

Background Sketch: Japan

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Japan is now spoken of as an "economic superpower." Although this is somewhat exaggerated, Japan is unquestionably among the world's leading industrial nations, "developed" in every respect. It has one of the highest levels of income and levels of life expectancy in the world. It is also the only Asian nation in this group, one of two Asian nations never to be colonized (with Thailand), and it is by far the latest country to enter the race to join this rank.

Japan is not normally cited to illustrate the need for pluralism in development, and has in recent decades been often represented in terms of two major images that seem to argue in the other direction: its aggressive militarism leading to World War II and its extraordinary "discipline" since. This is unfortunate, but doubly interesting. For despite truly enormous cultural differences and differences in circumstances, the basic processes and foundations of development at the local level in Japan are precisely what they were and are in the West. Pluralism, in the sense of the deliberate construction of many legitimate institutional options for entering productive arrangements on the basis of individual choice at the local level, is an important part of this, and when this pluralism was eroded in Japan by the rise of de facto fascism, as it was in western nations by rise of explicit fascism, the diversion from the course of development were precisely the same as well, not only because of the immeasurable direct damage done by the war which these changes led to, but also by the stifling of internal growth and change that accompanied it.

Modern Japan unquestionably has more important governmental functions centralized at the national level than the United States, but not more, for example, than Great Britain. At the same time, however, the power of this centralized government has long been balanced with powers established at other levels, by local administrations and at the level of village and family. Equally there have also always been important internal checks at each level of government itself. To a large extent, the main phases of Japanese history are defined by setting up and working within such systems of governmental checks, arriving at a major national crisis when they proved inadequate, and then establishing a new system of checks to move ahead. This sketch concentrates on the last three such periods: the Tokugawa Shogunate, the Meiji era, and the period since World War II.

Land and People:

The Japanese landmass consists of five main Islands, 35 major islands with an area of 50 square kilometers or more, and about 6,800 small islands. The land has been created by uplift and volcanic activity. Active mountain-building continues. Earthquakes and landslides are common. The total area is 377,720,000 square kilometers. The population as of 1990 was 123,612,000. The 1990 rate of population increase was .34 per cent year, a historic low. The population density was 331.6 per square kilometer. The population had doubled since 1927, and at that time the annual rate of increase had been about 1.51 percent.

The topography is characterized as about 278,000 square kilometers (73.6 percent) of mountain and hill, 41,471 square kilometers (11 percent) of upland, 51,963 (13.8 percent) lowland, and 9,232 (2.4 percent) inland waterways and the like. Functionally, 13.9 percent is cultivated, 0.3 percent meadows and pastures, 68.6 percent forest, 0.8 percent grassland, 3.5 percent waterways and inland water bodies, 2.7 percent roads, and 5 percent households or industrial sites. The area considered urban is 87,826 square kilometers (23.3 percent), most of which is concentrated in three areas: Kanto (around Tokyo and Yokohama), Tokai (around Nagoya), and Kinki (around Osaka and Kyoto) These industrial areas are also the larger plains and contain a very large part of the level land and the agricultural land of the country, and for that reason also have the longest histories of dense and stable populations. They have also long defined the principle political axis of the country, with Kyoto as the first capital and first major center of commercial growth and Tokyo as the second capital and at in the modern period the largest center of population and industry.

The rural land area is 256,066 (67.8 percent), most of which is mountainous and forested. The country is divided from north to south by a mountain spine, which materially affects the climate. The western side, with more exposure to Siberian influences, has substantially colder with more precipitation in the form of snow rather than rain. The climate also changes dramatically from north to south not only because of the changes in latitude (which correspond to the differences between New York and north Florida) but also by exposure to warm ocean currents to the south of Tokyo Bay and much colder currents to the north. The main centers of wet rice cultivation, historically, are from Tokyo south. The northernmost island, Hokkaido, was been a remote frontier area until only the end of the last century, far removed from the mainstream of social and political life.

Historical Development:

There are two major points that should be understood clearly as a basis of modern Japanese development: a strong centralized state balanced with strong village autonomy, and strong institutional pluralism at both the national and local levels. The first of these dates mainly to the Tokugawa period, specifically to the reforms the Tokugawa system introduced in comparison to the previous feudal period. The best way to describe pluralism is to say that by and large it has been a clearly accepted mode of governmental and societal organization since the reforms introduced after World War II, but when we look at the forms it has taken, many of its elements can be seen to have much earlier roots.

The Tokugawa system blended substantial influences from China with an underlying social and political system based on territorial control by warrior/administrative kinship groups called uji (roughly clans or tribes). Different tribes controlled different areas, in which they made up a warrior-administrative aristocracy, the samurai. Internally, each regional organization consisted of a theoretically fixed but sometime practically fluid hierarchy of warrior-administrators with their retainers and slaves, and the commoner population.

The national government consisted of the power balances between the dominant regional clans. From an early time this power balance came to a head in one dominant group (and region). The most

important national system of this sort to leave a lasting imprint was that of the Yamato, and Nara on the Yamato plain was their capital. It is from them that the Imperial line and the idea of an empire itself descends.

The introduction of strong Chinese influence is usually dated from 552 a.d., the year the Buddhist religion is said to have been officially introduced to the Yamato court from a kingdom in southern Korea-- who in turn were influenced by the contemporary T'ang dynasty in China. Reischauer op. cit. p. 19. With royal patronage, Nara soon became a center of strong Buddhist influence, with large and powerful monasteries that became independent political contenders in their own right. Buddhist monasteries became large landholders and maintained important military forces. The monasteries of several sects were strongly fortified.

On the Confucian side, in 603, the Yamato introduced a system of 12 ranks for courtiers, as a basis for assigning powers and responsibilities. These eventually became a "complex system of twenty-six grades that was to last, at least in outward form, until modern times." Reischauer op. cit. p. 21. In the following year, the Yamato formally adopted the Chinese calendar and the T'ang Seventeen Article Constitution, which was not a constitution in a modern sense, laying out a system of offices, rights, and duties, but rather a set of general Buddhist and Chinese Confucian precepts. Reischauer op. cit. p.21.

Nara was laid out formally in 710. But in 794, a second site was selected, 30 miles north, and new capital built. Possibly to escape influence of monasteries around Nara. The second capital was originally called Heian, and is now Kyoto. It remained the main Imperial residence until the Meiji era.

Confucian and Buddhist influences proceeded to grow and spread through the regimes of successive dominant clans. But the imported ideas were given a distinct form to fit Japanese circumstances. At the same time, Confucian ideas never became the basis of an examination system and a national civil service system based on examination of the Chinese sort. The Japanese administrative class continued to be based on birth -- the warriors-administrators (samurai) presumably descended from the warrior lineages or clans of the original separate tribal kingdoms. Confucian ideas simply became part of the common education of this class. Another major difference was that the emperor did not, normally, actually rule.

With about four early exceptions and some notable interventions in political matters which have continued to the present, the Emperor's function has usually been more religious, what Reischauer calls a Shinto "priest chief." Correspondingly, there is no Japanese idea exactly like the Chinese idea of the mandate of heaven. In the Chinese system, the Emperor was the ruler, whatever his origin, that actually had the mandate of heaven to rule. His rule was legitimate so long as the mandate held. But the mandate was a broad and abstract idea. The signs of losing it could be any form of disharmony or disaster in the realm. So it was almost always possible to dispute whether the person who claimed the mandate actually had it. In this sense, as scholars have noted, the Chinese system recognized something like the Western right of rebellion. In the Japanese system, the Emperor was the representative of the one fixed and distinct imperial line, of divine descent, which logically could not change. But the emperor (with about four exceptions) did not himself actually exercise administrative

control under the mandate of Heaven but rather allowed others to rule in his name, while he himself represented the general welfare and order of the nation and people. That is, once the system was established, instead of having the mandate, the Japanese emperor in effect became or provided the mandate.

From the time of Yoritomo Minamoto in about 1185 until the end of the Tokugawa period in 1868, the title of this actual ruler was shogun -- roughly equivalent to the sometime European title "protector of the realm." Further Japanese adjustments to fit their own special circumstances included an "Office of Deities to represent the religious functions of the emperor. Also, instead of the standard six ministries of the Chinese system, they created eight to include one for the imperial household and another for a central secretariat. These ministries and many other bureaus and offices were staffed with officials, each with an appropriate court rank." Reischauer op. cit. p. 23 The shogun generally set up a second system of his own, that mediated between the imperial court and the local territories. In this sense, at least from the time of Yoritomo Minamoto, the Japanese system has always been less monolithic than the Chinese, and has consistently relied much more on informal consensus than explicit command in the ruling group.

Since there was no formalized national civil service cadre based on a national system of examination with officers rotated from post to post, but rather more a system of local administrations still based on clans and clan territories, the Japanese provincial administration was simpler and less formalized than the Chinese. The country was divided into 66 provinces. The provinces were divided into counties and each county into villages. The provincial governors were from the central government, but lesser officials were "drawn from among the local leaders." Reischauer op. cit. p. 24

The Tokugawa government made two fundamental changes from the administrative practices that preceded it. First, it separated the administrative class from the agricultural class; second it separated the administrative class from the people who were ruled, detaching the erstwhile feudal followers from their erstwhile lords and attaching them instead to the land. The main formulator of these changes was Toyotomi Hideyoshi.

The transition to the Tokugawa period began in 1467. A dispute over succession to the position of shogun in the dominant Ashikaga clan led to the formation of factions among the powerful "constable daimyo" or shugo who "served as pillars of the political system". This ushered in a long period of conflict called the period of the "Warring States" after a similar period in Chinese history. The warfare only ended when Oda Nobunaga rose to power and began a program for national unification under the slogan of "the extension of military rule throughout the land" Nakane 1990 p.12. -- still nominally supporting the Ashikaga shogun. By military rule, Nobunaga meant rule by the samurai (warrior) class, but in its context this did not imply what it might today. As Reischauer points out, after the initial conflicts to establish it, the Tokugawa period was actually one of over two hundred and fifty years of continuous peace.

Nobunaga attacked the Buddhist monasteries, destroying some utterly, and abolished the guilds, which had worked with the monasteries to sustain a system of monopolies and which had maintained military forces to defend them. He introduced and enforced uniform standards of measurement through the areas he controlled and eliminated local tolls on the movement of goods within the area

he ruled, to encourage commerce¹. Equally importantly, he broke with the custom of assigning his followers hereditary rights in the estates he gave them to manage. Rather, he separated his warrior-administrators (daimyos and their samurai) from the land, and attached them to his government, subject to rotation from area to area according to need. He also built up a sophisticated central staff, trained by him and under his direct command, apart from his field generals and their staffs. His program seems to have been, basically, to make the government a distinctive and specialized institution with a monopoly on force, strip Buddhist and other competing organizations of their political power, and have commerce run by a market system,

Nobunaga was killed by one of his generals 1582, but his program was carried on by his another of his generals, Toyotomi Hideyoshi. Hideyoshi avenged Nobunaga's killing on behalf of Nobunaga's children, won a subsequent battle for succession, and continued with his policies. In 1582-1598, as the country was being pacified, he ordered the Kenchi (National Cadastral Survey). This set the boundaries for each feudal territory and applied the new official standards for rice measurement across the country, measuring all lands and classifying all the domains in a precise rank scale according to amount of rice they were expected to produce (the kokudaka system²). Secondly, systematizing the policies Nobunaga had initiated, "each daimyo's vassals were separated from the land they used to manage as landlords, and ordered to live in the town where the lord's castle was located³. The peasants, who had been privately owned by the vassals to work on the land and at the same time to serve as their footmen, were now made to join the central government and had to register as such in the Kenchi Daicho (Census Book). They were then given the perpetual right to cultivate their assigned plots of land, and were made liable to pay tax. Those among the feudatories [samurai] who preferred to remain in the village were disarmed⁴ and classified as peasants, but many of them were ordered to administer the affairs of the village as shoya (village masters)." Yogo 1979 op. cit. p.177.

The most important effect resulting from the separation of the vassals of the feudal lords from the peasants both in location and function was that the right to rule the land and people of the domain, which formerly had been privately possessed by the daimyo and his retainers, now belonged to the ruler of the whole country, who, as part of this, delegated his power of administration to the daimyo. In other words, the peasantry belonged permanently to the land and formed an integral part of the domain, while the vassals belonged to the daimyo as stipendiaries. For example, the national ruler, in fact, occasionally exercised his authority to transfer a feudal order to a less prestigious domain when the daimyo proved poor in managerial capability. In such cases, the lord was ordered to take all his warrior retainers which him so that there could be no trouble from any armed force left behind, but conversely, he was not allowed to move as single peasant out of his old territory." Yogo 1979 op. cit.

¹ Wealth was important, according to Nakane, in part because only a rich lord could afford the "phenomenally expensive" muskets that were just coming to be imported from Europe at the time he came to power. Nakane op. cit. p.18.

² Nakane p.13.

³ This had the advantage of allowing soldiers to fight in the peak labor demand periods, and of permitting generals to take advantage of the fact their opposition could not readily do so and still sustain their home production.

⁴ Only samurai could wear swords, and they were obliged to do so.

p.177.

Hideyoshi died in 1598, after completing the unification of Japan and beginning an unsuccessful effort to establish an Empire in Korea. The succession fell to Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542-1616), after a struggle with Ishida Mitsunari culminating in the battle of Sekigahara in 1600. Ieyasu had long been Hideyoshi's ally (after temporary conflict in 1584). Ieyasu was the son of the daimyo whose land (Okazaki) had bordered Nobunaga's on the east. When his father and Nobunaga's father formed an alliance, Ieyasu had been sent as a child hostage to live in Nobunaga's house, and the two boys had lived and been schooled together. In consequence, Ieyasu was the one person among his supporters that was allowed to have a hereditary domain of his own -- Okazaki. And in that sense Ieyasu had been recognized as an equal, or at least parallel, daimyo to Nobunaga while everyone else was a bureaucratic subordinate. In 1603 Ieyasu was appointed Shogun by the imperial court.

Ieyasu's problem was to establish peace in the land which Nobunaga and Hideyoshi had unified. He set up his capital at Edo (Tokyo), established major branches of his family at strategic centers, and protected their holdings by formidable castles. There were 25 such family domains, and together their income totaled one-fourth of Japan's average annual rice crop of nearly 150 million bushels. The family monopolized the mining of precious metals, taxed the merchants and guilds in the large cities, and by this means had sufficient wealth and power to hold the feudal barons responsible for the construction and repair of castles and other works. Borton 1970 op. cit. p.17. But they were not build or repair castles without the Shogun's permission or make alliances among themselves. Each daimyo spent alternate years in residence in Tokyo and at their own castle towns. Staging towns were set up in between for these movements, and to support other travel and communication. Borton 1970 op. cit. p.16. In time, Ieyasu supported these policies by establishing a ruthless principle of primogeniture for succession to the Shogunate itself, promptly pruning out all possible rival lines before they became viable, to prevent the development of any basis for factionalism among to the daimyos⁵.

It was the general policy of the Tokugawa government to order daimyos from time to time to undertake public works, including defence, at their own expense. With the dual aim of assuring that the daimyos would not arm themselves and promoting general prosperity, which depended on agriculture,

"...the Tokugawa government stipulated a detailed list of expenditure items according to the wealth of each domain, and whenever necessary, forced a daimyo to increase his expenditure by order him to undertake such costly public works as the improvement of a river for the central government. These measures caused the feudal lords to be intent on two policies in the administration of their domains; first, the promotion of agriculture and auspiciously the production of rice so as to increase the revenue of their administrations, and secondly the feudal lords were to maintain the village communities and secure taxes from the peasants. Concerning the first point...there were more than 600 cases of river improvement and construction of irrigation systems during the first hundred years of this feudal system (after the National Cadastral Survey). while the total agricultural land of the country doubled from the initial 1.5 million ha to 3 million ha during the same period." Yogo

⁵ Nakane 1990 op. cit. pp.20-21.

1979 op. cit. p.178.

Daimyos always made efforts to be sure there were good engineers in their entourage.

Villagers, on the other hand, who made up five-sixths of the population and were recognized as the economic base of the society, were subject to a number of regulations designed to tie them to their villages and, at the same time, make the villages self-sustaining.

" They were prohibited from changing their residence, raising crops without permission, and selling their perpetual right of cultivation or status as farmers. The operation of merchants in villages was also prohibited and there were many regulations on concerning the peasants manner of consumption." Yogo 1979 op. cit. p.178.

Each village was provided with a common forest for firewood and charcoal, a common grassland for fertilizer, and a land allotment. A practice of using a part of the farmland as a common to allocate on a temporary basis to families that has suffered some unexpected misfortune was introduced or retained. All such arrangements were systematically recorded in the Mura Meisai Cho (Village Inventory) which also provided the statistical base both for village administration and land development. "For example, in planning for the irrigation works of expansion of cultivated land... criteria for prioritizing projects was not so much dependent on land productivity as the securing of these three kinds of common land in proper proportion to the village population, which were the basic conditions for its maintenance." Yogo 1979 op. cit. p.179.

Finally, responsibility for taxes was assigned collectively. To the village as a whole, and then within the village the tax was allocated to groups of five families, so that if one family of the five defaulted, the others would have to make up the difference.

The village master was responsible for maintaining this system, assuring payment of taxes and managing such things as the allocation of irrigation water. But he was part of the organizational hierarchy of the village, not the daimyo. "...when a daimyo enforced an outrageous policy, a village master often organized peasants for resistance, and sometimes even resorted to armed opposition. As a result, the village master received capital punishment. What is significant, however, is... that the village master regarded it as more important to secure the loyalty of his villagers than to lose it by submitting the daimyo." Yogo 1979 op. cit. p.180.

"During the first 100 to 150 years of stable growth under the ... Tokugawa regime, the peasants' share in the crop was between 50 and 60 per cent, as compared with only 30 to 40 per cent in the preceding period, owing to the disappearance of intermediary appropriations ... All the peasant had to do was fertilize his land, improve his farming techniques, and transmit his practical knowledge to the succeeding generation. Moreover, thanks to the availability of the three kinds of common land, there was no conflict of exploitation among the peasant themselves in the villages. It seems that this situation, coupled with the expansion of farmland and the improvement of the distribution systems ...caused agricultural production to increase at least 2.5 times during this period, namely, the late sixteenth to the early eighteenth centuries." Yogo 1979 op. cit. p.181.

The tax was set on the basis of the official measure capability of the land. It was not simply a share of the actual harvest. So if a family could produce more than the expected amount, it was theirs. As the peasant author of a mid-seventeenth century treatise on improving agricultural production said, "If on land producing 10 koku, 11 can be harvested: that is the treasure of a family!"⁶ Improved farming techniques did not depend on centralized research, but often depended on the development of new commercial activities. One of the main changes was the widespread adoption of commercial fertilizer, including night-soil and fish products.

Agricultural growth combined with the concentration of administrators and their families in castle towns automatically meant that there was a role for merchants and commerce, and the Tokugawa period saw accelerating commercial growth. Merchants concentrated around castle towns, and became increasingly important with the "rapid increase in the size of the large cities centered around the castles." Borton 1970 op. cit. p.17. Even though the initial taxation system was based on the actual delivery of grain, they spread a money economy and "became the shippers, wholesalers, storekeepers, and later business managers for the fiefs. As the bankers for the central government, for the feudal barons, and for individual warriors, the townsmen soon became creditors to the military class. Consequently, their actual power increased in proportion to their fortunes." Borton 1970 op. cit. p.17.

When European expansion began in the early sixteenth century, Japan was always a major destination. Portuguese, Spanish, and Dutch were initially welcomed. Their respective missionaries began to teach and, Christianity spread -- along with foreign trade and such useful items as muskets. But:

"...in the early seventeenth century, when the founders of the Tokugawa Shogunate believed that foreign trade could not be carried on without endangering the peace and security of the realm, Japan was sealed from the outside world. Except for limited, carefully regulated, and controlled trade with a few Chinese and Dutch merchants at Nagasaki, no foreigners were allowed within the country. No Japanese were permitted to go abroad or to return from abroad on pain of death. Christianity was interdicted and practically exterminated through ruthless persecutions." Borton 1970 op. cit. p.19-20.

One effect of this policy, as Nakane points out, was to give the Shogun, with whom the Chinese and Dutch traded, a monopoly on foreign trade as well as information, and after it was introduced the volume of foreign trade actually increased⁷. This held for 150 years. Then increasing western technological superiority, the continuing demand for trading privileges, and the continuing buildup of internal changes came together to force the end of the Tokugawa system. Ironically, leaders of these changes were the daimyos charged with maintaining coastal defenses in remote areas, most notably Satsuma and Hizen, on the far Southern coast, and Choshu, which controlled the western entrance to the Inland Sea. Since, in the usual manner, the Shogun had provided no means to do this, they had taken the initiative to send people to study with the Dutch to learn Western science and technology, and had used Dutch assistance in building iron foundries and the beginnings of the needed

⁶ From Nomura Sakai, ed. Kawachi Ishikawa-mura gakujiitsu chosa kokoku. pp. 370-75. quoted in Smith 1959, p. 92.

⁷ Nakane 1990.op. cit. p.27.

industries. Partly to pay for these operations, and partly simply because they had opportunities and resources, these same lords and the clans they represented had also taken the initiative in developing more modern trading enterprises, including building specialized institutes, in some of their traditional monopolies and accelerating the modernization of agriculture by the introduction of new crops and European cattle. In early 1800's, when the Shogunate continued to be unable to find a way to support such activities while still maintaining its administrative control, they turned to the Imperial court which remained at Kyoto, and the court began to reassert an interest in government. This initiated a series of debates and political struggles whose outcome was the overthrow of the Shogunate entirely and its replacement with a new and self-consciously modernizing governmental system in the name of a new Emperor.

The Meiji Period:

The end of Japanese isolation is traditionally credited to Admiral Matthew Perry's visits with the "Black Fleet" in 1853 and 1854. Unquestionably this was crucial, but at the time Perry arrived the Japanese were well aware of events in China including the Opium War and had already begun to debate and adjust their policies. On the other hand, they had also rebuffed two previous American efforts less forcefully presented. Perry considered these rebuffs and read what was available in Washington on Japan. So it was no accident that his ships deliberately steamed into Tokyo harbor, which had been forbidden to foreign vessels, and it was "no mere coincidence that his squadron included two of the navy's best steamships. His flagship was the "Susquehanna," one of the new steam frigates. She was accompanied by the "Mississippi," which had already been under his command in 1847 and had performed creditably for him at Vera Cruz." Borton 1970 op. cit. p.13. At the time, "the largest Japanese shore batteries were one-fourth the size of the guns of the "Mississippi."" Borton 1970 op. cit. p.33.

In the forty years between Perry's visit and 1889 when the Meiji constitution went into effect, Japan underwent a revolutionary transformation. Government was transformed along western lines. Leading officials had made extended study tours to visit western political, educational, and scientific centers. Western experts were brought in to transform Japanese institutions. And of course intense and sometime bloody political rivalries were played out as first one and then another policy view and interest was formed and asserted. The major changes related to land reform and rural development occurred in this period, before the constitution was promulgated rather than after. Although the beginnings of cooperative movement occurred afterward, and carried up to the rise of militarism.

One of the most important of the study tours was the 1872 Iwakura mission to the United States and Europe. Among other things, the group met present Grant and he advised them that the voting franchise, once given, could not readily be withdrawn, so they should go slowly and give it by degrees. In Germany, the group met personally with Chancellor Bismarck in March 1873 and "They listened attentively to his advice that if Japan was to become strong like Germany it must rely on its own strength. He told them that nations could not be trusted and that international law was followed only so long as it was in the self-interest of a state to do so. Iwakura and his entourage never forgot this

lesson. In less than a decade, he was advocating a Prussian-type constitution for Japan. Ito [Hirobumi] was sent back to Berlin to study Prussian political philosophy in preparation for drafting Japan's constitution." Borton 1970 op. cit. p.99-100.

The constitution was thus not the beginning of a process of transformation, but rather a major step in its consolidation. It represented a victory of one view of the way to combine the old and the new. Specifically, it was the view of a more conservative group aimed more at preserving the traditional military and economic prerogatives of the samurai class than at opening the political system to wider participation and possibly more rapid change.

The Meiji constitution utilized a strong cabinet and limited powers of parliament on the model of the Bismarck constitution in Germany, which pulled the country together at the top by indirect representation that consolidated the various local aristocracies, but did not create a truly national electorate or require a democratic base for the governments of the constituent states. It was a constitution to protect the state, not the rights of individuals. Equally importantly, the Japanese system preserved the historic pattern of rule by an informal group in the name of the emperor and gave all power, formally, to the emperor, while in actual fact the emperor himself had no control over the administration or of this group. It preserved the ideal of government by consensus, but contained the evil of a failure to assign responsibilities. And it was not representative. In addition, the methods by which consensus was obtained within the controlling group were fundamentally extra-constitutional considerations of mutual benefit, which might work well enough in a country where the ability to intimidate or exploit a population are limited to a 15th century technology, but is extremely dangerous when such a group is in control of modern weapons and industrial production.

The Meiji era proper began on Feb 3 1867, when Emperor Komei died and was succeeded by his fifteen year old son to be known as Meiji. Japan was at this time already in a state of civil war. Troops and forces of the "young" samurai, who were also mainly from the outlying and more progressive areas, had engaged and substantially defeated the forces supporting the Shogun. In January 1868, Emperor Meiji announced restoration of his own power and formally abolished the office of Shogun, and in April the Shogun physically surrendered in Tokyo and was imprisoned in his family castle at Mito.

The changes affecting rural development revolved around the abolition of feudal rights and taxes and the creation of titles in land which could be the object of commercial transactions. In the same process, the peasants formerly tied to the land were freed to move to other villages or to cities, as well as into other work, and began to do so. The first of these changes was eliminating the restriction of military service to hereditary samurai. In 1869 Omura Masujiro was appointed Minister of War. He had been influential in reshaping Choshu army before the Restoration, and was "convinced that Japan could not become a modern state unless the new national army was composed of all elements in society." He "... proposed the adoption of universal conscription." This was resented by many samurai, and the immediate response was that "... a band of Choshu warriors was so indignant that it murdered him for his action." Borton 1970 op. cit. pp.95-96. But his recommendation was eventually carried out by Yamagata Aritomo, another of the "the young Choshu warriors who had previously served under Omura." Yamagata was appointed Second Vice-Minister for war and the first conscription law was promulgated in the same year, but it allowed payment for substitute. Farmers objected to this and

refused to serve. Borton 1970 op. cit. p.97. The loophole was quickly closed.

With the obligation to serve in the military universalized, the rationale for tying peasants to the land disappeared. In 1871 the government issued an edict issued "formally abolishing all of the fiefs [of daimyos] and turning them into prefectures. A few months thereafter, the new Minister of Finance, Okubo, and his assistant, Inouye Kaoru, developed a plan for the private ownership of land. They recommend the sale of land in perpetuity, the issuance of new deeds to specify ownership of land, and the establishment of a value of the land so that annual taxes could be collected in money." They decided that 6% was a fair return, and on this basis set monetary value at $16 \frac{2}{3}$ times the value of the crop. Borton 1970 op. cit. p.93. Since in the Tokugawa period 50% was taken as a normal tax, 3% of the value then became the new stipulated land tax rate. Borton 1970 op. cit. p.93.

Government assumed responsibility of providing annual rice stipends of Daimyo and Samurai, but the cost was great. In 1871, out of total government expenditure of 42.5 million yen, 15 million when as stipends to Samurai. Borton 1970 op. cit. p.94. So the government offered to commute stipends to government bonds paying 8%. In 1876 an Imperial edict made transformation of annual stipends into bonds compulsory for those who had not already done so. The result was that "within a few years all but 20 percent of them had lost control of their original holdings." Borton 1970 op. cit. p.95. There were two main reasons: the value of holdings had already been reduced to half by Imperial decree, and many of the were not competent in handling money. Privileges and duties such as wearing swords were made optional. In short, a new class system was created: "The feudal barons and the courtiers formed the new nobility; the warriors (samurai) comprised a new class in society called shizoku (gentry); all other persons became commoners.

The new prefects were given a limited type of democratic government by edit in July, 1878, "it was announced that prefectural assemblies would be established and their members would be elected by a restricted male electorate. The assemblies were to be used to discuss prefectural budgets and other local matters. On the other hand, their power was limited by the fact that the Governor initiated all bills and could veto them. He also had the power to dissolve the assembly if it became too cantankerous. Although these assemblies were a far cry from an elective national parliament, the government claimed that it was taking appropriate steps to determine the will of the people." Borton 1970 op. cit. p.119.

Pursuant to the Land Tax Act of 1873, the government conducted new land surveys, issued new deeds to owners, and assessed new taxes. Borton 1970 op. cit. p.93. Since the tax was now in money, it would be universal on basis of the land value and would not vary by crop. Since the first surveys had been conducted largely by relying on tenants and owners, and the latter had under-reported land and yields, the surveys were redone with more accuracy in the 1880s. Borton 1970 op. cit. p.94.

The distribution of land titles and the freedom to sell land and move created difficulties for the peasantry that were somewhat similar, though not so devastating, as the capitalization of stipends for the erstwhile samurai: a sharp increase in tenancy and indebtedness that soon led Meiji era agricultural development to be dominated by large landlords and the entrepreneurial activities of merchants who organized regional productive specializations.

The domination of agriculture by landlords and merchants in the Meiji period had many causes. First, there was already a substantial degree of inequality in landholdings, with a few large farmers in the villages commonly have ten or even twenty times as much land as the bulk of small-holders. The inequality had existed all through the Tokugawa period, but because of the restrictions on movements, provisions for common resources, and institutional differences, actual rates of tenancy were very low. Toward the end of period, however, with increasing commercialization that had already begun, tenancy had already begun to increase⁸, to about 20 percent of all land. Second merchants and others were now free either to buy land or lend money on it. Third, there were no support organizations to replace the lords, who had provide credit, maintained infrastructure, and assured the availability of common land. Fourth, the opening of the economy exposed the farmers, without preparation, the operation of the business cycle and sharp fluctuations in world prices that were creating difficulties for agriculture world wide. And finally, as T. Yogo has pointed out, the government itself had neither the resources, experience, or bureacratc apparatus to step in to support small farmers at the grass roots level⁹.

Between 1873 and 1890, agricultural tenancy increased from about 20 percent of total farmland to 40 percent. Ultimately more than 55 percent of the total farmland was under the direct control of large resident landlords who directly managed their land with hired labor under self-like conditions or of entrepreneurial merchants who held scattered plots which they cultivated through tenants, commonly to grow some specialized produce. Yogo 1979 op. cit. p.189. Despite periodic slumps, agriculture was profitable in this period, through the 1920s, for several reasons. One was that the actual land tax had not been re-assessed since 1873. Another was that demand and prices were consistently increased, in large part because of the continuous shift of population to the cities. Hence both groups of landlords, in different ways, invested to stimulate increased production. Cultivating landlords concentrated on increasing the returns on land they already held, by constructing under-drainage, consolidating fields, dressing the fields with new soil (from village common grassland), and so on. Such improvements brought reported increases of about 20 percent. The non-cultivating landlords mainly favored adding new land, by such means as land clearing and reclamation, and the farmland of the country increased about 500,000 hectares in the same period ¹⁰.

The main concern of the government, however, was the development of trade and industry, which were seen both as a greater threat to Japan's military and political independence and also as a greater opportunity for enrichment by those in power. As late as 1877 foreigners handled 94 percent of Japan's export trade and 97 percent of the import trade. Borton 1970 op. cit. p.129.

In the middle and late 1870's the government began to ask wealthy families to get into business to compete with foreign monopolies, and supported their efforts strongly. One of the first of these was Mitsubishi, who went into competition with the British P & O company and the American Pacific Steamship Company (after Mitsui had been ordered in and tried but failed). American Pacific Steamship was defeated after government provided 700,000 yen and bought nine ships for Mitsubishi to use for troop ships to put down Satsuma rebellion of 1877, and let them keep them after the war.

8 Smith 1959 op. cit. pp.150-179.

9 T. Yogo. 1979. op. cit. pp. 186-188.

10 Yogo op.cit. p. 190.

American Pacific sold three its ships to Mitsubishi when it quit operations. Borton 1970 op. cit. p.130-131. Similar policies stimulated the growth of Japan's silk production and marketing. The government would buy a plant, set it up, run it with foreign help, then sell it to local interests "at ridiculously low prices." Borton 1970 op. cit. p.133. As a consequence of such aggressive support, within sixteen years most of the export and import trade was in Japanese hands, and the foreign merchants were a considerably more cooperative. There was also very substantial collusion between politicians and business people for mutual benefit.

In October of 1881, the emperor supported a decision to oust Shigenobu Okuma and thereby threw weight behind the "conservatives" in the ongoing discussion on the constitution. Result was the announcement of the constitution designed to protect oligarchic interests, which would take effect in 1890, rather than a more open and "liberal" system that Okuma was urging that would have gone into effect in two years. Borton 1970 op. cit. p.146. The principles that this conservative group wanted were, at the time, contained in a memorandum written by Iwakura Tomomi:

"He [Iwakura] argued that the Emperor should be the source and authority for all steps connected with drafting a constitution. Furthermore, procedures should be followed which permitted the gradual adoption of constitutional government. Some matters, such as the rules for succession of the Emperor, did not properly belong in the constitution. Any such basic document should permit the Emperor to retain the following powers: supreme command of the Army and Navy; the right to declare war, make peace, and conclude treaties with foreign powers; supervision of the coinage; conferring of honors; granting of an armistice; and authority to close, prorogue, dissolve, or open the Diet. he should also be given the right personally to appoint or dismiss the highest officials of the government. Borton 1970 op.cit. p.143.

Iwakura also made specific recommendations to increase the power of the cabinet and reduce that of the peoples elected representatives in Parliament: the cabinet members did not necessarily have to be members of Parliament, The various Ministers of State should be individually responsible for their action the Emperor rather than collectively responsible to Parliament, and the Diet should be bicameral. The Senate, or upper house, was to be composed of Imperial appointees or persons elected by the peerage. The lower house, the Peoples Elected Assembly have only limited power, be selected by an electorate restricted to property owners, and should not approve Cabinet appointees. Borton 1970 op. cit. p.143.

The Meiji constitution was promulgated in 1889. Its preamble declared its subject matter to be "the rights of sovereignty of the State, " which the emperor had inherited from "Our Ancestors" and would bequeath to "Our Descendants" and which neither the Emperor nor his descendants "in future fail to wield" in accordance with the provisions of the "the Constitution hereby granted." That is, the entire document was in the form of an Imperial proclamation self-limiting the exercise of imperial power. Legislative power was divided between an elected House of Representatives and a House of Peers appointed by the emperor. The cabinet and state ministers had important roles but their composition was defined in only the vaguest of terms. The Ministers of State could at any time take seats and speak in either house (Article LIV). All laws required the counter-signature of the Minister of State (Article LV). A Privy Council was established to debate matters referred to it by the Emperor, but the

consequence of such debate and manner in which it was appointed was not described. The judicature was subordinate to the legislature and had no power of constitutional review (Article LVII and LX). In emergencies, if the Diet were not in session the Emperor could issue an Imperial Ordinance to be submitted to the Diet at the next sitting, which would be nullified if the Diet disapproved (Article VIII). And the Emperor could issue ordinances necessary for carrying out laws in any case (Article IX)¹¹.

As intended, the first government had a cabinet dominated by an oligarchy of the families that had led the restoration. "For the next decade and a half they continued to shuffle the cabinet posts among themselves" and until 1898 they strictly followed the custom of alternating the prime ministership between men from Chishu and Satsuma." Reischauer *op. cit.* 143. Although the constitution contained section on basic rights, these were always qualified by phrases such as "within the limits of the law." p.144.

The initial franchise restricted voters to 1.26% of population. Reischauer *op. cit.* p.p. 144. Voters were largely landowning peasants. The Representatives they elected did not control the budget. If they did not approve a new budget, the budget from the previous year would stay in effect. There were similar restrictions on prefectural assemblies, plus the further problem that the Meiji carried over the Tokugawa policy of allowing the central government to require public expenditures without actually providing the finances themselves.

The Diet was not tame, however, and immediately began to attack the oligarchs, by way of the budget. Partly to counter parliamentary pressure, and civilian pressure more generally, in 1899 the government made a fateful rule that ministers for army and navy had to be generals or admirals on active service. This, in effect, gave the military command a veto over the entire budget, and indeed over whether the government was to meet. At the same, the modernized military began to enjoy successes on the field and diplomatically, as Japan formed a close working alliance with Great Britain as part of an evident British strategy to use Japan to divide Russian attention. The Anglo-Japanese alliance of 1902 allowed Japan to plan attacking Russia in 1904, and eventually to colonize Korea in 1910. At the end of World War I, Japan was one of five victorious powers and benefitted substantially both from allied trade in the war and from German cessions at the end of it, emerging as Britain's major rival for power in China.

On July 30, 1912 Emperor Meiji died and was succeeded by his son, Yoshihito, who took the name Taisho. Taisho was not mentally competent, and his accession ushered in a period of exceptional openness, beginning with the "crisis of 1912." This occurred when the army minister withdrew from the cabinet because the army did not like budget that the prime minister had assigned it. This forced cabinet to resign because under constitution it could not operate without him. Reischauer *op. cit.* p.167. And as a result of this, the top level consensus broke up into separate and distinct groups representing the various administrative interests, including the Imperial court, the civil administration, the army, the navy, and the Diet parties. Assassinations and political intrigue increased. There was a public outcry and a strong movement to preserve a cabinet responsible to parliament, although the

¹¹ For an article by article translation and comparison of the Meiji and post-war constitutions see Borton, *op. cit.* Appendix II.

constitution had tried to make the cabinet "transcend" the diet and be free to act on its own. The result was the understanding that it was no longer possible to govern without a majority in the Diet. The rule that army and navy ministers had to be general officers on active service was formally revoked in 1913, although no prime minister actually insisted on making the change. This ushered in the period of "Taisho democracy" of 1913 to 1932 in which a wide range of liberal ideas and programs were put forward, including, for example, land reform, which often presaged what was to be finally done under the post-war occupation and thereafter. "It was the political and social ideas of this period that were to reemerge as the solid after Japan's defeat in World War II as the solid foundation for the democratic Japan of today." Reischauer op. cit. p. 181. Universal male suffrage was established in 1925. At the same time, however, the government returned to a system of electoral districts designed to water down party control and strength: each district would have 3 to 5 seats, but each voter had just one vote to cast. Reischauer op. cit. p. 171. This system still holds.

The Diet had begun to turn its attention to agriculture in 1890. Its actions became substantially bolder and more effective in the Taisho period. In 1890 a Credit Association Bill to establish modest village level farmer operated credit cooperatives, was introduced in the Diet but failed to pass. Based on a German model, it would allow cooperatives to lend out of members savings. Ten years, however, it was revived and expanded as the Industrial Cooperative Association Law and passed. Despite its name, it was clearly meant to include farmers. The cooperatives were to have administrative areas corresponding to the administrative limits of city, town, or village. They were to provide credit, marketing, purchasing, and producing, but leading could not be carried on in combination with any of the others. Their capital was to be raised by selling shares, but the number of shares to be subscribed by any one member not to be more than ten. Joint holding of shares was not permitted. They were to have reserve funds as decided in the constitutions set up by the members, plus one-fourth of the profit for each fiscal year. Their officers were to be directors and auditors to be elected at the general meeting, with directors elected for three years and auditors for one. And all members were to have equal voting rights. Their functions were to be: 1) to accept savings and loan industrial capital to members, 2) to market members products and processed products, 3) to purchase necessary tools materials and other daily necessities for members, 4) to process members products and to allow members to use cooperative equipments and facilities for agricultural support. The cooperatives would be excused by the government from income and business taxes, and were under government supervision at the county, province, and ministerial levels. This supervision consisted of the rights to demand reports, annul any decision, and require new elections. Morita 1960 pp.5-6.

In 1906 the government allowed the cooperatives to include credit with other services, and membership expanded greatly. After 1907 "the government endorsed strongly the security of capital ... through the Agricultural and Industrial Bank and the Hypothec Bank. There were 21 cooperatives in total in 1900, 1,671 in 1905, and 13,106 in 1919. The latter number almost equaled the number of villages in the country at the time. Morita p. 9.

By 1920, there was a prefectural federation of cooperatives in each prefecture and more than a hundred county federations. Morita p.9.

By this time about 2 million farm households out of an estimated 5 million belonged to cooperatives. These were mainly small and medium landlords, as opposed to the very large landlords and the hired

labor and tenants¹². The average savings on deposit was about 90 yen and average loan about 60 yen. Credit cooperatives were more active than marketing and purchasing, and most of the cooperatives at the Prefectural level were for credit, while the lower level organizations were more for marketing and purchasing." Morita p. 10.

The main successes, however, were in silk production and marketing, evidently in connection with the government efforts to help assure local control of the export market. Merchants continued to dominate credit and marketing in rice, wheat and barley. "Of the total amount of marketed cocoons, the cooperatives handled 92% in 1918 and 52% in 1920. The purchasing cooperatives dealt mainly with fertilizers and the amount handled by such cooperatives occupied 51% and 66% of the total market respectively for the years 1918 and 1920." Morita p.10. In 1919 the Warehouse Business Law enabled Industrial Cooperatives as well as Imperial Agricultural Association to provide storage services. Morita p. 9.

While the initiative for cooperatives came from the government, a different kind of organization aimed at information sharing was initiated by farmers, mainly the cultivating landlords. Through the 1890's they began to form associations for the "purpose of improving agricultural techniques and exchanging knowledge among each other" Morita p.16. These techniques were not necessarily new, and not necessarily for Western crops. They could also be techniques to improve yields of indigenous crops that had been developed in some specific area and had been learned and perhaps refined by recognized "devoted farmers" (tokuno). The tokuno would be invited to discuss or demonstrate them and discuss their possible adoption in the host area¹³. These discussion associations were called nojikai (Agricultural Affairs Society) in some areas and nodankai (Agricultural Discussion Groups) in others. Morita 1960 p. 16. The tokuno, although self-trained, were a well established institution, and had figured in government efforts to promote improved techniques since the 1870s.

The nodankai and these improvement efforts were brought together in the Agricultural Association Law of 1899, which established the Imperial Agricultural Association (teikoku nokai). The farmer associations formed under this law were in close contact with the government, and more obedient than the Industrial Cooperatives. "As for the management of the Associations the leadership of mayors and headmasters [village masters] of towns and villages who were mostly landlords could not be challenged. On the county level, it was most common for county superintendents, government officials, to become the presidents of the Associations. Every village with no exception set up one Association and was required to line up under the powerful central Association. In the 1930.'s the Associations became the most direct and local satellites to the government to take the lead in guiding peasants along a way directed by the government." p. 17.

Meanwhile, however, an accelerating cycle of price rises and falls had begun, along with a major population shift to the cities. From 1890 to the 1920s Japan went from 50% rural population to 10% rural population. Reischauer op. cit. p.163. In August of 1918 there were "rice riots" beginning in the rural areas and spreading to cities, and troops finally called out to quell them. The immediate cause was that rice and other price increases in Japan had doubled while real incomes of rural and urban

¹² Yogo 1979. op. cit. 197.

¹³ Yogo 1979 op. cit. p. 192.

workers dropped. Borton 1970 op. cit. p.320. The deeper causes included government imports of low priced rice from Korea and Taiwan, which was needed to make up a Japanese production deficit but which also depressed domestic rural incomes, while high taxes on the farmers in Japan (as on those in Korea) were actually being used to underwrite the industrial development. This was followed by an upward swing as world demand shifted and the policies in Korea became less brutally extractive. But in 1921 the agricultural boom of the WWI period turned to an agricultural panic. World prices of major commodities dropped. The value of cooperatives sales dropped by 30%, and purchases also suddenly decreased, but of course demand for loans increased.

In 1923 the cooperative system was strengthened by creating a National Purchasing Federation of Agricultural Cooperatives, and Central Bank for Industrial Cooperative Associations. This allowed cooperatives to provide both unsecured short term loans and long term loans redeemable within thirty years by year installments, and overdraft.

Another boom was followed by another panic in 1927. Rice prices dropped to 30% or 40% and cocoons to one third. It was very difficult for farmers and "almost fatal" to the cooperatives -- who had been riding the boom and apparently were over-extended in credit Morita p. 14. This was followed in 1929 by the depression itself. Oddly, however, in this case cooperatives benefitted, because of government support continued while at the same there were widespread failures among commercial banks.

The depression also saw the development and spread of tenants unions, which among other activities promoted coordinated cropping on a regional bases in some cases to counter the organizing power of landlords. They were, however, suppressed for ideological reasons.¹⁴.

In 1931 a National Marketing Federation of Cooperatives established, which completed a national cooperative system. But, this was also the year of the "Manchuria Incident" manufactured by the Japanese military which:

"...led Japan into her first step of a series of armed conflicts and the consequent aggression into China. All national efforts, political, economic and social, were now geared to a semi-war structure of the nation under the militarist leadership. Voluntary opinions were discouraged and deemed dangerous by those who were responsible for the aggressive policy. Oppression of liberal thoughts and opinions was fatal to any development of the cooperative movement. It was quite unfortunate that this new situation arose just when the cooperatives were beginning to move under their own initiative.

A policy of control over economy and thought of the nation was enforced toward the latter half of the 1930's. The government now began to use the nationwide organization of agricultural cooperatives effectively in enforcing its control policies upon peasants. Under high-handed guidance and protection of the government, therefore, the cooperatives seemed to flourish. Yet, during this period there was no sense of voluntary initiative on the part of the cooperatives--the true spirit of the cooperative movement was rather suffocated, checking its sound growth." Morita p.

¹⁴ Yogo 1979 op. cit. p. 201.

15-16.

Hirohito had succeeded to his incompetent father in 1926. Reischauer op. cit. p. 190. Under constitution army could act without control of civil government, and began to do so.p .190. In 1928, a group of middle officers overran Manchuria, on their own. When the League of Nations issued a report condemning the Japanese conquest, Japan withdrew from the League, accelerating its decline. The 1931 incident was arranged by the Army to provide a pretext to consolidate control with a coup d'etat. The Navy followed with its own adventures. In each case, groups of activist officers simply took action and dragged the government with them-- because the government could not punish, control, or get rid of them; because the moves generally did meet with popular approval; and because the high command could legally and practically ignore government requests.

Reischauer and others have said that the trend toward totalitarianism developed without a distinct totalitarian party or clear totalitarian ideology¹⁵. A key point that allowed the constitution to serve both democratic and totalitarian ends was inclusion of emperor as supreme authority without actual clear limitations or specifications of what this power was. This left an essentially "headless" system, that could be manipulated in a wide range of ways. Reischauer op. cit. p. 204. A second major contributing factor was the educational system, under close government sponsorship and control through the Home Ministry (which also controlled the police and eventually the secret police). The schools provided a direct career path into government service and at the same time was oriented more toward indoctrination rather than open criticism. In content, the curricula drew on the same narrow tradition of political and philosophical ideas that informed the Meiji constitution itself and the related legal codes: German idealism, with its roots in Hegel Reischauer op. cit. p. 165, and to a lesser extent the related tradition of French positivism. One of the consequences of this was that Japanese political thought from the 1920s, like that of Germany itself, was polarized between authoritarian theories of the right and left, with very little awareness of the large range of possibilities that were neither one

¹⁵ This, I think, needs qualification. There was surely an ideological aspect to what happened in Japan, as in Germany, which shows perhaps more clearly in what was not considered than in what was. The history of the period in Japan reads as though everybody read Marx and accepted his view of the class struggle, but simply chose different sides. No one had a third option. The kind of "capitalism" that the Japanese oligarchs attempted to create was certainly not what Adam Smith described, and not in fact anything that ever really existed anywhere in Europe for any period of time. It was the collusive and monopolistic capitalism that may have been starting to form in Marx's time, but that was aborted by the legalization of trade unions and the limitations on cartels and trusts, and that was tamed by the vast body of regulatory and safety legislation that became fully formed in the liberal democracies during the depression. The zaibatsu and the collusion between government and business in the exploitation of colonies was not the way markets necessarily or naturally worked, but it was a way they could be made to work -- with destructive consequences that almost anybody could see in some form. But while Marx's alternative seems to have had a clear voice in the socialist-dominated trade union movement during the formative Meiji years, there was no such constituency for Smith, to say nothing of Roosevelt and the New Deal, until after 1945.

nor the other.

For farmers, one of the consequences of militarization was conscription and war mobilization of production. Another was that from 1940 to 1945 "The control policy that covered every phase of the nation's life left lesser and lesser space in the agricultural field for two such huge national organizations to work independently. Thus in 1942, it was finally legislated that all agricultural organization should be unified and a new "Nogyokai (Agricultural Association) was established. This final move spelt the end of the short life of the Industrial Cooperatives." Morita p. 17.

The Post-War Period:

In 1945 Japan agreed to unconditional surrender pursuant to the terms of the Potsdam declaration, which included reconstruction of the government to eliminate militarism and assure democracy. It is clear that the government at the time, or after the surrender, did not anticipate the far reaching changes that were subsequently made to the constitution and to a wide range of subsidiary laws, yet the changes were made through the central apparatus and implemented entirely through the Japanese administrative system. Equally importantly, the major changes have continued to serve as part of the basic fabric of Japanese society and government.

The Draft of new constitution formally presented to Parliament in June 1946, and promulgated on November 3, 1946.

Technically, the constitution was an amendment offered by the Emperor to constitution of 1889. At the same time, however, the preamble immediately clearly declared that sovereignty resided with the Japanese people, and was explicit that the Emperor "was "the symbol of the State and of the unity of the people" and had no executive or legislative power whatsoever. Reischauer op. cit. p. 229. Emperor himself had prepared the way by announcing on Jan 1, 1946, that he was in no sense divine. In effect the announcement and the constitution deflated the emperor to approximately the status of the Monarchy in England. Reischauer op. cit. p. 229. The second change was unequivocal adoption of the full British model: house of representatives was made supreme, and the Privy Council, and the Peers were abolished. In place of the House of Peers, the constitution established a House of Councilors, whose members were elected for six years. This house had to agree to legislation with the house of Peers, but disagreements could be overridden by the House of Representatives with a 2/3 majority of those present. The prime minister was to be "designated from among the members of the Diet by a resolution of the Diet (Article 67) and would appoint the Ministers of State. A majority of the Ministers of State had to be from the Diet, and all had to be civilian. The Cabinet was made collectively responsible to the House of Representatives and required to resign *en masse* in the event of a vote of no confidence or the failure of a vote of confidence. Although the House of Representatives rules on the budget, the prime minister, and ratification of treaties, amendments to Constitution required a 2/3 vote by both houses.

Thirty-two articles of the constitution are devoted to fundamental human rights, without the qualifications of the Meiji constitution. Reischauer op. cit. p. 230. It banned all discrimination by sex, and guaranteed, among other things, the right to property and to right to bargain collectively. It established an independent supreme court to supervise an independent judiciary and exercise powers

of judicial review on the constitutionality of legislation. Four articles laid a foundation for the establishment of "local self-government" in accordance with the principle of local autonomy (Article 92). All "local public entities", were required to have assemblies (which was already the case), and all chief executive officers of local public entities, which included all prefectural governors which had formerly been appointive, were made elective by direct popular vote (Article 93). And Article 9 renounced "war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of setting international disputes."

The constitutional changes were accompanied by a wide range of legislative enactments, many of which were designed to devolve control to lower levels of government "which seemed important to the Americans, accustomed as they were to the diverse autonomies of a widely spread-out nation" Reischauer *op. cit.* p. 231. They abolished the Home Ministry, which had been the center of the militaristic system of internal control, and divided its functions among other agencies, although some of these were later partly reassembled. Control over the police and education was transferred from the central government to the prefectures and municipalities, and local governments were given greatly increased powers of taxation and legislation. On the whole, however, this atomization of authority did not work well. The country was too small and the population too dense for so many jurisdictions. From the first local governments exercised less authority than expected, and control over the police and education later gravitated in large part back into the hands of the central government. Only long after the occupation was over, when problems of local pollution and overcrowding became serious, did local governments develop some of the importance the occupation authorities had envisioned for them." Reischauer *op. cit.* p. 231.

Oligarchic economic power was clearly seen by the occupation authorities as complementing oligarchic political and military power, and was equally a target of reforms. The new government undertook a series of measures to assure more economic equality, including dissolution of zaibatsu combines, by nationalization of assets "for further disposal" and a steeply graduated personal income tax. Although there was some recombination, and there is considerable misunderstanding of this outside the country, the reforms have basically been effective. The great firms of Mitsui, Mitsubishi, and Sumitomo, no longer monopolize industrial and financial activity, and no longer can divide up the economic world, with government cooperation, to create in effect one great government supported cartel. Although there was some recombination, the new way of operating is consistent with the intent of the reforms intended. Reischauer *op. cit.* p 233."

Finally, the occupation saw major rural reforms and, in 1947, a "new dawn" of agricultural cooperatives. Morita 1960 *op. cit.* p.18. The land reform program, which many regard as the most sweeping and successful of all the occupation reforms, was aimed at improving the lot of tenant farmers and establishing them as an important force to defend the democratic system. The idea of land reform itself was not entirely new. There had been proposals in the Taisho era. After 1937 the government, under the National Emergency Administration, had undertaken a program to underwrite the purchase of land by tenants from their landlords at set prices, with priority to those who had lost sons in the war (which by the end of the war was almost every tenant house), and the experience gained in this effort provided important information on the kinds of support organizations such small farmers would subsequently require¹⁶. But it is a virtual certainty that it would not have been carried

¹⁶ Yogo 1979. *op. cit.* p.202-203.

out without the outside pressure that the occupation provided. It was one of the few major reforms that was generated primarily within the occupation organization, though with extensive Japanese advice. It was largely carried between 1947 and 1949.

Tenant-operated land, which had remained at about 45 percent since early in the century, was reduced to less than 10 percent by banning all absentee landowners and permitting the ownership of only a small amount of agricultural land beyond the area cultivated by a farm family itself. Self-cultivated holdings were limited to 5 hectares, and the land which could be held by resident landlords was limited to 1 hectare. The reforms resulted in the transfer of 2 million hectares out of the total farmland of 5 million hectares¹⁷. Excess land was purchased by an agricultural commission, who paid with securities, and the commission in turn distributed it to tenant farmers on long term credit. Priority was given to farmers with more than 0.2 hectares and shown good productivity¹⁸. The generous credit terms and runaway post-war inflation made it easy for the tenant cultivators to acquire the land and reduced the recompense to the former owners to only a penny on the dollar in real terms. Reischauer op. cit. p. 235. The overall effect of the reforms was to "establish a stable, egalitarian, and satisfied farming population, determined to retain its rights in the new democratic age." Reischauer op. cit. p. 235.

Supporting the land reforms, a new Agricultural Cooperative Association Law was passed in 1947, pursuant to GHQ "Directive on Liberation of Agrarian Population." This differed in important ways from the previous system. It allowed more autonomy, a wider range of functions, and a higher level government support from the outset. The main points were:

1. Any cooperative founded in rural village or town should be general purpose engaging in credit, marketing, purchasing and processing.
2. Any cooperative should also engage in guidance in farm management.
3. Federations to be founded on prefectural level would be differentiated by function for each of credit, marketing and purchasing businesses.
4. Central and national federations should be established separately for guidance, marketing and purchasing. Morita p. 19. Although it was voluntary, one and only one cooperative was set up in each village "after all". *ibid*.

Subsequently, this was not taken to exclude the possibility of special purpose cooperatives side by side with general purpose cooperatives. There were about 13,100 general purpose cooperatives in 1952. The numbers have declined subsequently, to about 12,400 in 1959. The number of specialized cooperatives was 4,652 in 1952, it peaked at 5,674 in 1955, and declined to 5,502 in 1959. Morita p.22.

A cooperative is a "juridical person" (corporation). Morita p.27. Primary (called "unit") cooperatives were initially formed at hamlet (*buraku*) level, not village. Thus one unit usually has only about 50 households, and number of such units will be found in a village.) Morita p.27. Subsequently, in the 1950's, the government ordered the consolidation of villages (*mura*, or *ku*) into municipalities (*shi*, or *cho* or *son*, depending on size). The cooperatives were then given the option of consolidating as well,

¹⁷ Yogo 1979 op. cit. p. 206.

¹⁸ *Ibid*.

although it was not compulsory. Most, however, chose to do so, since in almost all cases it will be in the interest of a cooperative to control a larger area and more people -- whether in relation to marketing their produce, purchasing material on their behalf, or providing credit or other services (such as equipment repair or rental). In the process, the primary units at the hamlet (*buraku*) level usually were not absorbed, however, but rather became branch offices.

Subsequently, since these larger units were formed, it has also been possible to organize many more new functional or special purpose associations within them -- such as tomato growers, melon growers, and so forth. Each cooperative normally has several product lines which it markets and usually several brand levels distinguished by quality within each. These brands are directly protected by vigorous government efforts, and permit cooperatives to auction their products through a nationwide computer net. Once the purchase is made, the buyer is identified by the auction to the cooperative, and then directly instructs the cooperative regarding the point of delivery of the product.

In addition to these general multi-purpose cooperatives which are now uniformly consolidated at the municipality level, the government has also supported further cooperatives wholly independent of these general purpose groups, that cover functionally limited concerns over still wider areas, such as land reclamations cooperatives, which are organized by area, and milking associations, by function and area.

In addition, there are further organizations which function like cooperatives but are legally distinct. Greenhouse farmers, for example, are usually not cooperatives but simply "associations" (nogyo kumio kogi) generally at the village level. Pig raising, on the other hand, is generally done by a system of "trader integration" (shosha-togo), and the pig raisers are not, legally, farmers. Farmers are registered as such, and only they can buy land; non farmers may rent or lease it, but cannot buy it, and by the same token non-farmers cannot join farmers cooperatives.

After 1950, the government added experimental farms to the mixture of support institutions. These played an important role as testing and demonstration grounds for products of the industries formerly devoted to war production and now turned to such products and fertilizers and agricultural equipment, since the directors of such firms typically had no such facilities of their own nor the expertise to construct them. This partnership was a major main stimulus to the dramatic increases in rice production that began after 1953¹⁹.

Since 1950, many more facilities and programs have been added. There is no need to describe them. From the point of view of development policy, there are three key points: the programs are voluntary, the organizational system offering them is pluralistic, and there are no forced choices.

The programs are voluntary in the sense that they uniformly involve a genuine application procedure. Those who would like to participate generally must develop a proposal that involves some group of families. Although there are normally tests for eligibility, participation by a family in one program does not normally preclude, as a bureaucratic matter, participation in any other. Participation may be excluded by physical constraints -- you cannot have a melon farm and a pig farm in the same place.

¹⁹ Yogo. op. cit. p.208.

Pluralism means, basically, that there is a combination of institutional competition and cooperation in program administration. An individual applicant never faces a monolithic government; he or she always has at least one organization on his side. Each program is typically administered by an independent agency with an independent staff, but applications and some administrative procedures commonly use the local government hierarchy or the cooperatives -- so these have an interest in assuring that the program agencies work effectively, and the program agencies act to keep the government and cooperatives alert.

There are no forced choices in the sense that no community has to choose between a program which is bad and another that is worse, or between a destructive program and an even more destructive status quo. Each community can pick and choose between a range of programs to suit its needs, and equally importantly any community may decline to participate in programs that do not. Although a few programs may be designed rather naively, such as cooperatives which attempt to get farm families to pool efforts in ways the families consider inappropriate, there is generally enough flexibility in the system to avoid such demands while still utilizing the resources effectively, so that no one is put in the position of having to choose between something bad and something worse.

As T. Yogo summarizes:

"In other words, a multilevel planning system and its procedures were established on the basis of the division of functions among agencies concerned: the national government served as the policy-maker, the prefecture as the administrative channel, the intermediate organizations [local offices of the program agencies] as the delivery mechanism of the means of development, and the communities as the receiving mechanism."²⁰

I would add, by way of clarification, that "receiving mechanism" is neither passive nor merely mechanical. Receiving in this context involves actively investigating, planning, coordinating, incorporating, and usually the imaginative creation of new organizations or the modification of those already present.

Local Government:

In the Tokugawa period, government below the national level had three levels: Daimyonate, a division of a Daimyonate under the charge of an agent or commissioner (which was not a decision-making office), and the village (edo son, or Edo-era village). The daimyo resided in the castle town, with his samurai administrative-military staff and their families. The village was under the charge of the village master, whose office was usually hereditary and either held in a single family line or rotated among a few. And the agent mediated between them. Commonly, such village masters were larger landholders and of former samurai families. By far the largest part of village government was handled by the village master, within the village.

²⁰ Yogo op.cit. p.214.

In the Meiji period, the Daimyonate was converted to the county, gun, or kun. There were 306 daimyonates thus converted in all. Guns in turn were administratively grouped into Prefectures (ken), with four or five gun making one ken. Each ken had an appointed governor and elected local council, as noted. The territory of the daimyo's agent disappeared, and the and the Edo-era village (edo son) became the hamlet (shuraku or buraku). The two terms, shuraku and buraku designate the same unit but the sense of the name is slightly different. The Japanese ideographs (Kanji) for shuraku combine the characters for "people" and "settled down" and buraku combines the characters for "families" and "settled down." Hamlets were subsequently grouped for administrative convenience into "municipalities," named variously as either "city" (shi), "town" (cho), or "village" (meiji son), depending on population. Thus in Japanese the equivalent for municipality is commonly rendered as shi-cho-son.

The head of the Meiji gun was elective, as was the mayor of the municipality, and each also had an elected council. The shuraku did not have an official government, but retained its ability to organize and function legally in such matters as contracts and management of common properties, and was still informally recognized within the committee structure within the municipal organization. As noted, the Meiji government carried over the practice of assigning public works and governmental duties to the prefectures without providing accompanying funds. It was the duty of the council to decide how such funds would be raised. As with the national government, their powers of refusal were limited; if they refused to pass a budget for one year, the last year's budget would carry over.

Under the present constitution, the Meiji prefectures have carried over to the present prefectures (ken), forty-three in number plus four special cases: Osaka, Kyoto, Hokkaido, and Tokyo. But the governors are now locally elected and the council has full control over the budget. Governors can veto bills of their assemblies, and the assemblies can override the veto. Assemblies cannot pass laws in contradiction to national laws, but they can pass laws to further specify national laws (such as specify the way in which a specific national tax is to be collected) and they can legislate in areas not covered by national law. The national government can still impose financial obligations (as in the form of setting standards for buildings or government services), but much more often it has become a source of program initiatives with accompanying funds, for which the prefecture may be the direct beneficiary but more often provides a channel, for example to the cooperatives or farmer associations. In addition to the governor and his administration and the assembly and its committees and staff, each prefecture also has an "administrative committee" consisting of offices of the various national ministries, such as education, police, elections, and maritime agencies, whose heads are under the "jurisdiction" of the governor, "but in the execution of official functions they are independent of the chief executive's control²¹"-- which is to say they responsible to their respective ministries.

The county (gun) has been eliminated, and local government has been consolidated in the municipality (shi, cho, or son, depending on size of population). The hamlets or wards of two to five Meiji municipalities have been regrouped to make each present municipality. As of April 1, 1983, there were 651 cities, 1,985 towns, and 624 villages²². The municipality has an elected mayor and

²¹ Jichi Sogo Center. 1984. *Local Administration in Japan*. Tokyo: Jichi Sogo Center (General Center for Local Autonomy) p.13.

²²Jichi Sogo Center. 1984. Local Public Administration in Japan. p. 2.

council, a distinct administrative center, and officials from prefectural offices of national departments such as agriculture, education and police. As noted, general-purpose agricultural cooperatives are now usually organized at the municipality level. Rural municipalities (cho and son) contain hamlets (buraku). Urban municipalities (shi) are divided into wards (ku). Municipalities may form several types of associations for common action. Japanese law also provides for the formation of Local Development Corporations to deal with such matters as housing, roads, ports, waterworks and sewage systems based on plans for a specified region. Parallel to "ordinary" system of prefectural and municipal hierarchies are four special cases: Tokyo, Hokkaido, Osaka, and Kyoto. The latter three are something like prefectures without subdivisions into municipalities. Tokyo is organized like a prefectural government subdivided into special types of wards.

As in the Meiji period, burakus and kus are not recognized in the national administrative system as having distinct governments, but are still cohesive social and areal units with substantial real properties recognized in many ways by prefectural and municipal actions and policies, as well as by the courts. They are usually easily distinguished by having branch offices of the municipal government, cooperatives, primary schools, post offices, and sometime secondary schools (depending on population) and the like as well as separate community halls, playgrounds, athletic grounds, agricultural or domestic water rights, sources, and/or distribution systems, funds maintained for public purposes, and, commonly, shrines. They also very commonly often own and manage common forests. The management groups of these enter into leases and other contractual arrangements which have legal force. Income from the forests fund other community activities. Community halls are managed by elected committees with sub-committees for social groups which are still defined largely in terms of the traditional division of labor: youth, women, farmers, ceremonies. The ceremonial committee is very likely to consist of a group of elder men, who informally coordinate the other functions. Farmers groups, which may or many be organizing within the buraku committee, exercise important collective functions, such as coordinating scheduling of crops to permit collective irrigation management, mechanical operations, or pest control -- or sometimes to change land use entirely in order to become eligible for some government development or redevelopment scheme. And now, burakus generally have active programs for cultural uplift, usually run by women of the community, whose important function is to sponsor programs to equalize the attractions of rural life and city and reduce outward migration of young people.

Conclusion:

Since the Tokugawa period, Japanese governmental systems have recognized, supported, and in fact depended up autonomous and largely self-governing villages, although the structural and legal basis of this autonomy has changed in each major period. In the Tokugawa period, it was the separation of the administrative class from the land and the complementary fixation of the peasantry to the land. In the Meiji period it was the institution of private title and, very largely, the expansion of large landlords who protected their rural interests, dominated the new forms of rural government, and still tied their tenants and employees to the village. Finally, in the post-war period, it has been the reestablishment of private title of the former tenants, but this time with sufficient financial and social support organizations through cooperatives and local government to allow them to remain financially viable

with their limited resources.

In the latter case, while village autonomy has been technically weakened, the integration of hamlets into the larger municipalities has presented a much greater array of support programs for rural activities, cultural as well as economic and infrastructural, while also providing employment and business opportunities of a more urban character. This much greater organizational richness allows their member families to find ways to maintain rural residence and farm production while at time usually also obtaining some sort of paid employment of a more urban character, so that at the present Japanese farms are largely run on a part-time basis. The result is that while legal power of former villages (buraku) is now technically reduced, the capacities of villagers to find ways to remain on their land and maintain their communities by informal means has been greatly increased. The stability of rural life in general appears to be far greater now than in the Meiji era, while rural life is far richer and presents far more options than under the Tokugawas.