

The Modernizers

Overseas Students, Foreign Employees,
and Meiji Japan

Edited by
Ardath W. Burks



The Modernizers

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About the Book and Editor

This volume of essays by Japanese and Western scholars sheds light on the process of modernization in nineteenth-century Japan, focusing on two significant aspects of Japan's transition to a modern society: the decision to live for a time with the necessary evil of relying on the skill and advice of foreign employees (*oyatio gaikokujin*) and the decision to dispatch Japanese students overseas (*ryugakusei*). The essays make clear that the success of both these programs went beyond aiding Japan's modernization goals; their indirect effects often extended much further than planned, influencing even today the fields of education, science, and history and affecting other countries' knowledge about Japan.

Dr. Ardath W. Burks, professor emeritus of Asian studies at Rutgers University, is the author of *Japan: Profile of a Post-industrial Power* (Westview, Second Edition, 1984).



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Overseas Students, Foreign Employees, and Meiji Japan

edited by
Ardath W. Burks

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Preface

The editor wishes to thank all the contributors, who prepared the original essays for a conference held at Rutgers University in 1967. In completing the introductory chapters, the editor has obtained constructive criticism from colleagues, members of the Asia Committee at Rutgers, of the University Seminar on Modern Japan (based at Columbia University), and of the Luce Seminar (Princeton University).

In preparing a first draft of the manuscript, the editor received invaluable aid from Elizabeth Woodward, now in the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, Rutgers. Readyng the final camera-ready, printed version of the essays would simply not have been possible without the patient help of Jane Burks, who aided in the proofing of all copy on screen and who prepared many of the difficult tables. Our only real arguments concerned the manner in which words are divided at the end of a line. In practically every case, she was correct in her judgment. Final copying was made possible through the courtesy of Associate Vice President (for Research) David Cayer, who lent encouragement toward completion of the project from the beginning.

It should be noted that when Japanese proper names are used in their normal (Japanese) style, the family name comes first, the given name second. In some documentation and in the bibliography, where the opposite (English) style appears in original publication-- for example, with names of Americans of Japanese ancestry-- then the given name appears first.

The authors accept responsibility for the contents of the volume; the editor, for final decisions on format and style.

Ardath W. Burks, Editor



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1. Introduction

Ardath W. Burks, Editor

This project, itself a contemporary experiment in international education, had as the occasion for its launching a brace of historical events. The various essays were prepared for limited circulation and discussion, at an international conference of scholars convened as part of the celebration of the bicentennial anniversary of Rutgers University. The authors-- together with a number of Japan specialists who acted as discussants-- gathered for three days, April 26-28, 1967, in New Brunswick, New Jersey. The date also roughly approximated the one hundredth anniversary of contacts between Rutgers and Japan. By coincidence, the following year, 1968, marked the beginning of the centennial anniversary of the Meiji Restoration in Japan.

The project had as the cause of its launching the intellectual curiosity of the scholars involved. They were grateful for an excuse to meet, to celebrate a bicentennial, a century of cultural and educational exchange, and the Meiji centennial. They too engaged in the polite exchanges appropriate to such occasions, singling out for the ceremonies the pleasant and productive aspects of such contacts. Then, as scholars must, they settled down to an objective examination of the process of exchange, specifically of the particular roles played by foreign employees* and overseas students* in nineteenth century Japan.

HISTORY OF THE PROJECT

Contributions by Japanese scholars had first been translated into English, usually by younger scholars working in Japan. Amendments and additions were suggested in the conference discussions held in 1967. The editor then took the various and different essays and, over some time, re-translated the original Japanese to some extent, re-edited the essays originally prepared in English, and annotated all of the contributions in uniform style. Revised essays originally prepared by Japanese were re-checked with the authors during the editor's successive trips to Japan in 1970,

* oyatoi gaikokujin

+ ryugakusei

1973, 1976, 1978, 1980, and 1982. He then prepared this introduction, five explanatory chapters, the conclusion, notes and bibliography.

Style of the Project

The final result, the editor and contributors hope, constitutes something more than a celebration of a bicentennial and two centennial anniversaries. The description of the role of Rutgers (site of the conference and academic home of the editor) appropriately remains in some of the essays, but that role is treated objectively. It is a fact that many of the first Japanese students did end up in New Brunswick and, indeed, some are buried there. It is also true that two quite different figures among the early yatoi were Rutgers men (William E. Griffis and David Murray). Dr. William E. Griffis has deserved attention, perhaps not because of his direct influence on nineteenth century Japan, but because he became America's first "old Japan hand." He was undoubtedly the most influential writer in projecting images of Japan on the minds of informed contemporaries. It is a fact that Griffis began the systematic study of the foreign employees. And finally, his experiences represented a classic case of the limitations of foreign advice, of serene enjoyment of Japan, as well as frigid frustration with Japanese; in short, a dramatic illustration of the promise and peril of international education.

As much as possible the editor has tried to render the text of the essays into a story that may interest the non-specialist, general reader, who may know little about Japan. Explanatory footnotes offer Japanese equivalents of English terms, as well as interpretations for specialists and graduate students working on Japan. Documentation, especially referring to original Japanese-language sources, has been designed for the specialists. The contributors have expressed the hope that scholars will carry on the research, from the macro-level of modernization to the micro-level of specific biographies, particular roles, Japanese responses in detail, and varied long-range results.

Interest in Japan

From a Japanese point of view, completion of the project was at least timely. In a kind of "nostalgia boom," amidst a perennial "search for identity,"* there has been a revival of interest in, and a spate of research on, the role of the foreigners. Originally in 1901, as has been stated, Dr. Griffis began to collect information on his contemporaries, the foreign employees. In 1921, Yoshino Sakuzo made the first notes on foreign employees, in Japan. Thereafter there was little research on the subject accomplished until the post-World War II era.

Umetani Noboru, who has contributed an essay to this volume, published his short reconnaissance on the subject of foreign

* Nihonjin-ron

employees, in 1965.¹ Then the Centre for East Asian Cultural Studies adopted as its major research program for 1967-70 the study of the foreign nationals employed in Japan. After Centre personnel had collected voluminous materials, Umetani prepared an interim report.² This was further expanded into a monograph published for the Institute of Developing Economies.³

Eventually Japanese efforts culminated in the 17-volume series on foreign employees, published under the auspices of the Kashima Research Institute, the first volume appearing in 1968.⁴ By 1975 the Japanese scholars were prepared to publish a guide to the contents and the locations of basic collections of Japanese documents on the subject.⁵

Interest in the West

In the West, studies devoted to Westerners who assisted the Meiji modernizers had certainly not kept pace with Japanese activity. In the United States, Robert S. Schwantes, who contributed one of the essays in this volume, made a reconnaissance of the ground to be covered.⁶ Then, also from an American point of view, Foster Rhea Dulles wrote a series of portraits, mainly of Yankees working in Japan.⁷ Both Schwantes and Dulles examined also the Americans' counterparts in Japan, the samurai, as well as Japanese students in and visitors to the United States.

In Canada, Hazel J. Jones, who wrote one of the essays in this collection, began to carve a distinguished academic career out of serious research on the foreign employees. Having completed her doctoral work at the University of Michigan, Jones published-- in both Japanese and in English-- a number of monographic studies on source materials in Japan, on foreigners employed by the Tokugawa government, and on Meiji government policy toward hired foreigners.⁸

In England in December 1981, the International Centre for Economics and Related Disciplines hosted a symposium associated with the Great Japan Exhibition then being held in London. Scholars from Holland, Austria, Switzerland, Germany and Japan addressed the topic of economic and social history in late Tokugawa and Meiji Japan. Covered (among other general subjects) were a British merchant's activities in Nagasaki 1861-1870, and technical transfer and cultural exchange between Scotland and Japan, 1860-1914.⁹

Meanwhile, on a more popular level Japanese began to remind their American friends of these early exchanges. The Tokyo Metropolitan Government historiographer, Tezuka Tatsumaro, had been publishing now and then short pieces on foreigners who had early resided and worked in Japan. In his series he also touched on the first Japanese students overseas, in a bi-monthly journal published by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government for liaison with foreign cities.¹⁰ More recently, publications of the Toyota Motor Sales Company have singled out the foreign teachers and have devoted one whole issue to the problems inherent in cultural exchange with Japan. Another carried an article on study abroad by Ishizuki Minoru, who contributed an essay to this volume.¹¹

In fact, Japanese themselves have been much less active in exploring the role of overseas students, as compared with that of the hired foreigners. In the early post-war period, Ienaga Saburo published his well-documented studies on the importation of foreign culture into Japan. The impact of Western culture on Japanese of the late Tokugawa and early Meiji periods was seen through the writings of Japanese travellers and authors.¹² Ishizuki, previously cited, produced his work on overseas study in 1972 and his has remained the definitive work.¹³ Meanwhile, there has been some activity among American graduate students.¹⁴

NATURE OF THE ESSAYS

The essays in the volume here introduced have taken advantage of all this recent and valuable research. Indeed, all of the authors have been involved in scholarship related to Meiji modernization. The collection is, in the opinion of the editor, the first work to set the subjects in historical background; to add analysis to increasingly rich data; and to bring together in proper relationship the role of the hired foreigners, the part played by the overseas students, and the evolving policy of Meiji Japan.

Historical Background

It was necessary, first, to review the historical background (in Part I), not only as the foreigners saw and later importantly described it; not only as Japanese students hoped it would change, but as contemporary (Japanese and Western) scholarship has reconstructed the scene "like it was." Although the remainder of the essays tended to concentrate on a few crucial decades and to single out representative figures, these background essays have dealt with historical environment and the forerunners of modernization. There was the long continuity of Japanese tradition, more often ignored by the brash "barbarians" but occasionally sensed by the more perceptive of the visitors. Inertia in Tokugawa history came out clearly in two original essays devoted to specific domains, Echizen-han* (Fukui) and Kaga-han (Kanazawa) by Kanai Madoka and by Robert and Yoshiko Flershem, respectively. These pieces, appearing in English for the first time, also constituted detailed profiles of specific domains at the rice roots level, rare in any language. Indigenous forces for change also emerged in the description of samurai as an elite in a steadily evolving "centralized feudalism." In Sakata Yoshio's succinct but masterful account, the confluence of domestic and foreign crises that plagued the venerable Tokugawa system and eventually brought it down, came out quite clearly.

* han, domain

Overseas Study

Crevices in the wall of seclusion erected by the Tokugawa regime began to be revealed early in the nineteenth century as countless samurai-lecturers and samurai-students moved about Japan in search of truth, at least partly along the path of "Dutch studies." In the 1860s crevices became cracks, when bold samurai under assumed names dared to sneak out of some of the domains to begin study in the West. The new Meiji government, as Ishizuki points out in his essay (in Part II), inherited the habit of overseas study, then began to manage it strictly, and finally, integrated policy toward students abroad with treatment of hired foreigners at home.

The Foreigners

The essays then turn (in Part III) to what the Meiji government regarded as a necessary evil, also inherited from the previous Tokugawa regime, the employment of foreign advisers, teachers, and helpers. Robert S. Schwantes examines the foreigners in general terms, as well as the creation of Japanese "counterparts." Several national groups are described in the fields of engineering, medicine, and the development of Hokkaidō. Hazel J. Jones then speculates on two views of the role of the alien advisers held by foreigners themselves, and goes on to identify which of these is the more accurate when considering Meiji government policy.

The Role of Education

The next group of essays (in Part V) examines the critical part played by education in the modernization of Japan. The specific roles played by Dr. Griffis in Fukuoka and by Dr. Murray in the country at large are examined by Motoyama Yukihiro and by Kaneko Tadashi, respectively. Shiro Amioka then unravels an interesting evolution of values, a change witnessed by the foreign advisers, from the late Tokugawa over to the new life-style of the Meiji era.

The Legacy

In the remaining essays (in Part V) the legacy, specifically contributions by foreign teachers and by returning Japanese students, is examined. Some of the products, for example, in science as studied by Watanabe Masao, are to be expected. There are also, however, unexpected by-products, for example, Griffis' advanced-amateur role in pioneering study of Japanese history. Umetani argues that Dr. Griffis may have been the first (Japanese or Westerner) to examine with cool detachment the institution (as well as the person) of the Emperor of Japan.

The conclusions (in Part VI) attempt an assessment of these

early experiments, within the context of international education, and of their contributions to the modernization of Japan.

Documents

In the appendixes, in addition to documentation, illustrations in the form of original documents are provided. Some of these, like the celebrated Charter Oath (1868), have appeared in many documentary collections, but they are included here for ready reference. Some are from the original Japanese, like the "Instructions for Hiring Foreigners" (1870), and were translated specifically for studies of the employed foreigners. Some others, originally prepared in English, have never been published (for example, Dr. Griffis' manuscript, "A Daimyo's Government," a first-hand description of feudal administration in Fukui).

NOTES

1. Umetani Noboru, *Oyatoi-gaikokujin; Meiji Nihon no kyōyaku-tachi* [Foreign employees; supporters of Meiji Japan] (Tokyo:1965).
2. Umetani Noboru, "Foreign Nationals Employed in Japan during the Years of Modernization," (repr.) *East Asian Cultural Studies*, X.1-4 (March 1971).
3. Umetani Noboru, *The Role of Foreign Employees in the Meiji Era in Japan*, I.D.E. Occasional Papers Series 9 (Tokyo:1971).
4. *Oyatoi gaikokujin* [Foreign employees], Kashima Kenkyūjo, 17 vols. (Tokyo:1968-1976). Representative volumes include: I *Gaisetsu* [General statement], by Umetani Noboru (1968); III. *Shizen-kagaku* [Natural sciences], by Ueno Masuzō (1968); V. *Kyōiku-shūkyō* [Education, religion], by Shigehisa Tokutaro (1968); IX. *Igaku* [Medicine], by Ishibashi Chohei & Ogawa Teizo (1969); XI. *Seiji - hōritsu* [Government, law], by Umetani Noboru; and XVII. *Jimbun-kagaku* [Humanities], by Kanai Madoka (1976).
5. *Shiryō oyatoi gaikokujin* [Materials on foreign employees], edited by UNESCO Higashi Ajia Bunka Kenkyū Senta (Tokyo:1975).
6. Robert S. Schwantes, *Japanese and Americans; A Century of Cultural Relations* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1955).
7. Foster Rhea Dulles, *Vankees and Samurai; America's Role in the Emergence of Modern Japan* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965).
8. A list of selected works by Hazel J. Jones includes: *The Meiji Government and Foreign Employees* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1967; and Tokyo: Yushodo, 1968; microfiche, 1973); "The Formulation of Meiji Government Policy Toward Foreign Employees," *Monumenta Nipponica* 23:1-2 (1968); "*Meiji seifu to oyatoi gaikokujin*" [Meiji government and hired foreigners], in Waseda University Social Science Research Institute, ed *Meiji bunka kenkyū* [Meiji culture research] (Tokyo:1969), III, 139-155; "Bakumatsu foreign employees," *Monumenta Nipponica* 29.3 (1974); (review-article) "*Shiryō oyatoi gaikokujin*" [Source materials on foreign employees], *Monumenta Nipponica* 30.4 (1975); and *Live Machines; Hired Foreigners and Meiji Japan* (Vancouver: University of British

Columbia Press, 1980).

9. See especially Shinya Sugiyama, "Glover & Co.: A British Merchant in Nagasaki, 1861-1870" (pp.1-17) and Olive Checkland, "Scotland and Japan, 1860-1914: a study of technical transfer and cultural exchange" (pp.56-76) in Ian Nish, ed. *Bakumatsu and Meiji: Studies in Japan's Economic and Social History* (London: London School of Economics, International Centre for Economics and Related Disciplines, International Studies 1981/2).

10. Tezuka Tatsumaro began his series in the 1950s in Tokyo Metropolitan Government, Council on Liaison with Foreign Cities, ed. *Tokyo Municipal News*. Sample topics include: "Education in Japan Early in the Meiji Period and Rutgers College," 16.2 (June 1966); "Martin W. Wyckoff and Other Rutgers Graduates Who Labored for Education in Japan Early in the Meiji Period," 16.3 (August 1966); "British Instructors at Imperial College of Engineering and Their Disciples," 17.1-2 (April-June 1967); "Channing Moore Williams, The Founder of St. Paul's University," 17.5 (December 1967); "DuBousquet, Frenchman, Whose Eminent Services Forgotten," 19.5 (August 1969); "The Formation of the Young Men's Christian Association in Japan and the Development of Modern Sports," 20.5 (June 1970).

11. *Toyota News* 5 (May 1975) carried a portrait of Griffis on its cover with a short inscription, "Early Foreign Teachers Played Vivid Role in Modernizing Japan." *the wheel extended* (The Toyota Quarterly Review), IV.3 (Winter 1974) reviewed sessions devoted to "Problems in Japanese Studies," held at the Japan P.E.N. Club's International Conference, Kyoto, November 17-23, 1972. This issue also included the article by Ishizuki Minoru, "Japan's Modernization and Study Abroad" (pp.21-29).

12. Ienaga Saburo, *Gairai bunka sesshu shiron* [Essays on the importation of foreign culture] (Tokyo:1948).

13. Ishizuki Minoru, *Kindai Nihon no kaigai-ryūgaku shi* [A history of overseas study in modern Japan] (Kyoto:1972).

14. The editor has consulted the following: James T. Conte worked on the subject at Princeton University; see "*Meiji Ryūgaku-sei*, Overseas Study in the Development of Japan, 1867-1902," paper presented at the 28th annual meeting of the Association for Asian Studies, Toronto, Canada, March 19-21, 1976; also Marilyn Bandera, "A Case Study in Educational Motivation: *Ryūgakusei* and Rutgers College 1860-1895," M.A. Thesis, University of Hawaii, April 24, 1970.



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2. Tokugawa Japan: Post-Feudal Society and Change

Ardath W. Burks, Editor

Interest in the foreign employees and Japanese students overseas-- as has been noted, lively in Japan and lagging somewhat in the West-- has once again drawn attention to the transition through which Japan moved in the nineteenth century. On occasion such attention has understandably exaggerated the role of the aliens and the Western-trained Japanese. Most historians agree, however, that the result of the transformation was not, save in a superficial sense, the "Westernization" of Japan.

It is once again the perennial historiographic problem faced by scholars who study Japan. Shall we, in assaying the "lineal development and cumulative growth" (as compared, say, with Chinese "cyclical development"), emphasize the decay and regeneration of indigenous institutions or the effects of periodic foreign influence? Does this society, as many Japanese have claimed, display certain non-erosive, unique characteristics,² or after careful study, may we conclude that Japanese development too lends itself to analysis under the universal laws of history?

Such questions raise, of course, another perennial issue, what for want of a more precise term has been called the "modernization" of Japan. The word is admittedly little more adequate than "Westernization." For the moment the question can be begged by agreeing at least that the foreigners and overseas students often thought that they were involved in the change as "modernizers." In any case, the study of the roles of aliens and of overseas students may throw light on the complicated transition from the Tokugawa period (1600-1868) to the Meiji era (1868-1912). This volume does not purport to settle the continuing arguments.³

The problem cannot, however, be by-passed completely. Just as soon as we introduce the employed foreigners in nineteenth century Japan and the Japanese students working abroad, we encounter their views of the Japan into which they were plunged or from which they surreptitiously escaped. If these observations now reveal a certain ambivalence, no less so are present-day views sharply divided as to the nature of the era of Tokugawa hegemony. Even today a scholarly debate rages over the precise nature and effects of Tokugawa "feudalism." These essays do not pretend to settle that debate either. It will be useful, however, to set forth as background a summary of the historical data and some

indications of the varied interpretations.⁴ Without some benchmarks, it would be difficult to make preliminary surveys determining whether slight change or considerable change or monumental change occurred in the Japan of the late nineteenth century. Without a sketch of the topography of history, one can scarcely decide whether the aliens employed in Japan and the Japanese who studied abroad played incidental or significant or crucial roles. What, then, can be safely said about Japanese society prior to the 1850s and 1860s, without becoming unnecessarily mired in arguments over historiography?

VARIOUS INTERPRETATIONS

The Tokugawa period in Japan's history until recently suffered, in the words of John Whitney Hall, a "bad press."⁵ The tradition of criticism goes back to works written by foreign residents in nineteenth century Japan, those who first tried to interpret Japanese affairs to their Western readers.

Foreigners' Views

Western observers, who in the nineteenth century were on hand to see the twilight of the Tokugawa era, first of all decried Japan's isolation* since the seventeenth century. Japan's leaders had quarantined the country against the disease of foreigners' presence, but in doing so (in the opinion of the Westerners) they had also stunted the growth of Japan. And then there was the matter of the Tokugawa regime itself.

William E. Griffis, an early foreign employee and the most widely read of the nineteenth century writers on Japan, declared: "Here was medieval Europe over again, as in a pageant and also a chamber of horrors."⁶ Sir Rutherford Alcock, British diplomat and historian, referred to Japan's "feudal form of government.... an administration based on the most elaborate system of espionage ever attempted.... a decivilizing agent.... an impediment to progress intellectual and moral."⁷ Guido Verbeck, the foreigner who quite early adjusted to Japanese life, nonetheless projected a negative view of modern Japan's background: "These people, in many respects, live yet in middle-age darkness and institutions from which it may be doubted whether they can emerge without at least one hard, it may be sanguinary struggle. The mighty Lord overrule."⁸ Writing somewhat later, Ernest Clement looked back on the Meiji Constitution (1889) as a document which "took Japan forever out of the ranks of Oriental despotisms and placed her among the constitutional monarchies."⁹

It is interesting to note that the Japanese word for "feudalism" + originated only in the eighteenth century and was adapted from a Chinese term which referred simply to "decentralized gov-

* Stemming from Tokugawa policy of seclusion; see below, p.16

+ hoken; later, hoken shakai (feudal society); or hoken seido (feudal system) see below, p. 14.

ernment." In the 1900s Japanese legal historians equated the pre-Meiji Japanese system with "feudalism" as used by Western scholars like Frederic William Maitland. In the 1920s some Japanese scholars adopted a Marxist definition, by which feudalism was identified as a stage of development. Thus Japan, like other countries of the world, had gone through an evolution from tribal antiquity through a middle ("feudal") age to a modern ("bourgeois") period. Beyond Marxist circles and outside Japan, it was Asakawa Kan'ichi who first handled feudalism within a comparative framework. His successor at Yale University, John Hall, has urged care and objectivity in use of the concept.¹⁰ Today historians use the term feudalism much more self-consciously, but they still differ sharply over the quality of Tokugawa society and the after-effects of the feudal condition.

Two Interpretations of the Tokugawa Heritage

To some observers, a group which has included Japanese historians and Western scholars who have interpreted the sources available in Japan, the Tokugawa system represented a stage of "late feudalism." (In using this term, this first group indicated agreement with the second, whose interpretation is summarized below.) These observers have used the term feudalism, however, more often in a causal, explanatory fashion and usually in a pejorative tone. Thus "feudal society" was dominated by "a narrow privileged ruling class," with an "oppressed peasantry" living on the threshold of starvation and "endemic famine." Following the classic definition, this school of thought equated feudalism with decentralization of power. Proceeding one step further, one observer described Tokugawa politics as marked by "plots, intrigues, and coups" rather than by "organized movements." He fitted in with generations of commentators who have noted that individuals under a feudal system were governed by social status. Under Tokugawa hegemony feudalism lived beyond its "natural life," according to this scholar and left "hideous wounds upon the minds and spirits of both rulers and ruled."¹¹

Writing in the 1930s and, more significantly, in the 1940s, many who denounced Tokugawa feudalism argued that the system provided the background out of which "modern" Japan (by which they meant the militarist Japan of that time) had emerged. They joined what was called "the united front against fascism and militarism" and, in doing so, provided a powerful critique of those specific features of "Japanese feudalism and early capitalism" that "gave rise to the phenomenon of Japanese militarism."¹²

In another respect, members of this first school of thought have agreed with representatives of a second, the modernization theorists. Most serious scholars-- Japanese and Western-- have admitted the critical importance of the nineteenth century Western impact as a catalyst, but the majority have argued that the final precipitation was still largely a Japanese compound. This treatment has dealt a blow to the popular concept, "Westernization," and has placed the roles of employed foreigners and overseas Japanese students, who served as vehicles for Western influence,

in proper perspective. Beyond this basic agreement there has been vigorous debate. To some historians Japan of the 1890s and after suffered from "abortive modernization" and its society displayed "feudal residues" well into the twentieth century (and some argue, until today). The transition from the Tokugawa to the so-called modern Meiji regime, according to these observers, actually produced "absolutism"* , which in turn inevitably led to militarism, "fascism," imperialism, war, and defeat.¹³

A second group of observers, also made up of Japanese historians and Western scholars,¹⁴ in equally self-conscious fashion have utilized the term, "feudalism." They have, however, attributed to the Tokugawa experience an entirely different quality and they have projected entirely different effects. They have been identified, both in Japan and abroad, as the modernization theorists.¹⁵

Modernization theorists have argued, agreeing with most Japanese scholars, that familiar Western periodization must be refined when applying historical standards to Japan. Since the era of the employed foreigners (nineteenth century), there has been a tendency to date the beginning of "modern" Japan from the Meiji Restoration (1868). This dating suited the temptation to attribute significant change solely to Western influences and ignored the considerable preparation during what the Japanese call the "early modern" (that is, the Tokugawa) era.

Some historians who belong to the modernization school have emphasized the ability of traditional practices to coexist with modern institutions.¹⁶ The administrative system under the Tokugawa regime, it has been said, was a form of unified rule based on plurality, the functioning parts in a check-and-balance equilibrium. It was precisely this system which marched into modern Meiji Japan. The new central government, directed by an oligarchy, displaced the military headquarters of the Tokugawa; prefectures replaced the old domains; a new civil service stepped into the place of the old feudal bureaucracy. "Thus the prototype of the Meiji government had already been established in the Edo period."¹⁷

Postwar Japanese scholarship and scholars like John Hall, who have interpreted it to the West, have thrown a different light on the long period before the nineteenth century transition. An attempt has been made to challenge the "re-feudalization" dogma, which was one explanation of what happened with the founding of Tokugawa hegemony. Although Japan was secluded for two and a half centuries, the authorities in Edo did not simply take Japan "out of the world's mainstream" (as has been claimed) so that the country "stagnated in isolation." Japanese were only brushed by universal scientific findings and Western political concepts, it is true, ideas which overseas students later learned and the foreign employees brought into the island nation. During the Great Peace+ Japanese did, however, learn to husband their scarce resources, perfect their unique style of group harmony, and aesthetically express themselves in exquisitely elegant but simple

* zettaishugi

+ Taihei

style. Indeed, Japan has never been an under-developed nation in the realm of the arts.

Moreover, society beneath the state changed significantly. As Edwin O. Reischauer, who might be called the father-figure of the modernization theorists, has put it,

During the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century, Tokugawa rule continued serene and unchallenged, but beneath an unchanging surface, forces were at work remaking the foundations of the nation.¹⁸

The regime, headquartered in Edo, was conservative and restrictive. It buttressed political stability with policies of social rigidity "that proved to be a long step backward." Institutions-- a matrix of what the Japanese call "centralized" or "national" feudalism-- were nonetheless "a political step forward." ¹⁹ While lip-service continued to be paid to the principle that administration was in the hands of a military (a "feudal") elite, samurai themselves went through a radical transformation into a proto-national civil bureaucracy. Even a "bourgeois" element appeared in the culture of townsmen, a life-style secretly admired and indulged in by samurai, if only in their leisure moments.²⁰ Rapid economic growth led to what Horie Yasuzō called a "commercial economy."

In one sense the foreign employees of the nineteenth century were correct in denouncing the Tokugawa system as "reactionary." Reischauer has admitted that two centuries of enforced peace "left an indelible mark upon the people": those who had been "bellicose, adventurous" Japanese of the sixteenth century became a "docile people" following orders from above and accustomed to "established patterns of conduct."²¹ In another sense the foreign observers were wrong: the Tokugawa preserved its original structure, but Japanese society and the economy developed well beyond the bounds of a strictly feudal system.

Respect for the Imperial system, for example, had been sustained and nurtured under the Tokugawa. In the late Edo era respect for the Emperor was revived so that, by the time of the impact of the West, Japanese had a native alternative to rule by a feudal elite. Despite the continuing formal division of the land into domains, an inchoate sense of nationalism was spreading throughout the society.²² Robert Ward was nevertheless correct in arguing that, although there was preparation for nationhood in early modern, that is, in Tokugawa, Japan, the process of modernization did not "go critical" until the 1860s or 1870s. By then a sense of nationalism came to pervade the whole society.²³

Thus modernization theory, like a narrative scroll, unrolls and identifies the Tokugawa as a "post-feudal" or a "proto-modern" society. Bold patterns are drawn in what has been called the "grand design" perfected by the former ambassador to Japan, Edwin Reischauer, or what has been dubbed more critically as "the Reischauer line." Why did Japan alone among the non-Western societies develop so as to transform itself during the nineteenth century into a modern nation-state? Reischauer's answer is to the effect that Tokugawa Japan was undoubtedly a "late phase" of "a long

feudal experience," so that--

Feudalism, or more properly its aftermath, has something to do with the development of attitudes and institutions more conducive to success in modernization.²⁴

LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY JAPAN

Today, because of scholarly arguments, we know more about Tokugawa Japan than did, for example, Japanese historians or Western interpreters who worked in the disturbing period of the 1940s. We know a great deal more than did the foreign employees, who worked in and on occasion described Japan of the nineteenth century. As to the latter, in spite of their limitations and prejudices, they had one supreme advantage: like Alexis deToqueville describing America, they were detached, third-party, first-hand observers (in their case, of the transition from Tokugawa to Meiji). Some, as the essays in this volume demonstrate, were often shrewd and objective in their estimates, which thus today constitute primary sources useful to Japanese and Western students alike. It is hoped that some glances at their views and a close look at their roles-- as well as at the parts played by Japanese overseas students--will provide yet another prism through which to examine the Tokugawa era (and the following Meiji period). If the magnification also adds flame to the current debate, so much the better!

The Tokugawa baku-han* System

Japanese refer to the Tokugawa period as "early modern" and to the administration based in Edo as "centralized feudalism" (a term which appears to be a contradiction). The Tokugawa system is often described as descended from forms of "decentralized feudalism" (a term which appears to be a redundancy). A shogunate had earlier been established by the Minamoto family at Kamakura and another, by the Ashikaga at their residence at Muromachi in Kyoto. Thus, just as the period of Tokugawa dominance has been called the Edo era, after the seat of power, so the others have become known as the Kamakura and Muromachi periods. The continuity is important.

Kanai Madoka, in his essay contributed to this volume, traces the rise of the Asakura family in Fukui, for example, back to the era of endemic civil wars (fifteenth and sixteenth centuries) and

* A compound drawn from bakufu (lit., "tent government"; military headquarters of the shōgun) and han (domain). Shōgun, military deputy of the Emperor in theory, administrator in fact (derived from an archaic title, sei-i-tai-shōgun, lit., "barbarian-subduing great generalissimo"). The widely accepted term drawn from mixed cultural traditions, "shogunate," is a curious Latinized form probably inherited from early contact between Japan and the West.

even before (to 1337). Two centuries before William Griffis arrived in Fukui from New Brunswick, New Jersey, when Matsudaira Tadamasa was daimyō* (early seventeenth century), already by then attention of the domain was directed from deeds of martial bravery to civil accomplishments. Certainly by this time, Kanai argues further, rule by "feudal lords" had been so drastically altered as to divest them of "feudal aspects" of governance.

Perhaps most points of view can be satisfied by describing the Tokugawa system as feudal but under centralized control. The military government headquarters was at Edo (which eventually became Tokyo). Japan was subdivided by the Tokugawa into family-held territory and some 265 domains. These were carefully distributed checkerboard fashion among several kinds of lords. There were the related lords, branches of the Tokugawa family itself. The Matsudaira of Echizen domain (modern Fukui) was such a branch. There were hereditary lords, loyal vassals who, prior to the crucial battle of Sekigahara (1600), had pledged fealty to Tokugawa Ieyasu, founder of the regime. Finally there were the outer lords, who had not originally been allies of the Tokugawa and whom the latter scarcely trusted.†

So long as certain principles were adhered to and strict injunctions followed, administration of local, internal, domain affairs rested with each lord. He was in his own territory, therefore, a small reproduction of the Tokugawa shōgun.

Some of the injunctions, however, proved to be important beyond the original design. The system of alternating residence‡, for example, required domain lords to build elaborate residences in Edo and to keep wives and children there. The lords then traveled regularly between the Tokugawa headquarters and their domains. The shogunate thus consciously knitted the otherwise decentralized system together. Unconsciously the Tokugawa guaranteed a lively and colorful flow of traffic from Kyoto and the domains through post towns on established routes to Edo. Japan's preindustrial urban settlements expanded rapidly. About 1700 Edo was already the largest city in the world (as Tokyo is today).

The Emperor

Surprisingly-- to outsiders but not to Japanese-- the Tokugawa never usurped the throne. Like the ancient Fujiwara civil regents, the Minamoto shōgun, the Hōjō regents of the Kamakura period, and the Ashikaga shōgun, the Tokugawa shogunate left the Imperial symbol intact. The Emperor remained "carefully protected" by the Kyoto Deputy of the Tokugawa based in the Nijō Castle. In the nineteenth century, of course, anti-Tokugawa loyalists

* daimyō (lit., "great name"), lord of a domain; for further breakdown see text following.

† shimpan, collateral families of the Tokugawa; also known as kamon, e.g. Echizen-ke Matsudaira; fudai daimyō, hereditary lords; tozama daimyō, outer lords.

‡ sankin kōtai

claimed and foreign employees agreed, that the shogunate had usurped the exercise of Imperial sovereignty. (When, with the Meiji Restoration the loyalists established a new oligarchy, however, they too saw to it that the Emperor would reign but not rule.

Griffis, for example, studied the writings of the Japanese scholar, Rai Sanyō (1780-1832), and was among the first to recognize the importance of the unbroken Imperial tradition, the significance of the Emperor as institution as well as person. As Umetani Noboru points out, in his essay in this volume, Griffis may have unwittingly forecast a provision of the 1947 Constitution. In 1915 he described the "Mikado" as embodying "the nation's memory and the people's hope."²⁵

Tokugawa Seclusion

All historians agree that Tokugawa practice was significant on another front. The policy of seclusion*, as described by the employed foreigners, was applied to contact with Western powers. (Tokugawa Japan had originated within, and remained in the realm of, East Asia, from which it was not isolated. At Nagasaki Japanese continued to be in contact with Chinese.)²⁶ Insulation from the West did limit and delay massive exchange with cultures outside East Asia, but even on that front seclusion was never complete. The Dutch too remained at Nagasaki and this exception was fateful, of course, because it allowed the steady expansion of Dutch studies.⁺ Continued presence of the Dutch also permitted them to play a crucial role at the beginning of the transition from Tokugawa to Meiji.

Tokugawa Society

The "step-backward" social policy of the regime involved the well-known version of Confucian hierarchy. Steps on the ladder from the top down were: samurai-warrior, peasant-cultivator, artisan-craftsman, townsman-merchant.† Thus had the Japanese completely reversed the Chinese assignment of low status to military men. It should be noted, however, that really quite early in the Edo era, samurai-warrior became in effect samurai-administrator. Nor did the dividing lines remain completely rigid: merchant stock was married or adopted into the samurai circle; lower samurai sometimes occupied a status in fact below peasant-headmen; in the late Tokugawa period, "men of ability," for example, doctors, often achieved samurai status.

* sakoku, a term coined in 1801 but later widely used to describe Tokugawa policy from the seventeenth century.

+ rangaku, lit., Dutch learning; see below, pp.20-1.

† shi-no-ko-shō; shi- from bushi (from which bushidō is derived), a term also used for samurai; no- from nogyō (agriculture) [peasants were also known as hyakushō (lit., "hundred families")]; ko- from kogyō (domestic industry); shō- from shōgyō (commerce) [artisans and merchants concentrated in the castle-towns were also known as chonin (townsmen)].

Almost all historians agree that the samurai were an elite, who were to prove crucial in the transition from Tokugawa to Meiji Japan. To some the military overlords were an arrogant, oppressive, and (in Norman's words) "virtually a parasitic class."²⁷ To others, during the Great Peace the samurai became civil administrators, scholar-statesmen (like their contemporaries, the mandarins in China), and an innovative élite. Sakata Yoshio, in his essay included below, called them "the intellectual and ruling class."

One of the Asakura family leaders, in the "Stipulations" prepared as early as the late fifteenth century, indicated a departure from standards of pure genealogy over to criteria whereby "qualified" samurai and "men of meritorious service" would be recruited into work for the lord. As Shiro Amioka has pointed out in an essay contributed to this volume, in the mature Tokugawa period the young samurai was expected to be accomplished in the literary arts. He was, of course, still expected to master the military arts as well, not because of the prospects of war but because such training was supposed to be good for the development of his body and his discipline.

Itinerant Samurai-Scholars

A distinctive contribution to our knowledge of the Tokugawa era has been made by several essays in this collection, those which have thrown light on the remarkable network of samurai-scholar-statesmen. Sakata (for Japan as a whole), Flershem (for Kaga), Kanai and Motoyama (for Fukui) have all dealt with the phenomenon, scarcely the mark of a stagnant confederation of feudal domains.

As in most academic communities, the Tokugawa network produced a great deal of movement among domains and their schools. Indeed, the term later used for "overseas student"* meant literally an "absent student," and earlier was applied to those who studied outside their domains. Samurai began their work in their own domain schools and some then moved on to Edo, Osaka, Kyoto, or Nagasaki to master Dutch studies, languages, and probably most significant, medicine.

Mature samurai-scholars traveled widely, as what in modern technical-assistance jargon would be called "consultants." Authors of two of the following essays deal with Yokoi Shōnan (1809-1869), who visited Fukui several times and lectured on learning and domain reform. Then there was the quite large band of medical students and advisers, who traced their training back to the German, Phillip Franz Bathasar von Siebold (1796-1866), who masqueraded as a Hollander and taught medicine.²⁸

A prime example of this kind of pre-Western impact, yet modern, man was Hashimoto Sanai (1834-1859), son of the Echizen domain official doctor in Fukui. He began his medical studies at age 15 and achieved samurai rank in his post as adviser to the lord, Matsudaira Shungaku. Later a representative of the daimyō

* ryugakusei; see below, chapter 6.

in Kyoto intrigues, he urged the opening of Japan and the enhancement of the power of the Emperor.²⁹ He was executed by Edo police. After the Meiji Restoration, he was converted into a martyr-hero.

Other Rungs on the Ladder

Sir George Sansom has remarked that Tokugawa statesmen, following Confucian theory, thought highly of agriculture but, in practice, not of agriculturalists. "...In reality the peasant was regarded, and was treated, as a machine to produce rice for the samurai to swallow."³⁰ Doubtless this judgment has, however, exaggerated the peasant plight for, as more recent research based on field studies has uncovered, transition was already under way even in the countryside. Thomas Smith has concluded:

Thus the power of status, traditionally defined, was greatly reduced, and new routes were open to social position and political power. The results were far-reaching. Peasant society took on an unprecedented mobility of which the effects were felt far beyond the boundaries of the peasant class; agriculture became competitive, productivity increased, commercial and industrial activity in the countryside flourished; there were even profound shifts of political power in many villages.³¹

Kanai, in his essay already cited (and included below), reported that the Edo regime as it affected Fukui was not "altogether oppressive": in one county the tax rate declined from 85 percent of taxable yield (in 1614) to 20 percent (in 1726) and then back up slightly to 25 percent (in 1751).

Other research conducted by Smith and studies made by Susan Hanley have indicated a tendency of Tokugawa society to control fertility because of a remarkably low mortality rate. Recent work on Tokugawa rural society has revealed a population exchange between village and city (a migration which has continued to the present day) and, as we shall see, dynamic effects of urban-based commercial activity on the countryside.³²

In practice artisans and craftsmen were ranked higher than merchants, because the former were of direct service to the samurai. Throughout the Edo era Tokugawa authorities displayed a distinct bias against merchants, whose informal status often belied formal ranking. According to orthodox Confucian theory, commercial profits constituted what in modern terms would be called "unearned increment." According to one widely used guide, merchants were very simply "to make accurate calculations" and "to keep their journals punctually without making any errors."³³ Actually, by the Genroku era (1688-1705) it was difficult to separate the contributions of samurai and non-samurai to townsmen culture. Shortly thereafter most samurai and many lords were financially beholden to merchants and had to be granted the first of many moratoria on debts. It must be made clear, however, that during the Edo period merchants were never allowed to seize the levers of power in any "bourgeois" revolt.

Urban Culture in the Edo Era

The culture of the old castle-towns, which in the Tokugawa period became preindustrial cities, however, did come to dominate the life-style not only of artisans and merchants but also of samurai. A revived Kyoto became the formal Imperial capital and, more importantly, a center for fine handicrafts (as it is today). Osaka, the "kitchen of Japan," became the great commercial entrepot of Western Japan. Edo, with its large population of samurai consumers, artisan producers, and merchant wholesalers, soon outstripped both these older cities and, as was noted, reached a population of over one million in the eighteenth century.³⁴

It is interesting to note in passing that, when the employed foreigners of the nineteenth century entered Japan, they looked on this earthy and at the same time urbane culture with some ambivalence. Missionary-educators among the foreigners were shocked over the absence of sin in a society governed only by shame. Unconcerned with matters of state policy and high-brow philosophy, townsmen openly and many samurai secretly plunged into the erotic and existentialist "floating world"* of pop culture. With remarkable accuracy the now-celebrated wood-block art of this period faithfully recorded the life of the courtesan-geisha and other entertainers, the color of kabuki and bunraku-puppet theaters, and the travels of lords, samurai, and footmen along the old Tōkaidō highway.

It is important to realize that today, we identify many Japanese characteristics as having grown from the seedbed of the Tokugawa period. Like the early foreign observers, who had a stake in, and regretted the passing of, traditional Japanese society, we have tended to equate these characteristics with agrarian-village Japan. Many were, however, products of preindustrial urban Japan.

Religious and Intellectual Currents

Religion as such would not ordinarily deserve a deep treatment in an inventory of the main features of Tokugawa life. The Japanese version of Confucian doctrine (that is to say, Neo-Confucianism) nurtured the transition toward a more secular conception of nature, man, and society. Nonetheless, Shintō and even Buddhism were mobilized to serve the political community in several respects. And certainly Buddhism, in a kind of protestant revival at the rice roots, continued to provide solace to the masses in Tokugawa times of troubles.

Religion was important to many of the foreigners who came to Japan in the nineteenth century. A majority of the Americans, whether they were missionaries or not, emerged from an environment with a strong protestant ethic and carried in their baggage a strong sense of mission. They were always on the lookout for comparisons and contrasts between Japanese and Western religious beliefs. Missionaries, of course, bore the white man's burden as

* ukiyo; wood-block prints of the period were called ukiyo-e.

well and to them, it was essential to find ways toward "salvation" of the "heathen."

If one were to expand the topic of religion to encompass the predominant ethic, the state philosophy, and learning, then intellectual currents in the Edo period would be seen to have been crucial.³⁵ In the nineteenth century, Dr. Griffis grasped this point and even foreshadowed one of the arguments made by the modernization theorists today:

The transformation of Old Japan was no sudden or unaccountable thing, because two centuries of intellectual preparation had given her thinkers a new mind.³⁶

On other occasions Griffis hopelessly confused the issue by linking Ōyōmei (Neo-Confucian philosophy of Wang Yang-ming* adopted in Japan) with what he hoped was emerging Christianity in Japan.

Many Japanese scholars (including several who made contributions to this volume) have emphasized the importance of a strain of rationalism and pragmatism in Tokugawa Confucianism. "Real learning,"[†] in the view of Sakata, "...prepared the Japanese soil for newly transplanted seeds of science and technology." His disciple, Motoyama Yūkihiko, has explained in his contribution, below, that Yokoi Shōnan, on one of his visits to Fukui in 1851, began to expound on real learning, which searched for fundamental principles not only in nature but also in society. The product was a declaration on the unity of scholarship and politics; the result, recruitment and training of "men of ability," who would be active in politics.

It has been noted that the samurai ideal was embedded in both martial arts and literary arts.‡ True religion reentered the picture with bushidō[§], the "way of the warrior" having been a strange mix of Confucian loyalty-obedience and Zen Buddhist contemplation. Before the Meiji Restoration, loyalty was strictly to the shogunate and to the local lord, regardless of whether one agreed with the orders or not. Later this feudal sense of loyalty provided no barrier to the appearance of loyalists pledged to lords who in turn supported restoration of the Emperor and later, the new regime.

Dutch Studies

Despite seclusion, the slow, steady-- one might say, subversive-- spread of Dutch learning allowed many Japanese to be ex-

* Wang Yang-ming (1471-1529), Confucian philosopher in Ming China.

† jitsugaku

‡ bu-, martial arts; -bun, literary arts; thus, bubun .

§ bushidō (lit., the way of the samurai), a term applied to the principles of loyalty and honor. Bushidō borrowed stoic endurance, scorn of danger and death from Buddhism; religious worship of country and sovereign from Shinto; a certain literary and artistic culture, as well as social norms for the five Confucian relations, from Confucianism. See also chapter 14.

posed to Western ideas. At the beginning of Tokugawa rule, of course, Chinese classics had constituted the core of curricula in the schools. The ban on Western books was lifted as early as 1720, except for those that dealt with Christianity. By the end of the eighteenth century, in most of the domain schools Dutch studies had been added to the curriculum. By the end of the nineteenth century, one-third of all courses taught in Japan were in the scientific disciplines. As Watanabe Masao has concluded (in his essay-contribution below),

The tradition of Dutch learning in Japan paved the way and enabled Japanese to make rapid strides in assimilating Western science.

In the hands of the Japanese, Dutch learning originally focussed on medicine, astronomy, and natural history; later, it concentrated on military affairs. Even in what the Flershems have called "backward" Kaga (see their essay, below), Western-style medicine had proceeded apace. As early as 1818 Maeda Narinaga offered the opinion that the Dutch were superior to the Chinese in medical techniques. Vaccination came to Kaga by 1850. In neighboring Fukui, Matsudaira Shungaku, the lord of Echizen, was early influenced by Tokugawa Nariaki, the Mito lord. Both came to advocate reform of military organization along Western models; thereby Japan could expel the barbarians. Lord Matsudaira's adviser, Yuri Kimimasa, shifted emphasis: if there was to be contact with foreigners, he urged, then it would be "cardinally important" to exchange "not only goods but also wisdom."³⁷

Along with Western ideas came foreigners, at first a mere trickle and later, from the mid-nineteenth century on, a small flood. It must always be remembered, however, that those who were called the "foreign employees"* were by no means the first to live in Japan and to work for the Japanese. There was, of course, what has since been dubbed the "Christian century," which lasted not quite one hundred years (1549-1639) and which witnessed not the triumph but the defeat of the faith.³⁸ After the Franciscans and the Jesuits had disappeared, submerged by Tokugawa seclusion, there were also Dutch employees. Perhaps the first was Jeurien Henslitz, who early in the seventeenth century taught surgery to pay off a Dutch debt.³⁹

The functions performed and roles played by the great band of Meiji era foreigners are described in some detail below (especially in Part III). Again it must be recalled that the older generation employees were Dutch and that they entered while the Tokugawa still held control. Members of Dutch missions as instructors advised the Japanese on naval affairs in the periods 1854-57 and 1857-59. They were displaced by the British, who established an English school at Nagasaki in 1858. It has been recognized that it was the French who did most for the fading shogunate. They established a Yokosuka naval complex in 1865 and a French language school in Nagasaki. Although the United States is said to have "opened" Japan, American employees in Japan in the early period

oyatoi gaikokujin; see below, chapters 8-10.

were few.⁴⁰ Samuel R. Brown and Guido Verbeck were missionary-educators, but since Christianity was still banned, they worked as teachers of English and students of Japanese language.

Education and Literacy

Something has already been said about the level of education and spread of knowledge among the samurai elite. Academies were not unknown even in pre-1600 Japan, if one does not assume an overly formal structure for such schools. By the end of the Edo era, however, a majority of the children of samurai above the lowest ranks were receiving formal education in more than 200 domain academies.⁴¹ Granted, items in the curricula were largely traditional, that is, Confucian; nonetheless, these schools were innovative in quality of education and widespread in diffusion. Even in Kanazawa, capital of the slowly developing Kaga domain, the Meirindō boasted the widest range of subjects taught in Tokugawa Japan. And gradually this academy began to admit townsmen of non-samurai status as well. In Fukui the Meidōkan was established in 1855 and later began the study of military arts, mathematics, and Western books. Griffis recorded his surprise upon arriving in Fukui in 1871 to find the "large and flourishing" domain academy in place with some 800 students, a collection of Dutch books ("chiefly medical and scientific"), a library of foreign books on military matters, and the American textbooks of one of the early overseas students.⁴²

There was also a surprising spread of learning among townsmen and even among women, considering that it was a male samurai-dominated society. Ronald Dore, in his study of education in Tokugawa times, concludes that the level of literacy among all classes was higher than that for countries of Europe at the time. "The creation of modern Japan was not simply a matter of top-level changes," he wrote. It was also a "cumulation of small initiatives by large numbers of people,"⁴³ who came to appreciate new possibilities and new choices.

Just as education and literacy are essential to a modern state, so too the late feudal and proto-modern Tokugawa system boasted a relatively high level of literacy. To the samurai, the writing brush came to replace the sword as a real in contrast to a ritual instrument of power. Merchants in the towns had to be literate, at least so far as bookkeeping and accounts demanded some education. Among the peasants, at least the head of the five-household group* had to be able to read and interpret regulations handed down by the government. One estimate has pegged the level of literacy at 40 to 50 percent among males.⁴⁴ It is doubtful whether any developing state at present equals that level.

* gonin-gumi.

The Commercial Economy

Doubtless other phenomena have been sufficiently described, at least by implication: the concentration of the samurai class in castle-towns, the growth of preindustrial cities, and the burgeoning of a merchant class with a lively if limited culture. Equally significant was the slow but steady permeation of money into the foundations of the Tokugawa structure. Dedicated in traditional fashion to the physiocratic bias in Confucian thought, with a feudal prejudice against commerce, the authorities in Edo, lord-vassals in the domains, and their samurai followers found themselves increasingly seized with problems of money.

Horie Yasuzo has traced the significant evolution. Although both the shogunate and the domains continued to lay primary emphasis on agriculture as the "foundation for the economy," agriculture itself became increasingly commercialized. Each castle-town was connected with Osaka and Edo and became the local subsidiary market center. The several measures enacted by Tokugawa authorities allowing Edo and the castle-towns to prosper were paralleled by steps taken to establish sophisticated systems of currency, weights and measures, opening and maintenance of post roads, and navigation channels. The local economy of each domain was independent, so to speak, but its dependence on the Japan-wide economy grew steadily. Much to the mystification of samurai, merchants perfected a system of "payment in advance"* on rice stipends (in modern terms, futures). Thus developed the commercial or commodity economy.⁴⁵

Inchoate Nationalism

The modernization theorists, striving toward a comparative theory of development, have assumed that an emergent sense of nationalism is a prerequisite to the modern condition; and that Japan of the nineteenth century had such a sense. Critics have countered with the idea that "feudal residues," combined with virulent nationalism, accounted for Meiji "absolutism," which in turn eventually gave rise to war and disaster. It is significant that both approaches place emphasis on nationalism as a factor in Japan's transition during the nineteenth century.

The Tokugawa version of feudalism never completely smothered embers of national identity as symbolized, for example, by the Imperial tradition. In their study of Kaga, the Flershems have discovered that Fujii Umon (1712-1767) was executed for advocating a restoration of Imperial power in spite of Tokugawa hegemony.

Late in the Tokugawa period, nationalism merged with the politics which led to the Restoration. Indeed, it was in the Mito domain, linked with the Tokugawa family itself, where national studies⁺ laid the foundations for transformation. As expounded by Fujita Yukoku (1806-1855), nationalism had as its thrust the

⁺ maegashi seido

⁺ kokugaku; see also chapter 14.

slogan, "revere the Emperor, expel the barbarian"* (explained by Sakata, below). Later, it assumed the form of the slogan, "enrich the country, strengthen the army."† There was a transference from loyalty-to-the-domain over to loyalty-to-the-nation. Even later, there was a transition from restoration (of the Emperor) over to renovation (of the society), all in the name of the Emperor and designed to protect the national polity.

FROM FEUDAL TOKUGAWA TO MODERN MEIJI JAPAN

There is a danger, of course, in following any of the interpretations of the history from the Edo era into the Meiji period, of assuming that not much of significance really occurred during that transformation. From one point of view, Japan's was an abortive modernization, which never completely escaped from feudalism; from another, the Tokugawa was already a proto-modern system, which contained many of the elements of a modern society. Most observers agree that the impact of the West, which doubtless was often exaggerated by the Westerners who participated in the process, had a circumscribed effect.

There is another viewpoint, described by Umetani Noboru in his essay below, that sees foreign pressure or "imperialism," important in other times and places, as "incidental to the process of history" in nineteenth century Japan. It was, in short, only a "nuisance," which prevented the "laws of history" from immediately fulfilling their task. One can recognize, without adopting any of these approaches, that the Tokugawa system revealed grave weaknesses, fissures that were widened by what the Japanese saw as an ominous Western threat.

Tokugawa Weaknesses

Godai Tomoatsu (1836-1855), one of the first of the overseas students, likened Japanese in the late Tokugawa period to "frogs in a well" because of their ignorance of the world outside.⁴⁶ Yo-koi Shōnan, whose nephews were among the first overseas students in America, described Tokugawa Japan as being subdivided into sections and without effective central control:

So when Perry arrived in Japan in 1853, he concluded that it was a country without a government. Indeed, he possessed insight and perceptivity.⁴⁷

Matsudaira Shungaku, lord of the Echizen domain when Perry came to Japan (and domain adviser when Griffis arrived in Fukui in 1871), also saw humiliation in weakness. In being forced by the foreigners to open ports, the Tokugawa had clearly revealed a decline in "military virtues," he thought. What would the reaction of the domain lords be? With foresight he concluded, "It

* sonno-jōi
† fukoku-kyōhei

would be impossible to continue governing the land in the same manner as heretofore."⁴⁸

On occasion present-day observers seize these weaknesses and convert them into reasons for the successful transformation. The British historian, W.G. Beasley, points to what the Meiji inherited from the Tokugawa: weakness in the Edo equilibrium, but with a structure that had nonetheless departed from traditional feudalism and thus paved the way to modernism. Education (for men of talent) and an ideology of loyalty (a normative value in Tokugawa feudalism) proved useful in the Meiji modernization.⁴⁹

Japan and China

Modernization theorists have contrasted the experience of Japan in the Tokugawa-Meiji transition with that of China under Ch'ing hegemony. In his essay below, Sakata pointed out that among Chinese literati, learning remained in the realm of belles lettres and was limited to mastery of Confucian classics. Among Japanese samurai learning meant literary accomplishment plus a reworking of ideas concerning obligations to the state, speculation on social structure and functions, and mastery of medicine, technology, military affairs-- in fact, anything that would strengthen the realm.

The question-- Why the different responses as between Chinese and Japanese?-- covers too vast and complicated a subject to be dealt with definitively in this volume. A survey of the evidence presented in the essays does, however, throw light on some aspects of the issue. If the impact of the West-- often dubbed "Westernization"-- had indeed been the main core and constant (and the cultures of East Asia, the minor variables), then the outcomes in China, Korea, and Japan should have been much the same. They were not. There were obviously significant differences among East Asian traditional cultures, arising out of geography and historical development; and also different mixes, arising out of the timing, scope, and form of Western impact.

The Western Impact

Moreover the phrase, "the impact of the West," is entirely too abstract a term (although it is an improvement over "Westernization"). We need to know much more specifically, how did Western influence enter; who brought in European and American goods and ideas; on whom was the impact felt at various levels of society and at different times; and what were the effects?

On a much more modest scale, this study of the nineteenth century employed foreigners and of Japanese overseas students will offer fewer abstract ideas and more specific evidence. It will throw more light on the transition from Tokugawa to Meiji, whether it was "abortive revolution" or "modernization." It will here and there pick up the interesting observations of both Japanese and foreigners of the time, granted their views were necessarily biased. To some degree it will attempt to reduce the abstraction,

"the impact of the West," to concrete terms.

There is a theory which attempts to explain the collapse of the Tokugawa system, as Umetani has pointed out, an approach that seeks to explain the transition within the parameters of historical materialism and through the dynamics of class conflict. This theory concentrates on "contradictions." Umetani argues that, although the Edo system has been called "feudalism," it was in fact "centralized feudalism." The internal development of this mature feudalism together with significant external pressure led to the collapse of the Tokugawa regime. Umetani concludes:

We may say that the Meiji Restoration was brought about through the process of Japan's search for the best possible response to external pressure, and that the impasse which the Tokugawa feudal society had fallen into was broken when the country responded to the unavoidable current of world history in the form of the Restoration.⁵⁰

NOTES

1. John Whitney Hall identifies the problem succinctly in his "Introduction: Japan's Historical Position" (chapter 1), *Japan: From Pre-History to Modern Times* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1970).

2. Foreign observers too have been intrigued by Japan's "special characteristics." The distinguished British historian, Sir George Sansom, commented on the "hard, non-absorbent core of individual character, which resists and in its turn works upon the invading influence." G.B.Sansom, *Japan: A Short Cultural History* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., rev.ed., 1943), p.15.

3. The debate over modernization not only continues but is applied to further development in the post-World War II period. See the trilogy by Kumon Shumpei, Murakami Yasusuke and Sato Seizaburo, "Intellectual Perspectives on Japanese Modernity"; "Japan Viewed as Ie Society"; and "Analysis of Japan's Modernization," *Japan Echo*, II.3 (Autumn 1975), III.1 (Spring 1976), III.2 (Summer 1976); all were translation-summaries of articles from *Chuo Koron* June 1965, October 1975, March 1976. The authors called attention to the impact of foreign writings on the Japanese intellectual world: in history, works of Japan specialists such as Edwin O. Reischauer, John W. Hall, and Marius B. Jansen; and in current development, John Kenneth Galbraith, *The Affluent Society*; Daniel Bell, *The End of Ideology*; and W.W.Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth*.

4. During the academic year 1958-59 the Editor was a member of the inter-disciplinary Modernization [*Kindaika*] seminar sponsored by the Research Institute for Humanistic Studies, Kyoto University. He also participated in one (the fourth) of the meetings of the Conference on Modern Japan of the Association for Asian Studies, the one held in January 1965.

5. John Whitney Hall, "The New Look of Tokugawa History," in John W. Hall & Marius B. Jansen, eds. *Studies in the Institutional History of Early Modern Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University

Press, 1968), p.55.

6. W.E.Griffis, "Four Makers of Modern Japan"(unpubl.ms.) in the William Elliot Griffis Collection, Special Collections Department, Rutgers University Library (hereafter the collection is cited as WEG-SCD-RUL). Griffis (1843-1928) was graduated from Rutgers College (Class of 1869). During a post-graduate year in theological seminary, he taught some of the first Japanese students in the Rutgers Grammar School and in Rutgers College. Later Dr. Griffis took great pride in the claim that he spent nearly a year "...alone in a daimio's capital far in the interior, away from Western influence, when feudalism was in its full bloom, and the old life in vogue." See *The Mikado's Empire* (New York:Harper & Bros., 6th ed., 1890), preface, p.9. After a brief stay in Fukui, Griffis was transferred to Tokyo (until 1874). After his return to America and until he made a second, his last, visit to Japan in 1927, he became the first unofficial historian of the employed foreigners. See Edward R. Beauchamp, *An American Teacher in Early Meiji Japan* (Honolulu:University of Hawaii Press, 1976); also Ardath W. Burks, "William Elliot Griffis, Class of 1869," *The Journal of the Rutgers University Library* (Bicentennial Issue), XXIX.3 (September 1966). For the work of Griffis in Fukui, see below, chapter 12; for Griffis as an historian, chapter 17.

7. Sir Rutherford Alcock, *The Capital of the Tycoon: a Narrative of Three Years' Residence in Japan*, 2 vols. (London:1863), II, p.250. Alcock was cited by John Hall, "The New Look," *loc. cit.*, p.257. Sir Rutherford Alcock (1809-1897) had been consul at Foochow, 1844, and at Shanghai, 1846-57. He was the first British consul general in Japan, 1858-65, and later served as minister plenipotentiary in Peking, 1865-71. He was knighted in 1862.

8. William Elliot Griffis, *Verbeck of Japan: A Citizen of No Country* (New York:Fleming H.Revell Co., 1900), p.116. Guido Verbeck (1830-1898) was born in the Netherlands. At the age of 23 he emigrated to the U.S. Chosen as a missionary-educator by the Dutch Reformed Church, he went to Japan in 1859 and, with his Dutch background, was assigned to Nagasaki (where some Dutch contact continued throughout the Tokugawa era). His school for teaching of English became so successful, it was given sanction and status by the Tokugawa headquarters (bakufu). Verbeck moved to Tokyo in 1864, joined the staff of the Daigaku Nanko, one of the forerunner units of Tokyo Imperial University. Strangely, Verbeck was not mentioned in Griffis' work, *The Mikado's Empire*, but was later singled out for the complete biography.

9. Ernest W. Clement, *A Handbook of Modern Japan* (Chicago:McLurg, 9th ed., 1913), p.120, also cited by Hall, "The New Look," p.57. Ernest W. Clement (1860-1941) was a prolific interpreter of things Japanese, a man working one half generation later than Alcock, Griffis, and Verbeck.

10. John Whitney Hall, "Feudalism in Japan-- A Reassessment," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, V.1 (October 1962); this essay is also contained in Hall & Jansen, eds. *Studies*, cited.

11. The exact words were drawn from an originally unpublished manuscript, "Feudal Background of Japanese Politics," completed in 1944 by the Canadian historian, E.Herbert Norman (1909-1957). Both Both Japanese and Western scholars have recognized his pioneering

work and the fact that his writings reflected rather faithfully the largely negative view of Tokugawa society inherent in Japanese sources available to him when he worked. See John Whitney Hall, "E.H.Norman on Tokugawa Japan," *The Journal of Japanese Studies* III.3 (Summer 1977), pp.365-6, 372. Norman's most significant published work was *Japan's Emergence as a Modern State; Political and Economic Problems of the Meiji Period* (New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1940). The Pantheon Asian Library has republished this work in a paperback edition including: a long introduction by the editor; the essay, "Feudal Background"; another short essay; a bibliography and an index. See John W.Dower, ed. *Origins of the Modern Japanese State: Selected Writings of E. H. Norman* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1975). For an enthusiastic Japanese view heralding the "revival" of Norman, see Toyama Shigeki, "The Appreciation of Norman's Historiography," *The Japan Interpreter*, XIII.1 (Summer 1980) (originally carried in Japanese in *Shiso*, April 1977). For a balanced review, see Gary O.Allison, "E.H.Norman, Modern Japan, and the Historian's Agenda," *The Japan Interpreter*, X.3-4 (Winter 1976) pp.393-402.

12. See Herbert Bix, "The Pitfalls of Scholastic Criticism: A Reply to Norman's Critics," *The Journal of Japanese Studies* IV.2 (Summer 1978), p.394. There is no need here to try to settle the argument, whether or not postwar scholarship "suppressed" Norman's work; or to enter the debate, whether or not for the Norman revivalists, criticism of Tokugawa feudalism (and Japanese militarism) has served a contemporary need outside of Japan. The postwar editor of Norman did comment on "some striking apparent similarities between Japan's experience prior to 1945 and American actions in the postwar period, particularly in Indochina." See Dower, ed. *Origins*, cited, p.86; also George Akita, "An Examination of E.H.Norman's Scholarship," *The Journal of Japanese Studies*, III.3 (Summer 1977), p.419. Allison was probably right when he stated in his review (cited above, fn.11) that inevitably the approaches of revisionist historians and of modernization theorists alike have been colored by the climate of their times.

13. There are numerous examples of the penetrating power of this pejorative treatment of feudalism, countless cases in which dogmatic rhetoric, if not ideology, has invaded the style of Japanese historians, Marxist or non-Marxist. Tsuji Kiyooki, an authority on modern Japanese administration, recognizes the modernity of bureaucracy, established after the Meiji Restoration, "similar to those in a feudal family." He writes that development in Japan was facilitated by "the spirit of the feudal patriarchal system," while simultaneously "modern types of organization and technology" were adopted. See his essay, "Decision-Making in the Japanese Government: A Study of Ringisei," in Robert E. Ward, ed. *Political Development in Modern Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), p.465.

A recent and much more strident denunciation confuses "feudalism" (used in the pejorative style), "militarism" (which, in the guise of mass conscription, can be thoroughly modern), and "capitalism" (as yet another stage of development). According to one author, the Meiji Restoration produced "a progressive and modern Japan" but "the very nature and flavor of feudalism remain-

ed largely untouched in much of Japanese society." The Restoration was "no more than a symbolic political gesture, and the militaristic feudal system remained." See Harold Hakwon Sunoo, *Japanese Militarism, Past and Present* (Chicago:Nelson-Hall,1975), p.9. There is no reason to believe that this author borrowed from the Norman analysis which, over forty years ago, was more intricately and elegantly woven. There is in the Sunoo tract but one reference to E.H.Norman, to make an obscure point on parliamentary politics.

14. It may be significant that Toyama refers to this school as "the American modernization theorists." *Loc. cit.*,p.12. Italics added.

15. The major works in English, which include translated contributions by Japanese scholars, have been the series entitled "Studies in the Modernization of Japan." Six volumes were published by the Conference on Modern Japan of the Association for Asian Studies: Marius B.Jansen,ed.*Changing Japanese Attitudes Toward Modernization*(1965); William W.Lockwood,ed.*The State and Economic Enterprise in Japan*(1965); R.P.Dore,ed.*Aspects of Social Change in Modern Japan* (1967); Robert E.Ward,ed.*Political Development in Modern Japan* (1968); Donald Shively,ed.*Tradition and Modernization in Japanese Culture* (1971); and James W. Morely, ed. *Dilemmas of Growth in Prewar Japan* (1971)(all volumes,Princeton:Princeton University Press). One should also consult, in addition to the Morley volume, which dealt with the peril as well as the promise of modernization, essays contributed to the Conference on Taishō Japan. They have appeared in Bernard S. Silberman & H.D.Harootunian, eds. *Japan in Crisis;Essays on Taishō Democracy* (Princeton:Princeton University Press, 1974).

16. Indeed, to contribute to the process of change. Robert E. Ward, who edited one of the volumes in the modernization series, concluded from examining the case of Japan that with judicious management "elements of a society's traditional political culture" may be converted into "potent agents of modernization." Ward,ed.*Political Development*, cited, "Epilogue," pp.577-592.

17. The Tokugawa (1600-1868) is often referred to as the Edo era, named after the Tokugawa seat of power (modern Tokyo). See Ardath W. Burks,"The Politics of Modernization: The Autonomy of Choice," in Ward, ed*Political Development*, cited, p.549.

18. Edwin O. Reischauer, *Japan, The Story of a Nation* (New York:Alfred A.Knopf,rev.ed.,1974), p.111. In his most recent treatment of Japan, the author sounds much the same theme. Japan, he wrote, although it was largely secluded from foreign stimuli, "was large and diverse enough to have a very lively society with a rich creative culture. The Japanese did not stagnate." Held down by a "complex, oppressive feudal system of government," nonetheless "they developed great skills in social and political organization and group cooperation." While the rigid political system remained relatively unchanged, in the society beneath were dynamic tensions: "between Confucian and feudal values and between economic growth and a frozen class society. Japan, far from becoming an immobile society in its isolation, remained capable of great change, as it was to demonstrate brilliantly in the second half of the nineteenth century." See *The Japanese* (Cambridge,Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978), p.77.

19. Reischauer, *Japan, The Story*, cited, p.89.
20. John W. Hall, *Japan From Pre-History*, cited, pp.160-2.
21. Edwin O. Reischauer, *Japan Past and Present* (New York:Alfred A. Knopf, 2d.ed.,1963), pp.80-1;see also *Japan, The Story*, cited, p.97.
22. Reischauer, *Japan, The Story*, cited, pp.98-9; the argument is carried further in chapter 7.
23. Ward,ed.*Political Development*, cited, "Epilogue."
24. Reischauer, *Japan,The Story*, cited, p.112.
25. W.E.Griffis,*The Mikado: Institution and Person* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1915), p.18. Article I of the 1947 Constitution of Japan reads: "The Emperor shall be the symbol of the State and of the unity of the people, deriving his position from the will of the people with whom resides sovereign power." *Mikado*, lit., "palace gate," is an archaic term for the Emperor, a word popular among foreigners residing in Japan in the nineteenth century and, of course, given greater currency by Gilbert & Sullivan.
26. As pointed out by Ronald P.Toby, "Reopening the Question of Sakoku: Diplomacy in the Legitimation of the Tokugawa Bakufu," *The Journal of Japanese Studies*, III.2 (Summer 1977), p.323, fn.1.
27. Norman, *Japan's Emergence*, citedI p.16.
28. John Z.Bowers, "The Adoption of German Medicine in Japan: the Decision and the Beginning," paper for the American Association for the History of Medicine, Kansas City, Missouri, May 11-13, 1978.
29. Frederick Weldon,"Hashimoto Sanai: A Japanese Martyr,"*The Journal* of the Rutgers University Library, IV.1 (December 1940), pp.15-21. Mr.Weldon first made a systematic inventory of the Griffis Collection, Rutgers University Library, papers including materials on the foreign employees and overseas students.
30. G.B.Sansom, *Japan*, cited, p.465.
31. Thomas C.Smith, *The Agrarian Origins of Modern Japan*(New York: Atheneum, 1966), Introduction, p.ii.
32. Hall cited these studies in his article, "E.H.Norman," *loc.cit.* p.370.
33. *Nippon Eitaigura* [The Japanese family storehouse], prepared by Ihara Saikaku (1642-1693), a leading novelist of the Genroku period (1688-1705), and cited by Shiro Amioka in his essay below.
34. Koda Shigetomo, *Edo to Ōsaka* [Edo and Osaka] (Tokyo:1934) contains a colorful account of the two cities.
35. To many Japanese Marxist historians-- and to many non-Marxists who have nevertheless adopted the rhetoric of historical materialism-- intellectual currents were not fundamental. Ideas (themselves products of "cultures") were regarded as derivative and tertiary. Primary was the "mode of production": primitive-slave, feudal, capitalist, or socialist. Politics was secondary and was determined by the mode. The resultant "culture" was tertiary. Thus a "feudal mode" always produced a "feudal class structure" and "feudal politics," which in turn spawned a "feudal culture." There have been, it is true, a few Marxist intellectual historians in Japan. In the West, Harry D. Harootunian has been an outstanding scholar, who has moved easily from interpretation

based on class structure to analysis of intellectual currents. See H.D.Harootunian, *Toward Restoration: the Growth of Political Consciousness in Tokugawa Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970).

36. Griffis, "Four Makers of Modern Japan," *WEG- SCD- RUL*.

37. For Maeda Narinaga (1792-1824), see the essay by Robert G. and Yoshiko Flershem, below. Matsudaira Shungaku (1829-1890) is described in several contexts in a number of the essays below, which deal with Fukui; as is Tokugawa Nariaki (1800-1860). Yuri Kimimasa (also known as Mitsuoka Hachiro, 1829-1909) prepared one of the first drafts of the celebrated Charter Oath; see below in the appendixes.

38. This story has been ably told by George Elison, *Deus Destroyed* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973).

39. H.J.Jones, "Bakumatsu Foreign Employees," *Monumenta Nipponica*, XXIX.3 (Autumn 1974), p.305.

40. Samuel R. Brown (1810-1880), one of the first American missionaries in Japan, established a school for interpreters in Yokohama in 1862. See below, p.191. For Guido Verbeck (1830-1898), see above, p. 27 and below, pp.246ff.

41. The academies have been covered in "The Fief Schools," chapter 3 of R.P.Dore, *Education in Tokugawa Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965).

42. Griffis, *The Mikado's Empire*, cited, p.431.

43. Dore, *Education*, cited, p.294; again, given as evidence in Hall, "E.H.Norman," *loc. cit.*, p.370.

44. Herbert Passin, *Education and Society in Japan* (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1965), pp.47-9.

45. Horie Yasuzō, *Meiji ishin to keizai kindai* [The Meiji Restoration and economic modernization] (Tokyo: 1963), chapter 2.

46. See the essay by Ishizuki Minoru, below.

47. *Kozuke sanron* [Three arguments on han discipline] (1860), cited in Masao Maruyama, *Studies in the Intellectual History of Tokugawa Japan*, trans. by Mikiso Hane (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), p.339.

48. *Bakumatsu gaikoku kankei monjo* [Documents relating to foreign affairs in the bakumatsu period], Vol.I, cited in Maruyama, cited, p.337.

49. W.G.Beasley, *The Meiji Restoration* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1971), esp. chapter I, "Tokugawa Political Society" and pp.411-2. See also Hazel Jones (who prepared one of the essays below), review of Beasley in *Canadian Journal of History*, IX.2, pp. p.239-41.

50. Umetani Noboru, *The Role of Foreign Employers*, cited, p.5.



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3. Fukui, Domain of a Tokugawa Collateral *Daimyō*: Its Tradition and Transition

Kanai Madoka

The domain of Fukui, once coterminous with the province of Echizen on the coast of the Japan Sea, was the place where William Elliot Griffis cast his lot in the final stages of han* history.¹ In response to an invitation by Lord Matsudaira of Fukui, Griffis arrived there on March 4, 1871. He stayed only eleven months because the newly organized central government abolished the old Tokugawa semi-autonomous domains.² What Griffis witnessed during his short sojourn in Fukui will be part of this essay.

Among the 90 (of 250-odd) domains which have been investigated one way or the other by central and local historians, Fukui is, of course, included. Yet there has been no attempt to compare Fukui's tradition before the eighteenth century and its transition to something new during the nineteenth as the domain of a Tokugawa collateral daimyō + with comparable developments in other domains.³ This essay intends to make clear the general role of Fukui as the domain of an Edo era lord and its special role as the domain of a Tokugawa kinsman.

FORMATION OF THE DOMAIN

In spite of the ambiguity of the term, both Japanese and foreign scholars have recognized that Japan has had a long history of "feudalism."⁴ While certain historians have maintained that feudalism flourished among the military caste under the Kamakura shogunate⁵ as a legal institution, others have asserted that it was established under the Tokugawa regime as a system of land tenure characterized by a clear contraposition of the large landed military aristocracy and the small farmers. Nevertheless, whatever may be said of the nature of Japanese feudalism, it is cer-

* han (domain)

+ daimyō, a feudal lord (technically, one who controlled land worth more than 10,000 koku [1 koku=4.96 bu. or 180 litres of rice], annual crop yield).

tain that the long established authority of the civil government in Kyoto was destroyed as the new domanical warlords emerged. It is also certain that the Japanese anxiously awaited the firm establishment of centralized state power as a means of compromising the feudalistic interests of these warlords. The emergence of the Asakura family from among the older military aristocracy and their political activities furnish significant evidence of the shift in Echizen province from the old established civil order to the new centralized system.

Asakura, the Sengoku Daimyo*

The gradual emergence of the Asakura family as an important local political force in Echizen during this transitional period may be traced back to 1337, just before the establishment of the Ashikaga shogunate.⁶ At this time Echizen was placed under the military governorship⁺ of the Shiba, one of the three families qualified to serve hereditarily as chief administrator[‡] of the shogunate. Within a year Shiba Takatsune ordered his vassal, Asakura Hirokage, born in Asakura of Tajima province, to reside at Kuromaru, north of present-day Fukui city, as his deputy officer.[†]

Hirokage's son, known as Takakage, is said to have been granted by 1353 the status of field manager of the Asuwa estate by its proprietor, the Ichijō family. The Ichijō was a noble family at the Imperial court to which Takakage was directly related through his mother. In a document of 1414 a deputy of the Asakura appears as manager of one of the Daijōin's[•] estates at Kawaguchi, close to Asuwa, together with men of the Kai, Oda, and others.

For fourteen generations, the Asakura family's influence had been extended through continued conquests in central Echizen. In the course of his campaigns, Yorikage had moved his residence to Kitanoshō (present-day Fukui city) and by 1462 assumed the office of deputy governor[‡] in place of the Kai family. By the year 1466 Yorikage's grandson, named Toshikage, had eliminated the influence of the proprietor of the Asuwa tract by driving away Ichijō Yasutoshi, who came to inspect his estate.

Under Toshikage the fortunes of the Asakura family reached new heights as a result of his support of Ashikaga Yoshimasa, the eighth shōgun during the Ōnin war, which Sir George Sansom has described as "the most dreadful conflict in the sanguinary history of the middle ages."⁷ This war was partly the outcome of a dispute over succession in the Ashikaga family that had become

* After sengoku-jidai (lit., "period of warring country"), from 1467 to 1568, during which Japan was completely absorbed in a civil war.

+ shugo or shugo-shoku

‡ kanrei, an office created after 1362.

† mokudai

• shū (estate); • of Kōfukuji, a wealthy Nara monastery.

•• shugo-dai or shugo-daikan