

16: TOKUGAWA JAPAN'S EARLY MODERN STATE, SOCIETY & ECONOMY¹

a. What new vision of Heaven did Tokugawa take into its second stage high civilization so as to stabilize its centralized feudal structure? What alternate vision did it forego, and why did it do so? When and in what ways and for what reasons did it evolve into a "bastard feudal" state and then an "old regime"?

b. In what ways did the feudal ruling class change during Tokugawa? How did its relationship with the townsmen change? Characterize the stages of the Agricultural and Early Industrial Revolutions during Tokugawa and the relationship of each stage of Tokugawa economic development to changes in social life.

A. Japan's Transition into Second Stage High Civilization Completed

1. *Buddho-Confucian double-mindedness*

As the early Tokugawa shoguns stabilized Japan's centralized feudal political order, Japan also began to mature the second stage of its high civilization. Japan likely reached the second stage at least by the late 15th or early 16th century. Certainly, mid-16th century European visitors waxed enthusiastic over the Japanese, and never said anything to suggest that the Japanese were at any lower level of development than themselves. The Europeans had, by my reckoning, by then been at the second stage for over three centuries.

We should, therefore, expect to find evidence at least by the 16th century of a new double-minded Japanese vision of Heaven.

The Japanese became double-minded by borrowing an elaborate Buddhism-influenced version of Confucianism—Neo-Confucianism—from China. They added this to the several forms of Amidist

this to the several forms of Amidist and Zen Buddhism already present in Japan.

Amidism had already long since familiarized Japanese believers with its complicated intermediate stages between Earth and Heaven. Zen Buddhism had almost equally long since become the favored faith of the feudal aristocracy.

Zen, you may recall, was the Buddhist equivalent of philosophical Daoism, except that it recognized even greater complexity than did the Daoist vision of the cosmos.

In Japan, Zen was monastic, rather than the faith of individual isolated "dropouts" as was the case with ancient Chinese philosophical Daoism and later Chan Buddhism, Zen's Chinese prototype.

Though its practitioners were collectively organized, Zen remained an individualistic faith. A Zen samurai could simultaneously belong to his fief's army and still retain his psychic autonomy no matter what the cosmos at large and the Hobbesian politics of *Sengoku jidai* times threw at him.

By Ashikaga times, Zen monasteries also often engaged in such secular activities as sponsoring trade expeditions to China. The monkish merchants not only brought back Chinese goods and cash but Chinese books. Shushi (the Japanese pronunciation of the name of the Southern Song Neo-Confucian philosopher Zhu Xi) was first read in Japan in the Zen monasteries during late Ashikaga times. That is where Japanese feudal aristocrats first learned what a fancy, double-minded Neo-Confucianism could be like and do.

Later, these fancy ideas were re-presented into the organization of the Tokugawa central government as it evolved past the centralized feudal into the bastard feudal stage. The 17th century Tokugawa shoguns sponsored Shushi's ideas as the core of the curriculum in their new Tokugawa Confucian University.

This enticed other scholars to teach these Neo-Confucian ideas to the rest of the samurai, converting these slightly meritized military aristocrats into a Chinese-style highly meritized military aristocracy. Though these meritized aristocrats just happened to all carry two swords, they rarely had occasion to draw them (contrary to the plot lines of Japanese sword-fighting movies).

2. *The Christian potential alternative*

A Christian potential alternative to this Buddho-Confucian version of double-mindedness existed. In the mid 16th century, the Portuguese not only brought in the muskets which Oda Nobunaga could adopt and improve upon, but they and the Spanish also brought in Counterreformation era Catholic Christianity. This proved as valuable as the muskets to Oda in his struggle with the Buddhists.

St. Francis Xavier, the great Jesuit missionary, who later suffered a martyr's death on the coast of China, visited Japan in 1549. He remarked in his diary that this was the best country that had as yet been discovered. The Japanese were white men, he observed, just like his fellow Iberians. They even organized themselves under knights and lords, just as Europeans did. The saint was intuitively recognizing the parallel results of the parallel feudal processes in Europe and Japan, and the achievement thereby of comparable second stage high civilizations in both.

St. Francis could not bring himself to give credit to the Japanese form of paganism—Buddhism—for creating Japanese high civilization in the first place. But in its superficial aspects, at least, Buddhism seemed to St. Francis so strikingly like Christianity that he looked forward eagerly to having Christianity fill the niche Buddhism occupied. If he and his colleagues could do that, he suggested, the recent loss of much of Northern Europe to Protestant heresy would not be important.

As it turned out, it was easy for Christian missionaries to mimic the outer forms of this Buddhist paganism so help in winning many Japanese over to the true faith. Francis Xavier's prophecies proved correct.

By the time of the death of Hideyoshi in 1598 there were over 100,000 Christians in a Japan whose total population was probably only approaching 15 million. This may seem a small minority, but these Christians were disproportionately concentrated in the southwest, mainly in Kyushu and within the ranks of the feudal ruling class. This eventually caused problems for the Iberian missionaries.

At first, however, Christianity managed to ally itself with the early winners in the competition to create the dominant centralized feudal power for all of Japan. The first big winner in that competition,

¹ 1st dr. 10/87; 6th rev. 9/99. By Edward H. Kaplan.

Oda Nobunaga, viewed the Christians favorably, if only as counters to the secular power of Buddhism. Patronizing the Christians helped gain him the leverage he needed to overcome the great Buddhist monasteries. When he burned down the monastic complex on Mt. Hiei and killed many of the monks, he both undermined the secular basis for Buddhism's independent political and religious power and lessened his need to keep using Christianity.



A Portuguese Jesuit as depicted by a Japanese artist. (Bradley Smith, *Japan: A History in Art*, p. 152.)

3. Defeat of the Christian alternative

By Hideyoshi's time, politicians were no longer so sure that having so many Christians around was an unalloyed blessing. Hideyoshi worried about their concentration in the southwest. This was the last area he had conquered, and hence the area he controlled least reliably.

The priests' intimate ties to Portugal and Spain, and Spain's nearby Philippine colony, constituted a standing threat to Japan's independence. The same impulse that led the Spanish to conquer the Philippines might lead them to try to conquer Kyushu and perhaps western Honshu as well. The priests might be their spies.

If Japan bought off this danger of invasion through conversion and alliance with the Iberians, it might become ensnared in conflict with Catholic Spain's great rivals, the Protestant powers, Holland and England. Hideyoshi was not sure

Japan could safely navigate between so many unpredictable alien powers.

Tokugawa Ieyasu, who succeeded Hideyoshi in control of the centralized feudal power, was more than doubtful. He was certain the Christian connection was dangerous. The early 17th century was, Ieyasu realized, an age when the outer world had become a vicious cockpit of both balance of power and even more deadly religious interstate politics.

Within two years of Ieyasu's death in 1616 Europe was enmeshed in the Thirty Years War, its own *Sengoku jidai*, the sort of war of each against all that Japan had only just evolved away from. The newly established Tokugawa shoguns did not want to become involved in that kind of competition. Nor did they want to expose their regime to the possibility of domestic rivals using firearms supplied by foreigners to unhorse it.

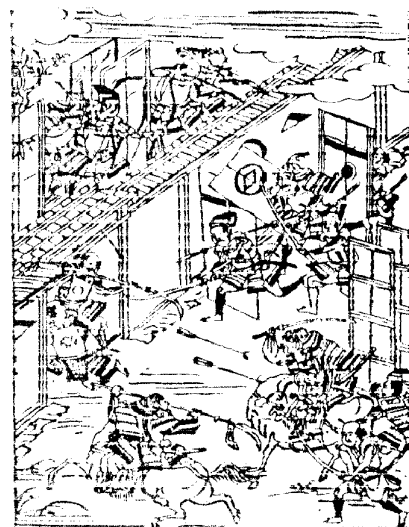
And so they banned the gun, set the stage for banning Christianity, and eventually ended virtually all political-economic intercourse with most of the West.

Ieyasu was not yet secure enough to carry this policy to its logical conclusion, but he bequeathed its beginnings to his successors, and they fulfilled its logic.

Goaded by increasing persecution, one of the remaining Catholic feudal lords on Kyushu rebelled in 1637. Hopelessly outnumbered, a remnant of the faithful took refuge from the Tokugawa soldiers in the castle of the Hara clan on the Shimabara Peninsula, but were there killed to the last man, woman and child.

Thereafter, even the non-political practice of Catholicism became a capital offense. All Japanese had to enroll in a local Buddhist temple and be willing to tread upon an image of Christ if asked to do so. Only a handful of Catholic Christians continued to risk underground practice of their faith.

Isolationism apparently did help keep the new shogunate secure from a renewal of the feudal wars and another round of instability. New candidates for control of the central feudal authority could not shoot their way into power in alliance with one or another of the foreign powers. Such things did not happen for another 250 years, until the 1850s when, perhaps not coincidentally, Japan's isolationism was finally breached.



The attack on Hara Castle in 1638 that ended the Shimabara Rebellion.

Isolationism also meant, however, that Christianity could not be substituted for Buddhism as the basis for Japanese double-mindedness.

And yet the Japanese have always remained at least subliminally aware of the Christian road they did not take. After the middle of the 19th century, when both isolation and the ban on Christianity ended, Christian influence (Protestant now as well as Catholic) returned.

Now, more than a century later, the still minuscule number of Japanese Christians are disproportionately overrepresented within the ruling class. Dialog between Zen Buddhists and Euro-American Christians and Jews has become one of the dominant novel features of contemporary religious life in both Japan and the West.

B. Tokugawa Stabilizes Centralized Feudalism

1. Tokugawa Ieyasu's victory

Ieyasu was not originally from the region that became his headquarters, the Kanto Plain. He was originally from a small mountain fief northeast of Heian, not far from Oda Nobunaga's home area. He first rose in status and power as a member of Oda's coalition.

Ieyasu obtained his Kanto base, which was far richer than his original holding, only after Oda's death. He got it from Oda's would-be successor, Hideyoshi. In exchange he agreed to become one of Hideyoshi's "outer lords." These people joined Hideyoshi's new coalition last, but were so powerful (because of location

and/or talents) that Hideyoshi had to win them over by granting them privileges rather than taming them by punishments.

By giving Ieyasu a much larger and richer fief, but one much further away from his own Kansai headquarters, Hideyoshi hoped to simultaneously appease and neutralize through isolation his most serious rival.

For a time this ploy looked as though it might work, but Hideyoshi made a serious mistake when in 1593, he bypassed his adopted adult son, Hidetsugu, as his heir in favor of his newborn natural son.

This was perhaps an outgrowth of some neurosis (or psychosis) derived from his risen commoner's shame at his illegitimacy. Of course it might just have been a simple error of judgment based on worries that a destabilizing faction among his housemen might grow up around the adult Hidetsugu.

Whatever Hideyoshi's motives, selection of the infant Hideyori as heir proved fatal to the fortunes of his house. When Hideyoshi died in 1598, his armies hurried back from Korea and rival alliances over the succession sprang up.

Over the short run, Hideyoshi's housemen rose higher in power as trustees for the infant heir than they would have as mere personal staff of the adopted son, Hidetsugu (who had committed suicide in 1595). Hence they loyally clustered around little Hideyori in Osaka Castle at the foot of the Kansai Plain. To counter Ieyasu's powerful Kanto Plain-centered coalition they put together an alliance between their own Kansai and the independent lords of the west and southwest.

Tokugawa Ieyasu countered by putting together an alliance that added to the lords of the east-central region the lords of the northern parts of the country. He also started to haggle with some of the more opportunistic lords of the southwest. Some of the daimyo of Kyushu were, like Ieyasu, among those who had come over last to Hideyoshi, and so they were not very ardent allies of his infant son. They were, in the jargon of New York politics, "dishonest" politicians: when you bought them, they would not stay bought.

The most "dishonest" of these southwestern politicians were the Shimazu family, who had ruled the large principality of Satsuma in Kyushu since Kamakura times. Though formally allied to the Toyotomi, they implicitly made a last minute unwritten deal with Ieyasu, and

showed up too late to make a difference in the decisive Battle of Sekigahara on October 21, 1600. This helped Tokugawa to defeat the Toyotomi coalition despite being outnumbered 130,000 to 80,000.

As a consequence of their victory at Sekigahara, the Tokugawa were able to replace the Toyotomi as heads of the dominant centralized feudal coalition. The Tokugawa were not, however, as yet strong enough to finally destroy Hideyori, whom they left ensconced in Osaka Castle. Nor could they risk purging outright most of the southwestern allies of their defeated Toyotomi rivals.

2. Ieyasu consolidates his victory

The victorious Ieyasu always professed to be a nice fellow. Of course he was anything but that. It was just that he was too shrewd to appear nasty. He promised not to move against Hideyoshi's infant heir. He left the child, Hideyori, in occupation of Osaka Castle, surrounded by Hideyoshi's staff. Indeed, he permitted almost all the feudal lords allied with the Toyotomi who did not die in the last battle to join the Tokugawa feudal coalition. They could not, however, retain any formal allegiance to Hideyori.

Ieyasu then carefully reorganized this Japan-wide centralized feudal coalition. He permitted his own relatives to retain important principalities surrounding his own fief in the heart of the Kanto Plain.

He also gave some of the *fudai* or Inner Lords—those vassals who joined his coalition early—Kanto Plain feudalities. Ieyasu moved most of the rest of the *fudai* to strategic locations out at the periphery, where they could keep watch over the *tozama* or Outer Lords. These Outer Lords were not only physically peripheral, but had been the last to join the Tokugawa feudal coalition.

The *tozama* lords were of two types:

1) Those who were too weak to resist the Tokugawa administrators. The shoguns bullied these whenever it seemed expedient to do so. Choshu, at the western edge of Honshu fell into that category.

2) Others were too strong to bully. Satsuma in western Kyushu fell into that category. These fiefs became "shogunal pets," carefully watched over by *fudai* lords, but given all sorts of privileges so that they might not be tempted into rebellion by bad treatment.

Ieyasu dared not move directly against them. However, he began to discourage their potential allies among the Catholic missionaries and the diplomat-soldiers of the Spanish and Portuguese states who were, he correctly believed, secretly financing and using these missionaries as stalking horses to advance their own power among the lords of the southwest.



Tokugawa Ieyasu

Ieyasu was blessed with plenty of time to make these arrangements. He had a decade and a half of life remaining after his victory in 1600. Though he and Oda Nobunaga and Toyotomi Hideyoshi were born within a few years of each other, by luck, strategy and a robust physical constitution, Ieyasu managed to outlive the other two by as much as a full generation.

By the time Ieyasu finally died in 1616, he had stabilized the Tokugawa feudal coalition. Even the most powerful of the Outer Lords were in no longer in a position to break away from their new Tokugawa overlords.

In 1605, Ieyasu acted to assure a stable succession by nominally abdicating the position of shogun in favor of his third son, Hidetada.

Ieyasu did not, of course, actually retire in 1605. He merely stepped back from everyday administration to devote himself to putting the finishing touches on his centralized feudal coalition. Above all, he waited for the right moment to move decisively against Osaka Castle.

That moment came in 1615. Hideyori would soon come of age, and Ieyasu sensed that his own time was ending. He got his army onto the castle grounds by means of a ruse, a promise to liberate young Hideyori from his confinement. Instead he burned down the castle along with Hideyori and his staff.

This eliminated the last potential external rival to Tokugawa power. Ieyasu had already finessed any possible crisis of the first succession within his clan by making sure that no possible rival to his

son Hidetada remained but himself. The next logical thing for Ieyasu to do was to remove even that theoretical threat to his son's power with his own death. And that, from entirely natural causes, is precisely what he did the following year at age 74. Hidetada built him an imperial-sized tomb and temple, and his descendants honored him there over the next 250 years as the founding father of their line.

As students of politics, we can respect Ieyasu but, like the Japanese, we cannot quite love him. Though less picturesque, he was the equal of our own civilization's post-religious, cold-eyed *politiques* of the 16th and 17th centuries and their successors who created modern, secular European and American politics.

3. Japanese and European early modernity compared

For example, with the help of his two predecessors, Ieyasu had done something equivalent to what Henry VII Tudor had done in 1485 in England.

Henry took over the English throne at the end of the long and divisive Wars of the Roses (England's *Sengoku jidai*, if you will). His Tudor family line replaced the old legitimate branch of the Plantagenet ruling house, whose last ruler was Richard III. The Plantagenets were roughly parallel to the Ashikaga, the Tudors to Oda. The Tudors were descended from a bastard Welsh offshoot of the royal line.

Henry VII consolidated his power by moving all of his friends (new and old) into office and/or into the aristocracy. The vast majority of modern English aristocrats only date from or after the time of Henry VII and his son Henry VIII.

As Oda did to the Buddhist monasteries, Henry VIII did to the English monastic estates. He confiscated them and consolidated the Tudors' position further by distributing the monastic lands to his and his father's friends and allies.

The founder of the Bourbons in France a century later did something very similar, and at the same time as Tokugawa Ieyasu.

Though, unlike the Tudors, legitimate, the Bourbons were the cadet (junior) branch of the French royal line. Their head, Henry of Navarre, also like Ieyasu, hoped to bring to an end the long sequence of religious wars and put together a stable centralized feudal regime.

Tired of the debilitating effects of war

and persecution, French churchmen and aristocrats finally joined to offer the throne to Henry, who had recently kept out of trouble by staying home as ruler of Navarre, way down in the southwest athwart the border with Spain. Their only condition was that Henry give up the Protestantism hitherto practiced by his line of the royal house.

Being a cheerful, cynical *politique*, as secular politicians were coming to be called then, he readily agreed, saying "Paris is worth a mass." As Henry IV of France, he converted to Catholicism, and marched in triumph into Paris to create a stable centralized feudal regime. His Bourbon successors, Louis XIII and Louis XIV, evolved this into a bastard feudal regime which dominated the international politics of Europe for a century.

The successors of Henry VII of England followed a somewhat different route to a centralized post-feudalism. Instead of embracing (and taking control over) the old faith as the French Bourbons did, Henry VIII helped trip off the Protestant Reformation. He splintered the Medieval Church and used the English fragment as his vehicle for centralizing power in his own hands.

In religious terms, the Tokugawa were more like Henry IV of France than Henry VIII of England. They did not encourage a religious revolution. They did not become Christians, as they might have. They took the safe route: Just as Henry IV stabilized his kingdom by reverting to Catholicism, the early Tokugawa rulers stabilized their power by reverting to Buddho-Confucianism.

However, unlike the French (but more nearly like the new rulers of that other island nation, England), Tokugawa Japan thereafter secured its position as an early modern state by keeping itself isolated from the vicissitudes of balance of power politics on the Eurasian land mass. Japan's isolation was, however, far more thoroughgoing than England's.

C. Tokugawa Becomes a "Bastard Feudal" Early Modern Regime

1. Tokugawa Iemitsu

We must next trace the evolution of this centralized feudal regime into the

bastard feudal stage, or if you prefer a more polite locution, into its "early modern" stage.

Tokugawa Iemitsu was the third shogun. He succeeded Hidetada in 1622 as a teenager and reigned until his death in 1651. He worked out the "final solution" for dealing with Christianity. He goaded the Christian feudal lords in the southwest into rebellion, then drove the rebels onto the Shimabara Peninsula, and exterminated and all the other Christians his agents could identify. A few Christians survived underground. Those who in each generation thereafter were found out when they would not step on an image of Christ, are still ranked among the martyrs of the Catholic church, which ranks Iemitsu with Pontius Pilate as among its great villains.

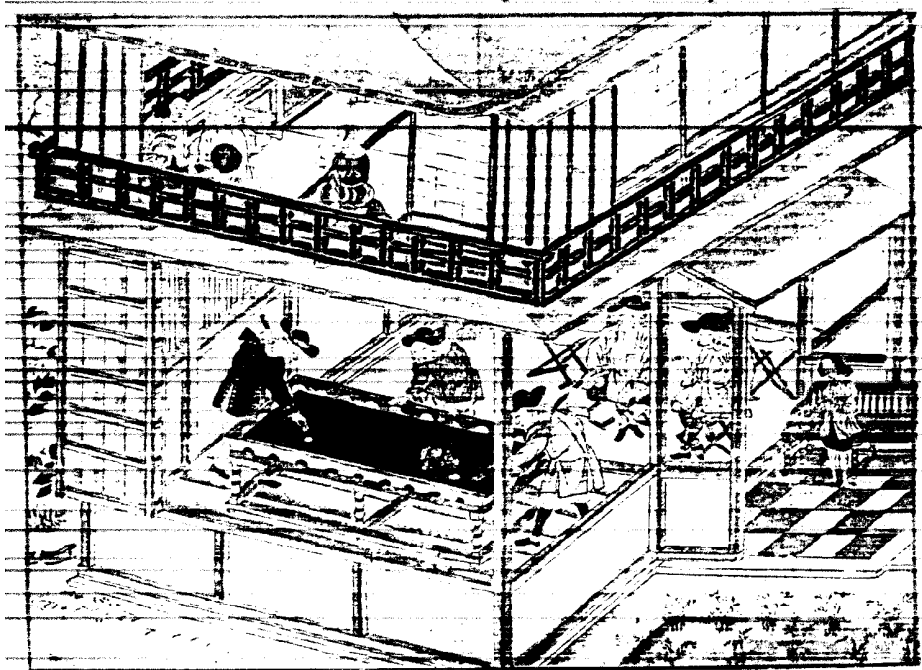
Christianity thereafter survived only as an underground faith, with every Japanese obliged to register as part of the secular census procedure with an officially sanctioned Buddhist temple.

This last requirement also completed the process of taming Buddhism by turning it into an obedient department of the state. Registration also provided very useful records for later social and economic historians, since the temple records often still survive.

Iemitsu sealed the bargain that was making Japan into a Buddho-Confucian double-minded high civilization by building a central temple to Confucius in the shogunal capital, Edo.

He used the expulsion of Christianity as the excuse for achieving his real aim: the isolation of Japan from the cockpit of European balance of power and religious politics. He threw out all foreigners, except those from Holland, the least powerful of the European mercantile states. Even the Dutch he nevertheless kept walled off on a narrow harbor island in the southwest. He also allowed in a handful of Chinese and Korean overseas merchants. It proved possible to maintain this degree of isolation right up to the 1850s.

Isolation was not complete, nor was it intended that it be. In addition to trade in goods with the Chinese and Dutch, there was also some foreign intercourse at the secular, intellectual level. A few Dutch technical books came in. Japanese scholars eventually translated some of them.



Billiard game in the Dutch settlement in Nagasaki. (Smith, p. 198.)

Once a year the Dutch were required to come to the shogunal capital, Edo, in a kind of tribute mission, and report to the shogun's ministers on the state of European politics. As a consequence, Japan was almost as well informed about the world during its 200 years of isolation as 19th century America was during its century of isolation from 1815 to 1916.

That is why in the 1850s the authorities could find out how powerful the Western powers had become, and could decide that after two centuries they would finally have to end Japan's isolation voluntarily. They knew that the alternative would be to end isolation on much less favorable terms involuntarily.

Iemitsu did not neglect protection of the Tokugawa position vis à vis the imperial authority. He married his sister to the reigning emperor, and kept a tame royal prince at his own capital, Edo, ready to replace any emperor who might try to make trouble for the shogun.

He also tamed the daimyo by instituting the *sankin-kodai* system of "alternate attendance," whereby the daimyo alternated between residence in Edo and in their home fiefs. But when themselves home in their fiefs, they had to leave their families in Edo as hostages for their good behavior.

2. Tokugawa Ietsuna

Ietsuna, the fourth shogun (r.1651-1680), finally forced all the samurai to move to castle towns and go on salary. He gave holdouts two alternatives to doing that:

1) They could give up the larger of their two swords and revert to being mere commoner landowners (commoners could carry a *short* sword), retaining a measure of genteel status.

2) If a retainer insisted on retaining the two swords and either would not or could not become part of the salaried staff of some daimyo, he would by default become a *ronin*—a masterless samurai—little better than a criminal.

We now think of such men as the heroes of modern swordfighter movies (the Japanese' self-conscious equivalents of the gunfighters in our westerns), men who traveled from place to place doing good by shedding lots of bad guys' blood.

In real life, of course, many *ronin* merely became village schoolmasters, and mostly kept their swords on the shelf, if they did not have to pawn them when tuition payments proved inadequate or came late. It would not pay to make movies of their careers, unless you were doing a Japanese version of "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow," and needed a Northeast Asian Ichabod Crane as your hero.

Ietsuna stoutly reaffirmed his predecessor's isolationist policy. There is a

perhaps apocryphal Chinese story that the Ming Loyalist Huang Zongxi traveled to Japan in the 1650s to offer Japan territorial concessions in Korea, if the Tokugawa would only agree to send an expeditionary force to China to help Ming fight off the Manchu invaders. According to the story, Ietsuna turned Huang down. (Would that Ietsuna's successors of 1927-37 had followed a similar policy!)

3. The "Dog Shogun"

The reign of the next shogun, Tsunayoshi (b.1646, r. 1680-1709), represented a decisive break from centralized feudalism and a quick shift into the bastard feudal stage. Tsunayoshi was the younger brother of Ietsuna. No one expected him to become shogun. He had to take the job after his brother died unexpectedly and without an heir.

Tsunayoshi was not prepared to rule like a feudal overlord. The men of the court had given him a civilian-style mixed Buddhist and Confucian education in order to keep him tame enough not to be a rival to his brother. Supposedly, he could not even ride a horse. Worse, he was not only a pious Buddhist, but a mama's boy "soft style" homosexual, rather than the sort of tough guy "butch" homosexual who fit the approved ruling class Japanese pattern for homosexuality in feudal times (and to some extent since then as well).

Contemporary wise guys in the streets of Edo called him "the dog shogun" because as a pious Buddhist he wanted to take care of all sentient life, and so set up welfare hostels for stray dogs. The saying in the streets then was that a dog's life in Edo was better than a human being's, since there were no welfare hostels for unemployed two-legged creatures.

Tsunayoshi's regime cannot accurately be described by the popular term used for the early Tokugawa governments—*bakufu* or "tent government." Ieyasu's generation had favored this old slang term for the new centralized feudal government he set up in his own castle town of Edo.

The label *bakufu*, however, no longer fit either the government of Tsunayoshi's time or its million-person early industrial capital city of Edo (the old name for modern Tokyo) by the latter years of the 17th century. A more accurate label for Tsunayoshi's government might be "bastard feudal." The shogun himself was much more like a Chinese emperor than a mili-

tary overlord in the substance as well as the style of his governance.

Chinese-style policies now predominated over Japanese feudal arrangements. Tsunayoshi's administration regularly attempted to finagle the money supply. It began to bully the Osaka bankers (see section H.2, below), who were playing a private central banker's role similar to the one the Bank of England would soon be founded to play in England, and which the Sichuan bankers of early Song China had once played.

Well before his death in 1709, Tsunayoshi's administration had become a post-feudal regime in all but name. Thereafter, the Tokugawa government and its ruling class remained merely superficially feudal, i.e. in the titles of rank they used alone. That would make it "bastard feudal" using the definition of this stage of the feudal process I gave earlier.

If we adopt the nomenclature often used for the comparable stage of European history, the Tokugawa government was also a maturing "early modern" regime, one ready to cross the line to full modernity no later than during the 19th century. Hence it also resembled China's governments since the Song Dynasty which were the world's first governments to turn early modern.

By Tsumayoshi's reign, Tokugawa also bore some superficial resemblances to the government of England's successors to the Tudors, the Stuarts. The first of these, James I, reigned during the first part of the 17th century.²

Tsunayoshi's government also resembled that of the Bourbon successors of Henry IV, Louis XIII and the young Louis XIV. During these two reigns the churchly *politiques* Richelieu and Mazarin completed the task of turning Henry IV's centralized feudalism into a bastard feudal early modern regime. In some ways Tsunayoshi's court resembles still more the regime of that silly dandy, Louis XV of France, during whose reign the French monarchy lost much of its vigor.

The next generation looked back at Tsunayoshi as a corrupt monarch setting the stage for Tokugawa falling into the Chinese pattern of the downturn of a dynastic cycle. That was half-right: Japan was becoming more like China.

² By an interesting but not particularly relevant coincidence, James, like Tsunayoshi, was a homosexual. This footnote should, however, fulfill my multicultural diversity quota for the week.

D. Tokugawa Becomes an "Old Regime"

1. Tokugawa Ienobu and Ietsugu

The England of the early Stuarts and the France of the later Bourbons (but not Song through Ming China) were within a generation or two of undergoing a drastic political revolution. This would usher them into the fully modern stage of their histories. Tsunayoshi's Japan was a rough East Asian equivalent of these European maturing early modern monarchies. Revolution, however, lay rather further into Japan's future, though it was not so distant as in the case of China.

A maturing early modern regime can fairly quickly become an "Old Regime," if it does not transform itself into a fully modern regime soon enough. By failing to fully modernize its own structure, such a government can interfere with its society's full modernization.

After the onset of the French Revolution of 1789, the label "old regime" was applied to the governments of Louis XV and XVI. These two rulers had supposedly failed to transform their state fully enough soon enough to render that revolution unnecessary.

Increasingly during the last century or so, historians have come to the opposite conclusion. The old regime in France is now believed to have become too fully modern for its own good. Its premature attempts to become more advanced than its society could handle may have destabilized it and tripped off the revolution.

Late Tokugawa Japan's government, however, may have fit the original definition of an "Old Regime" better than did its European counterparts. Certain of the feudal principalities appear to have become more fully modern sooner than did the Tokugawa central government.

The transition into this next stage of old regime-hood got under way with the death of Tsunayoshi in 1709. Tsunayoshi left behind a still more feeble successor (an adopted nephew), Ienobu, who only reigned for three years, until 1712. Ienobu left an even more feeble infant successor, Ietsugu, who died after another few years, in 1716.

Both were mere puppets of their ministers. These were Confucians reacting against Tsunayoshi's Buddhism. They

deliberately favored weaklings on the shogunal throne so that they could adopt much more strict Neo-Confucian policies.

The growing influence of Confucian values led Japanese statesmen then and historians since, to view Tsunayoshi's reign not as the transition from centralized to bastard feudalism, but as the beginning of a Chinese-style dynastic downturn—i.e. as reflecting decadence rather than increased political sophistication.

With the death of the infant Ietsugu, who obviously could have had no son himself, the Tokugawa family council had to shift the shogunal throne to another branch of the Tokugawa clan. The nod went to the Confucianism-influenced Kii branch. The Confucians at court hoped for a revival of the Tokugawa "dynasty's" vigor thereby.

2. Tokugawa Yoshimune

Tokugawa Yoshimune, the head of the Kii branch of the shogunal house, became the eighth shogun in 1716, and reigned until 1745.

Since he was selected by the Confucians, who had dominated the two short preceding reigns, it is not surprising that Yoshimune's was an exceedingly Confucian reign. Yoshimune modeled himself explicitly on Emperor Wen of the Han Dynasty, though from a "hard" rather than "soft" Confucian perspective.

The Japanese Confucian historians of the 18th century characterized his reign as a kind of "dynastic restoration"—the short-lived period of revival of a dynasty's fortunes after the preceding period of decline. The expectation among Chinese Confucian historians would have been that such a revival would be followed by renewed decline.



Tokugawa Yoshimune. (Papinot, p. 672.)
Tokugawa Yoshimune. (Papinot, p. 672.)

In the terms I have been employing, however, the transition to a post-feudal regime was by then all but complete. Yoshimune quite explicitly tried to reign like

an enlightened Chinese emperor. He even allowed European books to be imported, at first by way of China, so long as they dealt with technical secular subjects rather than with Christianity.

This broke Japan's intellectual isolation formally (though it had never really held informally). Western-style physicians who had learned their medicine from a translated Dutch textbook, soon joined Chinese herb doctors and Japanese shamans in treating the ill. Probably, given the propensity of 18th century European medicine to bleed and poison its patients, this reform must have merely raised the mortality rate.

A number of people who were not doctors also began to openly publish translations from the Dutch about the outside world, including the geography and history of the West. Some of them still got into serious trouble with the shogunal secret police if they tried to publish speculations on politics derived from this data.

Nevertheless, study of the West now became a serious and open branch of Japanese scholarship. People who had carried on such studies had hitherto been called *Bangakusha*—barbarian studies scholars. From Yoshimune's time on they could call themselves by the more genteel label *Rangakusha*—Dutch studies scholars. It was under Yoshimune, the good Confucian shogun, that Japan's more full intellectual opening to the world began.

However, as historians trained in the Chinese tradition would have anticipated, this "dynastic revival" did not outlast the reign of the eighth shogun himself. Most succeeding shoguns are invariably judged as having been inadequate or worse.

In my terms, however, the regime's decadence did not consist in rejecting Neo-Confucian morality but in embracing it. The dissonance between feudal and Confucian values keeping the government from adjusting to the needs of what was already an *early* industrial society edging toward a full industrial revolution. Neo-Confucian values kept the ruling class from fully recognizing that a plutocratic wing of its ruling class was in gestation. Feudal values slowed the transformation of its meritized aristocracy into a full meritocracy. As a result, Tokugawa fell ever further into becoming an Old Regime.

Some members of the meritized military aristocracy intuited this, and by the late 18th century were trying to reverse it.

3. The Tokugawa Shogunate almost avoids becoming an "Old Regime"

Yoshimune's son was Ieshige, the ninth shogun. He was born in 1712 and reigned from 1745 to 1760. In contrast to his father, Ieshige was rather feeble. He was an invalid during most of his reign. That is why the wise guys of Edo (fully the equals of London's cockneys or New York's wise guys) called him the "bed-wetting shogun." Because of his fragile health, Ieshige had most of the time to govern through his household administration because his modest ranking samurai personal servants were those closest to his sickbed.

This meant that for the first time in the history of the Tokugawa Shogunate a Chinese-style transmutation of power from "line" to "staff" was taking place. In this case the shift was from the high-ranking lords of the shogunal ministries to the low-ranking samurai household staff of an emperor-like shogun who rarely left his palace.

The head of this staff was originally a kind of superior butler—an official called the Grand Chamberlain. Because this was such a modest post originally, even the lowest ranking samurai could hold it. Now, however, the Grand Chamberlain became the defacto prime minister of this centralized bureaucratic regime.

Not only had the shoguns become like Chinese emperors, but the administrative staff of military aristocrats had become much more meritized. Any samurai could rise up through the ranks on the basis of merit (not, to be sure, as yet formally measured by written exams) to become the equivalent of prime minister.

In my jargon, Tokugawa Japan had by Ieshige's time, all but fully meritized its aristocracy. In East Asian terms, this put its ruling class at the level of development of the Chinese Tang Dynasty's meritized aristocracy. It was also on all fours with the similarly informal meritized aristocracies of early modern France and England and Koryo and Yi Korea.

During the reign of the next shogun, Ieharu, the tenth shogun (r.1760-1786), this new arrangement of the top bureaucratic offices became routinized. The non-invalid Ieharu's Grand Chamberlain was a low ranking samurai, the brilliant though corrupt Tanuma Okitsugu.

Tanuma has gained an even greater reputation for corruption than he deserves. This was because his main contribution to the evolution of the Tokugawa state was to take all of the informal (and usually corrupt) links that had grown up between the central administration and the urban middle class and make these links formal.

He hoped that the rich merchants and early industrial manufacturers who were most closely allied with his faction could enter the ruling class on their own terms as plutocrats. To his fellow aristocrats, particularly those of higher rank than himself, this prospect reeked of corruption, even before they discovered just how much these new plutocrats were paying Tanuma for their new status.

Despite both the appearance and reality of corruption, such a transition nevertheless had to be made. As you will see below, the Japanese economy had in the course of the first half of the Tokugawa period become a rapidly maturing early industrial one.

The shogunate simply could no longer afford to derive its revenues solely from agriculture, even from the commercialized agriculture of the agricultural revolution that had accompanied early industrialization. If the government could not draw revenues from the new urban commerce and manufacture as well as from agriculture, government revenues would slip. This would push the incomes of the aristocracy lower relative to the incomes of successful manufacturers and merchants. In years with bad crops, their income might fall still further.

Informally (which is to say, mostly corruptly), all through the 18th century, the government had been trading higher status to the manufacturers and merchants for higher tax revenues. This in turn made possible higher transfer payments to the ruling class. Under Tanuma, these arrangements began to be made formal and explicit. The jealous, and still formally aristocratic, members of the samurai class hated this. They told horrid stories about Tanuma's corruption, even exaggerating his admittedly monumental appetite for bribes.

Tanuma was as audacious as he was intelligent. In foreign policy, he was even getting ready to end Japan's isolation. His excuse for doing so was a story being spread by a crazy Hungarian adventurer named Benyovsky, who had slipped into Japan with a claim that the Russians were

about to take over Hokkaido. It turned out, however, that Benyovsky was merely concocting a story the better to promote his own wild schemes. The Russians were not coming. Hokkaido was less logical as a next target for their expansionary impulse than crossing the Bering Straits and moving along the Alaska coast and points south down to California seeking furs.

When Benyovsky's prevarication was revealed, Tanuma lost his excuse for ending isolation and entering alliances with other powers to counter Russia.

Still, he had almost gotten the Japanese government to do voluntarily in the 1780s what it had to do involuntarily under far more difficult circumstances in the 1850s. In foreign policy terms, at least, his timing was good. If Japan's reentry into interstate politics had occurred during the age of the French Revolution, European pressures on it would not have been as onerous as they were after 1815.

4. Tokugawa finally becomes an Old Regime after all

Shogun Ieharu died in 1786, the same year that the sacred Mt. Fuji had its last big eruption, one which spoiled its symmetry. Everyone took these paired disasters as bad omens. Ieharu's successor quickly drove Tanuma out of power.

Thereafter, the regime's vigor suffered more downs than it enjoyed ups. It never again really tried to get a grip upon the leading sectors of its incipiently fully modern society and economy.

Most initiatives toward change came from the territories of the *tozama* lords of the southwest. At first these initiatives were mostly confined to the economic level. But once the ominous new international developments of the 1850s got under way (only 75 years after Tanuma's time), they came at the political level as well. These political pressures opened careers to talents in the southwest even more fully than the 18th century internal changes had stimulated changes within the central government.

Commodore Perry's arrival on July 8, 1853, tripped off irresistible pressures from outside to end isolationism. Tanuma's more autonomous attempt to reach out from the inside, with Japan controlling the timing and extent of the end of isolation, was no longer possible. If anyone within Japan retained the ability to act independently, it was now the lords of the

southwest.

By the late 1860s the lords of the southwest were at last able to rerun the Battle of Sekigahara. This time the Shimazu of Satsuma did not stay on the fence, but joined with the other lords on the side of the emperor's faction. Together they overthrew the Tokugawa Old Regime and replaced it by a genuinely though unintentionally revolutionary "New Regime," the government of the Meiji Restoration.

You can argue that up until the end of Tanuma's time in 1786, Tokugawa was an early modern regime that still had a serious chance to transform itself from within into a fully modern one. It could have entered into stable formal relations with its own middle class. It could have gone out into the world once more, and on its own terms.

But whether for reasons of historical accident or otherwise, neither of these changes came about then. And so from the time of the death of Shogun Ieharu and the deposition of his Grand Chamberlain Tanuma Okitsugu in 1786 we can talk of an Old Regime ruling in Japan.

However, because it lasted past the middle of the 19th century, the fall of the Tokugawa Old Regime did not much resemble the transformations of England and France into full modernity via the 17th century Puritan and 18th century French Revolutions. Tokugawa's last stages more nearly paralleled those of Germany and Italy, which also delayed their transformations into fully modern regimes into the middle years of the 19th century.

E. Cultural Transformation of the Tokugawa Ruling Class & Its Relationship to the Chonin

In political-social terms, the Japanese ruling class—the samurai military aristocracy—was during Tokugawa times transformed into an essentially civilian, albeit still sword-carrying, meritocracy.

So drastic a change could only have been made by changing the intellectual framework within which the samurai operated. They had, as it were, to undergo something of a cultural revolution.

These intellectual changes also set the samurai on a course of social evolution that converged with the line of development being taken by the *chonin* class.

1. The influence of Shushi

For reasons of state, and because he had himself been introduced to them by his Zen monk teachers, Tokugawa Ieyasu wanted the samurai to study the ideas of the philosopher Shushi (Chinese Zhu Xi). Though he left the samurai their swords, Ieyasu wanted to make sure that these swords would always henceforth remain sheathed. He wanted to transform the samurai into a civilianized military meritocracy.

To a large extent he succeeded. The military aristocracy became conspicuously meritized. The samurai of Tokugawa times openly took up the term *jinzai* 人材—men of talent—as a self-description. This word has the same root as the more modern Japanese term *jinzaishuji* 人才主意—the common Japanese translation for "meritocracy."

Meritization of the aristocracy had an important unintended consequence. Chinese Neo-Confucianism made an active chief executive emperor the locus of sovereign power. Hence, to the extent that Neo-Confucianism captured the hearts of the samurai, it inevitably focused the loyalty of these sword-wielding men of merit not upon the shogun, but upon the emperor himself, and explicitly so.

Of course the shoguns contributed to this by themselves becoming more Chinese emperor-like in the course of the late 17th and the 18th centuries. In the short run this increased their power. But in the long run it undermined their status as feudal overlords, and suggested to Neo-Confucianized samurai that they might do better to shift their ultimate loyalty to the real emperor. The spread of Shushi's ideas inevitably emphasized the derivative nature of the shogun's power.

The ideas of Chinese Neo-Confucianism, as they at last became fully indigenized into Japanese life, were getting the samurai class members ready for a revolutionary change: the overthrow of the Tokugawa Old Regime in 1867-8 and its replacement by a fully modern but still partly Neo-Confucian and hence emperor-centered New Regime during the ensuing Meiji era.

2. The influence of Oyomei

Once the Japanese began to study Shushi, those of more romantic temperament and lower status would inevitably move on to the study of Oyomei (in Chinese pronounced Wang Yangming), the Ming Dynasty figure whose ideas complemented those of Zhu Xi. These two Chinese philosophers in a sense went together as a kind of matched intellectual set: Shushi for understanding Earth, Oyomei for an intuitively grasp of Heaven.

Oyomei was especially attractive to the numerous *ronin* (masterless samurai) created by the sword laws of the 17th century. Cut loose from the support of their society, such men needed a more intuitionist version of Confucianism than Shushi's rationalism could provide.

Those samurai who survived the cut during the 17th century and remained enrolled as samurai, retained the military cast of mind in their civilianized jobs. Oyomei's intuitionism, like Zen Buddhism, appealed more to the military side of their minds than did the bureaucratic rationalism of Shushi.

Application to Japanese life of Oyomei's writings also inspired a kind of secularization of the old Japanese Shintoist faith. The old Buddhist influences on Shinto were downplayed, and Confucian, secular influences were added instead. During Japan's 20th century fascist episode, this secularization was intensified to an almost pathological degree.

Oyomei's intuitionism lent itself especially well to the belief that if the universe was in principle contained within the mind of someone like Oyomei in China, it must be just as much contained within the minds of his Japanese disciples in Japan. Japan was as much a microcosm of the cosmos as China. By the middle years of the 18th century, this indigenization of Oyomei's intuitionism resulted in what in English is called Neo-Shinto.

In Japanese, this movement was called by a term translatable as "National Studies." It might also be called the "Japanese Studies Movement," because at one level it was strikingly like our own recent "American Studies Movement."

Neo-Shinto paid close attention to the details of Japanese history. Its proponents celebrated Japanese literature in much the same way that our American Studies Movement tries to integrate American history and literature, with each shedding

light on the other. The role played by Melville's *Moby Dick* in the American Studies Movement was played by Lady Murasaki's 11th century novel *The Tale of Genji* for Japanese Studies.

The movement also appropriated the results of a new Chinese-influenced scientific historiography to celebrate Japan's historical uniqueness, much as American Studies does with the originally German-inspired scientific historiography of the 19th century.

All this was at the secular level. At what was at least a quasi-religious level, Neo-Shintoism contributed to the creation of what the sociologist Robert Bellah has called the "civil religion" of Japan. But Japan's civil religion was unusual.

Unlike the civil religion of national patriotism (including Americanism) in our end of the world, the Japanese civil religion had as its core a real religion—the Shintoist native faith of Japan—as modified by the 18th century Neo-Shintoists.

During the 1930s and '40s this genuine religious component lent an intensity to Japanese patriotism never quite equaled by American or most European patriotism, even at their most jingoistic. It even seemed to justify the Japanese in starting a war in 1937 which on rational secular grounds they knew they could not win.

On the good side, the core of real religion in Japanese national patriotism probably at least inhibited, if it could not prevent, patriotism from decaying into an apologetic for a full-blown fascism during the 20th century (but see chapter 21).

In mid to late Tokugawa times, however, like Neo-Confucianism, Neo-Shintoism had the effect (since both the Confucian and Shintoist aspects of it focused upon the Emperor) of raising the status of the throne and by implication devaluing the status of the shogun.

3. Mass education

This increasingly popular generic Neo-Shintoism also served as the ethical-moral framework for the spread of mass education during Tokugawa times.

The sociologist R. P. Dore has estimated that, as in the more developed regions of China from Song times on, there was about a 50% male and a 10% female literacy rate in Japan by the middle of the Tokugawa period. Most urban and a significant minority of rural people got at least a lower primary education.

Most schooling took place in so-called *terakoya*—"temple schools"—schools run by *ronin* and/or upwardly mobile commoners. In spite of their name, *terakoya* were much more often located in the teachers' own houses than in local temples. In any case, temples were usually just convenient and cheap sites for delivering education rather than overt controllers of its content.

This 50% male literacy rate was not just very similar to the Song through Qing Chinese rate. It also resembles rates calculated in Europe for countries like England that had advanced past the threshold to the early industrial revolution.

The common Sino-Japanese pattern of locally-controlled community and fully private schools created schools not too different from the so-called parish schools of New England and "dame schools" of New York during colonial and early national times in America. As the United States approached the threshold of the full industrial revolution, its quasi-private schools apparently achieved even higher literacy rates, in some places approaching 90%.³

You may recall that I earlier argued that early modern China's c. 50% male level of literacy was achieved by market-based means rather than in obedience to state-based meritocratic commands. To reach that rate is one of the signs of an early industrial revolution. When an economy hits that level of economic development, about half of its male participants apparently *need* some degree of literacy to carry on their normal activities. Even if left to their own devices, they obtain it just as they obtain other goods—through economic exchange in the marketplace.

Mass education required convergence of the middle class with the samurai class. Many of the teachers of middle class children were ex-samurai. Such teachers carried generic Neo-Shintoism with them down out of the ruling class.

³ Early national period New York's Board of Aldermen granted "aldermanic scholarships" to "the children of paupers" at these private schools. They were called "dame schools" because they were run by young, unmarried women, called "dames" then, in the parlors of their parents. The very high literacy rates cited should not be taken very seriously. Scholars who study such matters can only rarely specify for which functions people were rendered literate at different times and places. The U.S. Census Bureau during the 19th century defined as "literate" any person completing three years of any kind of schooling. By that definition we now have 100% literacy.

Social influences also came from the *chonin* side. Both *chonin* and *samurai* now lived in *chonin* towns. Both read similar kinds of (often pornographic) printed fiction for entertainment. As show business began to take on its modern, urban, commercialized forms, equally moneyed members of the two classes even visited the same red light districts to attend various forms of the theater and chased after the same sorts of prostitutes and *geisha*.

F. Tokugawa's Agricultural Revolution

Let us, however, postpone for a moment consideration of the cities to take account of the farms and villages. If there was indeed an early industrial revolution under way by mid Tokugawa times, we should also, as for Song China earlier, be able to detect signs of an agricultural revolution overlapping it chronologically.

1. Influence of urban markets

In fact there are such signs. To be sure, it was the growth of cities that stimulated most of the agricultural revolution. Despite occasional claims to the contrary by recent developmental economists influenced by Mao Zedong, this is the normal pattern for development, at least once urban industrialization begins.

In the Japanese case, as the number of cities increased during the defeudalization stage of the feudal process, each of them came to influence a nearby rural zone where at least some people produced goods to be sold in that town. These zones grew larger as the cities they served grew larger during the first part of the Tokugawa. They tended to merge as one town's sphere of rural influence extended to and overlapped those of other cities.

Ever larger numbers of formerly self-sufficient farmers turned to supplying food and fiber and other agricultural commodities to the towns. The farmers sold these goods for money and used the money to buy goods they needed. Farmers soon realized that it paid for them to specialize, and through specialization to increase their productivity and incomes.

This in turn heightened the trend to shift from manor-like, centrally controlled farms to subdivided estates worked by tenants via share-cropping. These tenants

worked under contracts which tended to run for ever longer periods of time. This encouraged the abler and more ambitious of them to learn new technological recipes and risk building some of these recipes into the land they were renting. To further increase their income, tenants might devote their labor during the off-seasons to various cottage industries linked to early industrial activities in the towns. (see subsection 3 below.)

Sharecropping at higher incomes tended to replace the collective working of large, undivided estates by low income, low status, and perhaps semi-servile work-gangs of unspecialized rural laborers prior to the Tokugawa agricultural revolution.⁴

2. Technology, new & borrowed

The most conspicuous of the technological improvements to the land encouraged by long-term tenancy was the terracing of hillside fields. Song Dynasty China had added extensive terracing to its agricultural revolution during the 11th and 12th centuries. The Chinese seem to have originally picked this technique up from Southeast Asia. It probably originated (though using sloped rather than the step-like terraces first used in Vietnam) in the Middle East. Now, during Tokugawa times, step terracing spread extensively from China into Japan.

If you are going to the trouble and expense of terracing your hills into stair-step-like fields for irrigated rice, it pays to make sure that there are adequate supplies of water in tanks and reservoirs on the tops of these hills. These improvements require additional savings to finance.

⁴ A shift not unlike this took place in parts of the rural American South after 1865. For some reason, however, academic consensus American historians have tended not to recognize the shift from the gang labor of slavery times to post-bellum share cropping as a step up for blacks. Nor do they much notice that within a generation, at least a third of sharecroppers purchased the land they worked. A significant minority further raised their status by moving to cities to participate in full industrial work. These developments strikingly parallel the shifts in Tokugawa agricultural life narrated above. For a thoughtful implicitly ideational determinist view of the American situation see Robert Higgs, *Competition and Coercion: Blacks in the American Economy, 1865-1914* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 1977). Thomas C. Smith, *Agrarian Origins of Modern Japan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1959) is still the standard work on the Japanese side.

It then pays to employ improved varieties, including the fast-maturing rice seeds Song China also imported from Southeast Asia, probably Vietnam. Fast maturing rice allowed for several crops per year in the more southerly regions of both China and Japan.

Semi-automatic threshing machines and other new machines and production recipes, often from China, did indeed undergo widespread adoption in Japan during the 17th and early 18th century.

These machines are described in several widely sold self-help books printed during this time. Such books were manuals for capitalizing the land. They were Japanese equivalents of such works as Benjamin Franklin's *Poor Richard's Almanac* and the whole new genre of books on how to farm scientifically for fun and profit that became widely popular in England and then France during the 18th century. The Japanese equivalents of such books were just as detailed, and even included descriptions of how to keep the accounts for a commercial farm.

The readers of these widely circulated printed manuals must have belonged to a very numerous rural middle class, and one that was very future oriented. These rural *chonin* were prepared to save and invest *now* so as to obtain much more to consume *later*. Buddhism had done its work of spreading linear time in Japan too.

Members of this rural middle class included the more prosperous tenants, particularly those enjoying long-term tenancy contracts. Skilled tenants were the scarcest factor of production in the most commercialized rural areas, and so they could command favorable terms and long-term tenancy contracts.⁵

3. The peasant as "rational economic man"

In many regions, therefore, the peasantry behaved in a perfectly "modern," i.e. economically rational manner, but rationality is never a guarantor of virtue.

It is not surprising that a number of farming-related cottage industries would grow up out of such advanced farms. Cottage industries used off-season surplus labor in much the same way that the Ming

⁵ This was no fluke, peculiar only to Japan. The same was also often true of Taiwanese tenants under both fellow Taiwanese and Japanese landlords after 1895. To some degree this even held for Black sharecroppers in the post-bellum American South.

and Qing Dynasty Chinese economy used off-season female labor for such activities as cotton-processing. In early industrial China and Japan, such labor was mobilized for many additional purposes, including the various stages of silk processing.

In China, most such goods were bought from and sold to small-scale cottage industry workers by arbitrage-seeking brokers operating through China's highly developed hub and spoke marketing system.

In Japan, however, as in early industrial England, great trading houses retained ownership of key products through all or most of their various stages of production. These trading houses hoped to profit from bypassing state-licensed urban monopolies by seeking out lower cost producers in out of the way rural areas. (see part H below)

These activities raised rural family incomes significantly by mobilizing the labor of women and landless laborers who would otherwise have been underemployed. This was mostly a good thing. It raised rural incomes, not by amounts that we would now consider generous, but at least to higher levels than would otherwise have been obtained.

Hence it is not surprising that such commercial-minded rationality should also have been applied to other departments of life, including population limitation. Population control was practiced in Japan much earlier than you might have expected. This was not, however, an unalloyed good thing.

At least one village in central Japan retains exceptionally good birth and death records going way back into Tokugawa times. It was studied during the 1970s by Thomas Smith.

Smith found that this village was quite prosperous, and its farmers adopted many of the new technologies discussed above. Nevertheless, between 1700 and 1846 the population increase in this place was a fantastically low 0.03% per year. This is even smaller than the American 1965-80 "baby-bust" rate of population increase. These people did not, however, suffer low rates of population growth because of poverty-induced high death rates. The village was unquestionably prosperous.

Smith discovered that population control was quite deliberate. Several sorts of birth control were being practiced. Since I do not want to push the rating of this work

beyond the "PG" level, I will not go into the details of these here.

Unfortunately, a common method of birth control was what Smith calls "sex-selected infanticide." From the second live birth on, families tended to kill off girl babies, and kept killing successive newborns unless they turned out to be boys. To be sure, more innocent causes, like husbands working at a distance also helped space babies.⁶

With the characteristically Japanese gift for euphemism, infanticide was called *mabiki*—an agricultural term meaning "to thin out plant shoots." Thinning allowed the remaining plants to absorb enough water and fertilizer to grow vigorously. Parents "thinned out" the babies to maximize capital investment per child, and also to free labor, particularly female labor, for more profitable purposes. (These other purposes did not, however, include much that resembles "women's liberation.")

Apparently, judging from the generally stable post-1725 population figures for Japan as a whole, birth control was widely employed. The total Japanese population as of around 1600 was about 15 million, give or take a few million. By 1725, the population had grown significantly, but at a modest annual rate, to between 25 and 27 million. But then, between all but 1725 and the 1850s, population growth halted, and by the 1850s may barely have reached 30 million.

This drastic falling off of the rate of population growth used to be ascribed (particularly by Marxist economic and social historians and their academic consensus fellow-travelers) to poverty. Now, as the result of research like that of Smith, much of it is more plausibly ascribed to prosperity and economic rationality.

Relatively prosperous rural people attempted to act as rational economic men by practicing infanticide and birth control. No doubt their attitude was not too different from that of post-1960s American yuppies or from that of the 19th century utilitarian Englishmen whom the contemporary Oxford Movement poet Hugh Clough satirized in his "The New Decalog:"

Thou shalt not kill, but needst not
strive

⁶ Laurel L. Cornell, "Infanticide in Early Modern Japan? Demography, Culture, and Population Growth," *Journal of Asian Studies*, 55.1 (Feb. 1966), 22-50.

Officially to keep alive.

Even though population was growing rapidly in both Europe and North America during the 19th century, birth rates were also dropping dramatically all during this time. It was just that death rates dropped even faster (and in North America the immigration rate rose even more dramatically).

Death rates from disease also fell in Tokugawa Japan. Even smallpox had only a minor effect on population growth after Heian times.⁷ Though we in the West normally associate population planning by families with a full industrial revolution, it is also plausible to associate similar practices with Japan's early industrial revolution.

So much also for Parson Malthus and his long notorious worries about population tending to increase at a supposed geometric rate (2, 4, 16, etc.) and outrunning the means of sustenance which supposedly only increase arithmetically (1, 2, 3, etc.).

Malthus's related worry about people using "vice" rather than "virtue" to control their numbers seems to have been much closer to the mark. Eric Voegelin (echoed by the Soviet exile Igor Shafarevich in his *The Socialist Phenomenon*) suggests that at least part of the reason for the decline in the birth rate of mature full industrial societies is a kind of death wish induced by despair at the failure to construct a Heaven on Earth—i.e. that birth rate decline is a sign of crisis of civilization. However, this sort of argument may not yet hold for early industrial Japan.

G. Tokugawa's Early Industrial Revolution

There is other, more direct, evidence than peasants killing babies to maximize income that Japan had, in its urban and nearby rural areas, achieved something describable as an early industrial revolution by mid Tokugawa times—at least by the first quarter of the 18th century and probably by the late 17th century.

1. Isolationism

We must first confront the question of

⁷ William Wayne Farris, *Population, Disease and Land in Early Japan, 645-900* (Cambridge: Harvard, 1985); Ann Bowman Janette, *Epidemics and Mortality in Early Modern Japan* (Princeton, 1987).

the economic effects of isolationism—the *sakoku* or closed country policy—as the Japanese historians refer to it. Isolationism is as important in Japanese history for its economic effects and for its influence on political values and history as isolationism during the 19th century was in American history.

You may recall that in the previous chapter I argued that the *sakoku* policy had primarily political motives. It was essentially a way to isolate Japanese domestic politics from the destabilizing consequences of international balance of power politics. Isolation allowed the Tokugawa rulers to make sure that the lords of the southwest could not once again connect up with Spain or Portugal so as to reverse the results of the 1600 Battle of Sekigahara.

Isolation also had the cultural effect of insulating Japan from Christianity and all the elements of the West's version of the second stage of high civilization linked to Christianity which some Japanese had been tempted to adopt as an alternative to the Chinese Buddhist-Confucian version of a second stage of high civilization.

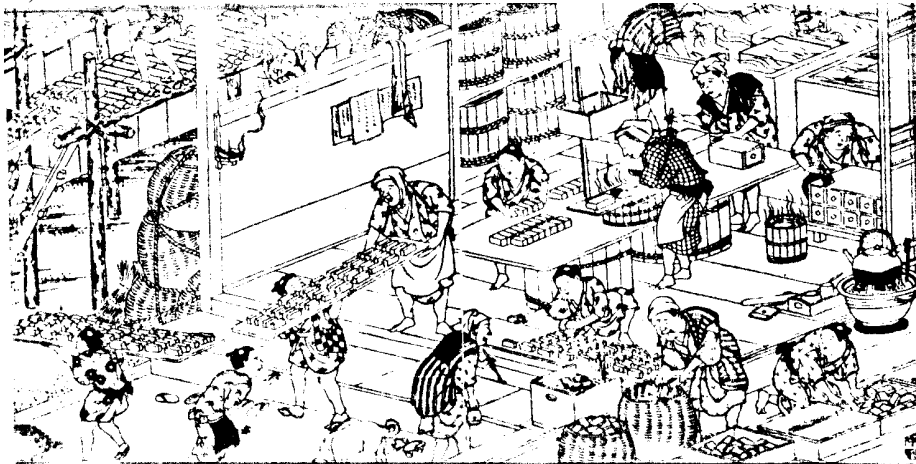
Some modern Japanese economic historians argue that the Tokugawa also had economic motives for isolationism, or at least that their politically determined policies had by and large wholesome economic consequences.

These late 20th century Japanese writers are regressing to a three century-old standard European mercantilist argument when they assert that in the 16th and 17th centuries, prior to isolation, Japan was being drained of silver. This was supposedly to pay for imports, particularly of fancy Chinese silks. Once the *sakoku* policy was put in place after the middle of the 17th century, they argue, the Tokugawa government could end this outflow of specie and simultaneously encourage domestic production of silks to replace these imports. This encouragement of an "infant industry" during the 17th century supposedly ultimately gave Japan a leg up in gaining a dominant position in the international silk trade after 1868, over two centuries later.

These arguments also read back into Tokugawa times the arguments of post-1960 Japanese rationalizers of protection for postwar Japanese industries and the arguments of American "Japan bashers" who accuse Japan of such protectionism. In fact, however, Tokugawa policies do

not seem to have had such intentions or effects. If they had, the results would have been as perverse (and ultimately self-hurting) as Japan's post-1960 protectionism has turned out to be.

Any protectionist effects of *sakoku* must have been trivial at best. After all, to be drained of silver is no different than being "drained" of any other depletable commodity, since that is all that silver is. Indeed silver is not even a particularly useful depletable commodity. To exchange silver for wholesome things from China was presumably a net benefit for both sides. The Chinese needed the silver to get out from under a destabilizing official paper money system. The Japanese Manufacturing freeze-dried bean curd. Notice the characteristic early industrial division of labor, much as in Adam Smith's celebrated example of pin manufacture. (Toynbee, *Half the World*, p. 219.)



apparently wanted these imports, which after all included not just silks but the printed books by Shushi and Oyomei required for the creation of an early modern ruling class.

Even granted the mercantilist premises, doubtful though they may be, of these modern Japanese neomercantilists, the good effects of keeping silver in and Chinese silks out would have been trivial, limited to those particular industries which were the beneficiaries of the exclusion of their foreign competition. The mercantilists do not mention the counterbalancing harm to those who had been making their money by engaging in the foreign trade now banned. I will mention some of these in the next section.

Even if we ignore the harm done to would-be importers, protectionism could not have had much effect. The most one could say is that given the 1720s population of around 27 million, a foreign trade carried on the small sailing ships of that

time simply could not have been massive enough to have made much difference to Japan's economy one way or the other.

After all, England only had around 6 million people in 1700—between a fourth and a fifth of the population of Japan. The same volume of foreign trade would have affected England at least four-fold more than Japan, and Japan's pre-isolation trade was likely never as big in absolute terms as England's.

2. The Sankin-kodai system

A more serious argument can be made that the *sankin-kodai*, or alternate attendance system put in for political purposes had substantial economic consequences. By forcing the daimyo and their households to be constantly on the move to or

from Edo, it stimulated urbanism and hence the commercial production of goods for consumption by these new urban people.

The samurai and their families constituted nearly 10% of the population of Japan. This was as high a proportion as held by the Polish aristocracy, and Poland had a higher proportion of aristocrats than any other European country. In Poland, however, most aristocrats still lived in the countryside.

Keeping so high a proportion of the Japanese population living what even contemporaries called a "hotel existence" must have intensified urbanization and all the trades that directly and indirectly served this upper class of physically mobile urban consumers.

Indeed about 10% of the population of Japan was living in cities of significant size by 1700. That may not seem like much, but it was a much bigger proportion than in France. England did not hit

that level until around 1800, well into its full industrial revolution stage.

Edo, the Tokugawa shogun's castle town, was probably the biggest city in the world in 1700, its million plus population making it slightly bigger even than the capital of China, Beijing.

Osaka, at the northern end of the Inland Sea, was the great entrepot at the other end of the road west from Edo. Coastal seaborne traffic and poor roads (deliberately kept poor to discourage rapid movement by potential rebels) linked both of these great cities to several dozen major castle towns and an equal number of large former postal cities.

In Europe, only Italy, by then past its peak, had a comparably dense urban network. In China, only the small region along the lower Yangzi and comprising the cities along the lower reaches of the Grand Canal resembled this 18th century Japanese conurbation. But China, unlike Japan, was beginning to be hobbled by the political and social aspects of its unfolding crisis of civilization.

3. Urban crafts and manufacturing

A number of old and new products were being produced in ever more indirect ways in these cities: bean cakes, silk, sake, soy sauce, tatami mats, and all sorts of new offshoots of the printing business. All of these goods, except for printing, could equally well be produced in rural areas within the commercial orbit of a large city. This possibility limited the efforts of would-be urban monopolists to secure monopoly prices for themselves by limiting production.

Sake, for example, could be produced in quite remote locations once the brewers learned how to produce a rice-based still-beer that would "travel." This could be achieved by "clearing" the brew of byproducts of fermentation through dumping alum into it. The solids combined with the alum and settled on the bottom of the cask, allowing the clear liquor to be siphoned off. This technique was supposedly discovered by accident when a disgruntled employee threw alum in a vat of sake to spite his employer.

Soy sauce, also in part the result of fermentation, similarly became a commercially produced product by the end of the 17th century. (Kikkoman, an old Japanese firm which also dominates the American

soy sauce market, on its labels claims 1630 as its founding date.)

At the retail level, ramen (Chinese *lamian* 拉麵 noodle shops became ubiquitous during Tokugawa times as a traditional Japanese form of urban "fast food."

Printing was not just of books of various sorts, including mass readership popular novels and calendars (printers of the latter holding monopoly licenses from the government). By the 1700s, perhaps on the basis of hints from analogous Chinese products, skilled commercial printers began to turn out multi-color printed posters mimicking and then going well beyond various genres of hand-made landscape and portrait paintings.

Only later did esthetes in both Japan and the West realize that these later and more original color prints constituted a unique and valuable artistic genre in its own right. At the time, and to a much greater degree than in contemporary China, these prints served as industrial commodities sold to an increasingly prosperous middle class that wanted to emulate the aristocracy's possession of high art. If a *chonin* could not afford a painting, he could at least purchase one or more of these cheap mass-produced and uniquely Japanese works of art.

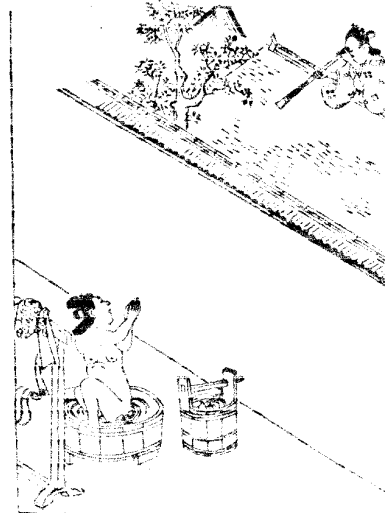
Urban men, whether *chonin* or *samurai*, read the same sorts of books, written by both, though the ex-*samurai* tended, like Saikaku, to satirize the *chonin* from a perspective both ruling class and pessimistically Buddhist. Perhaps that is why Saikaku's stories are still read.

Indeed the middle class and the aristocracy now joined directly in all sorts of early industrial age leisure-time activities: at the theater, including both live actor Kabuki theater (a mass marketed version of the old aristocratic Noh drama) and the Bunraku or puppet drama, which was used for a time as a substitute for Kabuki when Kabuki was banned. The actors were believed (accurately as it happened) by the puritanical Confucian reformers of the early 18th century to be working on the side as male and female prostitutes.

We also get for Tokugawa Japan the same kinds of anecdotes alluding to doubling of growth during the speaker's lifetime that we began to get during Song in China. These imply that growth of the economy was indeed approaching the 0.75% to 1% per annum compound growth rate that I suggested in chapter 11 as a functional definition for an early in-

dustrial revolution.

There are even some signs of the business cycle. After all, banks were present (see part H2 below), and intelligent economists have long since known that cyclical creation and destruction of bank credit by the rulers' friends in the banks sends misleading price signals to businessmen, causing them to overinvest. The label "business" cycle is misleading. Interventionism cycle or political cycle are more accurate.



"Suddenly she noticed him. Speechless with embarrassment, she clasped her hands imploringly. But he only leered all the more." An illustration from the first novel of Saikaku (1642-93). "The Man Who Spent his Life at Love-making." Saikaku depicted his public with the same posturing of merchants' triumphs and fate at the one quarters of Osaka. (18)

"Suddenly she noticed him. Speechless with embarrassment, she clasped her hands imploringly. But he only leered all the more." Saikaku, *The Man Who Spent his Life at Love-making*. (Toynbee, *Half the World*, p. 260.)

At this early stage, however, these business cycles were mostly masked by much larger movements of agricultural prices from such natural causes as droughts, floods, and possibly from sunspot-linked solar heat variations causing drought/flood cycles.

The Japanese situation resembled that in 16th and 17th century England. All the key signs of an early industrial revolution seem to have been as present in the cities of mid to late Tokugawa Japan as in late Tudor and early Stuart London.

H. Tokugawa Commerce and Manufacture: Stages of Development

If we examine the stages of development of commerce and manufacture during the Tokugawa, we do not just see signs of a progressing economy. We also

see an economy whose leading classes were beginning to escape from the controls of an Old Regime increasingly less able to maintain control over the market.

At each stage, the state could “co-opt” (compromise the integrity of through the granting of privileges to) the top layers of *chonin* society. But all this did was undermine the vigor of those co-opted, and leave them vulnerable to replacement at the top by another group more capable of both responding to the signals of the market and escaping from the constraints imposed by the state.

1. The merchant-quartermaster stage

The dominant members of the commercial class during the first third of the 17th century were the so-called merchant-quartermasters. We can conveniently name this first stage of Japan's early industrial revolution after them.

These men were upscale versions of the much larger class of castle town *chonin* quartermasters who flourished during the *Sengoku jidai*. It was just that the lord of their castle happened to be the Tokugawa shogun who unified Japan. These townsmen had supplied their political master and his allies with both military necessities and civilian luxuries on a smaller scale from the beginning of Tokugawa Ieyasu's rise to power.

Once the Tokugawa established a centralized feudalism comprising all of Japan, their erstwhile quartermasters could trade more widely. They also obtained new special privileges from their political masters, including what amounted to plutocratic status within the ruling class, at least for a short time.

One particularly lucrative privilege given these merchant quartermasters after 1600 was a monopoly license to trade abroad. There is nothing odd or even peculiarly Japanese or East Asian about such licenses. The Japanese had long since picked up the idea of monopoly licenses from the Chinese. Europeans had independently worked out similar institutions. This was, after all, also the age that witnessed the birth of the British and the Dutch East India Companies. Each of these companies enjoyed a monopoly license on their country's trade with Asia.

What was different about the Japanese case was that such foreign trade monopoly licenses did not last. They were ended

by two developments:

1) the coming of the sword laws which forced these merchant-quartermasters to choose between aristocratic status and continuing to engage in trade, and

2) adoption of the isolationist policy which ended those portions of Japan's foreign trade carried by Europeans.

These merchant-quartermasters and their customers were among the people who lost out, at least in economic terms, from the alleged protection of infant domestic industries that supposedly inadvertently resulted from isolationism.

Naturally, under these circumstances, most of these merchant-quartermasters abandoned their mercantile roles and instead chose aristocratic titles and employment as meritized aristocrats in the shogunal ministries dealing with the regulation of commerce and banking.

Having lost their private businesses, they could no longer function as plutocrats within the ruling class.

2. The Osaka rice brokers stage

The next townsmen to become dominant filled the niche left by the disappearance of the merchant-quartermasters into the ranks of the aristocracy. These were the rice brokers of Osaka. They soon became even more powerful in the market than their predecessors had been. Though they began as owners of rice warehouses, they used their location in that great trading hub at the top of the Inland Sea to evolve into bankers. This occurred as a consequence of who their best customers turned out to be.

Daimyo on their way to or from Edo under the requirements of the *sankin-kodai* system required lots of cash to lead their “hotel existence.” Unfortunately, all they had were the myriads of *koku* of rice they received as taxes in kind from the farmers in their *han*.

The Osaka rice brokers' warehouses were accessible by water to most of the *han* of Japan. The brokers were happy to buy this rice, and lodged it in their warehouses for subsequent resale at a profit all around the perimeter of the Inland Sea.

Soon the Osaka brokers accepted this tax-rice as a kind of deposit, which they and their daimyo depositors treated as a kind of near-money commodity. So good was the credit of the rice brokers that instead of bronze coins or small gold or

silver bars (which would have been too heavy to be conveniently carried anyway), they issued to their aristocratic depositors paper bills of exchange. The daimyo could use these to pay their bills or exchange for hard money or other liquid assets while they lived the “hotel existence” in Edo and on the road. Such bills circulated as high denomination paper money until someone cashed them in for rice at the warehouse. The brokers were soon running what amounted to money warehouses for the new commodity-money—rice.

The evolution of these commodity-money warehouses did not stop there.

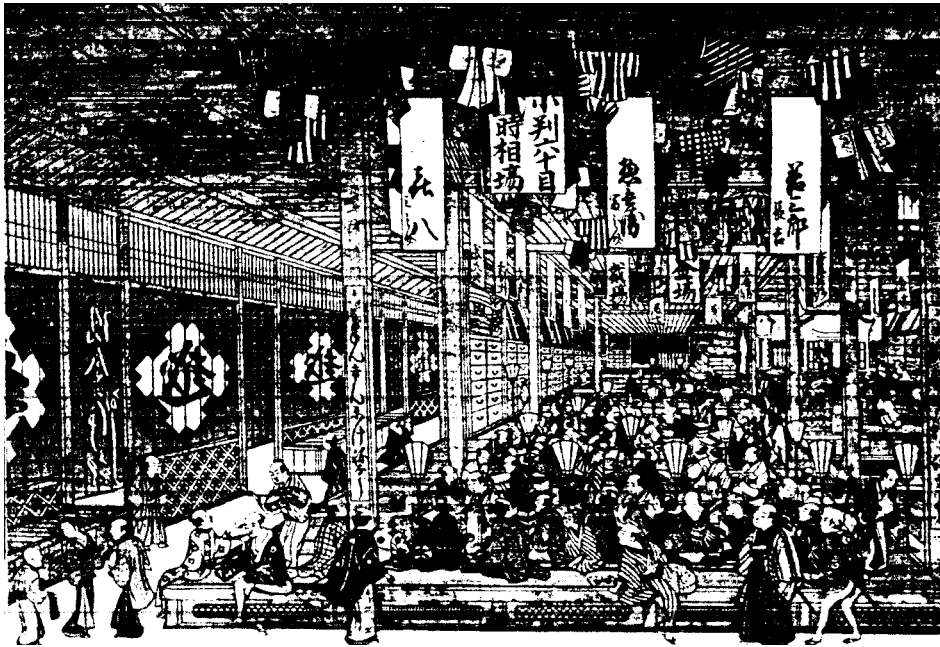
Before long, the rice brokers started to make cash loans to daimyo by issuing paper bills to them in return for *promises* to turn over subsequent years' rice crops to the warehouses. These bills were no longer backed by rice in hand in the warehouses. In principle, therefore, their quantity was limited only by the prudence of the rice-brokers in making additional loans to the daimyo.

The daimyo were by then normally spending more than the cash equivalents of their tax receipts in rice so as to live up to the levels of luxury expected of them by the rules of the shogunate. Though these loans were secured by pledges to deposit larger proportions of subsequent years' tax receipts, the path of least resistance for the rice brokers was to “roll them over” and even to expand the size of the loans rather than to insist that they be paid off (which most daimyo could not do anyway).

These rice broker warehousemen had by this point evolved into fractional reserve bankers, using rice as the reserve money-commodity for their paper bill moneys, only a fraction of which were now actually backed by deposits of that money-commodity.

Because the Osaka bankers' (as we can now call them) key loans were to political entities, they were also as much public central bankers as private commercial bankers.

By an interesting coincidence, the Osaka rice-brokers were becoming bankers at the same time (the late 17th century), that English goldsmiths began to evolve into private commercial bankers. Some of these English bankers became central bankers at about the same time as the Osaka men did. The Bank of England was chartered in 1693, and began to take



The open trading floor of the Echigoya Draper's Shop in Edo, the world's oldest department store. (Smith, *Japan: A History in Art*, p. 222.)

on central banking tasks similar to those assumed by the Osaka bankers at the same time during the early 18th century.

The Osaka bankers got into deeper trouble sooner than did their English counterparts. By c. 1700 many of the daimyo were so hopelessly in debt to the Osaka bankers that the bankers came to have more to worry about than did the indebted daimyo.

During the early 18th century, the shogunal administration under Tsunayoshi's successors was going through a series of fits of virtuous Confucian revolution not only against Buddhism but against bankers and traders in general. These men of the market were supposedly getting out of hand. Of course what these Confucianized samurai really meant was that the market had grown out from under the ability of meritized aristocrats like themselves to control.

The shogunate passed sumptuary laws forbidding people like the Osaka bankers from parading around dressed like samurai in silk outer garments. They had to be content with silk inner garments. The authorities added injury to insult by also passing laws suspending payments of debts owed to these bankers by the daimyo.

And so by the early 18th century, the Osaka bankers, like all bankers sooner or later in modern times, had been mouse-trapped. They had not been able to resist

the temptation to grasp big profits by issuing more receipts than they had money-commodities in their warehouses to cover. By issuing so many fraudulent receipts, they eventually turned themselves into creatures of the state, dependent on the good will of the state's proprietors to gain even partial and delayed repayment from their politically influential debtors.

When, in self defense, they periodically cut back on (or even when they did not increase) the number of fraudulent warehouse receipts, they caused temporary collapses in the volume of trade. Trade only recovered when they resumed issue of fraudulent bank notes. The modern business cycle had reached Japan.

3. The Za stage

This new form of political redistribution via bank loans corrupted the proprietors of the state as well. Despite the veneer of soft Confucianism it affected, the people who really ran the 18th century Tokugawa state were hard Confucians who were also learning how to become soft or eclectic Legalists. They would have been called "mercantilists" by contemporary Europeans. In this respect they also resembled most of those who ran the Chinese state during most periods.

All during the 18th century, these hard Confucians wound up giving ever more privileges to the members of the great urban guilds, called *za*. These were located in the main towns, particularly in Kyoto (the more recent name for ancient

Heian) and Edo (called Tokyo after Tokugawa times). In exchange, the state gained access to some of the monopoly profits that resulted from the higher prices that grant of monopoly licenses to these *za* made possible.

The silk trade was particularly lucrative for both the *za* and the government. Partly because of historical accidents, but also partly because the *za* encouraged centralization of the trade so as to monopolize it more conveniently, nearly 90% of the processing of silk was being carried on in Kyoto by the 1720s. Both *za* elders and the government's tax coffers were doing very well from so conveniently located a licensed monopoly.

By the time of Tanuma Okitsugu's administration during the third quarter of the 18th century, the state was preparing to fully legitimize these arrangements. Political historians have surmised that it was only the fall of Tanuma that aborted this process. Ideational determinist economic historians surmise that the *za* masters were already losing their monopolies during the 18th century. It was precisely because they were no longer prospering as much as before that the silk *za* so desperately sought out new political links with Tanuma's administration to try to restore their fading economic monopoly.

4. The rise of the ie

Hence even if he had remained in power Tanuma's proposed political marriage of the shogunate to the *za* might not have assured wealth and power for both.

The high monopoly prices charged by the *za* had opened up room for the rise of the *ie*, the great wholesaling "houses," to undercut such monopolies by shifting such productive activities as the silk trade to the rural cottage level. They did so by "putting out" those stages of silk production that did not need to be carried out in a big city. Once processed, the *ie* repossessed and sold the finished goods at retail in their own department stores, such as the Echigoya Draper's Shop in Edo.

Under the "putting out" system, the *ie* owned the semi-finished goods at all stages of the production process wherever the work was done. That gave the firm full control over the design, quality and cost of production of the finished goods.

Echigoya eventually evolved into the very upscale Mitsukoshi Department Store chain. But even by the late 17th

century it already had many of the traits of a modern department store, including the policy of posting fixed prices to obviate cheating by underpaid clerks. It was not until the 1850s that A. T. Stewart put a similar system into effect in his department store, New York City's (and America's) first.

The effect of the growth of the *ie* was dramatic. In the 1720s some 90% of the silk trade was in the hands of the silk *za* of Kyoto. By 1800 90% of it was not. It was instead in the hands of the several important *ie* which had taken it over.

What happened in the silk trade was also happening in other branches of manufacture and commerce. The great *ie* which thereby evolved became the matrix out of which grew the post-1868 large-scale sector of the Japanese industrial system.

Some of the *ie* founded in the 17th and 18th centuries, like Sumitomo and Mitsui, are still in business now as great international trading conglomerates, and even under the same names.

Just as the *ie*'s putting-out wholesaler

branches overwhelmed the *za* during the 18th century, it was the new banks the *ie* set up in the 1870s that financed their operations. The Osaka banks, did not long survive the fall of Tokugawa. The *ie* banks have dominated the financial life of Japan since 1868.

Notice how the same pattern was repeated at each stage of Japan's early industrial revolution:

The merchant-quartermasters rose to power, but were co-opted by the state and converted into meritized aristocrats. Their place atop the *chonin* social structure was taken by the Osaka bankers who grew rich and hence powerful through their government connections, but were also eventually neutered as plutocrats by the rulers' bullying. Then came the masters of the *za*, but their acceptance of monopoly licenses from the state merely set them up for the *ie* to usurp their business and then their political power.

The rise of the *ie* represents only a slight break in this pattern. They not only went around the *za*, but eventually around the Tokugawa state itself. The most im-

portant political connections of the *ie* were with certain of the reforming *han* of the southwest, regions to which they put out parts of their manufacture of silk and silk cloth.

This shows that by the latter part of the Tokugawa period the top ranks of the Japanese middle class had, at least for a time, escaped from the limitations of the early modern Old Regime of the Tokugawa state.

As it turned out, the *ie* were ready to serve as part of the matrix out of which the modern Japanese full industrial revolution and its accompanying political and social orders would grow during recent times.

In the course of the 130 years since the fall of the Tokugawa, the same pattern of co-optation by the state, leaving room for new and more elegantly organized and more productive groups to move up to the top of the townsman class, has been repeated several times in Japan. I will, however, have to postpone the narrative of that process to several later chapters. EHK