpretation of this critical process. Here we can only briefly summarize some of the conclusions drawn from the mounting literature on modernization.

The arrival of Russians, British, and Americans from the early to the mid-nineteenth century constituted the occasion for lifting the long seclusion, not the basic cause. Finally, the *Shogun* on November 9, 1867, submitted his resignation to the young Emperor Meiji and this event opened the famous Meiji Restoration. On April 6, 1868, the Emperor took the famous Charter Oath,¹⁶ which seemed to promise establishment of a deliberative assembly. In the years following, a clause in the oath was exploited by those who were to advocate a popular, elective assembly.

Political and economic unification was indeed the great accomplishment of the Meiji Restoration. As we have seen, however, there had already existed in Japan a strong tradition of a nation-family and even the irregular growth of central authority. On the other hand, former feudal leaders and their ideologies strongly colored the transition. A by-product was modern Japanese bureaucracy. In fact, some authorities have referred to the new administration as the *Sat-Cho* Shogunate, named after leaders drawn from the Satsuma and Choshu domains.¹⁷

¹⁵ "A Prospectus for Research and Publication on the Characteristics and Peculiarities of the Modernization of Japan, under the direction of Dr. Kosaka Masaaki, Director," mimeographed (Kyoto, n.d.). This is the plan for the interuniversity, interdisciplinary *Kindaika* (modernization) seminar, with which the author was privileged to be affiliated during 1958–59, in Kyoto. He has described it for his American colleagues in "*Kindaika*" *PROD* (Political Research: Organization and Design), II, No. 5 (May, 1959), pp. 3–6.

¹⁶ Reading No. 2, Arthur Tiedemann, *Modern Japan; a Brief History* (Princeton: Van Nostrand, 1955).

¹⁷ Robert A. Wilson, *Genesis of the Meiji Government in Japan, 1868–1871* (Berkeley: University of California, 1957). The appendices, identifying bureaucratic personnel, are invaluable.

Perhaps the most decisive step on the road to centralization of power and modernization of the nation was the abolition, in August, 1871, of the old feudal domains (*han*) and their rapid conversion to new prefectures (*ken*).¹⁸ Parallel to this development and equally significant was the land legislation of 1872–73, incorporating tax reform (*chiso kaisei*), which led in turn to the certification of private land ownership. In the 1870s, over 80 per cent of the regime's revenues was derived from the land.

Changes now came with bewildering speed, in the field of education, in the building of a modern peasant-conscript army and in the establishment of a navy.¹⁹

In the 1870s and 1880s, the Meiji oligarchs stripped off the shells of ancient Chinese nomenclature and got down to the kernels of Western-type governmental departments. In 1885, the central administration was completely overhauled and a cabinet, designed on the Prussian model, was formed with the famous Ito Hirobumi as the first premier.

The authoritarian prejudices of the oligarchs, their traditional fear of factionalism in the state, coupled with their preoccupation with military readiness and pressing problems of industrialization from the top down, led them to turn—if they turned outward for models—to German theories of the supremacy of the state. They completely rejected theories of representative government. Nevertheless, an opposition built around disaffected *samurai* did make an appearance. In 1874, Itagaki Taisuke organized the first political association and in 1875, representatives of *samurai* and other dissatisfied groups formed the first national party, the *Aikokusha*. Later, the Liberal Party and the Progressive Party entered the lists, but by 1885 the democratic movement had been effectively checked by the oligarchs. While it was not completely destroyed, it never regained its earlier effectiveness.²⁰

The capstone of this early modernization was the Meiji Constitution, which was drafted in preparation for the first session of parliament, in 1890. The oligarchs moved slowly, considering the ideas of Kido Koin and his gradualist approach; and those of Okubo Toshimichi, who leaned toward imperial absolutism. The real architect was, however, Ito Hirobumi, who spent the years 1881–1883 in Europe studying Western, chiefly Prussian, constitutional theory. Professor George Beckmann has given us an up-to-date account of the drafting:

While the oligarchs made important political concessions to those groups that demanded a national parliament, the Meiji Constitution was essentially a carefully formulated legal justification of a government in which the oligarchs had only a minimum of responsibility to the people. By the Meiji Constitution, the oligarchs established a body of authoritarian political principles in Western forms as the ultimate defense of their dominant position in the government.²¹

¹⁸ For a detailed case study, see my "Administrative Transition from *Han* to *Ken*: The Example of Okayama," *Far Eastern Quarterly*, XV, No. 3 (May, 1956), pp. 371–382.

¹⁹ Various Japanese monographs originally contributed to the *Kindaika* seminar, mentioned above, have appeared in translation in the *Zinbun Gakuho* (Journal of Humanistic Studies), VIII (March, 1958), and following issues. For a more general, comparative analysis, see George M. Beckmann, *The Modernization of China and Japan* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962).

²⁰ See Nobutaka Ike, *The Beginnings of Political Democracy in Japan* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1950).

²¹ George M. Beckmann, *The Making of the Meiji Constitution: The Oligarchs and the Constitutional Development of Japan, 1868–1891* (Lawrence: University of Kansas, Social Science Studies, 1957), p. 84.