

## 17: THE MEIJI RESTORATION<sup>1</sup>

*a. At the political and social levels, what are the functions of a modern revolution? How do excluding and non-excluding revolutions differ (for good and ill) in carrying out this function? Why might it be more useful to categorize the Meiji Restoration as a non-excluding revolution rather than as an excluding revolution or just a coup or reactionary restoration?*

*b. Define the three aspects of modernity. How does each aspect relate to the others? Select some key aspect of either the political, intellectual social or economic life of Japan during the Meiji era and indicate how it evolved through each of the three aspects of modernity.*

### A. The Function of Revolutions

#### 1. From Early To Full Modern

A revolution is a zone of sharp discontinuity between what precedes and what follows it. Mathematicians sometimes talk about “catastrophe” theory in ways dimly analogous to the way historians talk about revolutions. Physical mathematicians describe atoms making “quantum jumps” from one energy state to another. Like historical revolutions, these physical-mathematical discontinuities connect (or rather stand between) two different states of affairs. Unlike historical revolutions, though, the physicist cannot directly see what is going on during the discontinuity connecting the two different states of affairs. The shift happens too quickly.

The French and American Revolutions both involved sharp political discontinuities. They stood at the boundary between the “early modern” and the “fully modern” stages of development in politics and in other departments of life.

I use the term *Early* modern to refer to the period when the second stage of high civilization begins to mature. From an

ideational determinist perspective, early modernization has several effects:

1) During an early modern period, the meritocratic sector of the ruling class begins to gain prestige and hence larger and more bureaucratic states evolve.

2) In economic life, an early industrial revolution begins.

3) In philosophy, ideas about the nature of Earth catch up in complexity with the earlier ideas about Heaven that made possible the development of a second stage of high civilization in the first place.

A *fully* modern period is the last part of the second stage of high civilization. Pure aristocracy virtually disappears. The meritocratic sector becomes dominant. Though a plutocratic sector fitfully rises, and the early industrial age melds into a full industrial revolution, the meritocracy eventually reigns supreme.

Ideas about Earth hatched by the meritocracy begin to escape control and start to discredit earlier ideas about Heaven. Eventually, a dominant coalition of meritocrats coalesces around the idea of the mass of the population as a kind of Earthly pseudo-transcendent to replace the old vision of Heaven.

From a material determinist perspective, this mobilization of the masses is the decisive revolution of modern times.

However, ideational determinists like Eric Voegelin predict (and this prediction has recently been confirmed), that mobilizing this pseudo-transcendent, called “the People” (note the capital “P” to distinguish it from actual real people), must prove inadequate precisely because it is derived from Earth rather than Heaven. It can discredit but not permanently replace the old vision of Heaven. Once both visions have been fully discredited, the overripe fully modern civilization rapidly falls into crisis and remains in crisis until a new or reworked vision of a genuine Heaven wins men’s allegiance.

The kinds of revolution we are interested in here bridge the short and sharp discontinuities between early and full modernity and set the stage for overt crisis of civilization.

Historians also, however, use the term revolution for events that bridge discontinuities over much longer periods of time. For example, I have discussed an “agricultural revolution” extending over centuries as part of an early and then full industrial revolution that also stretched out equally long.

Before that, during the period of transition into early civilization, I noted the presence of a Neolithic Revolution. In China this revolution started c. 6,000 BC, but pooped along during the Beginning Neolithic with nothing very revolutionary happening for 3,000 years until the Late Neolithic, when within a few centuries, abrupt, sharp changes finally began. These included the creation of a ruling class, the state, and hence the beginnings of early civilization.

Full modernity’s most notorious material determinist prophet of revolution, Karl Marx, made something very much like the above distinction between abrupt and long extending discontinuities with his biological metaphor for revolution.

Marx described capitalism’s long “gestation” within the “womb” of Feudal Society. The Puritan and French Revolutions violently midwived the birth of capitalism by a kind of Caesarian section, which killed Capitalist Society’s Feudal Society mother. Marx actually describes Capitalism being ripped untimely and bloodily from its mother’s womb.<sup>2</sup>

Chairman Mao, who had read a bit of Marx, but preferred the Chinese style of culinary images for politics, spoke of “sprouts” of capitalism slowly growing within the soil of Chinese Feudal Society. These, he suggested, later began to suddenly grow into mighty capitalist plants under the violent ministrations of European imperialist capitalists after 1842.

“Sprouts” and “wombs” are just different images for a wholly new order slowly and in hiding taking shape and then suddenly and violently becoming visible.

Personally, I prefer Mao’s culinary metaphor, though he elsewhere observes that when the sprouts of revolution finally mature, the resulting revolution “is not a dinner party.” (He might with equal accuracy have added that, in China at least, the revolution may well end and be celebrated with a series of dinner parties.)

#### 2. Excluding & non-excluding revolutions

In practice, the long gestation of the kind of revolution envisioned by both

<sup>1</sup> 1st dr. 10/87; 7th rev 9/99. By Edward H. Kaplan.

<sup>2</sup> In ancient times a Caesarian section was in fact only performed just after the mother’s death as a desperate last measure to at least save the fetus’s life.

Marx and Mao always culminates in violence. This final bloody birth of a new society is what my label “excluding revolution” is intended to convey. During an excluding revolution, the ruling class of the old order is killed off, or thrown out of power and perhaps out of the country.

Suppose, however, full modernity has a more natural kind of birth, and is accompanied by not much violence. The “mother” does not die and the “infant” revolutionary society is born naturally, through the metaphorical equivalent of the birth canal.

The old ruling class does not disappear. Instead it stays around to join, nurture and second-guess the new ruling class. Indeed (to abandon Marx’s metaphor altogether), the old rulers may well turn some or all of their fellows into the core of the new ruling order.

An old aristocracy may redefine itself and perhaps become a new aristocracy. It may even redefine some of its members as new meritocrats. An old meritocracy may abandon its old template of merit and pick out a new one for itself. Even if the old aristocracy invites a new meritocracy and a new plutocracy to join it, it may well keep its former links to the old Heaven unchanged even as it lets bits and pieces of some new Heaven or Heavens to be patched onto the old one.

If any or all of these permutations occur, the result is what I would call a “non-excluding” revolution.<sup>3</sup> Like the excluding revolution, it is normally preceded by a long and relatively calm period of gestation. Both excluding and non-excluding revolutions achieve full modernity. Hence the crisis of the second stage of high civilization is either imminent or fully under way in both. The two differ only in what happens during the final “birthing” process.

<sup>3</sup> The most distinguished of American political scientists studying modern Japan, Chalmers A. Johnson, in his *Revolution and the Social System* (Stanford: Hoover Institution, 1964), 17n31, denies, but only by definition, that there can be such a thing as a non-excluding revolution. He admits, however, that the fall of Tokugawa would qualify as a revolution (made possible by some profound dysfunction of the old order, and creating a substantially new order) except for the absence of extensive violence during its overthrow. Our difference would seem to be more terminological than substantive. Johnson would accept my definition of a non-excluding revolution, with its revolutionary consequences, but would not accept the label “revolution” for it. A rose by any other name smells as sweet would be my rejoinder..

### 3. Some excluding revolutions

We have already seen an example of an ancient revolution evolving from non-excluding to excluding form. The unification of China by Qin in 221 BC initially transformed but did not destroy much of the old aristocracy of Warring States times during its non-excluding phase up until 210. However, the 208-196 BC civil war (the excluding phase) virtually wiped out that aristocracy and culminated in the reunification of China by the Han under a new meritocracy. A couple of centuries later, China’s first stage of high civilization entered its crisis.

Several more recent excluding revolutions served as sharp transitions from early modernity to full modernity. The Puritan Revolution in mid-17th century England was the earliest of these. It culminated with King Charles I losing his head, which certainly excluded him!

A large chunk of the English aristocracy then had to run away abroad to the continent or Virginia, and to remain out of circulation at home for half a generation. They and their status never quite recovered when they finally came back to England in 1660. However, an attempt in 1688 to undo the religious aspects of this revolution was itself quickly undone. As a consequence of its excluding revolution, England became the first fully modern part of Western Civilization.

A century later, the American Revolution excluded 100,000 Tories whom it sent running to Canada. There they founded the grand old Canadian tradition of anti-Americanism, or at least of sniffing at the revolutionary regime below the 49th Parallel as “the Excited States of America,” as one of their best economic historians, Harold Innis, once put it. American full modernity soon caught up with England’s.

Once the French Revolution worked up a head of steam between 1789 and 1792, it became the most conspicuously bloody revolution of this triad: The revolutionaries not only cut off the heads of their king and queen and of a fair sample of the old aristocracy, but also decapitated quite a few others. Much of the rest of the aristocracy fled abroad for the better part of a decade and a half.

Under Bonapart after 1799, France lapsed back into something resembling a non-excluding revolution. Several subse-

quent 19th century episodes (1830, 1848, 1871) hardly deserved the label “revolution” at all. Many Frenchmen now believe that only the return to power of General DeGaulle in 1958, and his voluntary retirement in 1969 finally allowed France to win American-style closure for the excluding aspects of their revolution.

The historian R.R. Palmer titled his book about this triad (British, American, French) of revolutions *The Age of the Democratic Revolutions*. He did not ignore the bloodier aspects of all this exclusion, but invited his readers to consider the great good that had come out of it all: Democracy, rule by the “People.”

A century and a half after the Puritan Revolution, England became a democracy. Less than a decade after the American Revolution, American constitutional democracy appeared. The French got democracy wholesale: Five republics (so far) and two popular empires as a consequence of the French Revolution of 1789. Though it took nearly two centuries, with DeGaulle’s Fifth Republic starting in 1958, France may finally have achieved the same sort of democratic stability as the English and American post-revolutionary regimes.

Unfortunately, Palmer did not consider other more recent excluding revolutions, patterned more on the French reign of Terror of the mid-1790s, than the other two, and considerably less attractive even than the French.

Consider the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the Chinese Revolution culminating in 1949. These also were excluding revolutions. Only one (Russia’s) has so far issued in democracy, even of the French sort, and equally unstably.

Barrington Moore, Jr.’s mid-’60s *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* pointed out this difference between 17th-18th and 20th century excluding revolutions, though with regret. Moore fellow-traveled with the New Left of those days and sympathized with revolutionary Russia and China. But he had to admit that societies having excluding revolutions in the 20th century as opposed to the 17th or 18th centuries all seemed to have turned out rather badly.

### 4. Non-excluding revolutions

Non-excluding revolutions might intuitively seem less likely to turn out badly than 20th century excluding ones, but they

often end in disaster after a lag of a couple of generations. You might think that a slow, natural sort of revolution would be rather nicer than a rapid, bloody one. Since a non-excluding revolution does not need to kill off or even exile the old ruling class, it might not have to do more than hurt the feelings of some of the old rulers.

The Taika Reform of AD 644-45 in Japan was an ancient prototype of such an uprising that turned out well. One wing of the Japanese old aristocracy pushed aside but not out (except for the Soga family) another wing, but stole the key new ideas of their opponents, and soon led Japan fully into the first stage of high civilization. Many historians take this as a “pre-qual” to the Meiji Restoration, except that the Meiji era’s non-excluding revolution turned nasty two generations later.

Other more recent non-excluding revolutions have also turned out rather badly. The leading examples of non-excluding revolutions in the 19th century (all in fact belonging to the third quarter of the 19th century) without exception hit exceedingly bad patches by the 1920s or ‘30s. These were the German and Italian national unifications, as well as the Japanese Meiji Restoration.

The first two of these evolved something called “fascism,” and a good case can be made for the Japanese also having gotten a dose of something resembling European fascism at roughly the same time.<sup>4</sup>

So maybe non-excluding revolutions are not so nice either. I am not sure what lesson can be drawn from this. Useless though it might be, the moral of the story may merely be that if you are going to have a revolution, and you want it to give you a stable parliamentary democracy fairly early on, you had best have an excluding one before 1789, but don’t expect to dodge your crisis of civilization.

## B. Elusive Nature of the Meiji Restoration

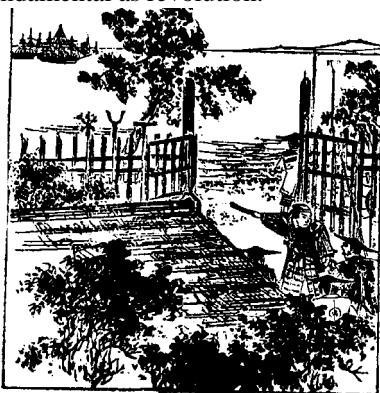
### 1. A preemptive coup d’etat from above?

The Meiji Restoration has always

<sup>4</sup> See chapter 21 for a discussion of the widely differing explanations of fascism and for an account of why the explanation I favor suggests that all three of these states’ rulers may have turned bad in that particular way.

looked to historians like something short of an outright revolution. Though that is what you might also expect from a non-excluding revolution, in some respects the events of 1867-8 look more like a *coup d’etat* or *golpe* than a non-excluding revolution. One section of the old ruling class merely muscled aside another section of the same class, but the ruling class overall did not change very much.

Even the initial stimulus for the revolution seems quite superficial, and hence incapable of tripping off something as fundamental as revolution.



Commodore Perry's fleet steams into Suruga Bay. (Papinot, p. 674.)

Commodore Perry arrived at Suruga Bay (on the east coast not far south of Edo) with his “black ships” in 1853, as the official representative of the United States of America. Ostensibly, he wanted to get Japan to agree to treat shipwrecked whalers properly and to end its diplomatic and commercial isolation.

Most observers then considered America to be a third-rate power, and even modern Americans are tempted to agree. We know that America was within a decade of going to pieces in an incredibly bloody civil war. In the meantime, it distracted itself from its all but mortal ills with the doctrine of “Manifest Destiny.”

This odd doctrine held that the Pacific coast of the Oregon Territory, which the Americans only began to heavily settle during the 1840s, was to be merely a jumping off point to Asia. It was America’s “manifest destiny,” said Missouri’s Senator Benton, to explore and perhaps conquer, or at least trade with, Asia.

In fact, however, America had little power to enforce such ambitions. Perry’s expedition, even with its smoke-belching steamship, was largely bluff.

What a trivial occasion for so great a change as the end of Japanese isolationism! America’s opening of Japan seems purely accidental, and Japan’s

granting to Perry a treaty of diplomatic recognition of no fundamental importance to America, and hence perhaps not to Japan either.

But when you go on to examine the story of Perry’s successor, Townsend Harris, the treaty he negotiated in 1858, and what the other powers were doing then, this opening seems less superficial.

The occasion for Harris’s mission may seem just as frivolous as Perry’s. Harris was a bankrupt New York businessman with Tammany Hall political connections who needed a job. Since he was a former merchant to Canton, the diplomatic job in Japan supposedly authorized by Perry’s treaty seemed to fit such talents as he had. Japan was sufficiently remote so that he would likely not cause much mischief there. Harris showed up in Japan in 1856, two years after Perry went home with his treaty.

And yet, after some stalling (the Japanese arguing that the Perry treaty did not oblige them to receive an American consul), the Japanese not only recognized Harris’s diplomatic status, they signed a treaty with him opening several ports to trade with Americans.

The Japanese signed this treaty because they knew that the British and the French and the Russians were lurking just over the horizon. The Tokugawa had been kept very well advised on European politics by the Dutch (the only non-Chinese or non-Korean foreigners allowed in Japan since 1637). They decided that signing a treaty with the whimsical Americans might provide a limiting precedent so as to hem in the far more dangerous British, French and Russians.

There were also domestic reasons why Tokugawa did not try harder to dodge ending isolationism. By the 1850s, Tokugawa was looking for friends abroad to help it resist old and new enemies at home.

“Mr. Dooley,” the persona of the turn of the century comic columnist Finlay Peter Dunne, accurately described the situation when he said (I omit Dunne’s Irish dialect), “You know, when we knocked on the door of Japan, we didn’t go in. They came out.” Mr. Dooley may have gotten it righter than some of the West’s imperial-minded historians then or later.

As it turned out, however, the Tokugawa “old regime” had delayed its coming out for too long. Its revived enemies in the southwest had already grown

too strong. America's initiative of the late 1850s inadvertently provided the occasion for a replay in the late 1860s of the 1600 Battle of Sekigahara. This time Tokugawa lost the key battle to the court and the daimyo of the southwest, descendants of the fellows they beat in 1600.

Within a decade after the 1858 Perry Treaty and not long after the several somewhat harsher treaties with the major European powers that it then had to sign, the Tokugawa formed an alliance of sorts with Louis Napoleon Bonaparte's Second French Empire.

The usurping Emperor of the French was already encouraging Maximilian, a Hapsburg prince, to create a dynasty for himself in Mexico while the Americans were distracted by their Civil War. He hoped this would increase France's power in the Western Hemisphere. He hoped for similar results from the Tokugawa shogunate which he encouraged with words and cash to reform itself into a modern state so as to overcome its domestic enemies. He hoped Tokugawa would become France's ally in Asia against both England and America.

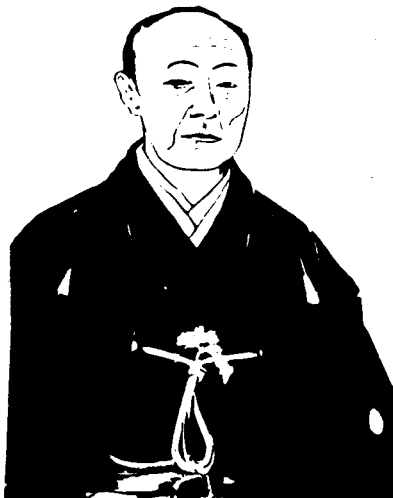
The Tokugawa were more than willing, but as it turned out, Louis Napoleon had made two bad bets. Both his Mexican and Japanese catspaws collapsed in 1867.

There are two possible relationships between a country's foreign and domestic policies: one or the other must be dominant. Either domestic policy sets the rules for foreign policy, or foreign policy sets the limits for domestic policy. The former relationship held in Japan from the 1630s to the 1850s. The latter took over thereafter. The Tokugawa polity could not accommodate the domestic political strains resulting from the change.

The several foreign treaties of the 1860s evoked violent opposition both above among the old aristocrats in Kyoto, and below among many of the meritized samurai working in the domains of the daimyo. The opponents did not just reject these treaties as "unequal." They rejected (or said they did) the end of isolation as such. They sought to hoist the Tokugawa politicians on their own petard. Japan was too good, they insisted, to associate with the Westerners. Opponents even accused Tokugawa of betraying the throne.

If the regime was to survive, Tokugawa Yoshinobu (r. 1866-68), who turned out to be the last shogun, had to launch what amounted to a preemptive coup from

above against these opponents. The failure of that coup in 1867 made possible the success of what at first looked like a feudal coup from below in 1867-68.



**Tokugawa Yoshinobu, the last Shogun**

The victors let Yoshinobu return to the old Tokugawa fief at Shizuoka. He stayed there until 1897, then moved to Tokyo (Eastern Capital, the new name for Edo), where he died, of natural causes, in 1913 at age 76. This resembles a classier version of the post-*golpe* careers of Latin American dictators.

To see why Yoshinobu's defensive coup from above failed and the more aggressive coup from below succeeded, we must see how the vassals of the southwest had changed since 1600.

## 2. A feudal coup from below?

The Satcho-Dohi coalition of the 1860s carried out this supposed feudal coup from below. The coalition was between the four *tozama* fiefs of Satsuma, Choshu, Tosa and Hizen, the four strongest principalities of the southwest. (Since the Japanese write with a syllabary rather than an alphabet, their abbreviations employ syllables rather than letters.)

You may recall that Satsuma's role in the Battle of Sekigahara in 1600 provided the margin for the victory by Tokugawa Ieyasu that made possible the establishment of the Tokugawa Shogunate.

Thereafter Tokugawa did everything it could to keep Satsuma isolated both from the other *han* and from foreigners. Once neither of these policies could any longer be maintained, a new feudal coalition embracing the vassals of the southwest took shape during the late 1860s, and this coalition reversed the verdict of 1600.

In geographic terms, in 1600 the Kanto Plain, with the aid of part of the southwest, took power over the Toyotomi coalition centered in the Kansai. In 1867-68, the southwest, in alliance with some of the men of the imperial court in the Kansai, defeated the Tokugawa of the Kanto.

One wing of the feudal aristocracy seemingly replaced another wing of that same aristocracy in 1867. That would seem to fit the definition of a mere *coup d'état* from below until we notice all the changes that resulted.

These southwestern feudal principalities had been much transformed during the 250 years since 1600. Feudalism itself had evolved at all levels in Japan to the bastard feudal—really post-feudal—level.

Intellectually, Choshu (at the southwestern end of Honshu) and Tosa (on the north side of Shikoku) had transcended their feudal loyalties to become hotbeds of emperor-centered Neo-Shinto thought. Choshu, as a non-favored *tozama* fief, had no particular reason to be fervently loyal to the shogunate. Instead, it developed close links with the court aristocracy by way of its hereditary prerogative to send guards to the royal court. Court intellectuals encouraged these Choshu samurai in their Neo-Shinto studies.

Tosa was isolated on Shikoku, but had prospered through its timber and mineral exports. Its rural middle class's most prosperous members had become a local plutocracy with some pretensions to local aristocratic status. These would-be gentlemen were finding Neo-Shinto emperor veneration much to their taste.

Satsuma, the most powerful of the feudal principalities on Kyushu, while not so intellectual in its interests as Tosa or Choshu, had succeeded during the preceding half century in undergoing considerable economic development. It instituted within its territory the kinds of soft Legalist reforms that Tanuma Okitsugu had tried to promote at the national level in the 1770s and 1780s, but had failed to quite bring off.

In the process of carrying out these reforms, Satsuma heavily meritized its aristocracy. It also became somewhat familiar with foreign affairs through its relations with the Ryukyus, which it had treated as a subfief since occupying them in 1609. (The Ryukyus also simultaneously accepted tributary status under China.)

Hizen, also on Kyushu, but the smallest of the four allied *tozama* principalities,

enjoyed a bit of all the influences that had affected the others. Soon after Perry came, it also worked out techniques for smuggling members of its lower aristocracy abroad. By 1867 it already enjoyed the advice of several people who had seen the world first hand, and knew precisely what Japan was up against.

While Hizen would go along with the Tosa-led Neo-Shintoist agitation against ending isolation, it understood that this was merely a tactical move. Its meritized aristocrats knew full well that once it and its friends had taken power, they too would have to accommodate the West.

By the late 1860s, all this made for a very great difference in the situation of the lords of the southwest as compared with 1600. *Shishi* (“righteous knights”), many from outside the coalition of the southwest, demoralized the shogunal administration by launching assassination attempts, some successful, against Tokugawa’s leading personalities. Tokugawa fully understood that its opposition was growing ever stronger. The shogunal authorities made deals with the foreigners precisely so that they could move to cut the lords of the southwest down to size.

Tokugawa moved first against Choshu, the more vulnerable of the *tozama* lords. Choshu had been the shogunate’s punching bag ever since the early 17th century. Since it was on Honshu, Choshu was also close enough to the Kanto to be vulnerable to Tokugawa power.

By this time, however, the Tosa Neo-Shintoist ideologues, who had long since been playing a go-between role among the other three *han*, and were on the verge of cementing an alliance between Choshu and Satsuma. Choshu was frightened enough to want such an alliance. Satsuma’s rulers knew very well that if Choshu’s local autonomy went first, theirs would follow soon after. They would no longer be “shogun’s pets.” They had become too dangerous for that.

And so Satsuma did not let Choshu face the Tokugawa army alone. In 1867 a combined Choshu-Satsuma force faced down Tokugawa on the borders of Choshu. When the Tokugawa soldiers retreated in confusion from this abortive confrontation, the new allies marched on their heels up to Edo itself.

This last confrontation also turned out to be relatively bloodless. The last Tokugawa shogun abdicated and was permitted to return peacefully to the pre-1582 fief of

the Tokugawa family near Suruga Bay.

### 3. A reactionary restoration?

The old Kanto Plain coalition led by Tokugawa was overthrown by a coalition of the southwestern principalities, but one blessed by the court aristocracy and, by implication, by the throne itself.

This might strike one as so non-excluding a change that even the term feudal coup may seem too strong for it. The Tokugawa shogun was not executed or even exiled. He was simply returned to the status of daimyo. At first blush that certainly looks like a mere *coup d’etat*.

Or does it? The rhetoric of this supposedly feudal coalition was less feudal than downright reactionary. The great motto of the coup-makers was *sonno-joi*—restore the Emperor and expel the barbarians. Though they did not really mean the latter, and in fact soon reaffirmed all the treaties with the Western powers the Tokugawa had signed, they really did restore the Emperor, at least after a fashion.

The Satcho-Dohi coalition was lucky. A new 18-year old Emperor came to the throne just as they were defeating the Tokugawa. Their friends among the court aristocracy immediately declared the new Emperor as the full sovereign, giving him back all the powers long delegated to the shoguns. They then put him into a golden palanquin and carried him past worshipful crowds up the Tokaido from Kyoto to Edo, where they installed him in the old shogunal palace, and renamed Edo as Tokyo (meaning “eastern capital”).

The courtiers also proclaimed the formal end of the Tokugawa feudal legal code, and restored the Taiho Code of 702 AD.

That is reaction for you! Back to the 8th century! On its face this would seem to have been a return to the Japanese governmental organization in its first high civilized and just barely sinified form. The ten century long work of indigenization had in 702 barely begun. The first permanent capital city had not yet been occupied.

The mid-19th century courtiers gave the newly crowned teenage Emperor the year-period title *meiji* —meaning “enlightened good government.” Since enlightenment traditionally came from Chinese-style rationality, that too fits into a pattern that would justify the label reac-

tionary restoration.

As it turned out, the courtiers never changed the year-period name *meiji* as long as that emperor was on the throne. From 1868 to 1912, when Emperor Mutsuhito died, the epoch was known as the Meiji year-period. Strictly speaking, we should refer to this ruler not as Emperor Meiji, as though that were his name, but as “the Emperor of the Meiji year-period” or as “the Meiji Emperor” for short.

The Japanese had finally taken up the custom the Chinese had been following since Ming times, when in a sign that Ming had become almost fully modern in its political symbolism, the most important event in an imperial chief executive’s reign came to be seen as his coming to power. There was nothing else important enough to justify changing to a new year-period name until that emperor died and was succeeded by a new emperor with a new year-period name.

This outer symbol of full modernity’s strong centralized government now came into use for Japan as well as China. This suggests that for all of the archaic-seeming trappings, something decidedly non-archaic was going on in Japan.

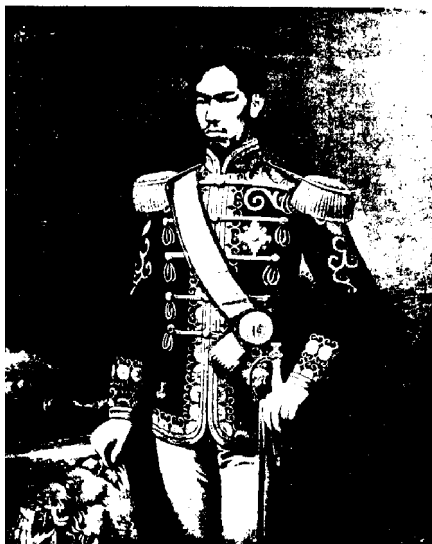
### 4. Renewal or renovation?

When the Emperor was placed in a golden palanquin and carried on the Tokaido all the way from Kyoto to Edo, with everyone along the road bowing down as they traveled past (and they passed most of the population of Japan on that route), in effect, they were carrying the symbol of the old state east to the early modern economic center, Edo. This did not make Edo into something old. Rather, it transformed the imperial institution into something new.

Nor were the politicians of the Satcho-Dohi clique, who were really running this new government, just a bunch of feudal daimyo and their housemen. The daimyo also played a more symbolic than active role. The housemen in charge were highly meritized middle-ranking samurai who eclectically combined their experiences to act much as modern politicians do everywhere.

The Satcho men accepted the overtly reactionary outer forms contributed by the Choshu and court Neo-Shinto ideologues to legitimize the new state, but they did not limit themselves to that. Under the influence of the Westernizing Hizen and

Tosa crowds, they quickly ghost-wrote for the Emperor the Charter Oath of 1868. This oath explicitly proclaimed a program for his reign that was genuinely revolutionary.



An 1880 oil portrait of the Meiji Emperor. (Conrad Schirokauer, *A Brief History of Japanese Civilization*, p. 202.)

In the Oath the Emperor promised not a Chinese-style restoration, for which the word *choshi* (Chinese *zhongxing*) would have been used, but something which he described with the word *isshin* (Chinese *weixin*), meaning “making new.” Perhaps because the label “Meiji Making-new” would have looked awkward in English, the less accurate “Meiji Restoration” has normally been used instead. We would have been better served if the early translators had at least called it “Meiji Renovation” or “Meiji Renewal.”

The Oath enjoined the Emperor’s new servants to look everywhere, even and especially abroad, to find whatever new ideas were needed to preserve the state. They should retain old ideas where possible, but were to transform old ways whenever necessary. The Emperor in effect proclaimed himself a pragmatist well before the American philosopher-psychologist William James popularized the term: Whatever worked, he would embrace.

The Emperor’s new servants proceeded to act precisely on that injunction. To be sure, however, it took them another twenty-one years, from 1868 to 1889, to stably legitimize what they were doing. But if this had been merely a *coup*, or a restoration, why should the new regime’s legitimation have taken so long?

## C. The Three Phases of Meiji’s Non-Excluding Revolution

### 1. The first phase: formal defeudalization

It is hard to imagine anything less than a revolution taking so long to win stable allegiance from the great mass of the people. Indeed, so complicated was the legitimation process that to make sense of it we are obliged to divide these two decades into at least three subperiods:

During the first subperiod the victors of 1868 finished off the old order. During the second, the new rulers fought among themselves for dominance. During the third subperiod, the victors among the new men consolidated their victory and created new political institutions to solidify their power.

The first subperiod ran from 1868 into the mid 1870s. The victors of 1868 quickly moved to formally defeudalize the ruling class by convening a feudal parliament called the *seitaisho*. European advisors were telling the Japanese that parliamentary bodies had evolved out of the feudal process in Europe, and were a wholesome thing. Very well, Japan would telescope into just four years that four-century long process of the history of parliamentary evolution in feudal and post-feudal Europe.

This *seitaisho*’s actual job in Japan was, however, more modest than establishing democracy. It would merely give a veneer of legitimacy to the non-excluding revolution’s redefinition of the old feudal military class out of existence.

The daimyo voluntarily collaborated in this last phase of defeudalization by agreeing to turn over titles to their feudal principalities to the new central government. This was profitable for them to do because the central government also assumed responsibility for the daimyos’ enormous accumulated debts.

The government gave new aristocratic titles to the daimyos, adopted from ancient Chinese titles, but really shaped on contemporary English models. It even eventually created life peerages for risen commoners to certify their new status as meritocrats and plutocrats. These genteel bribes of old and new aristocrats encouraged the *seitaisho* to ratify the first set of

changes without much fuss.

Thereafter things went much less smoothly. The government next rapidly repudiated the debt that it had assumed from the daimyos in several clever and quite up to date ways. It first moved to reduce the feudal stipends that it now owed to the *han* samurai. Of course this caused riots in the *seitaisho*. Nevertheless, the government bullied the measure through, then prorogued the feudal parliament. It brought a new version of it back into session when political life quieted down again.

The government soon argued it could not afford to pay even these reduced feudal stipends. It proposed to end its obligations to the samurai with one final lump sum payment to each of them. This proposal too was forced through the *seitaisho*. There followed another series of riots on the floor and another move to prorogue the body.

This time the government did not call its feudal parliament back into session again. The *seitaisho* had done its job. It had legislated feudal prerogatives out of existence, thereby rendering itself redundant as well.

Even the final lump sum payments to the samurai did not cost the government much. By then it had also founded a modern central bank, and promulgated a national banking law. It used the new banks founded under that law to market new instruments of debt and distribute new, and quickly depreciated paper money pyramided atop that debt by requiring that the new banks keep these debt instruments as their chief assets. It was in this new cheap money that the government paid off its financial obligations to its former feudal military aristocracy. (The obligation had been incurred in much more valuable money).

Having gotten rid of the government’s responsibilities to the feudal ruling class, the Satcho men added insult to injury. By imperial decree they banned wearing the two swords in public. The samurai had not only lost their stipends but their right to strut about displaying the most conspicuous outward sign of their class status. Without the two swords, how could they even think of carrying out their prerogative of *kirisute*—to cut down and leave on the road any commoner who offended them?

If these ex-samurai wanted to continue to lead the military life, they would have

to join the Meiji government's new conscript army as officers. In effect the Satcho crowd had redefined what had been a military aristocracy into the military wing of a new meritocracy. Administrator ex-samurai could join the new civil administration, and be redefined as civilian meritocrats.

Of course some of these meritocrats were more equal than others. Those from Satsuma or Choshu had a better chance of rising in office or army, better even than those from Tosa or Hizen, the two smaller and more peripheral of the founders of the new coalition.

A great deal of shock was caused by these changes. Within five years the old ruling class had been redefined all out of recognition, even to their hairstyles. The government did not formally ban the old aristocratic topknot and shaven forehead hairstyle, but it did conduct a propaganda campaign against it. The sound produced by knocking upon a topknotted head, the government assured the readers of the newfangled newspapers it encouraged, was the hollow echo of reaction. Knocking on a short Western haircut would produce the resonance of progress.

## 2. The second phase: A half-generational change

At the beginning of the second phase, in the mid to late 1870s, the power of the new ruling clique was reinforced by a half-generational change in the revolutionary leadership. Key founding fathers of 1868 who were in their forties at the time of the founding, began to disappear from the scene by the late '70s.

Some of them died of natural causes. Others were assassinated. They were replaced, however, not by their rivals, but by their assistants, men who were in their thirties or even late twenties in 1868, that is, by men a half-generation (ten to twelve years) younger than their bosses.

That had a good effect (except on the poor fellows who died or were shot, of course). It prolonged the charismatic power of the founding fathers' generation of revolutionaries by a half generation.

In a really new regime, of the sort produced by a genuine revolution, even a non-excluding one, the leaders who were present at the creation—in this case the men of 1868—have more clout than those who were too young to have been there at all. When the Meiji leaders' assistants,

who were also present at the creation of the revolution, albeit in subordinate positions, shot to the top less than a decade after 1868, the revolutionary generation was permitted to stay at the center of power for another decade. This postponed and to some extent eased the new regime's crisis of the first succession when the next generation of leaders, 20-30 years younger than the founders, took over.

A similar half-generational and then full generation change occurred in the aftermath of our American Revolution. Thomas Jefferson was succeeded in the presidency by James Madison and then James Monroe. These youngsters of 1776 carried the revolutionary generation of leadership into the 1820s, when they were finally replaced by men who had been mere children in 1776, first by John Quincy Adams, literally a son of one of the Founding Fathers, then by the younger Adams's contemporary, Andrew Jackson). The generational crisis begun then was not fully resolved, and led to the Civil War yet another generation later.

We have seen a similar first generation succession crisis during the succession from the founders of newly founded Chinese dynasties, and earlier identified it as the crisis of the first succession to the throne. A half-generational change in Imperial China might be provided by a regency under a dowager empress (as in Han's founding) or by a younger succeeding an older brother (Song). In contemporary China, Mao Zedong's stubbornness postponed a half-generational turnover from the early 1960s until after his death in 1976, when Deng Xiaoping, a decade (half-generation) younger than Mao, finally rose to power. The first full generational succession began with Deng's death in 1997.



Ito Hirobumi. (After George Trumbell, *In Korea with Marquis Ito*, NY, 1908.)

During the middle 1870s in Japan, Kido Koin, the intellectual leader of 1868, died of tuberculosis, and Okubo Toshimichi (called by contemporaries the "Bismarck of Japan") was assassinated by a samurai outraged by the revolutionary changes in the status of the samurai for which he justly blamed Okubo.

Kido and Okubo were replaced in the top jobs by their half-generation younger chief assistants, Ito Hirobumi and Yamagata Aritomo. Ito and Yamagata proved to be at least as able as their predecessors, and were young enough to remain influential leaders of the Satcho clique until just before the First World War.

The top men from Tosa and Hizen, Itagaki Taisuke and Okuma Shigenobu, resented not getting the top jobs, both before and after the deaths of Kido and Okubo. They quit the government and eventually founded what amounted to the first modern political parties in Japan, the Jiyuto (Liberal Party) and the Kaishinto (Progressive Party).

Since there was no parliament for them to work in, these parties were really little more than political clubs in their first incarnations. Nevertheless they were the ancestors of the first modern Japanese political parties of late Meiji through early Showa times. These in turn evolved into the contemporary Liberal Democratic Party, Japan's postwar ruling party.

Japan's first modern parties, the Jiyuto and Kaishinto of the 1870s showed up in Japan only a bit later than modern political parties appeared in England and America.<sup>5</sup> So the Japanese were only a decade or so late in getting their aboriginal modern political parties formed during the 1870s.

However, even among people who realize this, it is conventional to look down upon the first Japanese parties as merely superficial imitations of the European parliamentary parties.

But since there was no parliament as yet for them to fit into, no wonder they behaved most of the time like mere fronts for the local interests of Tosa and Hizen, respectively and for some of the commercial houses (*ie*) of Tokyo and Osaka that were their initial bankrollers. And yet the

<sup>5</sup> The immediate ancestors of the American Democratic and Republican parties only crystallized out during the Jackson administration during the 1830s. They did not take on their modern forms until the 1850s and 1860s, which is also about when the modern incarnations of the Conservative and Liberal parties took their modern form in Great Britain.

parties were always something more than that. Like embryos, though they did not look very promising, they had a future.

Still, the government had worse threats to confront over the short run. Saigo Takamori, the chief military leader of 1868, had become alienated from the government by 1876. He could not swallow what he could only see as the desacralization of the samurai by taking away their swords and government funding.



Saigo Takamori. (Smith, pp. 270-71.)

Saigo was already embittered because the government had pulled back from his scheme to provoke war with Korea so as to find some wholesome work for the samurai to do. In 1873, Saigo proposed to send himself to Korea as ambassador. There he would so pressure the Koreans to start their own Meiji Restoration that they would assassinate him. Japan could use his death as *casus belli*, and take over Korea so as to prevent the Western powers from doing so. His colleagues, who were traveling in the West when he proposed this démarche, hurried back to Japan to head Saigo off, arguing that such moves were premature.

Rebuffed over Korea in 1873, humiliated by the last of the sword laws three years later, Saigo retired from the government and returned back home to Satsuma to brood over his and his class's grievances.

In 1877 Saigo's fellow samurai from Satsuma, maddened by the loss of both their incomes and swords, launched a last ditch rebellion against the Meiji government. Like Robert E. Lee in our Civil War, who joined the Confederacy so as to remain loyal to Virginia, Saigo decided his ultimate loyalties were to Satsuma and

its samurai, and so joined the rebels.

However, the Meiji regime's new conscript army of commoners, with its military meritocrat officers drawn from the ranks of the ex-samurai, proved just strong enough by then to put down Satsuma, especially since Satsuma was now isolated. The other *han* had lost their dai-myos' leadership, and had been split up into *ken* (prefectures). None of the other old feudal centers joined Satsuma. The central government could draw resources from all over Japan. Satsuma was put down, and Saigo committed suicide.

The new government had shown its power. Having done so, it could now face down the new political parties.

The parties had demanded that they be permitted to participate in writing a constitution to provide a parliament for them to operate within. They expected to dominate any new parliament they helped design. Once it had put down Saigo's rebellion, the government was strong enough to dismiss this demand with contempt.

### 3. The third phase: constitution-making

But the Satcho clique understood such demands for a constitution could not be denied forever, and so decided to preempt the opposition by announcing that its own members would write a European-style constitution on their own.

The third, constitution-making phase of the new revolutionary regime's legitimation was inaugurated by 1880, when the Satcho clique first promised such a document. Later in the 1880s, Ito Hirobumi and some others took time off to travel abroad to shop for a constitution.

Ito had been to North America before where he was amused by American democracy, and shocked by the independence of American women (who, he said, behaved like Japanese geisha, and showed too much skin in their ball gowns).

He now led a new delegation to Europe, starting with England. He was impressed by English power, but concluded that England was too advanced politically to serve as a proper model for Japan. Next on his grand constitutional tour came the Paris of the Third Republic, where he had a good laugh at the chaos of French politics. Finally, he reached Germany, where he met his soulmate—Otto von Bismarck—the man who had just put together the Second German Empire, the

first one having been that of Charlemagne in the 9th century. (Hitler's Third Reich would be the third.)

The wily Prussian aristocrat had perfected his country's non-excluding revolution at the territorial expense of both Austria and France between 1866 and 1871. Japan might hope to do the same at the expense of China and Korea. Bismarck had written a constitution in 1871 for the newly unified German empire. Ito concluded that this too was just what the doctor ordered for Japan. The Japanese had already hired some Prussian Doctors of Political Science for their new university, and the 1871 German Constitution was precisely what these doctors had indeed ordered!

Upon his return from his travels, Ito got Bismarck's constitution translated into Japanese by some of these German professors and proofread by their Japanese disciples, who had just helped found the Political Science Department at Tokyo Imperial University (the renamed Tokugawa Confucian College). Ito used a slightly reworked version of that translation as the Japanese Constitution of 1889.

At that point, the new regime had been entirely legitimated, and (superficially at least) on a very novel basis. You cannot call the first elected government that took office in 1890 (even though still run by the Satcho clique) the result merely of a feudal coup or of a reactionary restoration. It was something quite new: It was the hybrid modern product of a non-excluding revolution.

It turns out, however, that this "hybrid modernity" is only one of the three aspects of full modernity.

## D. The three aspects of modernity

### 1. Traditional modernity

"Modernization" is one of those words that everybody thinks they understand and hence never bother to define. It usually turns out that what historians of the last couple of centuries really mean by it when they do not bother to pin down its definition is nothing more than "westernization."

That may be fine, if you are in the West, and are reasonably content with being a part of western civilization. It may not be so attractive a usage if you are

some place else and do not want to have to imitate European ways in order to turn “modern.” In this course, at least, we are indeed some place else—East Asia—and at this moment are confronting a Meiji era Japan in the process of turning itself into a fully modern civilization. Does that just mean the Japanese were westernizing themselves? No, I would argue that it does not.

Until this century, before a non-western culture could even think of westernizing itself, it had to already have present something which, if only for shock effect, one could label “traditional modernity.”

Westernization is proving rather hard to acquire for those cultures, as in post-1950s Africa, that had not already worked their way through traditional modernity before their colonization by Europeans. After winning their independence from these European imperialists, they felt they had to jump directly to full modernity. This proved very hard to do. Most African states have not yet done it.

“Traditional modernity” is admittedly an oxymoronic expression (i.e. one that combines two seemingly contradictory ideas, like “square circle”). I use it here as a synonym for “early modern” to shock you into taking notice of the paradoxical state of affairs built into “early modernity.” By coupling “modern” with “traditional” I am alerting you to the problems a culture faces when it goes on to make the transition to the fully modern without a traditional modern stage first.

Though a traditional/early modern culture can reach full modernity faster than an altogether pre-modern culture, it still faces many difficulties.

John Murray Cuddihy’s *The Ordeal of Civility* describes some of the difficulties of making that transition faced by some traditional/early modern groups within our own civilization: the Calvinists in England and North America in the 17th and 18th centuries, the European and American Jews from the late 18th to the early 20th century, and American Catholics during this century.

Cuddihy rightly characterizes this transition as an “ordeal.” To create the intellectual basis for and the social manners that accompany full modernity was not easy, even for the already early modern Calvinists. It was far more of an ordeal for the many Jews who stepped out of the medieval (i.e. pre-modern) ghettos of Eastern Europe directly into full mod-

ernity from the late 18th century. Their transition was accompanied by a good deal of anguish and at least transitional self-hatred of the group’s pre-modern as well as its fully modernized incarnation.

Marx, for example, was an assimilated German Jew who was both anti-Semitic and contemptuous of the capitalist forms of the gentile world to which many Jews had assimilated.

Similar problems were also faced by many 19th century New England Unitarians who despised both their own early modern Calvinist forebears and the commercial society in which they themselves lived.

Full modernization was just as tough for early modern Japanese. Even the most thoroughgoing of 19th century Japanese westernizers, Fukuzawa Yukichi, was in a bind similar to the above Europeans.

Fukuzawa spent his days advocating westernization. He wrote books about the West, he founded Japan’s first private Western style university and newspaper. And yet he would go home every evening to a traditional Japanese household, to lead a traditional Japanese male chauvinistic life bullying his wife and daughters. Never at a loss for an answer, he replied to his critics’ accusations of hypocrisy with an epigram: “A wine merchant is not always a drinker himself; nor is a dealer in cakes necessarily a teetotaler.”



Fukuzawa Yukichi at age 63 in 1898. (*The Autobiography of Yukichi Fukuzawa*)

Fukuzawa also plausibly argued that some aspects of traditional Japanese life already constituted a Japanese variant form of modernity, or at least something leading up to it. Those aspects are what I mean to point to with the labels traditional

or early modernity.

In the case of Japan, there was an easily identifiable early modern period. We have just finished dealing with it in chapter 16: the Tokugawa Shogunate, extending from 1600 to 1867.

There is also an earlier precedent or analog for traditional modernity back in the days of Japan’s transition from early to high civilization. This ancient analog to the more recent early modernity was the maturing indigenous early civilization of late Yayoi and Tumulus times.

By the 6th century, the southern islands of Japan and the southern parts of the Korean peninsula were, on their own, evolving the later, more developed forms of early civilization. Left to develop on their own, they might well have created an original form of high civilization.

That did not happen. Instead, Korea’s and Japan’s readiness for high civilization prompted them to take short cuts. They separated from each other and each in their own way adopted the already high civilized Chinese methods. They could not, however, have done this if they had not moved to the edge of high civilization on their own during the Korean Three Kingdoms and Japanese Tumulus Periods. Japan was doing something analogous to this when it began to adopt Western ways after 1868.

## 2. Westernization

Japan’s late Tumulus period, Taika Reform, Nara and early Heian periods witnessed a fairly rapid—even revolutionary—completion of the transition into high civilization on the basis of these Chinese and Chinese-influenced stimuli. The last decade of the early modern Tokugawa Shogunate witnessed a still more rapid shift from early to full modernity under stimuli presented by the West. Ancient “sinification” resembled modern “westernization.”

People tend to mistake westernization for the whole of modernization because it is modernization’s most conspicuous aspect in a non-western culture. When you look carefully at such a modernizing state, however, it is amazing how few, especially of the most important things, are actually becoming westernized. A few elements of pure westernization will hang on to only some of an early modern culture’s traditional modern “hooks.”

Even then these small patches of

westernization cause considerable anguish. They are the cause for the “ordeal” that Cuddihy wrote about. Westernization leads to much more intense alienation much sooner than does an indigenous, original transition to the next stage of civilization.

The West’s Heaven is the most alien thing about the West to a non-western culture. Unfortunately for non-Christians, the dominant Judeo-Christian western Heaven lies behind and animates all the most profound of the ideas, techniques, and things needed even by an early modern non-western culture to help make more rapid its transition into full modernity.

It is bad enough to have to endure high civilization in the first place, since it intrinsically tends to alienate you from the universe by separating your Earth more drastically from your own Heaven than did early civilization or pre-civilized culture. It is even worse to acquire your latest version of high civilization by a derivative route—originally through sinification and later by westernization—as Japan did.

No wonder that so little of westernization sticks. How fortunate that even a homeopathic dose (i.e. a poison that causes a disease in large doses, but administered in a very small a dose cures rather than kills) of it seems to be enough to stimulate an early modern culture’s transition to full modernity.

Just that sort of limitation also attached to ancient sinification. From the days of the Soga clan’s rise and then from the Taika Reform of 645 on, the Japanese borrowed just enough from China to boost themselves over the threshold into the first stage of high civilization. That much and no more lest they lose their Japanese souls. Something similar could be said of the medieval Western and Northwestern Europeans with regard to their borrowings from ancient Greco-Roman civilization during their transition into high civilization during the centuries after the fall of the Roman Empire in the west.

### 3. Hybrid modernity

Eventually, a traditionally modern culture exposed to western influences winds up creating a hybrid between the two. This hybridization can take two forms:

1) One involves using premodern and traditional modern objects and techniques more frequently and in new contexts cre-

ated by westernization.

2) The other involves the actual blending of old ways with western ways to form true hybrids which are neither the one nor the other, but descended from both.

The first form is often merely the first stage of the evolution of the second. Most of the objects and institutions of a westernizing fully modern civilization eventually become second type true hybrids.

Something resembling hybrid modernization also occurred during modernization’s ancient Japanese analog. This is the result of what I have previously labeled “indigenization.”

From late Heian times through the feudal process of Kamakura and Ashikaga times, Japan went through the indigenization of the partly sinified first stage of its high civilization. This indigenization also helped resolve the crisis of that first stage, and made it possible to evolve a second stage of high civilization by late Ashikaga and Tokugawa times.

Similarly, we should expect to detect signs of indigenization and of difficulty in completing indigenization during the process of creating 19th and 20th century Japan’s hybrid full modernity at the cultural as well as at the political-military and economic development levels. This constituted Japan’s own version of Cuddihy’s “ordeal” of full modernization.

Japan had to go through an exceptionally severe, though transient, bad patch from the late 1920s through the mid ’40s. It had during those years to work its way through a kind of generic fascism.<sup>6</sup> This localized crisis likely also marked at least the beginnings of Japan’s participation in the general crisis of the second stage of high civilization that was wracking both China the West itself by then.

## E. Meiji Political Life and Its Intellectual Underpinnings Seen via Modernization’s Three Aspects

### 1. Politics’ Intellectual basis

Because the Meiji era began with a non-excluding revolution, it kept its old

aristocrats. It also kept many of the guiding ideas, including the vision of Heaven of the old order.

*Sonno*—restore the Emperor—was more than a slogan. The Emperor was not only restored, but was sincerely revered. How much direct power the Emperor might exert remained uncertain even after the new 1889 Constitution came into effect. This uncertainty was in part deliberate. The Constitution-makers wanted to avoid committing the impiety of explicitly setting any limits on Imperial power.

Limiting the Emperor’s powers would also have offended Neo-Confucian principles. In China, the imperial institution had been the locus of sovereignty, with a constitutional position much like those of the American president and people combined. The Emperor was the head of the executive branch and also of the legislative branch, since all positive law both came from and was executed by him or his agents. He was also the source of all legitimate power exercised by his ministers, much like the “People” (or at least the electorate) in modern western democracies. The Meiji polity was more explicitly Neo-Confucian than the Tokugawa had been, and more Neo-Confucian than western as well.

In all periods, even those who held what they hoped were the strings guiding the Japanese Emperor, honored their puppet to the extent of letting him pull his own strings whenever he insisted on doing so. Particularly during the Meiji era, we can never tell with certainty when it is the Emperor acting on his own behalf, and when it is the Satcho clique of oligarchs using him (more or less voluntarily) on behalf of their own policies and interests.

The Taisho Emperor (r. 1912-26) was an invalid during most of his reign. Hence the puppet strings grew stronger then. As a consequence, the Showa Emperor (r. 1926-1989), found it difficult to loosen the strings. But when the crisis was great enough (as after the two atomic bombs fell in August 1945), even the Showa Emperor managed to favor advisers who then used him to order Japan’s surrender to the Americans.

David Bergamini (*Japan’s Imperial Conspiracy*) has plausibly insisted that the Showa Emperor should be held as responsible as his ministers for Japan’s resort to runaway imperialism during the 1930s and ’40s. Though most scholars disagree with him, the fact that Bergamini can at

<sup>6</sup> Because it was generic rather than explicitly modeled on the contemporary Italian Fascism, I spell it with a small “f.” See. chapter 21, below.

least make a highly plausible case for his thesis illustrating how ambiguous was the traditional modern role of the Emperor.<sup>7</sup>

A striking example of the hybrid role the Emperor could play during the transition into full modernity is the 1896 Imperial Rescript on Education. This edict explicitly enshrined both Neo-Confucian and Neo-Shintoist concepts and values into the new secular education system. The authorities had just finished unwittingly taking such values *out* of education by establishing a public school system organized along American and Russian lines. The Emperor and his advisers then put Japanese values back into the system.

Tokugawa Japan had evolved a perfectly workable locally controlled private primary education system in the *terakoya* schools. These somewhat misleadingly named “temple schools” produced a high literacy rate and wide acceptance of a civil religion blending Shinto and Neo-Confucianism, even though government assumed no particularly positive role in the schooling process. The secondary and tertiary levels of education were still blurred together, and also tended to be taken care of informally, mostly on a private basis, though Neo-Confucianism constituted the official curriculum in the official Tokugawa Confucian College at Edo.

During its first decade, the Meiji government deliberately introduced western-style, secular, government-financed and controlled primary and secondary education. The authorities closely imitated the Americans, who had themselves only begun shifting from *terakoya*-like private primary schools (sometimes in New York called “dame schools” because they were often run by respectable spinsters) during the preceding generation.

The Japanese modified the American primary school model somewhat, using Russian variants on the German and French patterns to do so. (These European influences may help explain why the Japanese still deliver a better primary education than does the purely American model we still use ourselves.)

The Japanese mainly used the German system for secondary and tertiary education. America confined the German system to the tertiary level, going over to

German-style universities from the 1870s on, at the same time Japan did. For several decades, the new Japanese school system was entirely the result of westernization.

At first, despite the absence in the new schools of any institutionalized backing for traditional values, the new Japanese system worked tolerably well. So too did the almost equally new American public school system during the first few decades after reformers like Horace Mann had begun hectoring local and state governments into preempting the field from the private dame schools of New York and the community schools of New England.<sup>8</sup>

The Japanese of mid to late Meiji times saw old values being undermined by the new secular and alien western schools into which they had frog-marched the children of Japan early in the Meiji era. This is not hyperbole. The authorities had during the ‘70s literally sent policemen to close down some of the *terakoya* when some parents were still traditional-minded enough to prefer them to the unknown quality of the new public schools. The Japanese government, like the German, had to conscript children into its public schools, just as it had to conscript young men into its new army.

By the 1890s, however, the Japanese government was appalled to learn that the new schools were neglecting traditional (i.e. Neo-Shintoist) values. This was the occasion for the Imperial Rescript of 1896. For better or worse, all concerned took the Rescript seriously. The old values—Neo-Confucian as well as Neo-Shintoist—were hybridized into the new, western-style institutions of compulsory public education.

During the first half of this century, Japan won and then lost an empire and a world war, and then endured an alien occupation by Americans, some of whom were intellectual descendants of Horace Mann. Even after all that, and even though Mann’s most influential intellec-

<sup>8</sup> Contrary to his high reputation among educationists, Mann was not a particularly attractive figure. He was the archetype of the Ichabod Crane model for the schoolmaster. A Bostonian prude and Unitarian luke-warm defacto ex-Christian fuss-budget, he was eager to serve as the front man for a gaggle of anxious Protestant ministers. These divines were very much afraid by the 1840s that masses of Irish and German Catholic immigrants would swamp the native WASP culture. They helped create the public schools to “Protestantize” or at least “Americanize” such people.

tual descendant, the philosopher John Dewey, came to exert permanent influence on the primary grades, Japan’s schools still retained these Neo-Confucian and Neo-Shintoist values, much to the chagrin of Japanese socialists of the 1980s and ‘90s and their foreign sympathizers.

This shows that a great deal of the Japanese early/traditional modern intellectual structure got built into even so seemingly westernized an institution as the public school. It also shows how difficult it would be to reform the increasingly feeble American public schools along truly Japanese lines. Can you imagine introducing Neo-Shintoist or even Neo-Confucian values into American school life?

## 2. Political life

The new political parties of the 1870s and their later successors were products of the same forces that were trying to westernize educational institutions.

Some of the Satcho Dohi clique of samurai and the people whose books they read had gone abroad. After visiting England, America and France, they had come back determined to create little imitation Liberal, Republican and Democratic parties in Japan. On the surface, the first political parties would seem to have been purely the result of this superficial impulse to westernize.

These new parties were also, however, to some degree masks covering old Tokugawa period samurai factions.

The Jiyuto or Liberal Party was in many respects a cover for the Tosa faction within the Meiji government which took this form after it went into opposition to the dominant Satsuma-Choshu faction during the late 1870s. The Kaishinto or Progressive Party similarly was a cover for Hizen and the interests of some of the old *ie* or business houses of Edo (now Tokyo).

The several later permutations of these ur-parties were often little more than facades for the factions of individual political leaders, and proved hardly more long-lived than these leaders themselves.

Of course this is little if any worse than the regional, interest-group or personalistic factional behavior of American parties, both in their early days and even now. After all, we have (or had) Henry Jackson Democrats (not to be confused with the current Jesse Jackson Demo-

<sup>7</sup> Modern western-style liberal democracies have a roughly similar problem in deciding what ought to be done when the sovereign people err, or even if such errors should ever be overtly noticed.

crats), Kennedy Democrats, Reagan, Bush (senior and junior) Republicans, to mention just a few personal factions.

As for business links, in earlier times, the House of Morgan (a banking firm) was associated with one wing (Grover Cleveland's) of the Democratic Party and what one could call the House of Rockefeller with one wing (the Ohio wing of Mark Hanna and William McKinley) of the Republican Party.

Right from the beginning of the republic, there were (and still are) Southern Democrats and Northern Democrats.

We all know that such historical and personal factions exist and that they all violate the rules of our civics textbooks. We just do not choose to teach about such intra-party factional distinctions much of the time. And yet we do notice their equivalents, like the mote in the other fellow's eye, in Japanese politics.

To change the image, Japan is something of a mirror for us. When we see the wart on the nose on the image in the see-through mirror through which we observe Japan, we do not notice that it is our own nose and wart as much as Japan's.

Nevertheless, the new Japanese political parties were from the first overtly similar to their Western models, but then and later these Western outer forms were draped over the traditional factional divisions and Neo-Confucian framework of political ideas that gave the parties what inner coherence they possessed, both before and after they obtained a parliamentary forum within which to operate.

The fad for western style political parties was just one aspect of an enormous book-fed fad for things western during the '70s and '80s. Almost every book on things western, including western political life, during those years was written by Fukuzawa Yukiji or by someone imitating him. As a consequence, all such books were alluded to at the time as *Fukuzawa-ban*—Fukuzawa books. This somewhat sarcastic label was intended by disgruntled traditionalists to disparage Fukuzawa and his westernizing influence as something faddish and hence superficial.

And yet Fukuzawa's early career fits quite nicely into the picture we have of late Tokugawa (i.e. early/traditional modern) intellectual and political life. He was the son of a poor samurai who could do no better for him than to arrange for a scholarship at a Dutch Studies (*Rangaku*)

school. Such schools had operated openly since the 1720s, when the ban on foreign secular literature was lifted. A graduate of such a school might at least practice western-style medicine for a living.

Fukuzawa's apprenticeship was harsh. Along with his classmates, young Fukuzawa huddled naked (to save wear and tear on his clothes) around the school's one Dutch-Japanese dictionary. Having already learned Neo-Shintoism along with basic literacy in his boyhood *terakoya*, the young Fukuzawa learned Dutch and some aspects of western science and history at the Rangaku school.

When he heard that Perry had arrived, Fukuzawa walked all the way to Edo to offer his services to the Shogunate as a Dutch translator, but was appalled to discover that Perry's crowd spoke English, not Dutch. In despair, he tells us in his memoirs, he nearly committed suicide, but finally decided that English was close enough to Dutch to render it possible to learn that too. He smuggled himself aboard a foreign ship and for several years studied in England, France and America.

Upon his return, Fukuzawa discovered he could make a career out of writing about the West in the more open atmosphere during the first decades after the Meiji Restoration. He also founded Japan's first modern daily newspaper and its first modern private university, Keio University.

If Fukuzawa, or someone like him, had not lived and written his books, political parties of the western type would have been literally inconceivable (i.e. nobody could have conceived of them) in 1870s Japan. And yet, Fukuzawa's career was a logical consequence, in the new context, of the early modern Dutch Studies School of Fukuzawa's pre-Meiji youth.

Even more puzzling than his modern aspects is the fact that Fukuzawa could go home at the end of each day, put on his kimono, treat his wife like a traditional Japanese wife and browbeat his daughters as would a traditional Japanese father.

Apparently even between the ears of this godfather of westernization, who was known in his own lifetime as the Voltaire of what he called the Japanese Enlightenment of the Meiji era, westernization and traditional modernity must not have been altogether syncretizable. If that was the case for Fukuzawa, who was great enough to eventually have his picture

placed on the ten-thousand yen note, that must have been even more true among the first generation of party men who had to read his books and newspaper to learn the West's ways.

Such political-cultural inconsistencies occurred in part because the parties did not for some time have proper support institutions into which they could fit. The most important of these institutions, a formal legislative body, would eventually be provided by the parties' enemies, the men of the Satcho clique who retained control of the Meiji administration.

### 3. The 1889 constitution

Recall that the 1889 Constitution was overtly a western import, a slightly modified translation into Japanese of the 1871 Imperial German constitution. However, Ito Hirobumi, its godfather, had deliberately picked the German rather than the French or the American constitutions as his model because he and his colleagues recognized the close parallels between German and Japanese history and between the structures of the two countries' ruling classes.

Both Germany and Japan were ruled by divine right monarchs. Both countries had during the current generation undergone non-excluding revolutions to create new polities. The legitimacy of both of their monarchs was still upheld by parallel hybrids between ancient religious traditions and 18th century secular philosophizing about both religion and politics. Romanticism had played the same sort of role for German nationalism as Neo-Shinto had for Japan.

Both countries still had what amounted to ex-feudal aristocracies dominating their ruling classes. Both had long-since admitted Chinese-style meritized aristocrats into their ruling class as well. Recently they had even begun to admit pure meritocrats and industrial age plutocratic members.<sup>9</sup>

Modern political parties had only just begun to be grafted onto old sectional and personal factions in both countries. Ito, like his mentor Okubo Toshimichi, hoped

<sup>9</sup> Prussia had picked up the meritocratic principle in the 18th century, from China by way of France and grafted it onto its existing aristocracy which eventually meritized itself, at least in part. For example, though Bismarck's father was an East Prussian junker (i.e. aristocratic) landowner, his mother was from a clan of Berlin high bureaucrats.

to play in Japan the same sort of role Bismarck had been playing in Imperial Germany as the aristocrat who tamed these parties.

In short, the westernization implied by Japan's copious borrowings from Prussia in fact rested on and was made viable by a series of striking historical parallels between the two countries.

As had earlier happened in Germany, a party system quickly took form under the new Japanese constitution from the first elections of 1890 on. Japanese party politics soon became ever more deeply institutionalized as hybrids of the second type rather than just a superficially western-style phenomenon.

The parties were not just something western. Nor were they just carryovers of traditional modern factions under a veneer of western labels. They were a unique hybrid: truly modern but peculiarly Japanese, enshrining the values of both Western 19th century liberalism and the interests of the regional and Tokyo plutocracies and (after 1890) of the Tokyo high meritocracy. This latter group had formed under a template of merit created in their own image by the Satcho clique during the preceding couple of decades.

Once the new constitution's lower legislative branch had convened, the Satcho oligarchs and their meritocratic clones quickly realized that they had to get in on the party system themselves. The parties were obviously going to dominate the new legislative branch of government. There was no way around this. The legislature had a legitimate role to play even in a constitution modeled on the German pattern. Without legislative approval, for example, no increase in the budget from one year to the next was legally possible.

In addition, by 1890, even the junior men of 1868 were growing old. Their meritocratic clones needed to find an institutional base beyond (though still linked to) the bureaucracy on which to ground their legitimacy. So the Tokyo bureaucrats either founded their own parties and inveigled plutocrats into bankrolling them, or joined and tried to influence one of the already existing plutocrat-dominated parties.

As a result, a new and more deeply hybridized set of political parties evolved, suited to both contemporary Japanese conditions and Japanese political traditions. That was the nice part. Not so nice

was the fact that, at least in the middle run, from the late '20s through the mid '40s of this century, neither these parties nor the evolving hybrid (Neo-Confucian in heritage, German in educational style) bureaucracy which exploited them could be perceived either by the electorate or by themselves as fully legitimate in either Western, Japanese traditional, or hybrid modern terms. Politically, they were neither fish nor fowl nor good red meat.

The Neo-Confucian meritocrats delegitimized themselves by hanging out with the new and not quite fully legitimate plutocrats. The meritocrats' Neo-Confucianism could not quite recognize a plutocracy as legitimate, no more than could the Chinese meritocracy of Song or Ming times. The plutocrats got put behind the 8-ball morally by being snooted by all the Neo-Confucian bureaucrats with whom they had to associate, but they also dragged the meritocrats with whom they fellow-traveled down with them.

The net result of this mutual delegitimization was that the parties' leaders became the Rodney Dangerfields of Japanese politics during the crucial period that followed the disappearance of the Founding Fathers of '68 after the second decade of this century:

Because they "got no respect" even from their own ranks, they became vulnerable to subversion by generic fascists from outside their ranks. This was almost as much true of the meritocratic as the plutocratic party leaders. Though preserving more dignity, they too lost the ability to control the political situation. They could neither rescue the parties nor provide any other institution apart from their own bureaucracy to substitute for the remnants of 19th century western liberalism.

Hence in what had already become a fully modern politics, the bureaucracy nevertheless could not alone do the key job expected from a fully modern elite. Whatever their prestige, the lords of merit could neither mobilize the great mass of the people nor prevent more informal and dangerous groups from doing so at the expense of both bureaucracy and parties.

These dangerous groups grew in power once Japan had created an empire, that empire had gotten out of hand (chapter 20) and the resulting dilemma of foreign policy threw Japan into what amounted to a "fascist process" (chapter 21).

## F. Meiji Social and Economic Life in Terms of Modernization's Three Aspects

### 1. Social patterns: marriage

We can tell a happier story if we turn to certain aspects of social and economic life during Japan's modernization process. The inherent self-correcting nature of markets tends to limit novelties to those the psyches of market participants can handle. I will in this section focus mainly upon the marriage "market." There are any number of other social institutions that might be considered, but marriage patterns, aside from being intrinsically interesting, also link up to most other aspects of life, even including the economy.

The aboriginal Japanese marriage pattern, called *yobai*—"continuous visiting"—in its late 19th century remote rural surviving vestiges, was apparently an uxorial form of trial marriage sealed by pregnancy.<sup>10</sup> The boy slept over at the girl's house until she got pregnant. Then the marriage was celebrated and he moved in with her folks, at least temporarily.

This aboriginal Japanese form of marriage also appears to have once been practiced even by the ancient *uji* aristocrats. However, once confronted with the Chinese form of marriage, the ancient Japanese slowly began to give up *yobai*.

The Chinese form of marriage was patrilocal: The girl moved into the boy's family. The marriage partners did not freely choose each other, but were linked as the result of a contract between the boy's family and the girl's family. The boy and girl did not even need to be consulted in the matter, or even meet beforehand.

Though it may strike you as less advanced than *yobai*, this Chinese style of marriage apparently came in from China along with high civilization. Not only did some of high civilization's glamour rub off on it, but it may also have had some functional value in its own right.

<sup>10</sup> I was told by a friend's father it was still being practiced in at least one western Kanto farming village within commuting distance of Tokyo as late as 1945.

At the very least, it simplified descent patterns and rendered them less ambiguous. That would have benefited a ruling class. In any event, its use gradually spread. Beginning with the Taika, Nara and Heian periods, it began to infiltrate the high aristocracy in the capital.

It penetrated to the local, provincial aristocracy after late Heian times and deepened its hold over both court and feudal aristocrats during Kamakura and Ashikaga times because the feudal aristocracy benefited from an unambiguous descent pattern. Then, in Tokugawa centralized feudal and bastard feudal times, it spread to the urban middle classes as they grew rich enough to begin to imitate the feudal aristocracy. The control over inheritance of businesses provided by patrilocal arranged marriages was no doubt useful for the owners of the many new enterprises of early industrial times.

Only in Meiji times did Chinese-style marriage spread to virtually everyone else. Patrilocal and patrilineal marriage were congruent with the new requirement that was legislated during early Meiji times for purposes of police control that everyone, not just the ruling class and their middle class imitators, adopt a family name.

No wonder the mass of everyday Japanese were feeling somewhat alienated by the end of the 1880s. It was not just the fancy new and abstract western political ideas that were cutting them loose from their old Heaven. Even among commoners, the boys and girls could no longer freely choose each other after some socially regulated sexual trial runs.<sup>11</sup>

## 2. Marriage patterns and economic institutions

And yet, this newly universal but seemingly archaic Chinese marriage pattern proved highly congruent with economic as well as social modernization. There is not much difference in function between the Japanese version of Chinese-style arranged marriages and the Victorian era Western marriage. In both

cases you wound up with a nuclear family (husband and wife and minor children, and perhaps retired parents of the husband) rather than an extended family (retaining married children, non-retired parents and possibly brothers of the husband within the family residential unit).

In principle, a Chinese-style family should be an extended one, with several generations living in one family compound. In practice that was rarely the case even in China. It was even less possible much of the time in the crowded cities and villages of modern Japan, particularly among middle and working class families.

Instead, in both Japan and the West as they moved into full modernity, whole armies of nuclear families took form, held together by the authority of the fathers and the voluntary subordination of the mothers who actually ran the households.

Nuclear families turned out to be very useful even during Tokugawa times for organizing working units of tenant farmers with long-term sharecropping contracts. Then and later the nuclear family's father became something like the head of a small family firm which either rented or owned its land or capital, and the mother became the "firm's" manager.

A corporation-like nuclear family can not only function as the institutional basis for an agricultural revolution in rural areas, but also for an early and then full industrial revolution in town. There, such a family can run even a big family business.

Nuclear families function just as well for urban working class as for middle class people needing unambiguous inter-family alliances and intra-family inheritance patterns as a society moves into the full industrial revolution. The nuclear family provides at least the minimum necessary social cement for people who might otherwise be atomized into free-floating individuals with not the foggiest idea what to do with themselves in an industrial town. At the very least, it provides a place to go home to from the factory—serving as a refuge from the sometimes cruel-seeming new world of the full industrial revolution.

That was the role some social historians say was played by the Victorian family during the industrialization of the west. The Victorian family was quite explicitly celebrated in the West even at the time as the only sure "refuge" from the stresses of industrialization. Much the same sort of

argument can be made for the Chinese-style family during Meiji Japan.

You may at this point object that surely Chinese-style marriages in Japan had to have been much more backward than Victorian marriages, even though both produced nuclear families.

After all, Chinese-style marriages were arranged without the consent of the prospective bride and groom. This was the opposite of the Victorian pattern. Indeed, to upper and middle class Japanese of Meiji times, the Victorian marriage seemed to be so different from their own pattern that they labeled it as "free love marriage" since among the Victorians the two prospective partners freely picked each other out, and even went on dates.

Still, the Chinese-style marriage remained dominant in Japan during the country's successful industrialization until quite recently. It is still practiced at least among some of the more genteel upper middle class families. This would suggest that the "free love" aspect of the Victorian marriage may have been less important than its tendency to create nuclear families within which capital could be accumulated and unambiguously transmitted to the next generation. Either with or without "free love," these two societies dominated by nuclear families both managed to achieve a fair degree of stable full industrialization.

Recently, free love has been hybridized into the latest form of the Japanese arranged marriage. The majority of Japanese marriages by the 1980s were in fact much closer to free love than the old style of arranged marriage. Except for small segments of the upper middle class, boys and girls went out on dates, and essentially chose their own mates.

However, most young people still live at home during college and even after they have graduated and gotten jobs, which drastically limits opportunities for hanky panky. When the boy and girl have picked each other out, they usually still do get the two sets of moms' and dads' permission to marry. Only then do they marry, often at a secular wedding chapel (which may look like a Congregational Church) for a western-style ceremony, and set up a household nominally separate from the boy's family. It might, though, still be in the same apartment house as either the boy's or girl's parents.

The really traditional-minded families, usually within the upper middle class,

<sup>11</sup> Marriage patterns similar to *yobai* were apparently the norm in West Africa and were carried over to the New World by African-American slaves, and eventually to the northern industrial cities by their post-slavery descendants. Never quite suitable to that urban environment, trial marriage was eventually turned into widespread illegitimacy when melded with the new welfare system after World War II.

sometimes still use semi-arranged marriages. The fathers begin the marriage brokering process in more or less traditional form by exchanging pictures of their marriageable children. Some even still exchange horoscopes to assure astrological compatibility.

However, either the boy or the girl can veto the other marriage candidate at any stage of the match-making process. If there is no veto at the picture-examination level, several dates follow, once usually carefully chaperoned, nowadays as normal dates. Then, if the two still like each other, the match goes ahead. In effect the parents propose but the children now dispose even among the more traditional-minded of the upper classes.

The several variant forms of marriage all still culminate in a somewhat traditional nuclear family only rarely broken by divorce (though divorce rates are rising in the '90s). Women are still somewhat constrained, but the overall result is still probably more wholesome than our contemporary Western marriage pattern of multiple trial marriages (sometimes also called serial monogamy). Even the original version of the Chinese-style marriage might be superior to this. Unfortunately, you have to have been influenced by China for the better part of a thousand years for this form of hybrid social full modernity to be attractive to you.

### 3. The economy

The *ie* or great mercantile houses of late Tokugawa times (cf. chapter 16), were already the dominant form of economic traditional modernity by the end of the 18th century. They survived the fall of Tokugawa to become the most conspicuous engines of full industrialization during Meiji and post-Meiji times.

One of the ways they did this was by continuing to operate in the silk trade which they had snatched from the hands of the would-be monopolists of the silk guilds during the 18th century. During the last quarter of the 19th century, they were beginning to export their silk to the West. They were not, however, exporting very many fancy silk brocades.

The *ie* were mainly exporting raw silk thread, and they were exporting it to the industrial West, which now required massive quantities of silk thread to feed the steam-engine-powered weaving looms for silk stockings that were producing mil-

lions of pairs of silk stockings to adorn the legs of middle class ladies of the West.<sup>12</sup> In Victorian times no respectable middle class woman would be without silk stockings, though the agreeable fashion of letting women's legs hang out well below the hems of their dresses had not yet appeared.

Silk thread was a traditional East Asian upper-class commodity, produced in China for its rulers long before the Japanese had even become an early civilization. Nevertheless the Japanese came to dominate the international export trade in silk during Meiji times. The *ie*, through the rural and small town putting-out (subcontracting) systems they had devised during Tokugawa times to make an end run around the urban guild monopolies, could provide very good quality control over the thread's strength, so that it would not break too frequently when used on automated industrial age machinery.

The Chinese had not developed so nicely self-regulated a putting-out silk industry during early modern times. Because merchants bought from and sold to part-time female labor the partially processed factors of production at each stage of production through the hub and spoke marketing system, they could not retain enough control over production to assure as much uniformity of quality as the Japanese *ie* could.

The *ie* were also very careful how they spent the foreign exchange that silk sales abroad brought into their coffers, because after all, they had no government-to-government or government-to-privileged-private-firm foreign aid encouraging them to be wasteful. They could only afford to use this foreign exchange to import what they actually needed. The banks they founded were very careful about lending foreign exchange to their customers for needed foreign factor of production purchases.

One of the many useful objects the *ie* or their banks' customers imported were bicycles. During the last decades of the 19th century the bicycle was not yet merely a wholesome means of transportation for clean hippies. It was a newly perfected, and very seriously high-tech middle class instrument for industrial age personal transportation, cleaner and cheaper and probably safer than the horse. Natur-

ally the late Meiji period Japanese began to import bicycles as part of their economic westernization.

These bicycles would, however, occasionally break, and would need spare parts. These spare parts could either be imported at considerable expense, or be awkwardly made by cruder but cheaper Japanese labor working in early industrial age blacksmith shops.

By the early years of this century, some observant entrepreneurs noticed that all or nearly all of the parts of bicycles were already being made by such early industrial age methods in small local workshops to serve as spare parts for repair of bicycles. New *ie* formed by these entrepreneurs bought up supplies of such wholly Japanese made parts and began assembling them into Japanese-made bicycles.

This may strike you as a fairly crude version of hybrid full modernity at the economic level, and it is true that many of the specific manufacturing techniques employed to make the parts were early rather than full industrial in nature, but the principle of subcontracting was also quite modern, and was applied to bicycle manufacture in Japan in a way not much different from that used by Henry Ford at that time with automobiles. Subcontracting was at least as important to the success of Ford's Model T than the famous moving assembly line on which Ford later assembled the parts he bought from his subcontractors.



An early Meiji period bicycle. (Smith, p. 263.)

Chapter 18, which deals specifically with the Japanese full industrial revolution, will provide additional examples which can be applied to writing the essay answering question 17b.

EHK

<sup>12</sup> Nylon had not yet been invented. In fact, during the 20th century, when they first appeared, rayon, and then nylon, were first thought of as artificial silks.