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THE ROOTS OF MODERN JAPAN

Jean - Pierre Lehmann

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Preface

As Western-style capitalism faces its worst crisis since the Great Depression and Eastern European-stylc socialism appears manifestly bankrupt, Japan seems to offer a dynamic alternative to a post-industrial society, Not only has Japan in the last twenty-five years or more, with the brief exception of the year 1974, been able to sustain an enviable degree of economic growth, but certainly in the last decade or so she has also proved a paragon of social stability and national cohesion.

Arising out of the seemingly incurable cancer which is affecting most, if not all, Western societies on the one hand and Japan's comparative success on the other, there has occurred, not surprisingly, a certain curiosity and indeed admiration in the West towards Japan- To the historian there is an element here of *deja-vu.* As Europe in the eighteenth century faced severe political, economic, social and moral crises, there developed a tendency among some of the *philosophes* to portray China and more specifically certain elements of her political philosophy as a viable model for European societies to emulate. In the meantime, as is well known, Europeans managed to do rather well, conquering a good deal of the world, while any talk of emulating foreign societies would have appeared ridiculous al a time when, on the contrary, authors ranging from Marx to Macaulay and others preached that the only road to salvation for non-European societies was to undergo a thorough process of occidcntalisation. The Western sense of self-confidence has, for obvious reasons, waned. Now, in the 1980s, some two centuries after the Chinese mirage, it is Japan which has become the focus of attention. Reflecting at least one of the differences in the later eighteenth and later twentieth centuries, however, on this occasion it is not philosophers seeking a political solution to European problems, but their modern counterparts, namely the gurus of business studies, seeking to unravel with a view to transplanting the secrets behind Japan's commercial and industrial success.

The objectives of this book are somewhat different. It is above all an historical study. While the first two chapters seek to develop and illuminate some of the more significant patterns in Japanese history and principally in

terms of the formation and nature of the Japanese nation, the subsequent chapters address themselves to the causes and consequences of Japan's transformation to modernity. The late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, when Japan first came into contact with the West, correspond to a period of conception. The two centuries and more of isolation which followed in the course of the Edo era arc a period of incubation, but in a manner in which the incubatory process should be perceived not as stagnant, but dynamic. In other words, the foundations for transformation to modernity were being laid and certain characteristics which were to mark the more advanced society that Japan became in the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were in the process of formation. This last period is that of full-scale modernisation, illustrated by the rate of economic growth, the process of industrialisation, the development of political and administrative modes of organisation and behaviour in response to the challenge of modernity, Japan's absorption into the international economy and diplomatic relations, and the intellectual and social ferment which these forces give rise to. In assessing the particular Japanese historical development, efforts have been directed towards distinguishing between those elements which may be deemed peculiar, or unique , to Japan and those which can be more readily understood in a universal or comparative context. Similarly, the process of modernisation should l>e perceived as arising out of a combination of external stimuli and internal responses. The term occidentalisation or westernisation appears inappropriate as it implies a comprehensive and linear process. Rather, external forces and internal reactions provided Japan with a dynamic and dialectical process of more or less constant change. Another major theme has been to seek to contest the perception of Japanese history in terms of a dichotomy between tradition and modernity. Japan's history in this respect is no different from that of other nations; it is an evolutionary, occasionally revolutionary, process, where different forces mesh together; these can, often do, give rise to contradictions, but that is something different from seeking to establish contrasting and conflicting forces between that which is allegedly traditional and that which is supposedly modern. In other words, something 'traditional* can, under certain circumstances, be very 'modern'.

The scope of the book is extensive. The objective was to try to cover a broad canvas with a view to presenting as full a picture as possible. The economic, political, social, intellectual and moral dimensions of Japanese society are generally given equal distribution throughout. A major aim here was to seek at least to avoid falling into the pitfall of cither economic determinism or cultural determinism. A major theme in this book is to underline the extent to which culture and economy have exerted reciprocal influences but without giving overall a greater predominance to one or the other.

described as a highly bureaucratic society. The influential role of the bureaucracy throughout the Edo era and during the transformation to modernity and the initiatives it took in laying the infrastructure for economic development can account for, among other things, the close relationship which persists between government and business. The all-powerful MITI (Ministry of International Trade and Industry) is a post-war creation, but the aura that surrounds it and the power that it wields can be traced back for centuries.

Japan possesses a truly unique history; it is long and it is rich. It goes without saying that this powerful historical tradition has deeply influenced the character of contemporary society and will no doubt continue determining the nature of the future. At the same time, however, that which is perhaps most remarkable about Japanese history - and also unique - is the degree to which on important occasions and in the course of major turning points the past has been discarded in favour of entirely new directions. Although obviously this is a matter open to debate anti in any case impossible to prove, one could nevertheless seek to argue that no society, all the while maintaining a certain respect for a traditional order, has altered so profoundly as has Japan over the last two centuries or more. As is suggested in Chapter 5, the Meiji Restoration was in its consequences far more revolutionary' than the events following 1789 in France or those following 1917 in Russia. The remarkable propensity for adaptability in the face of new circumstances has been both a feature and a great strength of Japanese society. The institutional innovativeness of Japan is perhaps the key factor lying behind her present success. The sources of innovativeness invariably include a combination of borrowings from abroad with certain indigenous traits. The current and much vaunted system of industrial relations in Japan is perhaps the best and most dynamic example of ihis process. The weaknesses in the West today' are in a large measure due to excessive curopocentricism and an inability to break the chains of the past, hence a preoccupation, possibly an obsession, with fighting yesterday’s battles. If there is anything at all that should be learned from Japan it is this: the study of external models and a certain institutional and social radicalism can bring a great deal of vitality to society.

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In 1974 and again in 1977 I was attached to the Faculty of Law of Tohoku University, Sendai; the hospitality and help that I received on both occasions were nothing short of overwhelming. In 1974 I was fortunate in being the recipient of a Japan Foundation Fellowship. In 1977 I received a grant from the Japan Foundation Endowment Committee and also from the University of Stirling,

Over this last decade 1 have been certainly stimulated and indeed enriched by the students it has been my good fortune to teach at Stirling University. I am sure that they would all agree that the one who deserves special mention is Mrs Madge Niven, who came to university late in life and whose enthusiasm was not only infectious but rejuvenating.

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NOTE

Japanese personal names are given, as is the custom in Japan, with the family name first.

Macrons, the sign which when placed above a vowel in a Japanese word indicates that it is long, have not been used in the text; they arc, however, used in the Glossary' of Japanese terms.

Full publishing details of works cited in the text will be found in the Bibliographical Note.

PART 1

THE HISTORICAL SETTING

1 Formation of the Japanese Nation

THE NATURE OF NATIONHOOD

In the modern era major transformations of an economic and political nature have largely taken place within rhe confines of what is termed the nation-state. Visions of a new order transcending national barriers ultimately proved to be chimeric. Pan-lslam, Pan-Asianism, Pan-Africanism were dreams, hardly realities. The internationalism of Trotsky was abandoned in favour of the nationalism of Stalin. Nationalism has been one of the major historical forces in the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The 'ism', however, can only be derived from a reasonably widespread acceptance on the part of the inhabitants of any given territory of what constitutes the nation: are there a sufficient number of ingredients, and are they sufficiently strong, to make the people believe that they arc bound together in solidarity, that together they constitute a national identity, and that the symbol of that identity is worthy of their allegiance? For nationalism to exist, there must be a nation; for the nation to exist, the population must acquire a national consciousness.

It is not the intention here to suggest that the emergence of a national consciousness predetermines economic development; it should perhaps be more clearly seen as a dialectical process. Yet even so far as economic development is concerned, the importance of national consciousness cannot be over-stressed. If a government seeks to impose national unity over an area, while the inhabitants refuse to recognise that any such unity exists, then revolt is bound to occur. A government which is constantly harassed by regional or sectarian or ethnic revolts will find that a considerable amount of its energy and its treasury will -be drained in order to 'solve' these problems. The chances, therefore, of passing successful legislation for economic, social, political and military policies arc limited.

In the pages that follow we will seek to establish how the conditions for establishing a Japanese nation - and hence the development of a viable and credible ideology of nationalism - were particularly propitious, in fact almost unparalleled. In the course of the late nineteenth century, at a time when

highly emotional debates raged throughout most of the globe on the subject of what constituted a nation, Ernest Renan (1823-92) suggested the following composition (*Qu'est-ce une nation?,* Paris, 1882); 'dewr *des glows communes dans le passe, une volonte commune dans le present; avoir fait des grandes choses ensemble, uouloir en faire encore'* 'To share common glories in the past, a common will in the present; to have accomplished great things together, and desire to accomplish more'. By the end of the nineteenth century, the Japanese could quite convincingly claim the applicability of this formula to their own achievements and aspirations. In the course of the nineteenth century, Japan was the only non-Western nation to have successfully industrialised, but she was also the only non-Western nation to have elaborated a popularly respected and upheld ideology' of nationalism. For the nationalist leaders of other non-Western societies, Renan's dictum remained a dream to be fulfilled, not a reality to be beheld.

What are the criteria for the establishment of this sense of a common national identity and solidarity? Albert Hourani (Cratic *Thought in the Liberal Age,* 1962) suggests a distinction between three types of nationalism; (1) that which is religious, namely based on a common faith; (2) that which is territorial, a sense of community and love for a defined piece of land, (3) that which is linguistic, in the manner advocated by the Syrian writer Sati kl-Husri who argued that all Arabs were of the same nation on the grounds that they all spoke the same language. To these three one might add a fourth criterion, namely the ethnic, in the sense of the unifying concept of a common race.

Modern nationalism, born in Europe, spread out in all directions until eventually it covered the entire globe. There are today approximately 150 'nations'. How many of these, however, are not plagued by internal divisions of varying degrees of severity? In many states it is clear that the centrifugal forces resisting the centripetal nature of the 'nation* fall under one or more of Hourani's three categories, along with the additional ethnic dimension. The nation in this context may be no more than an arbitrary creation and devoid of a national consciousness. This phenomenon is no doubt most visible in sub-Saharan Africa where the process of decolonisation brought about new 'nations', incorporating different ethnic, tribal or linguistic groups, whose only *raison d"etre* was as a result of boundaries delineated at the Conference of Berlin or some other imperial settlement.

An important element in the creation of a national consciousness can be found in what may be described as mythology. The myth may, for example, play an important role in masking certain uncomfortable elements of reality. The fact that an Algerian would find it impossible to converse with a Syrian did not prevent il-Husri from insisting that they should be brothers in the same nation since they both speak Arabic. More significant, however, is the

projection of the myth on to the past. The development of modern nationalist ideologies have, to greater or lesser extents, depended on the romanticisation of alleged golden ages of the past. Yet at the same time this may involve a danger which will threaten the very fabric upon which it is intended to weave the national identity. The erudition of Ram Mohan Roy (1772-1833) helped bring about the Hindu Renaissance; yet when the Hindu standard was grasped by the demagogic nationalist Balgangadhar Tilak (1856-1920), and others of comparable persuasion, ultimately the result came in sectarian killings, leading to the partition of 1947, and a hostility between Hindu and Muslim which continues to plague the Indian 'nation' to this day. In appealing to the national heritage, the outcome in many cases can be more divisive than cohesive. Most of the countries of Latin America, for example, are divided by gulfs separating the Indians from the *mestizos* from the whites. In his murals the Mexican painter Diego Rivera (1886-1957) glorified the Aztec past and depicted the horrors of the *conquista',* the potential here, however, was dearly divisive, as his compatriot and fellow painter José Orozco (1883-1949) pointed out, in that Indian would be turned against Spaniard at a time w'hen they should all be seeking to establish their Mexican identity in order to create a viable Mexican nation.

In the latter half of the nineteenth century the questions relating to the nation and nationalism were perhaps most pertinent in the various areas under the suzerainty or protection of the Ottoman Empire. The question of the Balkans, partly arising out of the declaration of the principle of self-determination by Woodrow Wilson (1856-1924), occupied a good deal of the time of those negotiating the post 1914-18 war settlement. The religious, territorial, linguistic and ethnic divisions constituted a maze of labyrinthine proportions. It is, however, with the problems posed by Arab nationalism that the development of Japanese nationalism might be most fruitfully compared.

It was noted earlier how Sati 'al-Husri sought to combine all Arabs into one nation on the basis of their alleged linguistic uniformity. More common among many Arab nationalists was to seek religion as the unifying bond; all Muslims are brothers in Islam, Yet, although the general area of North Africa and the Middle East may have had a preponderance of Muslims, there w[r]crc also significant minorities, both in terms of influence and numbers, such as the Jews, the Maronites, the Druzes, the Orthodox, the Copts, and so on. As in the case of India, therefore, a religious-based nationalism risked unleashing strongly divisive forces - to wit the fate of Lebanon today. Leaving that particular problem aside, however, it was also the case that in attempting to define the concept of the nation and its territorial boundaries Arab nationalists were the inheritors of two conflicting traditions. The *umma* was perceived as embracing all the world of Islam and therefore universal in scope. The rt'dtaJj,

on the other hand, was more particularistic; in the words of Albert Hourani *(op. cit.),* * [it] has the same meaning as **asabṭyya* in the doctrine of Ibn Khaldun - the sense of solidarity which binds together those who live in the same community and is the basis of social strength'. An emphasis on the universality and unifying force of the *umma* leads to the doctrine of Pan-Islam, while an emphasis on the group solidarity as evinced in the 'tuafriẏya (or *watan*) finds expression in Egyptian, or Syrian, or Iraqi, etc, nationalism. The conflict and the confusion between the two persisted throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The degree of nationalist intensity and determination among the Arabs was no less acute than among the Japanese, The problem for the Arabs, however, was in great part a difficulty in agreeing wherein lay the nation; was it the universal *umma or* a series of particular tua/on?

It is possible to project these terms on to Japan as a means of understanding the evolutionary' process of the formation of the nation and the national consciousness, The process will be looked at more closely in subsequent chapters. For the time being one can posit the following, In the pre-modern period the territory of Japan (the umnw) was divided into some 300 semi-autonomous fiefs (the tt'o/an) where the strength of feeling of 'arafọyja varied considerably in degree from one to the other - it was, for example, particularly strong in the southern fief of Satsuma. In the case of Japan, however, the particularistic *watan* (the fiefs) blended fairly rapidly into the more universal *umma* (the whole country), so that the two, *umma* and *unatan,* became indistinguishable: the feeling of 'cuafrtẏyd (the sense of community from which strength is derived) of the Japanese extended, in due course, to the whole of Japan. This phenomenon must not be brusquely disposed of simply because today it has become such a glaring reality. It is true that Japan has retained practically no residue of local particularism, as is ihe case in even the much older nations of Europe. It would not be correct, however, to assume that this transference of fief solidarity to national identity was achieved whhout a struggle nor that the latter was necessarily a foregone conclusion: indeed, a good deal of the political history of Japan in the decade preceding the revolution of 1868, and the three or four which followed it, can be written in terms of rivalries between the sons of the various fiefs.

The victory, so to speak, of the centripetal over the centrifugal forces in such a short time and in such a categorical manner is one of the more important features of the 1868 revolution. As a preliminary understanding, however, it is useful to apply to Japan the various criteria for the development of nationalism referred to earlier: the religious, the territorial, the linguistic and the ethnic. It will be seen how all combined to allow Japanese nationalism to develop untrammelled by barriers which have beset, in one way or another, most other societies attempting to form themselves into nations.

Territory

The Japanese territory is clearly defined, even if it has slightly expanded or contracted over time. Essentially the Japanese nation comprised the three islands of Kyushu, Shikoku and Honshu. In the latter part of the nineteenth century a programme of colonisation was carried out in the northern island of Hokkaido; although the Russians may have occasionally cast an expansionist glance in that direction in the past, Hokkaido nonetheless indisputably became recognised as part of Japan. To the majority of the Japanese these four islands are effectively what is meant and included in the nation of Japan. Both to the north and the south there arc areas of some ambiguity.

To the north-west of Hokkaido lies the elongated island of Sakhalin, while to the north-east are the Kuril islands, stretching all the way up to Kamchatka. Sakhalin was visited by both Russian and Japanese navigators from the seventeenth century onwards. In the modern era sovereignty over Sakhalin has alternated between the Japanese and the Russians, while at times they divided it into half. At the end of the Second World War there were somewhere in the region of 400,000 Japanese living in Sakhalin, the great majority of whom were repatriated to Japan, and the island is now, along with the Kurils, a separate *oblast* of the USSR with Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk as its capital. The Japanese do not dispute Russia's jurisdiction over Sakhalin. The question of the Kurils is different. Here again, possession has alternated be tween Japan and the USSR; at the Yalta Conference the Russians were ceded the Kurils at the same time as their jurisdiction over the whole of Sakhalin was recognised. Today, however, the Japanese claim the two islands in greatest proximity to Japan, Kunashiri and Etorofu (Kunashir and Iturup as they arc known in the USSR) and this is a matter of dispute between Japan and the Soviet Union; it is unlikely, however, to lead to war between the two countries. The ordinary Japanese will not think of Etorofu and Kunashiri in terms comparable to, say, the way the ordinary Frenchman felt about Alsace-Lorraine in the period 1871-1918. The Soviet presence on these islands is strategically uncomfortable, economically unfortunate (fishing) and psychologically upsetting. In the consciousness of rhe Japanese, however, these islands are not an integral part of the Japanese nation.

The same comment might be made of another chain of islands which extends for approximately 400 miles from southern Japan to the northern tip of Formosa, collectively known as the Ryukyu islands, the largest of which is Okinawa, Originally the Ryukyus formed an independent kingdom. By the fourteenth century Chinese supremacy was established; but in keeping with Chinese custom the king of Naha (capital of Okinawa) retained a degree of sovereignly as long as he paid tribute to the Chinese emperor. The Ryukyus served as a meeting place and trade entrepot between China and Japan and by

the fifteenth century the Shimazu realm (Satsuma) of Southern Kyushu had already established a special relationship with the islands. In 1609 the Satsuma fief actually conquered the Ryukyus, annexed the northern islands of the chain, and made the king at Naha a vassal of the *daimyo* (feudal lord) of Satsuma; a strange situation developed whereby the king of Naha paid tribute both to Peking and to Kagoshima (capital of Satsuma). After the revolution of 1868 the king was brought to Tokyo and in 1879 the Ryukyu islands were administratively metamorphosed into the Okinawa prefecture. The Chinese put up only token resistance and so both *de facto* and *de jure* the Ryukyus became administratively a part of Japan. This does not mean, however, that the Ryukyus figure in the Japanese perception of what constitutes their nation. In April 1945 two Allied offensives converged on the island of Okinawa which capitulated in June. It is true that 85 per cent of the defenders died in battle and it is also true that the fall of Okinawa was instrumental in the resignation of Lhe Cabinet of General Koiso Kuniaki (1880-1950). At the same time, however, the government could still claim that the sacred soil of Japan had not been trampled upon by an enemy foot. The Ryukyus lie on the periphery of the true Japanese nation.

So far as the four main islands arc concerned, however, the territory of the Japanese nation is both clearly defined within the Japanese consciousness and internationally recognised. The advantages of this situation cannot be over-emphasised. Territorial wars have plagued many of the nations of the world; Japan has been immune from these. This clear recognition of what constitutes the national territory has also been a major factor in developing a concept and ideology of territorial nationalism. Nor, and this is a very important point, arc there rival nationalisms claiming attachment to any piece of territory. Japanese territorial nationalism is also singularly reinforced by linguistic, religious and ethnic considerations.

Language

Sati 'al-Husri's definition of the most important unifying precept of a nation, a common language, admirably fits the Japanese case. It is true that a fisherman from Tohoku (north-cast Japan) would have had difficulty conversing with a farmer from the southern part of Kyushu; there were regional dialects, but no significant linguistic barriers. In this respect again Japan stands out in stark contrast to many of the countries of the world. In fact one can go further than this. Not only do the Japanese have a single unifying language, spoken by no other nation, but it is a very difficult language for a foreigner to master. Franc is-Xavier (1506-52), the Basque Jesuit missionary, described the Japanese language as an invention of the devil in order to impede the progress of Christian proselytism. The Japanese language, therefore, is not only a

unifying factor, but also a defence mechanism. Hence linguistic nationalism could also be a potent force.

Religion

The religious factor in Japan is a somewhat complicated one. At the risk of some oversimplification, one can say that it consists of an amalgam of the purely indigenous Shinto along with the importation from outside of Buddhism and Confucianism - the latter two, however, in spite of being originally extraneous have, over the centuries, taken on a marked indigenous hue. Leaving aside matters of metaphysics, as far as national consciousness is concerned the following points can be made. The Shinto religion is inextricably associated with both the territory and people of Japan. Just as the Japanese language is spoken in no other nation, similarly Shinto is practised only in Japan; it is not an evangelising religion. (The only exception here was the establishment of Shinto shrines in Taiwan, Korea and Manchuria in the pre-Second World War years as part of the programme of the Japanisation' of these colonised people.) Japan was perceived both in esoteric literature and in popular mythology as the 'land of the gods* (yAinAoAw). The initial xenophobic resistance to the Western incursion of the mid-nineteenth century - *joi,* or the movement to 'expel the barbarians* - had a certain rnillenarian coloration to it.

Having said that, it is also the case that although religion, mainly in the form of Shinto, may have contributed to a sense of national consciousness, religious nationalism as such, in a manner akin to Christian or Islamic societies, is not a characteristic feature of Japan in the modern era. As noted above, the Japanese embraced both Shinto and Buddhism - Confucianism is more of a moral philosophy than a religion. On the whole the two religions have co-existed quite harmoniously and in fact have exerted reciprocal influences over each other. Although one or the other may have experienced periods of ascendancy, the Japanese people arc not divided between Shintoists and Buddhists in the sense that, say, the Indians are between Muslims and Hindus and the Northern Irish between Catholics and Protestants. Religious fervour, though discernible in a few sects, is not a marketl feature of Japanese history, philosophy or society, nor is there a tradition of religious exclusivism. There have been conflicts in Japanese history in which monks and temples were involved; it would not be accurate, however . to describe these as religious wars, since the fighting was primarily concerned with the temples' temporal powers, not their spiritual beliefs.

Japan, in contrast to so many societies, has been spared the problem of significant religious minorities and the violent confrontations that these seem invariably to invite or provoke. While religion in Japan, therefore, has not

been a determining influence on the development or coloration of Japanese nationalism, it has been a contributory factor, even if only passively, to modernisation. Thus, Japan's progress was not to be significantly impeded by strong reactionary religious groups - such as the *ulema* in parts of the Islamic world, for example the *mollahs* in Iran today, or, for that matter, the Roman Catholic Church in Europe and Isatin America - nor by deeply held popular religious shibboleths. This is not to say that the process of modernisation was enthusiastically embarked upon by one and all, far from it, but that the forces of opposition did not enjoy the degree of religious sanction which they had in other societies.

Race

There is no such thing as the Japanese race, in the sense of a distinct racial species. The Japanese, however, have perceived themselves as a distinct racial group and this perception has played an important function in the development of Japanese national cohesiveness and nationalism. This unifying concept of a common race is further underlined by the absence of significant ethnic minorities, something which in so many other societies has acted as a disruptive force. There arc groups which are discriminated against: the aboriginal inhabitants of Japan - the descendants of whom, the Ainu, are contained exclusively in the northern island of Hokkaido; Koreans living in Japan; and an indigenous outcastc group known as the *eta,* whose origins and role will be discussed in a later chapter. Without in any way wishing to minimise the plight of these people, nevertheless from an historical perspective the point is that they were not of a sufficient magnitude to threaten the viability of the nation.

In the age of nationalism the Japanese arrived on the scene singularly well equipped. The potential for creating a unified nation was certainly there. Ultimately the strongest manifestation of Japanese nationalism is the territorial, though it is buttressed by the linguistic and racial. What this means in real terms is that the instinctive reaction is to defend the territory and to preserve Japanese sovereignty over it. Cultural considerations, though by no means totally insignificant, arc nevertheless of secondary importance. Religion in Japan may not have been a strong force for nationalism, nor, however, was it a significant impediment to change. It is the combination of these factors which set out Japan's uniqueness.

PATTERNS OF HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

When one considers a number of features of Japan's historical development from earliest times, the emergence and the nature of the nineteenth- and twentieth-century nation-state become more understandable. Some of the

more prominent characteristics, or patterns, of Japanese history will be studied in the following pages with a view to shedding light on the background of Japan as she entered the modern era.

Japan and the Outside World

The first point to highlight is that in the course of recorded history'Japan had never been the victim of successful military invasion until the late summer of 1945. There are a number of reasons for this, obviously, though at this stage it might be useful to interject a little geography. It was fashionable in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to refer to Japan as the "Britain of the East[1], partly on the grounds that she was an island off the mainland of Asia, as the British isles lie off the mainland of Europe. Among (many) other things, however, it needs to be pointed out that the distance between Pusan at the southern tip of Korea and Kita-kyushu, the two points of closest proximity between Japan and the continent, is seven times the distance from Dover to Calais, and the seas are much rougher - one docs not swim across the Tsushima Straits. The Japanese islands themselves do not offer hospitable terrain to the would-be invader, with more than three-quarters of the land-mass being mountainous. Invasion along conventional lines is a daunting proposition - which is one of the alleged reasons for the dropping of the atom bomb on Hiroshima, though why Nagasaki two days later remains rather a mystery,

Japan is far more of an island fortress than Britain ever was. This is not to say that an invasion of Japan was never attempted. The most celebrated abortive invasion in the chronicles of Japanese history' is that of the great Kublai Khan (1214-94) at the end of the thirteenth century. As is well known, the Khan's great armada was defeated more by the elements - in the shape of a great typhoon - than by the valour or military skills of the Japanese defenders. As is equally well known, the Japanese dubbed the salvational wind *shinpu,* otherwise pronounced as *kamikaze,* meaning 'the wind of the gods', the spirits of which they unsuccessfully tried to resurrect in 1944.

Japan, with the exception of the brief interval of the years 1945-52, has never been governed by a foreign power. This, in the nineteenth century', was something of which the Japanese were powerfully aware and a situation they intended to maintain. Consider the pattern of foreign invasions, from Roman times to the 1968 Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, which have been a marked feature of the history' of every European nation. Japan also stands in stark contrast to other regions of Asia. At the time of the British invasion of India most of the country was ruled by the foreign Mughal (Persian) dynasty; China from 1644 to 1912 was under the reign of the foreign Ch'ing (Manchurian) dynasty, while most of the Middle East and south-eastern

Europe were under the suzerainty of the Sublime Porte, namely the Turkish Ottoman Empire. Thus, for example, Chinese nationalism in its embryonic form as witnessed in, say, the Taiping revolution (1851-64), was anti-Manchu, rather than anti-Western; it was believed that with the removal of die foreign dynasty, China as a nation would emerge strong and powerful. The Japanese had no foreign over-lords to dispose of prior to facing the West.

As a concomitant of this historical phenomenon, one can argue, though with a number of reservations, that there is also in Japan a political and psychological tradition of isolationism. A few of the qualifications to this statement will be looked at shortly, while others will be elaborated at greater length in the following chapter. The point here is that if the Japanese were not invaded, nor did they often try to invade, the abortive conquest of Korea and Ming China by Toyotomi Hidcyoshi (1536-98) being more of an aberration of pre-ninctecnth-century Japanese history than a pattern. Also if one considers the frequent marriages between members of diverse European monarchical families in order to cement alliances or gain territory, no such phenomenon has occurred in Japan. Europeans, of course, tend here to be the exception rather than the rule. For example, the Manchu rulers of the Chi'ing dynasty were not only forbidden to marry Chinese women, but they were even proscribed from having intercourse with them; a taboo broken by the lecherous Emperor Hsicn Feng in 1852 when he indulged himself with Chinese maidens, collectively known as the Four Springs - Peony Spring, Cherry-apple Spring, Apricot Spring and Hangchow Spring - a sacrilege perceived by some as the source of the decline and ultimate eclipse of the dynasty six decades later.

If political and military isolationism is a feature of pre-ninetcenth-ccntury Japanese history, this hardly applies to intellectual currents, in fact quite the reverse. When placing Japan in the pantheon of the [k]great[f] cultures of the world, namely with Egypt, Greece, Rome, India, China, down to more modern times with France, Germany, Britain, Russia and so on, there is one characteristic which they all share and which in Japan is conspicuous by its absence. Japan has never, in all her history, produced a towering religious or philosophical figure of universal repute and influence. Not only is there no Japanese equivalent to Confucius, Christ, Buddha, Muhammad, there is also no Japanese equivalent to Rousseau, .Adam Smith, Marx, Nietzsche, nor even to Lenin or Mao. In historical terms, Japan has tended to be a beneficiary, rather than a benefactor, of the great intellectual currents of the world. This is not to say that Japan has been devoid of original thinkers, but rather that generally speaking originality has been more involved in adaptation and innovation than in invention.

Japan, as the historian Richard Storry (J *History of Modern Japan,* 1978) has

pointed out, though not subjected to military invasions, has experienced a series of cultural invasions. The most fundamental consists of the Japanese absorption of Chinese culture in the period roughly corresponding to the seventh to the ninth centuries AD. Throughout the ensuing centuries Japan continued to absorb, though with very varying degrees of intensity, cultural imports from the outside world, predominantly China and Korea, to some extent from the Iberians and the Dutch in the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries and, of course, from the major Western powers in the latter part of the nineteenth. All these cultural importations were subsequently assimilated into the indigenous environment - or 'japanised" in the jargon of the profession - with the result that occasionally the resulting product bore only the vaguest resemblance to the source from whence it came.

77ie Imperial Institution

While scanning the Japanese landscape and attempting to place it in the perspective of an international horizon, there remains one wholly indigenous, unique and historically significant institution which demands attention. That is the Japanese imperial institution. The first thing that marks it off as quite exceptional is that it is the longest-surviving monarchical dynasty. Even if one is sceptical about the claims that the first occupant of the imperial throne, Jinmu, ascended to it on It February 660 BC and settles for the more plausible second or third centuries of the present era, the unique distinction of longevity remains valid. That in itself is a consideration of utmost importance in an understanding of the emergence of the modern Japanese nation-state, but there is far more to it than that.

The Japanese 'Emperor' or 'Empress' (in the sense of reigning monarch, not in the sense of consort to the Emperor) were referred to by the Japanese in the course of history with a variety of euphemisms. They might be called *Gotho,* the name of the palace they lived in in Kyoto and which could be translated as 'hallowed place'; *Mikado,* 'sacred gate' leading to the palace; *Dairi,* the part of the palace where the Emperor resided; TwisAi, 'child of heaven', etc, In the modern era, however, the current appellation has been Tennrj, not an entirely satisfactory translation of which might be 'lord of heaven[1]. In this book we shall use the term tenno (without italicising it) for two reasons. The more practical is that this will obviate the necessity of having to refer to the 'Japanese' emperor when wishing to distinguish him from, say, Napoleon (1 or III) of France, Franz-Josef of Austria-Hungary, Theodoros II of Ethiopia or, for that matter, from Bokassa I of the Central African Empire. The second reason is that 'emperor' is not really a proper translation of tenno in that it does not in any way convey the numerous connotations derived from the use of the term nor the aura with which it is enshrouded. In Japanese the

term tenno is exclusively reserved for their monarch, other emperors being called *kolei.* We refer (or referred) to the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire, the Kaiser of Germany, the Czar of all the Russian, the Shah of Iran, and so forth, so that even from the point of view of consistency it would seem that it is more appropriate to use the term tenno rather than emperor.

Article II of Chapter I of the 1889 Constitution of Japan declared a salic law. The present operative Constitution, of 1947, is mute on the matter of female monarchs, but it is unlikely, at least in the foreseeable future, that a woman will be invested with the imperial regalia. In the past, however, there have been ten female occupants of the throne; although eight of these were concentrated in the seventh and eighth centuries, there have been two in more modern times - Meisho (1623-96) and Go-Sakuramachi (1740-1813). Neither of the two, however, was married nor did they bear children. For the purposes of modern history it is correct to visualise the tenno as a fundamentally male, indeed phallocratic, institution to a degree paralleled perhaps only by the papacy in Rome. Indeed just as the Pope is presented as the 'father' of ail Catholics, so is the tenno presented as the 'father' of all Japanese.

In the opening paragraph of this section we referred to the tenno institution as 'wholly indigenous'. Strictly speaking this is not entirely correct, although in the course of history, and certainly in modern times, it has been perceived by the Japanese as such. In early Japanese history there were rivalry and warfare between various families or clans (u/r) in the course of which one was emerging *primus inter pares.* It was at the time that this family was consolidating its power that the first and most fundamental cultural invasion took place. Japanese scholars went to visit China and they were as awed by the cultural splendour of the T'ang dynasty (618-907) as more than a millennium later they were to be overwhelmed by the material power of the West. From the point of view of the tenno institution the timing is of considerable significance.

The first T'ang monarch, Li Yuan (reigned 618-26), came to power after the short-lived Sui dynasty (589-618) and after an extensive period of civil disorder and warfare had plagued China. The T'ang dynasty set about on a vigorous programme of national reorganisation and regeneration with many of the institutions which it established, especially the crucial civil service examination system, mutatu mutartdir, surviving until the beginning of the twentieth century. Not only were China's cultural attributes splendid, including the Buddhist religion recently imported from India, but it was equally clear that her political system, and the ideology upon which it rested, could serve as a viable model for Japan.

Traditionally, both the Chinese and Japanese monarchs were supposed to act as intermediaries between the world of mortals below and the heavens

above. Their ministrations would include praying for rain at times of drought, for victory at times of war, and so on. Thus, as has often been pointed out, but still requires stressing, both in China and Japan there was an absence of an independent authoritative ecclesiastical institution, as was the case, for example, in the Christian or Islamic world, The Chinese or Japanese monarchs were supposed to be both pope and sovereign, both caliph and sultan. According to Japanese mythology, Jinmu-tenno was descended from the sun*goddess Amaterasu and from the male deity Danagi and the female deity lzanami who between them created the land of Japan. Thus all descendants of the imperial line arc ultimately born from the deity at the apex of the Shinto pantheon. Chinese influence in the evolution of the Japanese imperial institution should be seen chiefly in two respects; first, in the way secular authority was bestowed on the tenno; secondly, albeit perhaps more indirectly, in the methods with which the secular and spiritual legitimacy of the tenno were proclaimed.

For the first 432,000 years of China's history the reign was established by a succession of twenty-four celestial monarchs, the first dozen of whom concerned themselves mainly with the affairs of heaven, while the second dozen set about putting in order earthly matters. The first recognised Chinese ruler as such, however, was Huang Ti, who is to the Chinese what Jinmu-tenno is to the Japanese. In early recorded history, however, Chinese rulers ascribed to themselves the humbler equivalent of 'king', rather than 'emperor'. Prince Shih founded the Ch'in dynasty (221-207 BC)$_t$ which brought about the unification of China, involving the standardisation of the script, weights and measures, and included the beginning of the erection of the famed Great Wall. It was also Shih, however, who proclaimed himself Shih Huang Ti (translated as Emperor) and thereby invested a divine status to his rule and one which, in theory, remained with the occupant of the imperial throne until 1912. It should be emphasised here that the power of the Chinese 'Emperor' was always perceived as bmh spiritual ami temporal; the Chinese monarch both reigned and ruled,

The situation in Japan was somewhat different. By the time of the Chinese cultural invasion it would appear that the position of the tenno had developed for some time and in such a fashion that his sacerdotal role was clearly of much greater significance than his administrative one. In fact, it was held that the tenno should be above these vulgar mundane matters; he was, therefore, little more than a kind of chief priest. It is here that the Chinese influence came to bear. During the height of Chinese influence, roughly mid-seventh to early ninth centuries, two things happened.

The first is that it is precisely during this period that the person of the tenno enjoyed the greatest temporal pow[r]cr, or at least so far as recorded history is

concerned. This point is important to bear in mind. As will lx* seen, from the late twelfth century to 1867 temporal power was in the hands of succeeding dynasties of *shogun* (military commanders - hereafter not italicised), who actually ruled, while the emperor reigned. During these centuries, however, there were a number of movements favouring 'restoration', by that meaning the act of 'restoring' both spiritual *and* temporal power to the person of the tenno. The perception was that the legitimate right to rule of the tenno had been usurped by the shogun and that this was a highly unsatisfactory situation. This perception, it should be clear, bore only scant resemblance to reality; but then a sense of reality is not necessarily an important vehicle of history.

The second thing, however, and intimately connected with the first, is that it is during this same period that the legitimacy of the tenno was traced and put into writing. This is of course a universal phenomenon. When the upstart parvenu Francesco Sforza (1401-66) established himself as Duke of Milan he had the court historians compile a twelve-volume chronicle of his family history. The tenno of this period could claim far more legitimate and longer lineage than the Sforza, but this was simply by oral tradition and the evolution of native custom. Thus, among other things, this is an age of codification. The court had two family histories compiled: the *Kojiki* (Record of Old Things) and the *Nihon-shoki* (Chronicle of Japan), Iwth completed in the early eighth century. There is a substantial difference between the two works, the former being more of a literary exercise, while the latter is more a history. Both, however, reflect the spirit of the age; both related the age of the gods down to the origins of the tenno and his descendants.

In ihese records, as in the codes which were promulgated in the first year of the eighth century, both the secular and sacerdotal power of the tenno were not only asserted, but held to be indivisible. This was the concept known as *saisei-itchi,* which might be translated as 'the unity of rights and administration'. The *Taiko Ritsu* (Penal Code) and *1'aiho Ryo* (Civil Code) of 701, based on their equivalent Chinese models, went into considerable detail in defining administrative offices and laws, but both equally emphasised that ultimate responsibility and all power resided in the person of the tenno. In this way, to borrow New Testament phraseology, in the tenno God and Caesar were made one.

If there arc significant similarities between the Chinese and Japanese imperial institutions, there are also crucial differences and it is as important to understand the latter as it is the former.

In order to do this, however, it is important to say a few words about Confucianism, An exercise of this kind inevitably involves generalisation, even the risk of caricature; it must, nonetheless, be attempted. If the three

pillars upholding Western civilisation can, to a certain degree, be distinguished from one another - Judaco-Christian religion, Greek philosophy and Roman law - Confucianism combines the three elements. Although there are other schools and influences within the East Asian civilisation, Confucianism is the most dominant. Confucius (K'ung Fu-Tzu, 551-479 BC) lived in a period of great political and military anarchy, lie shares with Jesus, Muhammad and Shakyamuni (the Buddha) the quality of never having written anything himself, but to have had his message recorded by his disciples; these writings came in the form of what arc called *The Analects.* The message of Confucius was subsequently revised and considerably regenerated by Mencius (Meng-tzu, 371-289? BC). That loose body of doctrines referred to as Confucianism has, needless to say, considerably evolved over the ages and, as in the case of all religions and philosophies, various aspects of its creed may have meant different things to different people at different times. Also, as suggested above, Confucianism is universal in its concern: it seeks to dictate political organisation as well as social organisation, including, for example, the proper relationship between husband and wife.

Confucius deplored the anarchy which surrounded him and his efforts were chiefly directed at restoring Aanrwny to society. The term harmony has been italicised here for, in terms of Western understanding of the East Asian civilisation, it is perhaps one of the most crucial concepts to have uppermost in one's mind. What this means, among other things, is that in the Confucianist perspective conflict cannot be constructive; conflict exists when society is not at peace with itself, when harmony has ceased to prevail, and therefore all efforts should be directed at restoring social harmony. Perhaps the cardinal injunction for the maintenance of harmony is [4]Know thy place*. Thus the ideal Confucianist society is a highly vertical one and, indeed, founded on what are called the Five Basic Relationships. Of the five - ruler and subject, father and son, husband and wife, elder brother and younger brother, and friends - only the fifth relationship is conceived of on equal terms; die other four were absolute relations of superior to inferior. It should be clear, therefore, that Confucianism is the very antithesis of egalitarianism - and the status of woman is definitely relegated to a very lowly position.

Confucianism, especially in the works of Mencius, sees man as fundamentally good - and it is here that one can see the attraction that Confucianism had for Rousseau. Man should be guided by principles of *virtue,* rather than by laws - a position vigorously denounced by the chief contending philosophy in China generally placed under the title of Legalism. Again we have italicised the word virtue, for, along with harmony, it is another key concept in the Confucianist philosophy. The five chief virtues were those of benevolence, righteousness, reverence, wisdom and sincerity. It was

incumbent on all men to practise the virtues, but it was primarily the responsibility of those who enjoyed the position of superiority in any given relationship,

If there occurred calamities - from earthquakes or famines to civil wars or political anarchy - this was dur to either of two causes; society was not properly following the rules of harmony or the rulers were not practising virtue. And it is here that one comes to a most fundamental position and one where the Chinese and Japanese paths completely diverge. In the Chinese interpretation, if it is social elements which arc behaving in an unruly fashion and thus responsible for the calamities afflicting society, then they must be suppressed forthwith. If, on the other hand, it would appear to be the case that it is the ruler who is responsible, then that is an altogether different matter. And it is here also perhaps Lhat the divine status of the Chinese sovereign is somewhat reduced when compared to his Japanese colleague. The Chinese sovereign is the agent of heaven and he reigns and rules according to the mandate of heaven. So long as he practises virtue he retains the mandate. Once he ceases being virtuous, however, then he loses the mandate and it becomes incumbent upon the people, in order to carry out heaven's will, to change the mandate of heaven. When the dynasty has changed, the founder of the new dynasty is the possessor of a new mandate, which he and his descendants shall continue to enjoy so long as they practise virtue.

It is on the importance attached to the concept of heredity that the Japanese and Chinese traditions differ almost totally. This is not to say dial the Chinese attached no importance to heredity, but as seen in the case of the mandate of heaven outlined above, it 15 clear that it was not the sole, nor even necessarily the prime, source of legitimacy. Two quick examples can be presented to clarify further the contrast - though it should be made abundantly clear that here we are speaking of theory, not necessarily always of reality. The first is that of primogeniture. The Chinese have generally not practised primogeniture, while in Japan it has tended to be the norm - in economic terms this was to have clear implications in regard to capital accumulation. Secondly, one feature of the Chinese system which was conspicuously absent in Japan (until after the revolution of 1868) was that of the civil service examination. Confucius and his disciples, along lines parallel to the Platonic ideal, believed that power should be combined with wisdom and that the latter was not necessarily the monopoly of any specific layer of society. As was seen earlier, it was during the T'ang dynasty that recruitment to the civil service by competitive examination was institutionalised and that this survived until its abolition in 1905. In theory the humblest peasant could aspire to the highest administrative office as long as he was able to prove his superior wisdom by passing the examinations. In Japan the important clement in determining the

bearer ot a particular civil or military office was heredity and not merit. It should again be emphasised that one is here talking about the theory, not necessarily the reality - and, as will be seen, one of the more powerful causes of the revolution of 1868 was the conflict between the two principles of merit and heredity which emerged in the century or so which preceded the revolution.

For the tenno, therefore, the source of legitimacy was above all hereditary. A change of dynasty was unthinkable since this would obviously sever the link with Jinmu-tenno. The tenno had one chief consort, but numerous other concubines, thus improving the possibility of producing numerous imperial offspring. The successor to the throne need not be the child of the chief consort - in fact the present crown prince will be the first of the modern tenno to be the son of his 'official' mother. Of course it could - and did - happen that the reigning tenno might be sterile or impotent or die in infancy. In this case the successor was adopted from within the imperial family. The question of who should inherit the throne did occasionally lead to war. Adoption, in order to perpetuate the family name, was (and is) a widespread phenomenon in Japan: the paternal-filial relationship need not be a blood one. In society at large an adoption could be secured from people other than relatives - though, as in the Edo period (1603-1867), the choice was theoretically circumscribed by social rank; in the case of the tenno, however, adoption must be from among members of his family.

In the course of history the imperial institution experienced numerous vicissitudes and indeed at times languished not only in obscurity but even in poverty. Its fundamental nature, however - its link with the gods and its principle of heredity - were never challenged. It was a remarkable institution and, from the historical perspective of creating a viable modern nation-state, it played a fundamental role.

Pouter in Japanese History

It is difficult (and generally always has been) to define the locus of power in Japan. For, among other things, there is generally a considerable disparity between form and substance. If one takes the example of the contemporary Japanese family, by relying exclusively on appearance it would seem clear that not only is the husband the boss, but a tyrannical one to boot. Here, however, one is presented with one of the starkest contrasts between form and substance, in that the chief female of the household - today generally the wife, but in the past more commonly the mother of the husband - rules with an iron hand, while the husband is flattered with courtesies in regard to his (impotent) reign. The pattern can be situated in practically any institution. The presumed head of a family, corporation, university is generally little more

than a figurehead- In this context one should introduce one of the operative terms of Japanese historical study, namely *gekokujo;* this literally translates as 'the victory of the lower over the higher', more figuratively as the rule of the higher by the lower.

This term has been used with particular effect by Maruyama Masao *(Thought and Behaviour in Modem Japanese Politics,* 1963) in analysing the convulsions of the 1930s. There were, during this decade, a number of young officer movements whose avowed aim was to change the direction and nature of government. The phenomenon of the military puLsch is (unfortunately) fairly universal. What sets the Japanese case, certainly of the 1930s, apart is that the young officers did not presume to take over control themselves; it was generally expected that once the coup was successful some figurehead, for example, a general believed to be sympathetic to the 'cause', would assume power. Megalomania is somewhat different in Japan to what it is in most other places.

A possible correlative of the *gekokujo* phenomenon is that, generally speaking, Japanese history has not been marked by great charismatic political leaders. In the course of die seismic transformations of the mid-nineteenth century, no single figure can be said to have dominated the arena. In the convulsions of the 1930s and early 1940s, there was no Japanese counterpart to Hiller, Mussolini or Franco. Japanese leaders do not tend to be white-plumed knights in the forefront of hatties, but generally furtive figures in the background. There arc exceptions, perhaps most notably that triumvirate of the late sixtcenth/carly seventeenth centuries, Oda Nobunaga (1534-82), Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536-98) and Tokugawa Icyasu (1542-1616). In the Japanese consciousness, however, and indeed as would appear to be the case in the nation's chronicles, great heroes are more associated with failure than w[r]ith victory - the theme of Ivan Morris's *the Nobility of Failure* (1975). Perhaps the two most popular heroes of Japanese history are Minamoto Yoshitsune (1159-89) and Saigo Takamori (1827-77). Both, however, failed in their mission, both suffered untimely deaths, the first by order of his brother (Yoritomo, 1147-99), the second at the hands of his kinsmen.

As to the 'man at the helm' in most periods of Japanese history he is hardly visible. Or rather there will be a person visibly at the helm, except when a decision regarding which direction to take is needed, and then he will be conveyed to the privacy of the cabin below. This pattern, though not applicable to the first two of the triumvirate mentioned above, was observed by the third. The battle of Sekigahara (1600) is generally regarded as the occasion on which the period of civil war was definitely brought to an end. Three years later the victor, Tokugawa Icyasu, secured from the ten no Go-Yozei (1571-1617) the appointment of shogun and thus the 'Tokugawa

dynasty was established. Within two years, however, leyasu abdicated in favour of his son Hidetada (1579-1632); the latter, in turn, abdicated nine years before his death and was replaced as shogun by his son Icmitsu (1603-51), who is one of the very few to have actually preserved the throne until his death.

This pattern of abdication stretches far back into Japanese history and has continued to exist until comparatively recently. The practice of the reigning tenno abdicating in favour of his successor became well established during the Nara period (709-84) and was prevalent during most of the Hcian period (794-1185) and indeed was institutionalised as the t'nwx (cloister government) by the tenno Shirakawa, who lived from 1053 to 1129, but reigned only from 1072 to 1086, leaving as his successor to the throne a seven-year-old boy. In more modern times one can cite the example of the Meiji *genro* (elder statesmen, though meant more in terms of prestige than actual age) who, having set the ship of state on an even keel, retired to the background and placed their prot^gls at the helm. The most recent case perhaps is that of Yoshida Shigcru (1878-1967), the prime minister and main political figure of the immediate post-war era, who resigned office in 1954 and spent his (many) remaining years at the seaside resort of Oiso.

While we did say that megalomania takes a different form in Japan, we did not say it does not exist. Ostensibly the retired sovereigns, shoguns, *genro* or prime ministers left the hurly-burly of the affairs of state in order to give themselves up to meditation, the arts, learning, or simply to enjoy more fully the company of their concubines. The reality, however, was generally of a different order. In alleged retirement, power nevertheless continued to be exercised with as much effect as, if not more than, when in office. Why did this system develop? The answer is difficult and in any case varies according to the times, places and circumstances. In fact in the cases of all the tenno who had never actually exercised any power, that is, the vast majority, it was generally a result of ennui and impatience at having constantly to perform the sacred rituals; abdication in their case did literally mean greater freedom to enjoy the arts or whatever aspects of court entertainment most took their fancy. In other cases it might be as a means of ensuring the succession.

What has been written here may appear to contradict the phenomenon of *gtkokujo* raised earlier on. One might try to explain it in the following manner. When the 'boss' and his entourage effectively exercise power, then the phenomenon ofgd»£u/o is in abeyance or indeed in extinction. When this is no longer the case, then the forces of *gekokujo* go into operation. In the course of the Edo period (1603-1867), for example, in the early decades the shoguns, retired or otherwise, effectively exercised power. In the latter half, however, real power was increasingly devolved further and further down rhe scales of

the feudal hierarchy. The revolution of 1868 is to a very great extent an assertion of *gekokujo.* It might be objected that this is a universal phenomenon; that surely Robespierre, Danton, Marat & Co. were exercising a gallic version of*gekakujo.* We have seen earlier on, however, how the universal phenomenon of the military putsch had its peculiar variant in Japan in the 1930s. It is not a question that revolt and subsequent transference of power are unique to Japan, but that the manner in which they have occurred is remarkable and that this is turn has had important ramifications in the course of Japanese history and especially in the revolution of 1868.

In introducing this subject it might be appropriate to say just a few words about the traditional system of periodisation in Japan. Earlier, we had occasion to mention the Nara period, the Hcian period and the Edo period. Generally periods arc named either after the place in which the government is alleged to be located or after the family who are, in form if not necessarily always in substance, in control. Three caveats must be entered. This periodisation is obviously not descriptive of social or economic conditions; for these purposes Japanese historians are more likely, in say the modern or pre-modern era, to distinguish between feudal, early modern, modem and contemporary as a means of illustrating the socio-economic conditions rather than the political. Secondly, two periods may be at least partly coincidental. Thus the Heian period is generally reckoned to have been in existence from 794 to 1185; Heian-kyo (the modern city of Kyoto) was the new capital designed for the tenno and his court in imitation of the capital of T'ang China, Ch'ang An. The tenno and his court in fact remained in residence there until in 1868 they moved eastwards to Tokyo (the former city of Edo), The reason why the Heian period ends in 1185, however, is that in theory' secular power was transferred to the new institution of the shogunate which established its capital in Kamakura, thus inaugurating the Kamakura era which lasted from 1185 to 1333. In fact, however, the tenno had long ceased exercising secular power and this was firmly in the hands of a family, the Fujiwara, who had assumed and inaugurated the office of *kanfiaku* (chief councillor); thus the period 858-1160 is sometimes referred to as the Fujiwara period, but also as the Heian period in that this power continued to be exercised from Heian-kyo (Kyoto). Name and place therefore can both be used, thus the same period can be called the Edo era (after the place) or the Tokugawa era (after the name of the dynasty).

The third caveat is that Japan was not a unified state during most of the periods in question. In the so-called feudal period, which in strictly political terms extended from 1185 to 1869 (the year the *daimyo,* feudal lords - hereafter not italicised - 'returned' their domains to the tenno), Japan was parcelled into numerous fiefs. The degree of autonomy of the fiefs varied

considerably throughout these centuries of political feudalism; fief autonomy was particularly strong in the course of most of the Ashikaga or Muromachi era (1338-1573) - Ashikaga being the name of the shogunal dynasty, Muromachi the district in Kyoto where they built their castle - while it was correspondingly weak throughout most of the Edo era. Finally, it, should be made clear that even here dates arc arbitrary and correspond generally to the final acquiescence (or submission) to what had become an overpowering reality. This reality was determined by strategic and economic factors, not political fiat. In real terms the beginning of 'feudalism' can be said to have predated 1185 by more than two centuries, while its erosion was well under way before 1869.

It was shown earlier in this chapter how succession to the tenno's throne was retained in the same family for, in the words of the 1889 Constitution, 'ages eternal[1]. At the same time it was pointed out how the tenno's actual temporal rule was in existence for only a very limited time. Power in Japanese history has generally been devolved from the alleged ruler to some other office. This pattern of devolution has taken many guises which in its modern context will be scrutinised to some degree. Here, however, we will limit our consideration to only two offices, the first very briefly, the second in somewhat greater detail. The first office is that of *sessho* or *kanpaku;* the two are in strict theory separate offices, the first being somewhat akin to the term 'regent', the second to 'chief councillor'; for our purposes, however, they can be treated together. One should note here again the extreme importance of heredity attached to these offices as already indicated in the case of the tenno's legitimacy. There has been only one imperial dynasty, while the dynasties of *kanpaku 'sessho* have varied and altogether there have been three shogunal dynasties. The *sessho* (regent) was an office which had been held by members of the imperial family; in 858, however, it was assumed by the noble Fujiwara Yoshifusa (804-72). The office of *kanpaku* was inaugurated by Fujiwara Mototsune (836-91). From the ninth to the middle of the nineteenth century both offices could be held only by descendants of the Fujiwara family, indeed generally reserved to only five descending families (referred to as the *go-sekke).* The office of shogun was inaugurated in 1192 by Minamoto Yoritomo. All succeeding shogunal dynasties were related to the Minamoto family. Oda Nobunaga became neither *kanpaku* nor shogun as he was not a descendant of either of these families. Hideyoshi was really the son of his own works and nothing more. He did, however, assume the office of *kanpaku;* indeed he was generally referred to in Japanese history as *taiko-sama, taiko* being the term applied to a retired *kanpaku [sama* is a title of respect), Hideyoshi having retired in order to secure the succession for his son. Hideyoshi, however, claimed to be descended from the Fujiwara, a claim which was clearly fraudulent, but here perhaps was an

instance of /ewe *majeure* and the tenno Ogimachi (1517-93) assented to recognise the fabricated genealogy without which the title of *kanpaku* could not have been legitimately bestowed. Icyasu's claims to Minamoto descent were equally implausible, nevertheless the fiction had to be accepted. Once again one must distinguish between form and substance.

The time when the Taiho codes were promulgated, known as the era of the rtTsu-tyo society, as we have seen, corresponded to the height of Chinese influence when both temporal and spiritual power were firmly in the hands of the tenno and his court. The secular authority gradually came to lx[1] challenged, especially by the Fujiwara family. A very important precedent was set by the Fujiwara and followed by Japan's political leaders for the ensuing centuries. The Fujiwara did not seek to usurp the imperial throne, they simply established a new institution, the *kanpaku,* and monopolised control over another, the *sessho.* The all-important principle of heredity was not only preserved, but indeed expanded since heredity became the sole basis of legitimacy for the *kanpaku-sesshn* offices as well. 'The Fujiwara did not have to fight the tenno, but in order to cement closer relations with the throne the Fujiwara resorted to placing their women either as chief consorts to the tenno or somewhere reasonably high in the imperial harem. The Fujiwara, therefore, might well have made their own the famous dictum of the Habsburg Emperor Maximilian I (1459-1519): *Belli gerant ahi, tu/etix Austria nube* ('Let others make war, you, fortunate Austria, marry'). And indeed in this respect the Fujiwara were eminently successful in that almost three-quarters of the reigning tenno from the eighth century to the present were the offspring of Fujiwara women.

The power of the tenno declined and until 1868, with a few small exceptions, temporal power resided elsewhere both in fact and in theory'. The prestige of the imperial family and of the tenno in particular continued to be great throughout the ages and of course the fiction was maintained, with varying degrees of zeal, that the power exercised by the alternative ruler was invested in him by the tenno. Thus the shogunal dynasties also frequently contrived to establish close relations with the imperial family through marriage or concubinage. The position, however, can be roughly stated in the following terms. The more firmly established the shogunal dynasty and their power, the less they bothered about securing the investiture or indeed access to the imperial bedchamber. When shogunal fortunes declined, however, the imperial prestige ascended. One of the dying gasps of the Tokugawa regime was to try to secure a firmer and more legitimate foundation to their rule by marrying the penultimate shogun Iemochi (1846-66) to Kazu, the young sister of the tenno Komei (1831-66),

The highly individual political arrangement of Japan in comparison with

most other societies was that of the dual structure and reciprocal relations of the shogunal and imperial institutions. In European terms, had Oliver Cromwell, instead of ordering Charles I's decapitation, confined him to rhe regal palace with nothing but ceremonial duties to perform, or Napoleon I recalled Louis XVIII from Hartwell and installed him with impotent pomp in Versailles, then Oliver and Napoleon would have been respectively shoguns of England and France. In terms of modern history what this meant was that the Japanese had something which (say) the Chinese lacked: a residual alternative source of political legitimacy. The century of Chinese history from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twrcnticth can largely be written in terms of a search for an alternative and acceptable source of political legitimacy. The Japanese had no such problem and partly as a result of this their revolution was able to take place far more quickly and far more smoothly than the Chinese.

The Institution of Shogun

What were the origins of this shogunate and how did it develop? In order to answer this question one must turn to changing patterns of land tenure and to internal warfare. In the *ritsu-iyo* period the land and the people belonged to the tenno. The area under imperial control extended from the southern island of Kyushu to just north of the Kanto plain. The northern part of the island of Honshu was still inhabited by the aboriginal natives of the Japanese islands; the conquest of Japan by what we today call the Japanese began in the south and over the centuries extended northwards. Thus fighting with the natives was still taking place during the Heian period.

It is important at this point to explain the distinction between the *huge* and the *buke.* The *kuge* literally means public families, but might be more precisely defined as civilian nobility. The *buke* arc military families. The *bu* can mean military, martial, or arms. Thus from *bu* we have *bushi,* a warrior; *bushido,* the way of the warrior or the code of knightly chivalry; *budo,* the martial arts, namely such sports as *judo, kendo,* and so on. An alternative word for *bushi,* warrior, is swwai, etymologically derived from the verb [4]to serve', or 'wait upon'. The Japanese warrior (and henceforth we shall alternatively use either bushi or samurai and no longer italicise them), therefore, is perceived as both a man of arms and a retainer. The history of the latter part of the Heian period can be seen in terms of the *buke* challenging the power of the *kuge.* They were successful and from the twelfth to the mid-nineteenth centuries power was almost exclusively in the hands of the *buke,* though the *kuge* occasionally sought to reassert themselves. Power and prestige, however, do not necessarily always go hand in hand. The Heian period had witnessed a very rich and flourishing culture and the inhabitants of Heian-kyo were looked upon with awe as paragons of civilisation and sophistication. In modern British terms one might

say they were beheld in a fashion comparable to the aura which the Oxbridge don enjoys when seen from the perspective of a provincial university lecturer. Likewise, the bushi were held to be rustic, ill-mannered ignorami, which by and large of course they were. Although life in Kyoto had become very decadent and tended to remain so, and although in the course of time at least some of the bushi lost their rustic manners and acquired great learning, the prestige of the *kuge* remained unaffected. From the late Heian period onwards the leading *buke,* from the shoguns downwards, sought marriage or concubinage arrangements with the *kuge,* Of the fifteen Tokugawa shoguns, one third chose as their chief consorts *kuge* girls, while just under half were married to imperial princesses; and this, with the exception noted earlier of the hapless Icmochi, was at a time when Kyoto was perhaps at its most impotent.

Returning to the latter part of the Heian period, what was happening was the following. While the *kuge* and the imperial court were luxuriously engaged in frivolity and sensuality of all kinds, the *buke* were having to fight hard campaigns. In return for their services they were given estates or else they simply appropriated them. These private estates, *shoen,* enabled the proprietor to collect taxes and in due course to raise troops. The proprietor might in turn grant parts of his estate to the more powerful leaders of his army. This is what in Japanese is called onAyu, meaning the granting of fiefs to vassals as a reward for military services. Thus one can see here the transition which is gradually taking place. From a position where in theory all the land and all the people belonged to the tenno, the lantl is in fact being parcelled out by the *buke* who in turn are also establishing their own vassalage. The fiction was retained that land and people belonged to the tenno, but in reality this was so only very indirectly. The concept of'restoration' here must be seen, therefore, not only as 'restoring' temporal power to the tenno, but also 'restoring' to him both the land and the people.

The late Heian period witnessed the ascendancy of the military-landlord families, *buke,* over the tenno and the *kuge.* This also meant that Japanese society was bound to become overwhelmingly patriarchal. If the *kuge* were still respected for their (alleged) intellectual superiority, the question of moral values was altogether different. The moral code of conduct to wrhich all sections of society should aspire was that of the *bushido. Bushido* was derived from the nature of a martial society and from the social ideology of Confucianism to which we referred earlier in this chapter. The woman's position was one of total subservience to her male lord, according to the well-known Japanese adage that in childhood she belongs to her father, in marriage to her husband and in widowhood to her son. Also, as invariably happens in misogynic martial societies, where the physical and moral attributes of

manliness are so much admired, there was a tendency for male homosexuality to proliferate - that is of a Spartan, rather than Athenian variety - thus further undermining the position of women. That paragon of samurai virtues, Saigo Takamori, was a notorious sodomite. We shall have more to say about the situation of women in the following chapters. But for the time being, one might simply note in passing that although a number of women occupied the imperial throne, no woman ever became shogun.

All aspects of society, therefore, were changing even though Heian-kyo continued to enjoy a residual charm and prestige which endured throughout the subsequent ages. Nevertheless, the late Heian period definitely marked the end of an era. As the *buke* were consolidating their proprietorship over land and vassals, they were also, as is the case with warriors, fighting not only against the aborigines but also among themselves. In simple terms one can say that the Minamoto family emerged as the most powerful of the *bake.* Once this position was asserted vir-i-mr the *buke,* it only remained for it to be legalised by the tenno. Minamoto Yoritomo had established his headquarters in Kamakura on the east coast of Japan at a considerable distance from Kyoto. Minamoto Yoritomo was granted in 1192 the title of *sei-1-tai-shogun* by the Emperor Go-Toba (1180-1239) and thus officially began the institution of the shogunate.

The term *sei-i-tai-shogun* literally means ‘commander-in-chief in charge of the suppression of barbarians*. The nomenclature and the post date back to the Nara period. The barbarians in this instance were the Ebisu, the aboriginal inhabitants of Japan, the shogun being entrusted with their suppression so that the Japanese could occupy more territory. The title, however, remained the same tong after the barbarians had either been suppressed, driven to the northern island of Ezo (now called Hokkaido), or assimilated through miscegenation. There was an interval of some centuries between the ending oi'one barbarian threat and the appearance of another. As coincidence would have it, Europeans were also referred to as barbarians. This too was derived from China; the Chinese distinguished between the barbarians from the north, such as the Mongol and Manchu nomadic tribes and against whom they were (supposed to be) protected by their Great Wall, and the barbarians from the south, namely Europeans. Europeans were ‘southern-barbarians' in the sense that they reached China from South-East Asia and to the southern port of Canton. In the mid-nineteenth century, therefore, the chief administrative officer of Japan was still the possessor of the title *sei-i-tai-shogun]* when Perry and others came knocking at the Japanese door, it was strongly felt in certain quarters that the *sei-1-tai-shogun* should live up to his responsibilities and go about suppressing these barbarian intruders.

Although the title of shogun predated the establishment of the Kamakura

government by four centuries or more, the crucial point to note here is that hitherto this had been a temporary *ad hoc* arrangement. With Yoritomo, however, it was recognised as a permanent and hereditary office, hence one has here the foundation of the first of the shogunal dy nasties. The government of the shogun was called the *bakufu,* 'tent government', since earlier shogun in the course of their campaigns had no fixed residence but administered from their camps. The term (hereafter not italicised) survived even after the shogun's headquarters were installed in a well-fortified castle on a fixed site.

The shogun was the *primus inter pares* of the *buke,* though in the course of the bakufu's seven-century existence the extent of his power varied considerably. Temporal power devolved away from the imperial institution in Kyoto. The shogun exercised jurisdiction and the right to collect taxes only over chat area which his family controlled, namely his domain. Japan, therefore, was parcelled up into a series of fiefs. The doctrines purporting to prove the secular pew'er of the tenno were quietly put to one side. As opposed to universal bonds of loyalty between the tenno and his subjects, namely the people of Japan, there developed particularistic ties between each lord and his retainers. One sees this phenomenon illustrated in a number of practices of the feudal ages. The case of *junshi,* self-immolation, is indicative of a number of characteristics of these centuries. The term originates from antiquity when it was the practice to have slaves buried with some great figure when he died in order that they might minister to him in his travels in the world beyond. In the feudal era it took a slightly different form, though the term w'as retained. When a shogun died it might be considered incumbent among some of the feudal lords more closely associated with him to commit *seppuku* - the more refined term for *hara-kiri,* discrnbow'cbnrnt - in order to keep the dead shogun company. Similarly, when a great feudal lord died, it would be the privilege of his more important retainers to follow suit, *Junshi,* as practised in the feudal era, also underlines what was said earlier about the declining status of women. Although it was the custom that widows should not remarry, they were nonetheless not considered worthy of accompanying their deceased husbands (as in the case of suttee in India); *junshi,* like so many other facets of Japanese society, became an exclusively male preserve.

2 The *Ancien Regime*

THE EMERGENCE OF FEUDALISM

Japanese history in the centuries predating the emergence of the modern era - the second half of the nineteenth century - can largely be written in terms of opposing centrifugal and centripetal forces. The *rilsu-iyo* system, referred to in the preceding chapter, had witnessed a high degree of political, administrative, military and economic centralisation. In the latter half of the Heian period, however, strong centrifugal forces asserted themselves with both political and military power, along with a degree of economic autonomy, devolving away from the centre, that is, the imperial court of Kyoto. In this process of transition and especially in the course of the twelfth century a scries of wars - for example, the Hogen (1156) and Heiji (1159-60) insurrections - broke out, further eroding imperial power; indeed the most significant result was the transfer of administrative power from the court nobles to the military chiefs. In this manner was feudalism brought about in Japan. The imperial court was gradually stripped of land and people. Under the feudal system, the lord exercised exclusive rights of tenure and taxation over the areas under his jurisdiction and his retainers owed allegiance to him, not to the tenno. In the evolution of Japanese feudalism, increasing stress was placed on the lord-vassal relationship; that which arose as the result of a military arrangement would, especially during the Edo period, receive ideological sanctification.

As the locus of power evolved away from the imjierial court, paramountcy in military and administrative affairs was hotly contested between rival families and factions. In the years leading to the establishment of the Kamakura bakufu, the main rivalry was that between the Taira and Minamoto families; the outcome was the Gcnpci wars, lasting from 1180 to 1185, culminating in the largest naval conflict hitherto witnessed in the Far East - the battle of Dan-no-ura in 1185 in which the Taira were completely routed. Thus was order restored with the setting up of the Kamakura bakufu which enjoyed a degree of central power, the legitimacy of which arose from its investiture by the tenno in the new and completely innovative shogunal dynasty of the Minamoto. The establishment of the Minamoto set a pattern in Japanese history which might be described in the following manner: the establishment of the Minamoto shogunal dynasty in 1185, of the Ashikaga

dynasty in 1338 and of the Tokugawa dynasty in 1603 can be seen as efforts to contain the over-extension of the feudal centrifugal forces and restore, with varying degrees of authority and success, a modicum of central administration.

Great military confrontations produce great military heroes, who, in turn, provide inspiration for epic tales, narrated, sung and acted for posterity. The most famous of these legends in Japan was the *Heike Monogatari*(written in the early thirteenth century), a work dramatically relating the rise and fall of the house of Taira. In terms of its impact it is perhaps comparable to the French medieval *chansons degesie,* for example the *Chanson de Roland* (which in fact was composed at roughly the same time as the *Heike Monogalari).* Thus one needs to emphasise here that the earlier great epic, the *Genji Monogalari,* written by a woman, Murasaki Shikibu, in the early eleventh century, was exclusively concerned with the affairs of the civil Heian court; while the *Heike Monogatari,* exclusively concerned with matters of warfare and individual bravado on the battlefield (as opposed to the bedchamber), emphatically announces the coming of a new age. The emergence of the bushi as the ruling élite of Japan was reflected not only in a new literary genre, but also in the birth and development of religious sects more attuned to martial values: *Zen-shu* (the Zen Sect of Buddhism) was introduced in Japan from China during the Kamakura period, while in the thirteenth century, Nichiren (1222-82) preached a more indigenous but militant gospel. The age of the bushi had begun and was faithfully illustrated in all spheres of Japanese cultural activities.

The Kamakura settlement, however, did not eliminate real or potential tensions within Japanese society; conflict continued between rival *buke* and indeed between *buke* and *kuge,* the latter not easily satisfied with being relegated to impotent, albeit prestigious, political oblivion. The intricate details of Japanese political history in the three centuries following the establishment of the Kamakura bakufu need not detain us here. Suffice it to note the following points and trends. Shortly after the death of Yoritorno, the founder of the dynasty, political power devolved to yet another military family, the Hojo. The latter did not seek to supplant the Minamoto dynasty, but simply created a new office, that of JAIÀACTI, namely regent to the shogun. A pattern often repeated in the course of Japan's political history and serving as illustration of the *gekokujo* phenomenon, described in the preceding chapter, established itself whereby an impotent tenno theoretically reigned in Kyoto, while an equally impotent shogun theoretically ruled in Kamakura, whereas in fact administration was, for a while at least, firmly in the hands of a completely different family and office: the Hojo. The complacency, power and prestige of the Hojo were significantly undermined by the two Mongol invasions of 1274 and 1281. Although these proved abortive, the threat from

the outside and the ruling family's apparent inability io cope effectively provided more than ample ground for revolt. The Kamakura bakufu and the Hojo regency were overthrown simultaneously in 1333.

In a brief, albeit significant, interval tenno and *huge* power reasserted themselves. The years 1333-6 are known as the Kenmu Restoration, during which the tenno Go-Daigo (1288-1339) sought to re-establish central administrative control in Kyoto. This imperial interlude was short-lived; it provided both fodder and a model, however, for subsequent restorationist thinkers and movements. The immediate result was the near total eclipse of the imperial household and *huge* until they were rehabilitated in the latter part of the sixteenth and early part of the seventeenth centuries. This decline of Kyoto reached its nadir in the course of the Onin civil wars.

The causes of the latter need not concern us here; the consequences, however, were of great significance as far as our understanding of the prelude of Japan's modern era is concerned. Although the period following the attempted Mongol invasions witnessed almost ceaseless warfare, these were not as extensive and devastating as the civil war which followed the Onin war of 1467-77. On the one hand, during the Onin war central government, theoretically under the sovereignty of the Ashikaga shogun, ceased to exist for all intents and purposes. On the other hand, the manor system (*shoen*), which had emerged in the course of the later Hcian period and was the major feature of feudalism under the Kamakura bakufu, collapsed. What this meant was that the rAoen, hitherto to be counted in the thousands, were being absorbed into vaster but numerically far inferior territorial fiefs under the jurisdiction of great military landlords. Thus came about the period of a century of civil warfare, referred to as the *xengoku* era (the period of the country' at war with itself).

Local warlords (the daimyo) became completely independent and fought each other for die aggrandisement and consolidation of dieir fiefs, with the ultimate aim of imposing their will on the whole of the nation. The latter endeavour, however, could not be achieved by any single daimyo alone; hence came into operation on a grand scale the converse of warfare, namely the creation of alliances. Reduced from the thousands to a few hundred, the daimyo coalesced round a much smaller number of the most prominent families. These in turn exercised power, directly or indirecdy, over extensive provincial areas: the Shimazu consolidated their position in the southern part of Kyushu, the Date on die eastern part of northern Honshu, and so forth. The political map of Japan was not only changing, it was being simplified. On the other hand, the social picture was also rapidly evolving. This era of incessant warfare allowed a high degree of social mobility from Lhe lower bushi estate to positions of high military rank and even the rise of commoners -

Toyotomi Hidcyoshi was of peasant stock. With the demands created by warfare ample opportunity was provided for the enrichment and gain in influence of artisans and merchants; the latter also benefited considerably from the vast extension of foreign trade (to be seen below). Thus, among other things, the *sengoku* period witnessed urbanisation. The opportunities for rapid social promotion and the chaotic instability of the country' acted as powerful inducements to self-seeking opportunism involving frequent cases of treachery; in return for a promise of a higher rank, a vassal would betray (or indeed kill) his lord for the sake of another. The feudal ideal of the lord-vassal relationship was completely submerged in an anarchic sea of rising individualism. This occurred at all levels of society; indeed, Hideyoshi achieved power by violating Oda Nobunaga's will, while Tokugawa Ieyasu, Hideyoshi's erstwhile closest and most faithful vassal, betrayed! his oath and ultimately had Hideyoshi's appointed heir, Hideyori, assassinated. Finally, in this general chaos, it should be noted that opportunities were even presented to women to play influential roles in political intrigue; indeed the *sengoku* era is not without its heroines, as well as its heroes. The state of complete disorder must be emphasised, for only when this is appreciated is it possible to understand the political, social, economic, ideological and moral rigidity which the founders of the new Tokugawa dynasty sought to impose. Peace and unification were eventually achieved. Before examining the consequences of the latter, however, another important facet of the *sengoku* era needs to be examined: the arrival of Westerners and with them the introduction of firearms, Christianity and the extension of Japan's maritime and foreign trade.

EXPANSION IN EUROPE

Before proceeding with Japanese affairs, however, it may be worthwhile to pause briefly in order to consider, in lightning fashion, developments in Europe. The Renaissance led to the Reformation which in turn produced the Counter-Reformation. The Roman Church, after suffering considerable setbacks, re-emerged with strong militant and mercantile determination. Most illustrative of this new mood was the founding of the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits) by the Basque Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556) in 1540. The ambitions of Christian expansionism were to be significantly aided by other developments, notably in the sciences of navigation, cartography, geography and so on. Needless to say these were not always perfect. In late October 1492, Christopher Columbus (1451-1506) set foot on an island and solemnly declared it must be Japan - in fact, it was the island which came to be called Cuba. Nevertheless, while the *Santa Mana,* the *Pinta* and the MHa, irrespective of their captain's intentions, were heading West, Vasco da Gama (1469-

1524), Fernand Magellan (c. 1480-1521) and others set their sails in an easterly direction.

The age of explorers rapidly metamorphosed into the age of conquerors. Similarly, new economic demands arose. The luxuries of the past - spices, tea, sugar, silks, etc. - were becoming the necessities of the day. The spirit of mercantilism required to be nourished by the acquisition of gold - symbolised in the passionate quest for *el dorado.* In the course of time, and as a result of military and conjugal campaigns, the European nation-states came into being, led by monarchs, such as Francis I (1494-1547), Philip II (1527-98) and Elizabeth I (1533-1603), whose ambitions were matched by their ability.

All these factors combined in enabling these new powers to dispense with hitherto indispensable Levantine and Italian traders. Thus were the great European seaborne empires born. Initially quasi-monopolised by the Spaniards and the Portuguese - who, in spite of Lusitanian reluctance, were united under a single crown from 1580 to 1640 - the defeat of the Spanish Armada and the death of Philip II finally broke the bonds and unleashed the full fury of the Dutch, the English and eventually the French to expand round the world.

For our purposes we can ignore developments in the Ncw[r] World and concentrate our attention briefly on what happened in the East. The Portuguese, after having established themselves in such outposts as Goa on the Malabar Coast (1510), moved to more eastern horizons and decided to settle permanently in Macao (1557). Spain in 1564 sent the *conquistador* Miguel Lopez de Legazpi to subdue and colonise a group of islands in the East which collectively came to be known as the Philippines (after Philip II). Rapidly following in their train came the Dutch who established themselves in Batavia (Djakarta today), while the English contented themselves temporarily with a few outposts on the Coromandel coast, eventually to be joined there by the French. The process which the Japanese subsequently labelled as the eastern advance of Western power (Miryobctozen) was under way. By no means, however, should Japan be seen as nothing but a passive onlooker to these developments. In fact, in the same period of European history which has been described here, events in Japan also seemed to be propelling her to become a great seaborne empire.

THE IBERIAN INTERLUDE AND IMPACT

Earlier in this chapter it was stated that Japanese history could be written largely in terms of contending centrifugal and centripetal forces. The most acute and lengthy period of breakdown of central or quasi-central power occurred in the century which followed the Onin wars. As the second half of the fifteenth century set in, the Ashikaga shogunate of the Muromachi bakufu

was in a parlous state; the shogun Yoshimasa (1434-90) behaved in a manner not unremarkable among sovereigns presiding over chaos - he enjoyed himself. When he died a power-struggle over the succession broke out. This marks the beginning of the *sengoku jidai.* It was a period of total anarchy: contending daimyo strove to gain supremacy as their samurai armies fought battles all over the country. Armed bandits roamed rhe countryside, causing havoc to the agricultural economy, as they tore into villages, pillaging, burning, raping.

In this period of political and military anarchy, however, there were also a number of important social ramifications. The first, as noted earlier, was that a significant degree of social mobility did occur. Secondly, there was a good deal of trade, which allowed merchants to acquire wealth; and indeed, in a manner comparable to medieval Europe, there emerged a number of autonomous commercial towns, notably those of Sakai, Yamaguchi and Osaka. There was also another interesting development. As will be indicated shortly, this period also witnessed the introduction of firearms. Indispensable as a raw material for the warfare being waged was leather. Traditionally, the only group in Japan who worked with leather, and the same who slaughtered animals, were the *eta.* The origins of the *ela*$_t$ who are in fact completely indigenous to the Japanese population, are obscure; suffice it to say here that they were a despised outcast group and, in spite of a number of legal changes, remain so to this day. Given the nature of their work, however, not surprisingly their popularity was considerable during the *sengoku jidai,* as a result of which the feudal war-lords sought to attract *eta* to their domains. Hitherto mainly localised in the Kansai region, the effect of the demand for their services was to scatter them throughout most of the country.

The political settlement which brought the *sengoku jidai* to an end will be looked at later in this chapter. In terms of the 'roots of modern Japan', however, one of the most influential factors was the establishment of the policy of *sakoku* (closed country, namely isolationism) which lasted from 1639 to 1854. This isolationism came as a complete reversal to an expansionism which Japan had been experiencing for some time, the extent and effects of which were remarkable. The background of the policy of isolation, therefore, requires consideration.

The traditional order of foreign relations in East Asia was centred on China. In the preceding chapter a few words were said in regard to the internal social arrangement which comes under the general label of Confucianism. The basic principles of the internal order were applied to external relations - in theory, if not always in practice, this system remained operative until the latter part of the nineteenth century, its executors being initially the Western powers, but ultimately imperial Japan. Thus, as in the

realm of social affairs, the world from a traditional Chinese optic was perceived in hierarchical fashion. China was the middle kingdom, the *huang-ii* (emperor) was the Son of Heaven, the supreme ruler; all surrounding territories were tributary states of China, whose monarchs were vassals of the Aitfing-ti, who paid him tribute of both a ceremonial and material nature. Among other things, the *huang-ti* could be called upon to arbitrate between the disputes of tributary' monarchs whose claims for legitimacy rested on the pow[r]er that was invested in them by the *huang-ti.* Japan, as has already been pointed out, owed a very significant cultural debt to China and there can be little doubt that China's overall superiority in terms of civilisation was recognised by Japan at least until the latter half of the nineteenth century. Strictly speaking, however, Japan had remained outside the Chinese tributary orbit; this may be accounted for partly by reasons of geography - had the Mongol invasions proved successful the nature of the relationship would presumably have changed - but also for indigenous institutional reasons, namely Lhat Japan had her own emperor, the tenno, whose legitimacy was derived from his divine ancestors, and who himself had the power to invest others to rule, whether *kanftaku* or shogun. Nevertheless, there are instances in which the *huang-ti* saw fit to exercise his imperial pow'er over the Japanese, as in, for example, the case of the Ming emperor Chu Ti (1360-1424) conferring upon the third Ashikaga shogun Yoshimitsu (1358-1408) the title of King of Japan in 1404.

The honour thus granted to Yoshimitsu, which in fact he had not requested and indeed did not welcome, w[r]as not, however, without reason. In the course of the middle of the fourteenth century onwards, piracy became a lucrative business in which a good number of lords and their retainers from the western coast of Japan engaged. These pirates - referred to as the *u-ako,* the "wa[1] being the Chinese character for *Yamalo,* the ancient appellation of Japan - plundered the coasts of China and Korea and indeed extended their activities throughout most of South-East Asia. They obtained goods such as silks, porcelains, iron, and precious metals and other luxury goods - the Muromachi era was a highly colourful one, the ruling dite of which were much addicted to luxury goods and luxurious living. In the Philippines, for example, one of the most prized treasures were ancient Chinese ceramic wares which could be found buried in old graves, as these were much appreciated by the participants of the tea ceremony (rAa-n^y); the tea ceremony, though probably originating some time in the early thirteenth century, was initially a mainly religious exercise, closely identified with the Zen Buddhist sect. Under the Ashikaga shogunate, however, it became an exercise in aesthetics, not, as is the case today, of simplicity, but on the contrary of opulent luxury.

Both China and Korea sent missions to Japan to ask that these piratical

plunderings be brought to an end, Yoshimitsu proved reasonably successful in this endeavour, hencc the token of gratitude he received from China. In connection with the *wako* of the mid-fourteenth century there is one interesting tangent. Japanese plunder in Korea caused havoc to the already disintegrating Koryo dynasty (935-1392). A Korean general, by the name of Yi Sŏng-gye, had risen to some prominence partly because of the success he had achieved in repelling the Japanese pirates; in 1392 Yi Sŏng-gye had the last Koryo king deposed, usurped the throne and thus founded the Yi dynasty in Korea, which was to last for over five centuries but was ultimately, in 1910, brought to an end when the Japanese annexed Korea and turned her into a colony.

Piracy, temporarily suppressed, resurfaced as the Ashikaga shogunate weakened and lost effective control. By the early sixteenth century it had resumed on such a scale that China suspended official relations with Japan and severed them completely in 1557. Two points, however, should be noted. The first is that from the mid-fourteenth century Japan became an expansionist commercial nation and Japanese colonies were established throughout most of East Asia, notably in Korea, Formosa, Luzon - which a band of Japanese pirates tried to conquer in 1540, but failed - Annam, Siam - where Japanese mercenaries became the King's palace guard - Borneo, Sumatra, Even after jafautu, these colonies remained, though dwindling in number, ultimately to be absorbed into the local populations for lack of new Japanese blood being exported. The second point is that Japanese expansionism, then, had origins comparable to those of Elizabethan England, the exploits of the *tt-ako* being somewhat reminiscent of those of, for example, Sir Francis Drake (c. 1543-96).

It was in the course of the early/mid sixteenth century that one of the more convulsive events in Japanese history was to occur, namely the arrival of the Portuguese. The impact, both direct and indirect, on the course of Japanese history was substantial. The story itself is a reasonably familiar one and only a very brief summary will lie given here. It is important, however, to assess, albeit quickly, some of the major areas in which the Portuguese presence mostly made itself felt and thereby influenced developments within Japan - warfare, medicine and the sciences in general, trade and navigation, religion and politics, and ultimately *saknku.*

In 1542 the first Europeans to touch Japanese soil landed on the small island of Tanegashima off the southern coast of Kyushu; their arrival, however, was not predetermined, but the result of an accident, their ship having been diverted from their route to Macao by strong winds. A papal Bull of 1502 gave Portugal the exclusive right of prosclytisation in the Far East; the propagation of Christianity by the two Iberian kingdoms was seen as an important element in their mercantile and political expansionism, thus missionaries operated

under what was known as the *Padroado Real* (Royal Patronage) for Portugal and *Paironalo Real* in Spanish. In 1564, as noted earlier, Spain undertook the conquest of the Philippines and thus sent her own missionaries eastwards. Generally speaking the Jesuit order (Society of Jesus) operated under the patronage of the Portuguese monarchy, while such mendicant orders as the Franciscans were under the patronage of the Spanish monarchy. The recipient of this patronage was not necessarily a native of the country from which he received it, though he would probably be the subject of the monarch. Thus Christopher Columbus, a Genoese Jew by origin, nevertheless placed himself under the patronage of Queen Isabella the Catholic (1451-1504) of Castille. Citizenship, needless to say, was not in that period what it is today. The same applies to missionaries and merchants in the Far East. Francis Xavier (1506-52), from Navarre, then part of France, placed himself under the protection of the Portuguese crown, while Will Adams (1564-1620), an Englishman, was employed as a pilot aboard a Dutch vessel, the *Erasmus*. Similarly, many of the so-eailcd "Dutch' who later were able to establish a small factory in the island of Dcjima, which was maintained until the mid-nineteenth century, were not Dutch at all, but Swedes, Hessians, and so on.

Francis Xavier met a Japanese migrant in Goa by the name of Yajiro, who through his extended residence there spoke fluent Portuguese and was asked by Francis to accompany him and two other Jesuits to Japan, which they reached in 1549. Francis Xavier stayed for some two years, before returning to Goa, where he died. Others followed, until the Jesuit missions became quite sizeable and established an impact, if not always an actual presence, in most of Japan. Conversions were numerous. It has often been alleged, however, that such conversions were spurious and motivated simply for commercial or political advantages. There can be little doubt that there was an element of opportunism - something which invariably occurs whenever there are mass conversions anywhere - but to write off the Japanese Christians of this period in such a manner is misleading. Il must be remembered that courageously, indeed heroically, many Japanese Christians faced martyrdom, rather than apostatise. Also, in spite of most effective means employed by the I'okugawa shogunate to completely eradicate Christianity from Japan during a period of more than two centuries, when in the 1860s Christian missionaries were once again allowed to come to Japan (albeit restricted in their activities to three ports), it transpired that a good number of members of fishing communities had kept their faith in secret throughout these centuries; they were known as the *kakure kirishitan* (crypto-Christians).

Although successful to begin with, as the century progressed the Jesuits incurred difficulties, some of which were attributable not to the Japanese but to missionaries operating from the Philippines, it will be recalled that in 1580

Spain and Portugal were joined under the single crown of Philip II. With Philip's consent however Pope Gregory XIII (1502-85) had decreed in his *Ex pastolari officio* of 28 January 1585 that Japan was to remain a preserve of the Jesuits; Franciscans, Dominicans and Augustinians in the Philippines, however, resented and increasingly ignored the papal instructions and began sending their own missionaries to Japan, until Pope Paul V (1552–1621) in his •Sarftr *Aposlolicae Procidentia* of 11 June 1608 revoked the ban and permitted both Jesuits and mendicants to propagate the gospel in Japan. The incessant feuding between the Jesuits and the mendicant orders was by no means the sole cause of the eventual eclipse of Catholic missionary enterprise in Japan, but it certainly contributed to it.

By the late sixteenth century a number of anti-Christian edicts were passed and persecutions begun. The missionaries were made to understand that their presence was no longer welcome. They persisted. Finally in 1614 the conclusive edict banning Christianity was promulgated and all remaining missionaries expelled. Japanese Christians either abjured their foreign faith, or chose martyrdom, or, in some cases as pointed out above, went into hiding, while a number managed to go into exile, some to the Philippines, others to Macao, where in fact it was Japanese Christians who built the magnificent cathedral of St Paul, of which only the impressive facade remains today.

Before leaving this subject, two events arc w[r]orth mentioning. The first is that the Jesuits were instrumental in encouraging two pioneering Japanese missions to visit Europe, The first of these, under the auspices of the Christian daimyo Omura Sumitada (1532-87), Arima Yoshisada (1531-88) and Otomo Yoshishigc (1530-87), consisting of four young men, sailed from Nagasaki in 1582; the route was Nagasaki-Macao-the straits of Malacca-Goa-Cochin-round the Cape of Good Hope and hence to Lisbon. They were received in Madrid by Philip II and in Rome, with splendid pageantry, by Gregory XIII; they returned to Japan in 1590, after a trip of eight years[1] duration. The second mission was carried out under the orders of the formidable daimyo of Mutsu, in north-eastern Japan, Date Masamunc (1566-1636), and entrusted to Hasckura Tsunenaga (1561-1622) of Sendai. Hasekura left in 1613 and travelled to Spain by way of Mexico; he arrived in Madrid a year later, was baptised in the presence of Philip III (1578-1621) and was also received with great pomp in Rome by Pope Paul V. Hasekura returned to Sendai in 1620, seven years following his departure, to find that the policy in regard to Christianity had undergone a significant metamorphosis. In spite of Masamune's order to apostatise, Hasekura refused; his life was spared, though his son, also a Christian, did become a martyr.

Martyrdom, therefore, was fairly rife in Japan of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, initially, the missionaries were simply told to

leave; martyred, however, were those who either refused or sought to return. There is in this context an interesting point to be raised. As suggested above, the Christian convictions of a good number of the Japanese converts were firm. In its attempt to root out what came to be officially labelled as the *jashumon* (which could be translated as 'the evil or pernicious heretical faith'), the new Edo bakufu was prepared to resort to whatever means possible. One of the most effective in suppressing the alien faith was Inoue Chikugo, himself an apostate, who was appointed the first head of the Inquisition Office. It came to be realised by Inoue particularly, but also by others, that the martyrdom of the foreign missionaries had the effect of serving as models for the native Christians and gave them greater resolution in their faith. Therefore another ploy was resorted to. It was thought that if the missionaries could be made to apostatise themselves, then this might prove much more effectual in terms of sapping the morale of the indigenous Christians and also in terms of ridiculing the practitioners of the evil sect. A number of such 'conversions', carried out by means of torture, were brought about. Such was the case of Giuseppe Chiara (1606-85), who married and took the Japanese name of Okamoto Sancmon, and of Christovão Ferreira (1580-1654), who took the name of Sawano Chuan and assisted Inoue in the work of the inquisition. (Ferreira is also the subject of two works by a best-selling contemporary Japanese novelist, Endo Shusaku, born in 1923, both available in English translation: a novel, *Silence,* and a play, *The Golden Country.)* There was one final great Christian uprising: the Shimabara rebellion of 1637-8 led by Amakusa Tokisada (and the ostensible immediate pretext for the policy of *sakoku* adopted the following year), in which rebellious peasants were spurred on by quasi-messianic hopes. By and large, however, and with the exception of the *kakure kirtshttan,* Japan from the late 1630s to the mid-nineteenth century was rid of both missionaries and indigenous Christians. In 1709 an Italian Jesuit, Giovanni Batista Sidotti (1668-1715), sought to smuggle himself inside the country; he was caught, interrogated and ultimately put to death. He must have been a man of a singularly persuasive character, for among other things he managed to convince his chief interrogator, Arai Hakuscki (1657-1725), one of Edo Japan's leading intellectuals, that the Christian religion was not necessarily as injurious to the country's interests as the authorities wished to make out.

Two very different points can perhaps be derived from the events narrated above. First, traditionally the atmosphere in Japan has generally been reasonably tolerant in regard to religious matters. In carly-seventeenth-century Japan, however, Christianity was perceived by the authorities not so much as a religion but as an ideology; this ideology w[r]as held to be inimical and subversive to the interests of the state, of what could be described as the

nascent Tokugawa body-politic, and hence had to be rooted out. Without wishing to stretch comparisons too far, there is nevertheless a certain similarity here between the way the Tokugawa authorities viewed Christianity and the way in which, three hundred years later, the military regimes of the 1930s perceived Marxism: both were condemned as not only evil, but pernicious and dangerous and just as the Tokugawa authorities sought in due course to stamp out heresy by forced conversions to orthodoxy, so did the government of the 1930s prefer conversion to execution.

Secondly, what occurred in Japan also corresponds to a fairly universal pattern. A characteristic of the period lasting from roughly the late sixteenth to the early eighteenth centuries was the rise of absolutist monarchies - this was happening in the Ottoman Empire, also in Russia with the consolidation of Romanov rule, especially under Peier I (1672-1725), in France under a succession of Bourbon kings from Henry IV (1553-1610) to Louis XIV (1638-1715), in Mughal India under Akbar (1556-1605), in the foundations of the Ch'ing Empire in China, and so on.

The establishment of the Tokugawa dynasty by Icyasu (1542-1616) was a Japanese variant of this fairly universal phenomenon. The advent of these absolutist monarchies in many parts of Europe and Asia was due to a multiplicity of factors, notably, for example, the changing technology of warfare and particularly the introduction and proliferation of firearms. At the same time, these absolutist monarchies required supportive ideologies. Thus, whereas the literature on Japan in the late sixteenth/early seventeenth centuries will inevitably mention the persecutions of Christians, it must not be forgotten that the Christians in their own territories were carrying out a good deal of persecution themselves. For the Iberians it was the age of the Inquisition. In England at this time the climate was not particularly healthy for Catholics- In France Huguenots were being persecuted or forced into exile; many of these chose England and with their skills and ethic thereby contributed to the first industrial revolution taking place in England rather than France, The point then is that the consolidation of monarchical rule anywhere also required the consolidation of orthodox ideology; or, to put it another way, an absolutist monarchy required an absolutist doctrine. What was taking place in Japan was not in nature any different from what was happening in many other parts of the world undergoing similar political developments.

Apart from Christianity, the Portuguese introduced the Japanese to a good number of things. Among these one should not forget to include bread, the Japanese word for which to this day remains *pan,* borrowed from the Portuguese, as indeed is the case with *tabaka* (tobacco), and they taught the Japanese how to fry fish in batter, leading to the national dish called *tenpura.*

Gunpowder and the printing press, as every schoolchild knows, were Chinese inventions, but for reasons uncertain, having invented them, the Chinese then forgot about them, with the result that both were re-introduced into the Far East by the Iberians. There were other consequences of the Portuguese arrival which deserve attention,

In terms of shaping the destiny of Japanese history, and especially the unification of the country which was achieved by the end of the sixteenth century and thus terminated the era of civil war, the greatest Portuguese contribution was the introduction of firearms. Given the raging wars, needless to say, these came to be in considerable demand. First introduced in 1543, within two years the Japanese were manufacturing (heir own and urban centres such as Sakai and Yokkaichi became famous for their production. Firearms were responsible for the consolidation of power into fewer hands and ultimately for the rise to power of the famous trio, in succession Oda Nobunaga (1534-82), Toyotomi Hidryoshi (1536-98) and ultimately Tokugawa leyasu.

Originally samurai battles consisted not so much of a general rnêlée, but of a whole series of individual combats; the samurai would announce his pedigree, his motivation in engaging in battle and his intention after victory - though often waiting for chroniclers to arrive before bothering with any of these. By the fourteenth century, as there developed a more sophisticated knowledge of the use of the horse in warfare, battles became more co-ordinated, especially in their greater reliance on cavalry charges. The samurai then was a mounted archer and indeed the way of the samurai was referred to as the way of the bow and the horse. The introduction of firearms and the use of cannon by the last quarter of the sixteenth century led to a metamorphosis both in combat and fortification. Huge stone castles were built, hence leading to the establishment of castle-towns throughout Japan. In terms of tactics and organisation, firearms led to the abandonment of close combat in favour of long-range fighting, of the cavalry' being replaced in favour of the infantry, and of rearrangements of units within the army, leading to larger armies under central command. Changes of course also occurred in armour. What all this meant, among other things, was the increasing pro fession al isat ion of the warrior and consequently a greater differentiation between warrior and peasant.

The last major battle of the *sengoku* era was that of Sekigahara in 1600, although a number of serious engagements did occur in 1614 and in the Shimabara rebellion mentioned above. By the end of the third decade of the seventeenth century, however, Japan was for all intents and purposes at peace. The firearm fell into disuse. In that sense, its impact can be said to have been of relatively short duration, albeit powerful at the time. The distinctive

mark and symbol of the samurai in the course of the peaceful Edo era was the sword. The great aura attached to the sword, therefore - with army and navy officers even in the Second World War carrying them at their side - is a comparatively recent phenomenon. Certainly when in the second half of the nineteenth century the Westerners returned, the Japanese were making very little use of firearms, while the sword appeared to be omnipresent.

In the sixteenth century the scientific gap between Europe and East Asia was by no means as substantial as it was to be in the mid-nineteenth. Nevertheless the Europeans were able to teach the Japanese a few things; the printing press and the manufacture and use of firearms have already been mentioned, but one should also add that under European guidance significant strides were made in naval construction and navigation, including the use of the compass and developments in cartography.

Even in the first decade of the seventeenth century Ieyasu was seeking to obtain from the Spanish Governor General of the Philippines skilled carpenters in order to assist the Edo *bakufu* in the construction of ships. This request was not acted upon immediately, on the ostensible grounds that the Governor General had to obtain approval for such a venture from the Viceroy of Mexico, under whose jurisdiction the Philippines were placed, though the real reason may have been the Spaniards' belief that their security against the Japanese lay in the latter's relative ignorance of naval construction. The Iberians, however, had also instructed the Japanese in more sophisticated methods of mining and in the refining of certain metals, especially silver. The Japanese were also taught techniques in Western painting, with quite a number of Japanese Christian paintings surviving to this day. Perhaps the most significant work of the Jesuits, however, lay in the field of medicine, both in the sense of medical science and that of medical care. To this ChristovSo Ferreira contributed a great deal, as did a devout merchant by the name of Luis de Almeida (1525-84). Some of the more impressive medico-pastoral work carried out was that catering to the needs of orphans and especially to lepers.

The Japanese followed Chinese nomenclature for the Portuguese, namely by referring to them as the *nanban-jin* (barbarians from the south), hcncc the sciences which they imported into Japan were referred to as *nanban-gaku (gaku* meaning studies or school). The concrete contribution of the Jesuits here must not be exaggerated, partly because their own knowledge was limited and the atmosphere in Catholic kingdoms at the time was not particularly conducive to scientific inquiry'. Also in the chauvinistic hysteria which led to the policy of *sakoku,* progress in Western studies was limited; in fact one could probably speak in terms of regress. Nevertheless, *nanban-gaku* was the first in a series of Japanese accumulation and assimilation of (mainly) scientific knowledge from

the West – to be followed in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries by *Rangaku* (Dutch Studies) and in the second half of the nineteenth century by KjfaAu (Western Studies) - which in due course permitted the country to experience her own, albeit borrowed, scientific revolution so that by the early twentieth century Japan had by and large 'caught up' with the West. In other words, the reception of *nanban-gaku* is a reflection of the Japanese spirit of intellectual curiosity and scientific enterprise.

It should be understood that in its inception the policy of exclusion, *sakoku,* was directed primarily against the Iberians. It should also be remembered that as far as Japan's neighbours, Korea and China, were concerned, it was they who by severing relations with Japan in the mid-fifteenth century - a policy further strengthened by Hideyoshi's abortive attempt to conquer both towards the end of the century - were isolating themselves from the Japanese, not vice versa. The Dutch, whose first vessel, *de Liefde,* reached Japan in 1600, were not expelled from Japan, although they were severely restricted in their movements in the country. The English did make a brief appearance in the decade 1613-23, but it was they who chose to leave, not the Japanese who forced them out. The fact chat when the English tried to return to Nagasaki in 1673 and resume trading relations they were in fact rebuffed is a separate matter, though part of the reason for the Japanese refusal was the Dutch informing them of the marriage between Charles 11 (1630-85) and the Portuguese Catholic princess Catherine of Braganza (1638-1705).

European commercial rivalries and warfare were pursued, or at the very least reflected in both Asia and the New World, From the point of view of the Dutch it was not so much a question of the royal marriage as the fact that England and the Netherlands were at war with each other. This reflection of European rivalries can also be seen in the fact that the Dutch assisted the Japanese in the siege of Shimabara, where there were a number of Portuguese Jesuits. *Sakt/ku,* it must be emphasised, was originally an essentially anti-Christian edict, directed almost exclusively at the Iberians; Christian in the ideological sense referred to above, but also against the kingdom of Philip II and his descendants because of the proximity of their colony in the Philippines. The Dutch were also, of course, Christians but whereas the Portuguese revered both God and Mammon, in their East Asian activities at least, the Dutch were prepared to content themselves with the latter. The *predikanten* (Dutch Calvinist missionaries) simply did not play the role in Dutch commercial and territorial expansionism that missionaries played in Catholic kingdoms, initially Spain and Portugal and subsequently France. Nor must it be believed that Tokugawa fear of militant Christianity was purely illusory; the Shimabara rebellion has already been alluded to, but also in the Osaka campaigns waged by the Tokugawa against Hideyoshi's son and presumptive

heir, Hideyori (1593-1615), Christian samurai had swelled the ranks of the enemy and they advanced into battle carrying crosses and the names of Jesus and Santiago (the patron saint of Spain) inscribed as martial insignia. European rivalries, therefore, persisted in Japan, a phenomenon the Japanese were able to benefit from, and such was the case especially in the area of trade - a complex matter, a general outline of which we should now consider.

FOREIGN TRADE, CIVIL WAR AND ISOLATION

In the mid-sixteenth century, as we have seen, China and Korea severed all relations, including commercial ones, with Japan. It is true that an indirect trade with the two could still be maintained, partly via the Ryukyu (L'iu-ch'eou in Chinese) islands, which the Satsuma *han* (fief - hereafter not italicised) annexed as a tributary state in the early seventeenth century, and partly via the increasing number of Chinese immigrant merchants who set themselves up in most ports of South-East Asia. Japan's main import requirements were raw silks, silk goods, metals and sugar. With the arrival of the Portuguese these requirements significantly expanded; although rhe Japanese, as pointed out earlier, began manufacturing firearms themselves, there was a constant demand for imports as well, not only of firearms but also of a variety of commodities needed for warfare. The daimyo of the *sengo/cu* era, for obvious reasons, became very active in foreign trade. In order to pay for imports there occurred a frantic development in mining of gold and silver, especially the latter which was the medium of exchange in foreign trade.

The Portuguese increasingly became the lynch-pin of Japan's overseas commercial activities. The jenfotu daimyo welcomed Portuguese ships and competed in luring them to the ports in their domains. Portugal's Eastern operations were triangular in nature: chartered ships left Goa annually for Macao carrying mainly silver bullion and spices; with the proceeds obtained from the sale they purchased raw silk, silk goods and gold which were added to their stock of firearms and gunpowder, with which they sailed to Japan; these were then exchanged for silver with which the Portuguese ships returned to Goa. By the late sixteenth century the Portuguese had come to monopolise most of Japan's foreign trade and they were thereby able to maintain profit rates of 70 to 80 per cent, at times even more than 100 per cent. Portugal's control of Japan's trade was clearly detrimental to the latter's economic interests.

The central government sought to remedy this situation by two measures: the first was to obtain government monopoly on mining and foreign trade, the second was to play the Portuguese against the Dutch and ultimately to force the former out. The city of Nagasaki was the centre of foreign trade. The city had in fact been quite simply donated to the Portuguese missionaries by the

Christian daimyo Omura Sumitada (1532-87); Hidcyoshi confiscated the city and its surroundings and placed the whole territory under the jurisdiction of his administration. Hidcyoshi, as we will see, had dissipated his energies and his coffers in two fruitless campaigns on the mainland. Icyasu, forsaking foreign military adventures, sought to consolidate the economic foundations of his bakufu by profiting from foreign trade. He encouraged commercial transactions with foreign countries and sought to establish cordial relations with China and Korea and with the Spanish government in the Philippines, One of the very first steps which followed the establishment of his regime was to promulgate an ordinance on the conduct of the silk trade. Thus a quasi-governmental monopoly was established in the shape of the *itowappu,* whereby the merchants of the major commercial centres, Kyoto, Sakai and Nagasaki, subsequently including Edo and Osaka, were forced to form an association for the import of raw silk goods; the bakufu required priority of purchase, the remainder being distributed for marketing in the rest of the country. The *itowappu (ito* means silk, *wappu* quota) was subsequently broadened in order to include commodities other than silk.

By the early seventeenth century trade between Japan and China resumed - and indeed grew initially, though it came to be interrupted owing to the wars raging between the Ming and the invading Manchus - and leyasu was able to increase trade with the English and the Dutch at the expense of the Portuguese. Icyasu then proceeded to establish a bakufu monopoly in merchant shipping overseas. He sent personal letters to the various rulers of South-East Asian countries informing them that hereafter only those Japanese ships which carried his official red seal permits (rAupyo) should be allowed to carry out trade on Japan's behalf. The 'red seal ships' (rAtn'njwi) proliferated with the result that in the three decades preceding *sakoku* close to 400 ships navigated in East and South-East Asia. Japan's exports still consisted mainly of metals (essentially silver, copper and iron), while imports continued to be dominated by raw silk and silk goods, though deer-skins and shark-skins (for sword hilts) were also an important commodity. It is clear then that at this stage the bakufu was moving in the same general direction of governments such as those of Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands, England, France and Denmark, namely the establishment of monopolies (in the case of European countries via the founding of the East India Companies) over foreign trade.

Why then did Japan suddenly alter course and revert completely from a policy of commercial expansionism to one of isolationism? This is, needless to say, a much-debated subject among historians. The answer, we believe, is to be found more in political than in economic developments. *Sakoku* in terms of trade was more illusory than real. First, one needs to consider Japanese trade with China and Korea. Trade with Korea continued at an admittedly uneven

but generally uninterrupted pace through the intermediary of the So daimyo family of Tsushima island who maintained a factory in the Korean port of Pusan - an arrangement which lasted well into the latter part of the nineteenth century and which the Koreans were loath to abandon. In regard to China, official relations were not re-established until China and Japan signed a European-style treaty in 1871, but trade between the two was vigorous.

It was in 1635, four years before *sakoku,* that the ban on Japanese leaving the country was imposed and subsequendy naval construction for seafaring, as opposed to purely coastal navigation, was prohibited. Chinese ships, however, frequently visited the port of Nagasaki; in the first half of the seventeenth century the number of Chinese ships averaged about sixty per annum; in the years of the Ming-Ch'ing wars in the sixties and seventies there was a substantial decline, though by the end of the seventeenth century the number increased to close to 200 per annum. The nature of the trade, the commodities bought and sold, remained substantially the same, and it was also the Chinese who imported into Japan goods from South-East Asia, including rhinoceros horns - the powder of which, according to universal belief, has powerful aphrodisiac effects.

The loss of the Japanese trade, immensely valuable in terms of its ratio of world silver transactions, was a contributory cause to the decline of the Lusitanian empire. The Portuguese loss was a Dutch gain and they subsequently jealously guarded the monopoly, among European powers, which they came to have over Japanese trade. The Dutch exported from Japan mainly silver and copper - the latter especially played a vital role in the Netherlands' international trade and balance of payments throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries - but also lacquer-ware and porcelains; Persia, for example, is said to have imported annually thousands of Japanese teacups bought from Ihitch ships.

In the course of the eighteenth century the turnover of foreign trade in Nagasaki diminished. There were essentially two reasons for this. One is that, as shall be seen later, Japan's population (which following the *sengpku* era increased dramatically within the first 120 years or so of the Edo era from an estimated fifteen million to somewhere in the region of thirty million), by the second quarter of the eighteenth century ceased to grow and remained virtually stagnant for over a century. Thus the domestic market for imports reached a demographic ceiling.

Secondly, it will have been noticed that in all discussions on trade so far, raw silk and silk goods always figured prominently in Japan's imports. Throughout the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Japan consistently suffered from a considerable and indeed very harmful balance of payments

deficit. Thus, it will also have been noticed that Japan's exports consisted primarily of precious metals, especially silver. Japan, therefore, was experiencing a drain of specie for the purchase of silk. The bakufu became aware of and increasingly alarmed at this situation, and began to resort to various measures. One was what in contemporary terms would l>e called selective import controls, in other words the importation of certain products was banned or limited quotas were imposed. Another more productive measure was, wherever possible, to encourage domestic production. The most important and fruitful area in which this policy was pursued was in sericulture. It must be stressed that throughout the Muromachi, *sengoku* and early Edo eras Japan had been completely dependent on the import of both raw silk and silk fabrics. With an assiduity comparable to that of the second half of the nineteenth century when the Japanese set about learning Western technology', Chinese treatises on sericulture were brought into Japan, studied, and Japanese works on the subject also written and distributed. Mulberry trees were grown, silkworms reared, and in due course the entire process of the silk industry, from rearing worms to finished products, was established throughout most of the country. In the short term this of course meant that Japan became self-sufficient in the product which hitherto she had been most dependent on obtaining from abroad, which, inevitably, in turn meant that her balance of payments benefited considerably. In the long term, however, though no one could have divined this at the time, the domestic production of silk was to have much more far-reaching consequences, in that when Japan was re-opened to international trade in the mid-nineteenth century it was raw silk initially, and subsequently silk products as well, which became Japan's major item of export to Europe and thereby subsidised the country's programme of industrialisation.

PACIFICATION AND UNIFICATION

We must now turn our attention briefly to the process of pacification and unification which brought the *sengoku* era to an end. The reunification of Japan may be said to have started when Oda Nobunaga entered Kyoto with Yoshiaki (1537-97), the last Ashikaga shogun; Nobunaga had already achieved the pacification and control over the central provinces from Owari to the Kinai region. Nobunaga was from a small daimyo family in the province of Owari. As he was not a descendant of the Minamoto he could not claim the shogunal throne; initially, therefore, he allowed Yoshiaki to remain shogun while he set himself up in the position *of shikken* (regent). Upon his death the mantle of pacification was taken over by Hideyoshi. Nobunaga had succeeded in controlling the central provinces of Japan, but the north and Kyushu still eluded his grasp. In 1587 Hideyoshi dealt a severe defeat on the Shimazu

daimyo, whose power had extended through most of the island, and forced him back to the confines of the southern domain of Kagoshima. Three years later, with Hideyoshi's victory at Odawara, the eight provinces of the Kanto area, hitherto controlled by the Hojo, were brought to submission and placed under the supervision of Tokugawa Ieyasu. Date Masamune, rccognising/orc? *majture,* submitted to Hideyoshi and thus was the unification of Japan achieved.

Arising out of a predilection on the part of some to find Western counterparts to major Japanese historical figures - such as Admiral Togo Heihachiro the 'Nelson of Japan', Okubo Toshimichi the 'Bismarck of Japan[1], etc. - Hideyoshi is sometimes referred to as the 'Napoleon of Japan'. Whereas the Corsican was of petty nobility, Hideyoshi's origins were far more modest. Both, however, were complete parvenus on the political scene, both rose to prominence because of their impressive records in warfare, both were first-class generals but poor admirals, both waged war, but also carried out extensive internal reforms which had radical and long-lasting effects. Hideyoshi's nerve, in every literal and figurative sense of the term, was amazing. He fraudulently claimed to be of Fujiwara descent and thereby in 1585 received the investiture from the tenno Ogimachi (1516-93) as *kanpaku.* The fiction is less important than the fact. The tenno Ogimachi - as was also the case with his grandson Go-Yozei who was forced to recognise Icyasu's fraudulent claim to Minamoto pedigree and thereby invested in him and his descendants the office of shogun — was in one sense impotent, in that he could not counter Hideyoshi's military strength, but he retained supreme legitimacy- The imperial court in the course of the *sengoku* era had fallen in material terms in possibly the worst condition of its existence. Hideyoshi revived imperial finances and imperial prestige, while securing his own prestige anti power. The very act of seeking imperial sanctification sanctified, once again, the tenno; Hideyoshi, therefore, and Ieyasu subsequently, paved the way for the Imfierial Restoration which was to occur three centuries later.

Hideyoshi was the architect, Ieyasu the builder - albeit inserting a few modifications in the original blueprint. There is, however, one major difference between the policies of the two. Ieyasu, as wt have seen, believed in the benefits of international commerce and international intercourse, but he did not, however, favour territorial expansion. Hideyoshi's internal policies will be looked at shortly; first, however, we must ask why Hideyoshi sought to embark on a policy of expansionism and how it was implemented.

The second question is easier to resolve than the first. In regard to Hideyoshi's motivation, one can do little more than hypothesise. As has been pointed out above, marauding by Japanese pirates on the coasts of China and Korea had occurred in the fourteenth century and was resumed with greater

force in the mid-sixteenth, Hidcyoshi had put a stop to the activities of these latter-day *wako*, but China still refused to re-establish relations with Japan. One factor, therefore, was a sense of pique on Hideyoshi's part for being rebuffed by the Ming - a sentiment no doubt aggravated by the contempt in which the Japanese were held by the Chinese, There is, it would seem, another element. Warfare, except perhaps in cases where the result is complete defeat, does not appear to drain warriors' energies, but to fuel them. In 1590 domestic peace was achieved. The atmosphere, however, remained militantly warlike, thus providing circumstances under which a good foreign campaign would be welcome. Also a foreign campaign was a means of dissipating the attention and energies of potential foes. Victory would no doubt have also resulted in substantial economic gains; Japan would then control all the wealth and trade of the Far East and South-East of Asia, and indeed Hideyoshi's vision stretched as far as India, It is possible also, though there is no way to prove it, that Hidcyoshi was moved by Spain's example. Finally, no doubt one of the most vital factors was quite simply Hideyoshi's megalomania.

Hidcyoshi had originally hoped for, if not Korean alliance, at least acquiescence in his planned invasion of China. Due to a degree of recalcitrance and procrastination on the part of the Korean kingdom, in May 1592 an army of just under 200,000 landed at Pusan. The whole campaign, including intermittent periods of armistice and peace negotiations, lasted six and a half years, ending shortly after Hideyoshi's death and indeed at his dying request. Initially the Japanese were highly successful and soon occupied all of Korea and reached as far as south-eastern Manchuria. Spectacular though their initial victories may have been, they were still far from Peking. In fact they never progressed any further and when the Japanese troops were withdrawn, a stalemate had been reached; the Japanese, it is true, suffered little, but Korea was left devastated.

Although the Ming response to Korea's plea for aid was initially weak, it subsequently increased significantly; and although the Japanese were far superior both in arms and tactics on land, the Koreans, especially under the brilliant admiral Yi Sun-sin (1545-98), mastered the sea and therefore cut off Japan'5 supplies; the severe Korean winter caused sickness and demoralisation in the Japanese camps; the Japanese were constantly harassed by Korean guerrilla-type bands, known as the *uigan* (righteous armies). Thus ended Japan's first concerted attempt at imperialism. One footnote perhaps can be added; the comparison with Napoleon, precarious in any case, ceases in that Hidcyoshi, unlike the Corsican, did not lead his own troops into battle, but sought to orchestrate the campaign from Japan - in spite of repeated announcements that he was shortly to depart.

REFORMS AND A NEW SOCIAL ORDER

Tht background of the *sengoku* era must be clearly understood in order to appreciate the numerous intensive and extensive reforms which occurred, first under Hidtyoshi and then subsequently under Ieyasu and his early successors, in the last decade or so of the sixteenth century and the first four of the seventeenth. Japan in the *sengoku* decades did not suffer merely from political anarchy and the ravages of warfare. The country can be said to have been inflicted with a moral cancer - which is no doubt one of the (admittedly many) reasons why Christianity should have proved appealing in this atmosphere of depravation. The most hedonistic forms of licentiousness were rife and in battle savagery and treachery prevailed. Among the numerous reforms passed, therefore, one of the major elements which must be constantly borne in mind is that the new rulers of Japan were strongly motivated by a desire to impose a moral order. This will be seen in various areas, though to show the extent to which they went, one example is worth citing.

Prostitution, needless to say, had been rife; following an edict enacted in 1617 under Ieyasu's heir, Hidetada (1579-1632), a cleaning-up operation was undertaken. Hereafter the profession was allowed to be exercised only in designated areas on the periphery of the cities, in areas which came to be referred to as*yukaku* (upleasure enclosures') - thereby adopting a policy, albeit of course unwittingly, pioneered in Europe by the sixth-century BC Athenian statesman Solon, who had established houses of prostitution in certain quarters of the outskirts of Athens and declared them a state monopoly. It must of epurse be pointed out that, as in the case with Solon, Hidetada *s motivations may not have been exclusively moral, but economic as well: licensed prostitution - taxed prostitution.

The Edo bakufu also sought to limit the extent of concubinage. Strictly speaking Japan was a monogamy in that a man had only one wife, but the system of concubinage was well established. According to rules passed in 1615, in theory daimyo were limited to eight concubines, high functionaries to five, samurai to two, while commoners should have none. As with all moral legislation anywhere, such proscriptions had only a very limited effect.

In regard to economic and political reforms, the overriding concern of Hideyoshi and subsequently the early Tokugawa shogun was to achieve the maximum degree of national unification, a necessary precondition of which was to ensure the weakening of the daimyo. (The abolition of the daimyo at this stage was militarily impossible.) In social terms the concern was to restore order, to restore feudal hierarchical relations and thereby to prevent the sort of social chaos which had prevailed - and which, ironically, Hideyoshi himself had benefited from - in the *sengoku* era. The ideology' which was used to buttress the regime was a rigid form of Confucianism, which, as indicated

briefly in the earlier chapter, perceived society in hierarchical terms and alleged that chaos did ensue when the hierarchical order broke down.

In economic terms we have already seen how Hidcyoshi imposed a monopoly on mining. Subsequently a central monopoly was also enforced in regard to minting of coins. It was also during this period that the standardisation of weights and measures was carried out. We have also seen how Hideyoshi sought to establish a monopoly over foreign trade and how this policy was pursued with effect by leyasu, including the retention of Nagasaki as a bakufu-adm ini stored port. Further steps were taken to achieve greater national economic consolidation. Since the Nara era customs barriers *(sekisho)* had been erected and in the course of the Ashikaga shogunate these multiplied; in 1568 Nobunaga began to abolish the *sekisho,* a policy continued by Hideyoshi, while under the Tokugawa the private construction of *sekisho* was prohibited and those which existed no longer performed an economic function, but a purely policing exercise.

Perhaps Hideyoshi's greatest achievement was the land survey which he had carried out from 1582 to 1598 - known as the *taiko-kenchi, kenchi* meaning land surveying. The land survey was carried out in a manner according to which the village (mum) was the basic unit; from the assessment of the yield of each individual plot, the total was calculated in the form of the *muradaka,* namely the agricultural yield of the village. On this basis taxes were to be paid; thus the responsibility for the payment of taxes was not an individual, but a collective matter, it being up to the village administrators (mura-yaiunin), usually elected from among the farmers, to ensure that each household contributed its due and the total reached, as indeed it was also their responsibility to control irrigation and generally maintain order. The *taiko-kenchi,* therefore, recognised the right of cultivation of the farmers on their plots; but at the same time peasant migration and the buying or selling of land were strictly prohibited.

The social order which came to be imposed on Japan was derived from Confucianist principles. In the Chinese scheme of things, society was divided into (in descending order), literati, peasants, artisans and the merchants; because they were not directly engaged in production and labour, but benefited from that of others, merchants were relegated to the bottom rung of the ladder. The settlement in Edo Japan consisted ofrcplacing the literati with the samurai. There is, however, an important distinction which made the Japanese system far more rigid. In China any male, irrespective of how lowly his birth, could aspire to the top rung of the ladder, assuming he passed the competitive civil sendee examinations. China, therefore, in social philosophy remained a meritocracy and admitted social mobility. Japan, on the other hand, was an aristocracy, the only determining factor being that of birth.

The process of social differentiation between the peasantry and the samurai was accelerated by Hideyoshi's *kalunu-gari* (sword hunt) of 1588, whereby weapons were confiscated from peasants; it should be noted, however, that although this policy rnay have been couched in ideological terms, it had also been motivated by strong pragmatic considerations, namely to try to bring to an end the numerous and constant peasant rebellions which had become endemic in the *sengoku* era. The process of differentiation between samurai and peasants was furthered by the policy of removing all samurai from the land and installing them in the castle-towns *(jöka-mathi).* This measure was also aimed at securing Lhe feudal bonds between lord and retainers; by placing the latter in firm allegiance to (he former, it was hoped that the practice *of gekokujo* would be brought to an end.

The establishment of this network of relationships was of a social, political, but also economic character. For the sake of simplicity, we shall ignore here merchants and artisans. The basic social and judicial unit was the household («)■ The institution and concept of the *ie* is one to which we shall be frequently referring in this work. It is at the same time one of the most important and complex phenomena in Japanese history and society. Sometimes translated as 'family', preference here is given to 'household', in that the *if* included all those physically attached to the household and not necessarily by tics of kinship - for example, servants, apprentices, adopted sons and daughters, with wives belonging to their husbands' w but not to that of their parents - while family members, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, etc., would probably belong to separate *ie.* Inside the *ie,* according to Confucian ist precepts, a strict hierarchy was supposed to be observed, in that all owed allegiance to the head of the household, while younger brothers were subservient to the eldest brother, sisters to their brothers, and so forth. The individual *ie* was part of that greater collective, the *mura* (village), and each owed obeisance and paid taxes to lhe *mura-yakurtin.* They in turn paid homage and the taxes to the samurai administrators, who passed on the latter into the daimyo's coffers, and, of course, owed the daimyo complete and absolute allegiance.

The samurai were forbidden - in keeping with the strict social segregation - from engaging in remuneratory activities; their income consisted of fixed stipends, determined by their rank, which they received from their daimyo. The daimyo, therefore, had the exclusive right of taxation and jurisdiction in their han (fiefs). They were not responsible for direct taxation to the bakufu, but they could lie, and frequently were, called upon to contribute to public works. The daimyo, who were also ranked in hierarchical order, owed allegiance to the shogun (or to the *kanpaku* at the time of Hideyoshi). While the shogun (or *kanpaku)* owed absolute allegiance to the ten no, from whom his legitimacy was derived, the shogun was also responsible for the economic

welfare of the imperial court. The system was one of decentralised unification; this may appear to be a contradiction in terms, but would be, nevertheless, a reasonable translation of what in the Edo era is referred to as the *baku-han-sei* (bakufu-han system).

The daimyo - the number of which varied, but was generally during the Edo era in the region of 270, though their revenue, territory, power and status differed enormously as well - remained, therefore, in theory autonomous. For peace and unification to be achieved, however, the absolute prerequisite was to secure the submission of the daimyo. What Hidcyoshi did was to deprive all existing daimyo of their estates. Those he was militarily strong enough to crush, he abolished; the others he enfeoffed anew, either in their former estates, or in different ones, or in smaller segments of their former estates. This practice was carried on by the Tokugawa shoguns, with indeed the most extensive reorganisation of daimyo taking place following the decisive Tokugawa victory in the battle of Sekigahara in 1600 - in which Ieyasu's power was challenged by the daimyo who remained faithful to the house of Toyotomi and the person of the young Hideyori, 'this policy pursued by both Hidcyoshi and Icyasu was aimed not only at weakening Iocs, but also at rewarding allies. The han given by the shogun to the daimyo - and the same applied to the shogun's direct retainers, of which there were two categories, *hatamoto* (bannermen) and *go-kenin* (personal attendants) - were personal gifts to the individuals concerned, not to their descendants. What generally happened, though not invariably, especially in the early years of the Edo bakufu, was that once a daimyo died, his heir was re-invested with jurisdiction over his fief. Similarly, when a shogun died the relationship was renewed.

'The battle ol Sekigahara was undoubtedly a landmark and it was this victory which enabled Ieyasu, three years later, to proclaim himself shogun, establish the Tokugawa dynasty and a bakufu in the eastern city of Edo. In spite of this success, however, Ieyasu's position remained somewhat precarious: he had both former foes and ambitious allies to fear, and while Hideyori remained alive his claim to legitimacy was jealously and resolutely fostered by his heroically courageous and legendary mother, Yodogimi (1569-1615). The 'Toyotomi family ceased to pose a danger in 1615, for the simple reason that it ceased to exist altogether following the Tokugawa siege and destruction of Osaka castle in that year and the suicide of both Yodogimi and Hideyori. Ieyasu died the following year.

Ieyasu's heirs, notably the second and third shoguns, Hidetada (1579-1632) and lemitsu (1603-51), further consolidated the Edo bakufu's military, economic, and political power, thereby weakening that of the daimyo, until in the mid-seventeenth century it could be claimed without any exaggeration that

the Tokugawa house had established what amounted to an absolute monarchy in a fashion comparable, in many respects, to that of Louis XIV in France - with the important difference, however, that Hidetada, Iemitsu and their successors did not drain the treasury by engaging in foreign wars. It remains, therefore, in the final pages of this chapter to describe the Tokugawa settlement as it was formed in the course of the seventeenth century and, *mutatis mutandis,* remained in essence until 1862 (the year in which the *sankin-kotai,* the system of alternative residence of daimyo in Edo, was abandoned).

FOUNDATIONS OF THE TOKUGAWA BAKUFU

Obviously one of the more important pillars of the Tokugawa edifice had to rest on wealth. Already under Hideyoshi, the Tokugawa domains had been substantially increased, with the result, in fact, that their value - calculated in terms of yields of rice, the normal unit being the *koku,* equivalent to 4·96 bushels - was by far the greatest in Japan, in fact more (han double the second largest han. In the rearrangements which occurred under Ieyasu and his successors, these holdings were increased; in fact the *teniyo* (shogunal domains) came to account for about a quarter of the Japanese territory. We have already seen how the bakufu maintained a monopoly on foreign trade, mining and minting. The Tokugawa administration also took under its control most of Japan's major commercial urban centres, including Nagasaki, Kyoto, Sakai, Hyogo, Niigata, Hakodate and Osaka. Thus the bakufu enjoyed substantial revenues from agricultural taxation, commerce and mining. Furthermore, the bakufu obtained considerable contributions in Ixnh kind and labour from a number of daimyo for public works, which included the Tokugawa's own castles, such as the Edo castle, the newly constructed Nijo in Kyoto, and so on.

The enrichment of the bakufu was accompanied, by and large, by the impoverishment, in relative terms, of the daimyo. Daimyo, under the Tokugawa settlement, were ranked according to two, non-corrcsponding, methods. Thus a daimyo's power could be measured in terms of the number of koku of rice at which his domain was valued. In terms, however, of status and proximity to the shogunal throne, there was another form of division, namely the *shinpan, ftsdai* and *tozama* The *shinpan* were collateral branches of the main Tokugawa family, they had close access to (he shogun, and in cases of the ruling shogun dying without an heir, a successor might be chosen from one of three families (collectively known as the *go-sanke),* the Owari, Kii and Mito. The *fudai* were those who had allied themselves to the Tokugawa prior to the battle of Sekigahara, while the *tozama* were those who submitted themselves to Ieyasu in the course of or immediately after the battle. The *tozama,* who included such powerful daimyo as those of Shirnazu (Satsuma

han), Maeda (Kaga), Date (Sendai) and Mori (Choshu), were in many cases wealthy, but were perceived by the Tokugawa with suspicion and throughout the Edo era they were generally without any influence or notable presence at the shogunal court. The*fudai,* on the other hand, usually had far more meagre revenues, but they could hold influential positions within the shogunal court, and indeed it was from their number that the *roju* (councillors, generally a body of about six members) were appointed.

Following the death of Hidcyori and at a time w'hcn Tokugawa power was clearly in an uncontested ascendant, the bakufu issued the *buke sho-hatto* and the *huge sho-hatto* in 1615; these were the rules which were to govern the conduct of *buke* and *kuge* affairs. They were the most extensive codes to be published in Japan since the *ritsu-ryo* of the Heian era and provided the bakufu with the cornerstone of its legal institutions. Nevertheless, the daimyo did not always prove as submissive to these laws as was intended, and their recalcitrance provided the bakufu with further need to discipline and rearrangements of han; in the first half-century of the Edo bakufu's existence, daimyo were removed from one part of the country to another on something like 300 occasions. So far as the tuf? were concerned, of which there were about 140 families, the rules which governed their conduct consisted essentially of ensuring that they remain in their residences in the gyew (imperial park), ministering to the needs of the most exalted prisoner of all, the tenno. The *sho-hatto* could be modified according to circumstances or indeed according to the whims of succeeding shogun.

In 1635, as the most devastating means of weakening the power of the daimyo, shogun Icmitsu instituted the system of *sankin-kotai* - *kotai* means to alternate, while the term *sankin* can be roughly translated as 'reporting for audience'. Under this system daimyo were required to travel to Edo and, though there were variations, generally to spend one year in two in personal attendance at the shogunal court. We have here a good illustration of the methods used by an absolute monarchy - the principles and indeed the means are comparable to those lying behind Louis XIV's building of Versailles. The expenses incurred by the daimyo were enormous: as a result of *sankin-kotai,* daimyo had to maintain at least two residences, one in their fief capital, another in Edo - indeed some daimyo maintained as many as five *yashiki* (mansions) in Edo alone; to and from Edo the daimyo could not travel light, *noblesse oblige,* but needed to be escorted by huge retinues of retainers, servants and so on. The *sankin-kotai,* therefore, was the most effective means of weakening the daimyo'$ economic base. The daimyo's wife and children were forced to reside in Edo, hence hostages to the bakufu in case of rebellion. The long periods of attendance at Edo also had the effect of weakening the daimyo's links with his han. The national repercussions of the *sankin-kotai,*

albeit indirectly, contributed more than any other measure in ultimately laying the foundations for modern Japan and hence the ultimate overthrow of the Tokugawa regime.

The Tokugawa system was moving towards crystallisation. Another measure taken in this period, already frequently referred to, was *aakoku* (closing the country). Four years before its formal and final implementation, in 1639, the Edo bakufu had already banned the travel abroad of Japanese subjects. The reason for this policy, as that of *sakoku* in general, was primarily political. There had already been a number of serious uprisings; it was believed, no doubt correctly, that the Iberians would not hesitate in forming an alliance with a party hostile to the Tokugawa regime. By prohibiting Japanese to travel abroad, for example to Macao or the Philippines, the bakufu was seeking to ensure that there would be no intrigues likely to result in Iberian assistance or alliance with potential rebels.

While the bakufu was consolidating its military, economic and political base, it was also establishing one national orthodox ideology, Christianity, the *jashumon^* was proscribed and numerous measures, apart from persecution, were taken in order to ensure that the evil, heterodox sect was in fact rooted out; these included, for example, *Jumi-e,* the practice of treading on sacred Christian images which people had to carry out, usually at the time of the census, in order to prove they did not belong to the proscribed faith. To insist, however, on the persecution of Christians and the proscription of their faith is perhaps to perceive Japanese history from an excessively europocentric point of view, for the simple reason that it was not only Christians who suffered, Nobunaga, for example, had ruthlessly crushed certain Buddhist centres, especially those of the Ikko sect - including the burning to ashes of the temples of Mount Hiei in 1571 and the forced submission of the bonzes of Mount Koya in 1581. In the Edo era for the most part Buddhism was tolerated, but only as a religion, not as a secular force.

Ieyasu, Hidetada and Iemitsu had taken considerable personal control of affairs, Although Ieyasu built on foundations laid by Hideyoshi and his successors continued erecting an edifice generally along the lines of Icyasu's intentions, it nevertheless remains the case that the first three Tokugawa shoguns were undoubtedly dynamic innovators. The fourth shogun, Jetsuna (1639-80), inherited his father's throne when he was twelve. It was under his reign that the practice of *junshi* (self-immolation) was abolished; otherwise, Ictsuna followed a policy of severe censorship, imprisoning many writers, and it was he who carried *sakoku,* much further by imposing a strict ban on the importation of foreign books (including Chinese translations of Western bocks or even Chinese works which dealt with Western sciences). His brother, Tsunayoshi (1646-1709), had a degree of innovatory impulse, but is perhaps

chiefly remembered for his veneration of dogs - he was bom in the Year of the Dog ~ and for forcing the population to follow his example, whereby not only must no dogs be injured, but also they should be respectfully addressed as *0-Inu-sama* (Venerable Master Dog). Tsunayoshi died at the age of sixty-three, stabbed by his wife.

Thus the institutionalisation of the office of shogun had also begun. Although there was an occasional enlightened despot among them, for example the eighth shogun Yoshimune (1677-1751), by and large the later shogun were undistinguished, often ascending to the throne when still children, until certainly by the latter part of the eighteenth century the authority of the shogun was no more than nominal. The last shogun, Yoshinobu (1837-1913), was an immensely dynamic and innovative leader, but by then it was too late.

The policies of Nobunaga, Hidcyoshi, leyasu and his two immediate successors were in great part motivated by a desire to bring*gekokujo* to an end. In fact by the latter part of the seventeenth century, both at bakufu and individual han levels, *gekokujo* reasserted itself. There are occasional exceptions - there were a few masterful daimyo for example - but *mutatis mutandis* the picture to be drawn here has widespread application.

Although originating as an absolutist monarchy, in the course of time the major feature of Edo Japan was its bureaucratic nature. Daimyo were virtually incapable of undertaking the affairs of their domains in view of the amount of time they had to spend- mainly doing nothing but engaging in conspicuous consumption - in Edo; administrative responsibility, therefore, was entrusted to their retainers. At this stage, however, it should be stressed that the bureaucracy, both at bakufu and han levels, was based on an aristocratic, not meritocratic principle: most offices were cither hereditary or limited to persons of certain rank within the samurai hierarchy. Certainly at bakufu level, also at least among the larger han, administrative affairs became both more numerous and more complex and required an adequate machinery.

At the apex of the bakufu pyramid stood the shogun. The immediate Tokugawa relations (the *go-sanke)* and the shogun's female relatives, wife and concubines, residing in the *ooku* (grand interior) had direct access to the person of the shogun, but in both cases their influence was generally limited to choosing an heir to the throne when circumstances required it. The chief official counsellors to the shogun were the *roju* (council of elders), who were recruited exclusively from the *fudai* daimyo. From their number a *tairo* (chief elder) might be appointed. Below the *roju* came the *waka-doshiyori* (junior elders). Both *roju* and *ivaka-doshiyori* were changed at regular intervals, the number in both groups generally in the region of five. Another office was that of *ometsuke* (great censors), again numbering about five, who reported to the

roju, mainly on the activities of the daimyo; the *ometstike* were recruited from the *hatamoto* (bannermen, the shogun's direct retainers). Lower down were the *metsukf* (censors) who reported to the *tuaka-doshiyori* on the conduct of the *hatamoto*. Parallel to these posts were other offices. The *Edo-macht bugyo* (Edo magistrate) was in charge of all administrative and police matters of the city of Edo - whose population was huge as a result of *iankin-kotai* - and was assisted by officials and constables numbering about 150, The other cities under bakufu control also had their fcugyo and administrative apparatus. The *jisha bugyo* (commissioners of temples and shrines) kept an eye on the activities of monks and bonzes. One of the more important offices was that of *kanjo bugyo* (administrator of finance) who was responsible for the finances and general matters pertaining to the fiefs under the direct jurisdiction of the bakufu. The *kanjo bugyo* was assisted by a number of deputies *(gundai* or r/tnian), who in turn relied on the service of *tezuke* (clerks). At the bottom of the bureaucracy were the mura-/dAunirt (village administrators).

In this apparently byzantine administrative machinery a most sophisticated system of checks and balances was in operation: to put it another way, everyone was spying on someone else and simultaneously being spied upon. Edo Japan, it is no exaggeration to say, was a highly effective police state. It should also be clear that although high offices were named, administrative responsibility devolved to lower echelons. Official bureaucratic power was absolute in Japan, a phenomenon well illustrated in the slogan of the time, *Kanson-minpi,* 'revere officials - despise the people'. Also, it will be recalled that samurai or bushi were warriors; on the other hand, fighting, apart from peasant rebellions, had been eradicated.

Increasingly in the course of the Edo era, the civil branch of both bakufu and han bureaucracy *(yakukata),* which took charge of administration, finance, justice and so forth, became increasingly appealing to samurai and an important aspect of their society and outlook. *Kanryo-shugi* (bureaucratism), which has undoubtedly been *the* most marked feature of modem Japanese society and remains so to this day, was bom and developed in the Edo era. This is not to say that bureaucracies had not existed beforehand, and certainly a fairly elaborate bureaucracy existed, for example, under the old *ritsu-ryo* system. But it was in the Edo era that it became all-pervasive, that Japan moved away from a martial to a bureaucratic society. Finally, though the nature of this phenomenon remains to be explained in the following chapters, one can at this stage already indicate that the revolution which overthrew the Edo bakufu and 'restored' the tenno in 1868 was in fact a bureaucratic revolution.

PART 2

PRELUDE TO MODERNITY: THE EDO ERA

Introduction

Writers of Japanese history in the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries tended to subscribe to what has since been somewhat derisoriiy called 'the Sleeping Beauty Theory'; namely, that upon entering the period of *sakoku* Japan fell fast asleep, remained unchanged, until the Western powers arrived and all of a sudden everything happened. This view of history was, to a certain extent, compatible with contemporary Japanese perceptions: the light of the new era of civilisation and enlightenment - *bunmei-kaika,* the slogan of the 1870s - contrasted sharply with the feudal obscurity of the past.

An impressive amount of research, especially in the last three decades or so, has revealed numerous elements of dynamism in Edo society. Even apart from empirical observation, however, from a purely speculative point of view it is simply illogical that Edo Japan should, so to speak, have gone into hibernation: the remarkable changes which occurred in the latter part of the nineteenth century must have had their roots somewhere.

The chronological evolution of the Edo era from the period with which we concluded the former chapter, the late 1630s, until the beginning of the nineteenth century will not be dealt with in any detail here. Rather we will be concerned in investigating certain prominent features of the Edo era and identifying trends; this exercise will be carried out thematically rather than chronologically . A general periodisation, however, may not be out of place.

The three most important determinants of the evolution of Japanese society in the Edo era were peace, *sakoku* and *sankin-kotai.* The establishment of peace led to the stabilisation of economic life; which, in turn, resulted in a substantial growth in population on the one hand and more land under cultivation on the other. *Sakoku* also meant an increase in domestic production and obviously far greater self-reliance. *Sankin-kotai* led to a substantial movement of goods, techniques, and ideas throughout the country. This resulted in a number of significant economic developments: transportation and communications were much improved, agricultural techniques became more sophisticated and there was a greater variation in crops. The separation of peasants and samurai, the forced migration of the latter into the *joka-mathi* (castle-towns), and the inevitable increase in the

population of Edo because of *sankin-kotai* led to a marked degree of urbanisation. This development gave rise to substantia] urban consumer demand, not only for clothes, food, drink and other essentials, but also for luxuries - ceramics, silk-ware, lacquer-ware, swords, and so on. All this movement and demand motivated agricultural diversification, which led to the erosion of subsistence agriculture in favour of cash crops. Cash crops, in turn, necessarily involved the monetisation of the economy. Monetisation requires money-lenders, brokers, and so forth. Money-lending and the need for transporting and storing goods, as well as providing services and retailing, inevitably resulted in the rise of merchants. The consolidation of a national market also brought about a degree of regional specialisation and agricultural diversification, which led to an expanding rural entrepreneurial group. This is the general picture, details of which will be looked at shortly.

Historiographical orthodoxy has been that, whereas the seventeenth century, culminating in the brilliance of the Genroku era (1688 - 1703), experienced growth and increasing prosperity, the eighteenth century witnessed stagnation. As inevitably happens with orthodoxy, revisionism has crept in, the latter tendency insisting that the eighteenth century also experienced evolution and economic development. One's appreciation of Edo society would depend on whether it is viewed macroscopically or microscopically. The overall impression obtained from the seventeenth century is that of a significant degree of dynamism, innovation, movement at practically all levels. For example, in spite of *sakoku,* the rapidly growing population managed to feed itself. The most startling fact, by any standard, is that Japan's population in the eighteenth century simply ceased to grow. No doubt *sakoku* was responsible for this state of affairs. The interdiction on Japanese going abroad meant that at times of famine there were no means of obtaining external sources of food-stuff; also, the generally limited nature of contact with the outside world imposed serious restrictions on technological developments. This must be contrasted with the significant amount of geographic mobility occurring in Europe, where societies were able to capitalise on the inventions and innovations of others.

There arc other indices of decline: official corruption tn the bakufu, for example, assumed alarming proportions. Also, whereas city merchants in the seventeenth century had proved to be enterprising and innovative, in the eighteenth century they were little more than usurious. Population control seems to have been achieved largely as a result of infanticide (the current idiom being *mabiki,* 'thinning out'). It was noted in the former chapter that one of the major motivations for Hidcyoshi's *katana-gan* (sword hunt) was to bring an end to peasant rcvolts.The peasants went on

revolting, but the number of uprisings increased in geometric proportions in the course of the era: during the seventeenth century there was approximately one uprising per annum, jumping to three a year in the first four decades of the eighteenth century, five in mid-century, followed by six for the remaining part of the Edo era. It has been suggested that the combination of infanticide and peasant uprisings need not be interpreted as manifestations of decline, but rather as an illustration of rising expectations resulting from higher standards of living. This is not necessarily an implausible explanation. The point is, however, that current perceptions in Japan at the time - whether rebellious peasants, moralists, reformers or critical intellectuals - were that both the economy and society were in a parlous state. On the surface, even with the proverbial benefit of hindsight, this certainly appeared to be the case.

Indices, indicating cither progression or regression, could be invoked. The point requiring emphasis, however, is that at a general societal level the country was in a state of stagnation, indeed decline. Upon closer examination, however, it becomes clear that there were areas of growth and development, though these tended to be scattered- This two-dimensional picture helps to explain two things. If everyone had been happy with the general state of affairs, it goes without saying that the revolution would not have occurred. If, on the other hand, the situation had been one of utter stagnation and collapse, Japan's remarkable and rapid modernisation could not have taken place.

3 Society in the Edo Era

Japanese society was organised according to a strict hierarchy of basically four estates, namely the *shi-no-ko-sfui* - samurai, peasants, artisans and merchants. Here a very important point has to be made. These four groups, or estates, must not be confused with classes. Class, in fact, is not a useful analytical concept in terms of the early part of the Edo era. It is as a result of a number of forces which evolved in the course of this period that classes, along with class interest and class conflict, began to emerge; but the process of differentiation which occurred took place mainly *within* the four estates. When one comes to consider the disintegration of die Tokugawa regime and the nature of the revolution, to speak in terms of a peasant, merchant or samurai class is misleading, in fact meaningless. The variations within these estates were far too substantial to allow any sense of homogeneity or solidarity, in spite of occasional rhetoric to the contrary,

THE PEASANTRY

The *shi-no-ko-sho* aspect of the Edo settlement was motivated partly by ideological considerations, but it was also economic. Tokugawa economic philosophy was quintessential!? physiocratic, It is for this reason that the peasants were allotted the second rung in the social order and that Edo moralists engaged in platitudinous incantations about the virtues of agriculture and of the peasant existence. It should be emphasised that irrespective of changes taking place within the economy, notably the dominant role of merchant wealth, the basic social ethic of Edo Japan remained constant and was never, unlike the rise of the capitalist ideology' in north-west Europe and the United States, effectively challenged in the course of the Edo era.

leaving ideology aside, the major contribution of the peasantry as envisaged by the Tokugawa order was two-fold: to feed the ruling orders and pay taxes. The peasants constituted the vast bulk of society, even towards the end of the period corresponding to approximately 80 per cent of the population. They were the backbone of the economy and neither bakufu nor han governments hesitated in extracting from the peasantry as much as was materially possible, in fact in some cases more than was materially possible. The basic theory of the Edo agrarian economy was quite simple. Peasants paid

taxes into the coffers of the han or bakufu treasuries - that is, to whatever government had jurisdiction and rights of taxation over them. Taxes were paid in kind, while daiinyo or shogun paid stipends, also in kind, to their retainers. The peasant should be allowed to live, or simply, perhaps, survive; agriculture, as envisaged by the Tokugawa settlement, therefore was at a subsistence level.

In fact, there was considerable agricultural development, especially in the course of the seventeenth century. This was obviously necessary in order to allow for the significant demographic increase, already noted, to take place. The population was able to grow, partly due to an increase in agricultural productivity, but mainly due to a considerable territorial expansion by means of land reclamation; the area of land under cultivation was about doubled in the period 1600 to 1720. Agriculture throughout the Edo era, it must be emphasised, remained labour-intensive; very little use was made of capital equipment and those technological improvements which did occur were only of marginal significance - Japanese agriculture was not really mechanised until after the Second World War.

The actual yield per acre remained low, very much in accordance with other Asian cultivators. By the early eighteenth century agricultural development had reached a ceiling: given existing conditions there was no more food to cater to a further increase in population. The secondary and tertiary sectors developed, but not to a sufficient degree to absorb large numbers of surplus rural population, nor, owing to *sakoku,* could surplus population be channelled into emigration - as occurred, lor example, in the British Isles and Ireland with surplus population being exported to the colonies of settlement. Population had to be controlled, therefore, by a number of Malthusian checks - other than war, in view of the Pax Tokugawa - which consisted primarily of infanticide in the rural areas and abortions in the cities, as well as a number of famines which occurred at fairly frequent and regular intervals especially during the latter part of the eighteenth century.

R iziculture in Edo Japan was labour-intensive. The cities, especially Osaka, developed as significant centres of commerce and services, but *not* manufacture. The manufacturing sector established itself where the labour supply could be found, namely the rural areas, where there was the opportunity of recruiting seasonal labour - in fact more often females from the farms. A contrast was drawn, therefore, between the affluent cities and the deprived villages. The popular rural perceptions of this contrast amounted more to caricatures of reality than reality itself; there was urban deprivation in Japan, as indeed there was village affluence. But it remains a significant feature of Japanese history until the conclusion of the Second World War - or, more precisely, the 1946 Land Reform carried out by the American

Occupation authorities - that these perceptions remained steadfast. The peasantry were exploited in order to subsidise urban life - symbolised, among other things, by the recruitment of peasant girls to service the urban brothels. If one fails to grasp this tension between rural and urban areas as a leitmotiv of pre-modern and modern Japanese history, then one will misunderstand the nature of the evolution ofjapanese society: the Japan Communist Party of the inter-war period, rigidly and blindly dogmatic, failed to understand this phenomenon which, in turn, partly explains why its success in terms of recruitment was minimal and hardly to be found outside university circles.

By no means, however, should the nature of Edo agricultural society be viewed as static. Several points need to be clarified. The first was that significant urbanisation in quantitative terms did take place, qualitatively consisting essentially of samurai and merchants. Consumer demand in the urban areas was inevitably going to have significant repercussions on the rural economy. In short, from a subsistence economy, there occurred a definite trend towards the development of cash crops and diversification. Another point to be borne in mind regards taxation. The percentage of output siphoned off for taxes varied according to region and circumstance - much lower, for example, in the case of reclaimed land - but at a macro level would probably average out at about 50 per cent. Generally speaking the amount to lie given up in the form of taxes was fixed; in other words, it was determined on the basis of the yield calculated at the time of Hideyoshi's land survey or other surveys which occasionally, but infrequently, occurred in the course of the Edo era. Taxation, therefore, took account of potential yield, not actual yield, on an annual basis; fluctuations resulting from climatic, technological or other factors did not figure in the registers. Peasants obviously stood to lose a great deal, especially in bad years, but they could also benefit, possibly quite substantially, were a bumper crop to occur.

Conditions, adverse or favourable, obviously did not affect all peasants throughout Japan equally at the same time. For example, the topographically and climatically better endowed south-west had far better chances of prospering than was the case in the harsher climate of the north-east - which is, in fact, what happened. The Kansai region particularly improved, partly because of a more benign climate, also because of its proximity to the huge market of Osaka. There developed in the course of the Tokugawa era, therefore, a geographical differentiation between, in relative terms, a rich south-west and a poor north-cast. This is another feature ofjapanese history which remained reasonably constant until fairly recently -

Even within the same region, however, significant differences between the peasantry developed. Farming in Edo Japan was definitely a precarious form of existence; nonetheless opportunities, given a degree of luck and a good

dosage of initiative, did exist and could be exploited. In view of a number of developments taking place in the course of the Edo era, and especially the rise in urban consumer demand, the forces of a market economy were in operation. The astute - and lucky - peasant could judge the requirements that the market demanded and the opportunities it offered. Having been successful, for example, in generating a small surplus after taxes had been paid and mouths fed, there were a number of things he could do. He might invest in the purchase of some implement or raw material necessary for diversification; he might extend his land by reclamation; he might also extend his control, if not actual proprietorship, over his less fortunate neighbour's land- This last point is important and merits brief consideration. The unsuccessful, unlucky peasant would have difficulties paying taxes and feeding hirnself and his family. In order to meet both demands he might resort to borrowing from a more affluent peasant. The selling and buying of land, as was noted earlier, was forbidden but nevertheless the poor peasant might offer his land as collateral, in other words he mortgaged it. Tn view of the law regarding selling and leaving one's land, but more significantly in view of the continued labour-intensive nature of riziculture, the poor peasant would not be forced off his land, but would remain and pay rent to his creditor. This provided yet another potential source of revenue for the richer peasants.

Thus, in the course of the Edo era, a rural surplus was generated, the forces of the market economy resulted in diversification, inter-han trade, regional specialisation, cottage industry and small-scale manufacture - most notably in sericulture - and, inevitably, social differentiation occurred *within* the peasant estate. By the latter part of the Edo period, therefore, the social composition of the peasantry would include substantia] rural landlords - who might also be engaged in some trade and manufacture - at one end of the scale, poor tenant farmers at the other end, with in between various groups including single farm families and share-croppers.

What all this amounts to is that in fact Japanese agriculture had become capitalistic, albeit in a somewhat primitive form. It was also invariably from the richer peasants that the mura-jiatanin (village officials) were chosen; and generally from among that number the richest would be appointed village headman (nxinioAior *shoya).* As social turmoil increased in the latter part of the Edo era and hence both bakufu and han had to rely extensively on the services of the headmen to keep peace in the villages and ensure the steady flow of taxes, as a reward they might be granted the right to adopt a surname and even to carry a sword, both theoretically privileges exclusively reserved to the samurai. Similarly, the position of headman became increasingly hereditary'. A significant blurring of distinctions between samurai and rich peasant (£orw)

was taking place. In the Edo era, therefore, a landlord *class* was emerging, combining wealth with social prestige and political influence - yet another feature of Japanese society which was, *mutatis mutandis,* to remain constant until the end of the Second World War, In analytical terms, it would not be too far off the mark to suggest that the richer peasants of the later Edo era represented the rural wing of the bourgeoisie. They contributed, by means of payment, to the revolution of the mid-nineteenth century; in turn, they were amply rewarded in that one of the early acts of the new regime was to lift the ban on the buying and selling of land.

If a Japanese agriculture was developing, in economic terms, in the direction of capitalism, leading to the emergence of classes, it does not necessarily follow that rural society, that is, the superstructure in terms of values and mores, is co be perceived in the same way. The social history of rural Japan can by no means be written simply in terms of class conflict. One might suggest that it was one of the contradictions of Edo society - as it was, indeed, of the subsequent decades of modernisation - that whereas the economy was evolving along a basic capitalist line, society retained certain marked 'feudal' traits. Major affinities among the rural populations, especially the poorer segments, tended to remain geographic rather than social in character. This arose mainly out of the diffusencss of the rural population, which was scattered among thousands of villages, generally inhabited by small numbers, without much communication existing between them. Phis, in turn, accounts for the fact that although Japan in the course of the Edo and Mciji eras witnessed numerous peasant rebellions, she never experienced anything approaching a peasant revolution. Furthermore, landlords in general exercised a form of paternalistic authoritarianism which was not necessarily unenlightened. The fairly widespread phenomenon of the 'absentee landlord[1] did not arise in Japan until the 1920s. Thus the entrepreneurial landlords can be said to have exercised social control.

There was undoubtedly a good deal of suffering among the poorer peasants of Edo Japan; there was also a great deal of injustice. Poor peasants were exploited. Nevertheless, from a purely economic perspective, enterprising landlords, by accumulating capital and investing it in a variety of ventures, contributed significantly to the economic vitality of Edo Japan and thereby laid the foundations for the industrialisation of the later nineteenth century. This point can be made even more emphatically. As will be seen, although city merchants flourished and proved daringly innovative in the course of the early Edo period, by the late eighteenth century their productive and innovative capacities had seriously diminished. In many cases, rural entrepreneurs combined agricultural exploitation with trading and manufacturing. While not necessarily in the way the Tokugawa had intended, nevertheless the

peasantry, or elements of it, did ultimately prove able to provide a strong backbone for the Edo economy.

MERCHANTS

The social philosophy of the Edo era in regard to the merchants might be introduced, indeed summed up, by the slogan *Kikoku-senkirv.* 'revere grain - despise money', It is one of the contradictions of Edo society that money, albeit perhaps despised in essence, was much appreciated in concrete terms and came to pervade all sectors of society. In spite of the ofTiciaJ physiocratic ideology, the Edo economy became thoroughly monetised and the axis of economic life centred on the cities, mainly Osaka, Kyoto and Edo. The city merchants laid the foundations for the economic life of Edo Japan and lubricated its machinery for more than two centuries. By the end of the Edo era they ceased to perform any useful function, indeed arguably they had become parasitic. Even, however, if it can be claimed that their contribution was no longer constructive, it was and certainly had been destructive in terms of hastening to its end the Tokugawa regime and all that it srood for.

By the latter part of the nineteenth century Japan industrialised according to essentially capitalist lines - namely, private control of capital and the means of production. The nature of Japanese capitalism, however, differed from that of its Western counterparts. -Many of the institutions and values which came to be associated with Japanese capitalism - some of which survive to this day and will doubtless continue to survive in future - have their roots in the Edo era and more specially in developments within the merchant estate. It is these patterns which we shall seek to isolate here.

In terms of modern Japan one can suggest that there have been three periods of conspicuous nation-wide entrepreneurial dynamism and genius: the seventeenth century, the second half of the nineteenth and the two decades or so which followed the end of the Second World War. In all three periods there was an clement of *tabula rasa,* while at the same time certain benefits accumulated from the past were exploited. The seventeenth century witnessed the definitive end of the *sengoku* wars and the establishment of peace, the mid-nineteenth heralded the abandonment of past official restrictive laws and practices, while the years following 1945 also experienced the re-establishment of peace. In all three periods great fortunes were made and enterprises either revitalised or born completely anew. Ail three periods set a high premium on initiative, ingenuity and intrepidness. So far as the individual entrepreneurs were concerned, in all three cases, to use current jargon, there were both 'push and pull' factors; in other words there were forces which motivated individuals to abandon their existing stations on the one hand, while on (he

other there were forces attracting these individuals to new ventures. We will be concerned in this chapter with only the first of the three periods; the point we wished to emphasise was that in the seventeenth century, as in the other two periods, there was a national climate which was favourable to entrepreneurship.

The factors responsible for the new climate of early Edo Japan, apart from peace, were the side-effects of *sankin-kotai*, the growth of the market economy and inter-regional trade, urbanisation and the tremendous amount of construction which was undertaken, the creation of sizeable consumer markets, especially Edo, the significant improvements in communications, anti in due course the increasing dependence of the ruling orders on credit facilities. The major puli factor, therefore, was that early Edo Japan, to put it quite simply, provided opportunities for making a quick profit. Characteristics subsequently associated with the Japanese firm, for example, collective, enterprise-centred motivations and methods, do not apply here; rather, on the whole, this was a period of rugged individualism with material reward as the goal.

Tokugawa legislation on the separation of the estates and official moral incantations, such as mi no *hodo wo shirt* ('know your place'), were singularly ineffective. The city merchants originated from three sources: merchants of the *sengokn* period, peasants who downed farm tools and samurai who preferred financial remuneration to social prestige. The push factors, therefore, were a combination of the demographic increase, resulting in some surplus rural population, and the straitened circumstances of samurai whose stipends were fixed at the lower end of the scale, the latter including the founders of such enterprise, later to become empires, as Mitsui, Sumitomo and Konoikc.

Edo, which in the eighteenth century reached a population approaching one million, was mainly a consumption centre. Initially, the great hustle and bustle of economic life gravitated in Osaka. A quick glance at a map of Japan will establish the geographical significance of that city. Situated at the north-eastern end of the Inland Sea, all movement, whether by land or sea, from Kyushu, Shikoku and the south-western part of Honshu towards Edo passed through Osaka, and the same applied to the western coast of northern Honshu. Osaka, therefore, became the major geographical centre of the raahn-ioto:, a position from which it developed in order to become the commercial and financial centre of Edo Japan. The payment of taxes and stipends in kind, the development of inter-han trade and the consumption requirements while in residence in Edo all combined in making Osaka the great entrepot of Japan. One of Osaka's major functions, therefore, was in wholesale transactions. The wholesalers (tonju) handled all large transactions,

especially rice, but also other commodities, such as cotton and silk goods, oil, paper, straw matting (tatami), and so on.

Osaka, it will be recalled, was a bakufu city; daimyo were not permitted to own land there; hence they resorted to renting warehouses from local merchants. Originally daimyo entrusted samurai to supervise their Osaka affairs, though increasingly these were effectively in the hands of merchant administrators (Aimonoto), while the financial agents *(kakeya)* were also merchants. The importance of *kuramoto* and *kakeya* and the increasing reliance of the daimyo on them led in certain cases to their assuming family names and carrying swords; therefore, as in the case of village headmen mentioned earlier, the distinction between samurai and merchant became blurred. The monetisation of the economy obviously meant the need to convert goods in kind into specie, bank notes or bills of exchange, all of which were in circulation during the Edo era; similarly, for reasons it is unnecessary to go into here, fluctuations existed between gold (used primarily in Edo), silver (more current in Osaka) and copper (in the provinces). The complexities of the Edo monetary system - a complexity which was to assume labyrinthine proportions - gave rise to the need for a professional service of money exchangers, again the major group of which came to settle and operate in Osaka (called *ryogaeya).* The *kuramoto, kakeya, ryogaeya* and *lonya* composed the *crème de la crème* of the Osaka merchant establishment. Besides the activities already mentioned, wealthy Osaka merchants also became the chief creditors of the bakufu, the daimyo and the samurai.

The activities just mentioned, albeit among the more remunerative, were by no means the only outlets for individuals with initiative and the requisite capital for entrepreneurship. Thus the retail trade, given the sizeable consumption market especially of Edo, was another potential source for making profits. Here lies, for example, the genesis of the Mitsui fortune, when Hachirobci Takatoshi (1622-94) established his shop, the Echigoya (direct ancestor of the Mitsukoshi Department Store), in Edo. Hachirobei's entrepreneurial talent is well reflected in occasional daring innovations, such as the institution in 1689 of a system of cash on demand, instead of credit, in return for which customers would have cloth cut to suit their requirements, rather than having to buy it in bulk.

The seventeenth century, then, was a period of initiative and innovation. Surplus capital obtained from an enterprise was either reinvested in the same enterprise, for example by setting up branches in the same city as did the Mitsui in Edo or in various parts of the country, or channelled into completely new ventures, such as textiles, *sake* brewing, the lumber industry, and so on. Alternatively capital could be used for purchasing reclaimed land, an investment frequently resorted to by merchants, hence blurring the

mcrchant/peasant distinction. Profits could also be channelled into finance capital, namely lending money with interest to daimyo and samurai; this, as will be seen, became the chief characteristic of the city merchants in the latter part of the Edo era. Of course it was also possible that capital might quite simply be drained away in extravagant living. No doubt instances of profligacy did occur among the merchant community, but the disincentives for such a course of action were considerable; there were a whole scries of regulations governing the conduct of the city merchants (collectively known as *chonin,* city dwellers), including, for example, the prohibition on the use of silk garments; thus conspicuous consumption involved risks of official reprobation, a number of rather spectacular cases of w[r]hich occurred in the Edo erapotir *encourager les autres.*

If the merchants resisted the temptations of extravagance, such was not necessarily the case among the bakufu or the han. As with political control, bakufu finances under the first three Tokugawa shogun were carefully administered. Under the fifth shogun Tsunayoshi, who presided over the brilliant Genroku era, all fiscal caution vanished. Conspicuous consumption and the construction of palaces for prestige were indulged in by both shogunate and daimyo. Reliance on merchant administrative expertise and finance increased until it reached endemic proportions; in other words, from the early eighteenth century until the end of the Edo era bakufu and many daimyo were more or less permanently in debt to the merchants; hence the latter consolidated their economic strength.

More or less simultaneously with the establishment of the definitive economic preponderance of the city merchants, other events and trends occurred which led to a major transformation in the spirit and operations of urban economic life. Notwithstanding the limitations imposed by the Tokugawa regime, the seventeenth-century economic setting was one of relative free enterprise. As firms flourished, however, the main objective became to secure the advantages gained rather than attempt to reap new ones.

In ihe *sengoku* era urban commercial life had been regulated by a system of guilds, but these had been abolished. In the course of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries there were considerable pressures to re-establish them. In 1651 a minor concession had been made in favour of bath-house keepers (/uroya). Under shogun Yoshimune, however, guilds (iaiu jidAama) received official sanction. The advantage as far as the merchants were concerned was chat the monopolistic guild system provided them with protection, especially from potential interlopers. From the perspective of the bakufu the advantages were two-fold. The system made the urban commercial landscape better organised and hence easier to control. Secondly, under the original Tokugawa settlement taxation was based exclusively on land, hence

merchant wealth remained untapped; the guild system, therefore, was of economic benefit in that charter fees (wyb-Am) and regular contributions (mjufa-Atn, literally 'protection money') were paid into the Bakufu treasury - it was the *tairo* (chief elder) Tanuma Okitsugu (1719-88) who originated another method for collecting from merchants, which was to be resorted to increasingly frequently in the late Edo era and also in the beginning of the Mciji era: the *goyo-kin,* or forced loan extracted from merchants on an *ad hoc* and arbitrary basis. The guilds were monopolistic and generally individually confined to a single product or single line of activity. The guilds were ultimately abolished in 1843 by the *tairo* Mizuno Tadakuni (1794-1851) as part of his ill-fated Tcnpo reforms, but the bakufu economy was in such a desperate state, indeed aggravated by Mizuno's reforms, that the effects were nil.

It was noted earlier that the chief characteristics of the seventeenth century included innovation and diversification. The establishment of the guild system effectively brought both to an end so far as the general climate of city commerce was concerned. Significant surpluses continued to be accumulated, but increasingly these were channelled almost exclusively into usury capital, namely loans to the bakufu and daimyo at very high interest rates. It became the easiest and generally safest way of making money; it did not, however, require particular skill - it was an exercise conspicuously lacking in intellectual stimulation. The city merchants were able to settle comfortably into an entrepreneurial climate of at least semi-paralysis owing to the protection which they enjoyed internally, the guilds, and externally, due to *iakoku.* By the time the guilds were abolished and more importantly when Japan was open to foreign trade, paralysis had set in to many of the city merchants to such an extent that they were completely incapable of moving in the new direction of the times. The city merchants had become completely rooted in the Tokugawa regime; when it was overthrown, so were they.

Earlier it was suggested that the rural landowners and provincial merchants might constructively be viewed as the rural wing of the bourgeoisie; the city merchants, as an entity, that is allowing for individual exceptions, could perhaps best be termed the urban wing of the feudal order. From there, however, it should not be inferred that theirs was necessarily a comfortably insulated existence. Throughout the Edo era the atmosphere in which the merchants operated was one of insecurity. There are elements of comparison between the rise of seventeenth-century Japanese entrepreneurs and their English counterparts. The latter however were not protected by a comparable policy of JdAvAu, but on the contrary were able to capitalise on England's growing foreign trade and all the ancillary industries it gave rise to. More significantly, English entrepreneurs were able to enjoy the benefits of judicial

protection and identity, an ideology, especially for example in Calvinism, that gave moral justification to their pursuits and consequently both a degree of social prestige and political influence. The Japanese merchants were denied all of those things. The merchants might be creditors to daimyo and samurai, but they had no legal redress against them should the latter default on their debts. The *shi-no-ko-sho* classification was judicial as well as social. A samurai could not be held justiciable for a crime committed against a commoner - indeed there existed the phenomenon of *ktrisule-gomen*, 'slay and take leave', illustrating the samurai's ability and not unusual proclivity to hack to pieces some commoner whom he found objectionable and then leave without further ceremony or fear of punishment.

There were differences between Osaka and Edo merchants and indeed between these two and the provincial merchants. Yet it is possible to trace a fairly general picture of the emerging merchant ideology both in regard to the nation as a whole and to individual firms in particular. Let us first look at the national climate of opinion in regard to merchants. The atmosphere emanating from all layers of society can easily be summarised in one word: hostility. Everyone - bakufu official, daimyo, samurai and peasant - was in debt to the merchants. Scholars inveighed against them, notably, for example, some of the most prominent thinkers of Edo Japan: Kumazawa Banzan (1619-91), Ogyu Sorai (1666-1728) and Miura Baien (1725-89); merchants were portrayed as a cancerous growth within society, responsible for its economic ills, which in the later Edo period were assuming very alarming proportions, hence moralists generally preached a return to the physiocratic ideal.

Social mobility between the four estates did occur and, indeed, in spite of official prohibitions to the contrary, merchants, apart from obtaining samurai rank in their own right, were also successful in penetrating the bushi estate via marriage and adoption - and in fact some of the leading scholars of the Edo era issued from merchant stock. This was the case of one of the towering and ultimately most influential figures of the Edo era, Motoori Norinaga (1730-1801). Motoori and other scholars of merchant background, however, did nothing to provide ideological justification for merchant entrepreneurship; on the contrary they generally adhered to the principles of *kikoku-senkin* ('revere grain - despise money'). An exception is sometimes made of *shingaku* ('heart or mind learning'), founded by another scholar of merchant birth, Ishida Baigan (1685-1744). The anthropologist Robert Bellah *(Tokugawa Religion; The Values of Pre-Industrial Japan,* 1957) sees in *shingaku* the closest Japanese equivalent to the Weberian model of the Protestant ethic; although there are undoubtedly certain similarities, for example the emphasis on frugality and hard work, nevertheless implicit in the concept of the Protestant

ethic is an outlook which is assertive, indeed defiant - elements totally lacking in *shingaku.* To the extern that *shingaku* may be said to correspond to a merchant ideology, it was primarily presented in a defensive manner, in fact it sought to exonerate merchants from the evils commonly attributed to them and rather insisted on their perfect compatibility *within* the feudal order.

As Japan witnessed the decline of the semi-feudal regime of the Tokugawa settlement and entered into the modern age, the economic base of which became essentially capitalist, what she lacked was a coherent, articulated bourgeois ideology- It was not really until Japan's most recent revolution, which occurred following 1945, that entrepreneurship and capitalism gained widespread respectability, In the course of the decades following the revolution of 1868, the ideological response of the new capitalist entrepreneurs was meek, subdued, consistently defensive; the general climate of opinion and especially the attitudes of political propagandists remained hostile. In the modern age Japan's capitalist ideology failed to develop adequately, mainly because it lacked roots.

From the lower echelons of society the merchants were also despised and not infrequently attacked. Peasant rebellions, if not necessarily always directed against merchants, nevertheless involved looting of warehouses and other merchant possessions and indeed attacks on their persons. The most spectacular of these was led by the samurai scholar Oshio Heihachiro (1793-1837), who was moved to extreme sympathy for the plight of the poor peasantry in years of famine, which ultimately terminated in the near destruction and looting of the merchant quarters of Osaka in February 1837. (Oshio Heihachiro remained a legendary figure in the popular Japanese pantheon.) Similarly, in the decades following 1868 and perhaps especially in the turbulent thirties - when *nohonshugi,* agrarianism, appeared as a modern variant of the principle of *kikoku-senkin* - ideologically motivated attacks on entrepreneurs continued and increased, with the leaders of the big cartels (atuWro) having to pay right-wing organisations protection money.

As we have seen, Edo Japan did witness a degree of social mobility between merchant and samurai; throughout the period, however, this remained illegal and in any case, compared with, say, English entrepreneurs joining the gentry, limited. The ordinary merchant was unlikely to aspire to, and even less gain, entry into the bushi estate. On the w'hoie, therefore, merchant capita] remained within the enterprise; it was not squandered in pursuit of a social ideal. What is interesting, however, and of great significance in terms of understanding the roots of modern Japan, is that the ideology and organisation of individual firms came to be modelled on the way of the samurai, the *bushido.*

It was stated earlier that the seventeenth century was essentially one of

individualistic entrepreneurship. Although the system we shall describe here had certain antecedents in the early Edo period and indeed before, on the whole the model became mainly a product of the eighteenth century. This model, therefore, emerged at a lime when other forces were at work, including the establishment of the guilds.

The first point to note is that the turn of the century witnessed the steady erosion of individualism in entrepreneurship and the rise of collectivism. The individual firm (referred to as the *ie) came* to adopt many of the characteristics and values of the han, relationships within the enterprise corresponding to those between daimyo and samurai, This pattern will be studied shortly. Here it might be appropriate to insert a parenthesis in regard to terminology frequently used in reference to Japanese history and indeed contemporary society.

The institution and concept of the *ie* is perhaps one of the most distinctive characteristics of Japanese social and economic history, among other things because of its remarkable resilience in surviving the vagaries of revolution and industrialisation. It was pointed out earlier that *ie* has frequently been translated into English as 'family*, and reservations were expressed. One of the major reservations is that this translation may be partly responsible for the use in Western literature on Japan of the term 'familism'. In the following section comment will be made on the nature and evolution of the Japanese family; it will be argued that the ideal of the Japanese family was also modelled on the daimyo — samurai relationship, not vice versa. All ideal social relationships in Japan came to be based on the tenets of *bushido.* In the *bushido* scheme of things the family, in terms of consanguinity, was of only subordinate significance. The relationship between the samurai and his lord w[r]as much more important than that between him and his wife, children or parents. In Confucianist moral philosophy two major virtues were highly-prized: filial piety (Jto) and loyalty (cAu); but whereas the former was supreme in China, in Japan it was the latter. The ideal of the *ie,* therefore, was based on the ideal of the han; in other words, the latter did not develop as a macrocosm of the former, but the if became a microcosm of the latter. In due course, after 1868, the han disappeared while the if remained. Though familism may be a term favoured by some writers, feudalism is adopted by others. Feudalism, as an operative analytical definition of Japanese society in the modern era, is also misleading for a whole variety of reasons, but mainly because the term 'feudal' implies something pejorative and regressive. The institution and concept of the if arc by no means necessarily regressive; in certain circumstances, as is arguably the case in Japanese industrial relations today, it can be a most progressive, indeed dynamic, force. Having discarded both familism and feudalism, what is left? Only to describe the phenomenon as

Tc-ism', with apologies for the infelicity of the term. If, however, it is difficult to define the w, it can at least be described.

In general, allowing for individual variations, the commercial *Ie* combined all or most of the following characteristics. The employment - and often adoption (ytuAi) - of apprentices *(deshi)* was widespread and die system of apprenticeship became rigorously institutionalised. On the recommendation of colleagues, friends or relatives, a young boy was introduced into (he *ie* and began his apprenticeship. If he proved unsatisfactory he would be sacked without further ado and his referees could be held responsible for some form of compensation payment. The apprentice did nor receive any wage, but was given free board and lodging and, depending on the humour of his employer, might on festive occasions receive a small gift. The rules applied to *deshi* were very strict; they had virtually no freedom whatsoever, in fact to all intents and purposes they became the property of die *ie* In exchange, however, an apprentice learned a craft or a trade and by virtue of having secured entry into an *ie,* he was also assured of membership and protection of the guild. The period of apprenticeship varied, but could easily last as much as a decade, indeed even more. After having satisfactorily served his period as an apprentice and when coming of age (usually at about eighteen), the *deshi* w[r]ould be promoted to the position of *ledai* (journeyman). The next and ultimate stage up the ladder within the *ie* was to be appointed *banto* (manager). A *banto* could become head of the w if he were adopted as the heir, in which case he would marry a daughter of the *ie* if there were one available; alternatively a good *banco* might be given a capital sum with which he would establish a *bekke* (branch *ie)* from the AonA/(main ie).

Two features of the *ie* system should be noted. The first is that it was rigidly hierarchical, the lines between the head of the *ie,* the *banto,* the *ledai* and the *deshi* being clearly defined. The second is that the *ie* head exercised full authority over all members and expected to receive complete loyalty and obedience from them; in return, however, he guaranteed them security for life, for once the probationary period of the *deshi* was over, only as a result of a very serious infringement of the ie's rules would an employee be sacked. Thus, as suggested earlier, the relationship between the head of the *ie* and its hierarchically organised members, in both structure and values, came to reflect the daimyo-samurai ideal.

The *ie* then, both as structure and ideology, became the pattern and model of the Japanese enterprise in later Tokugawa times. Two more features of the *ie* deserve brief mention. Only members of the bushi estate had the right to surnames. What happened among the merchants is that the name of the firm came to be used as the chief means for designating individuals within the *ie,* whether head, *banto, ledai* or *deshi.* The custom whereby Japanese to this day

will commonly introduce themselves by prefacing the name of the organisation they work for (as in Fuji Ginko no Hattori, Fuji Bank's Hattori) has its roots in the *ie* system of the Japanese enterprise, which in turn was modelled on the han, as samurai always prefixed their surnames by the han to which they belonged. The *ie* in this way gained both an identity and a sense of corporate solidarity. Both identity and solidarity were further elaborated by yet another feature, also patterned after the han: the codification of house rules. In the case of Mitsui, for example, the code was derived from the will of Hachirobei in 169+ and formally promulgated in 1722. Most *ie* had their own regulations codified; the general tenor of all of these, however, varied little, consisting mainly of exhorting members of the *ie* to virtues of loyalty, diligence, probity, respect for hierarchy, and so on. These codes can collectively be termed *chonindo* (way of the townsman/merchant), the basic message of which is hardly distinguishable from *bitshido,* after which it was modelled.

The codification of *ie* regulations resulted in the institutionalisation of the *ie.* Along with the establishment of the guilds, the conservative investment of capital into money-lending, the institutionalisation of the *ie* also contributed towards the stagnation of the urban economy. Founding fathers became the *ie* deities (fomt) and their bequeathed legacy, in the form of the codified rules, holy writ. The general atmosphere pervading the *ie* came to be backward rather than forward looking; the underlying ethic was a strict and unimaginative obedience to ancestral precepts.

In the course of the latter part of the eighteenth century and first few decades of the nineteenth the bakufu economy deteriorated seriously; the various attempts at reform, including the more protracted Kansei reforms (1784-1801) and the Tenpo reforms (1830-43), provided either negligible results or indeed aggravated the situation. There is one element of Mizuno Tadakuni's Tenpo reforms worth noting, partly because of its relevance to the Tokugawa era, also however because of its association with more contemporary trends in other parts of East Asia outside Japan. As indicated earlier the principles of *kikoku'senkin* remained official doctrine, in spite of everything, throughout the Edo era: urban merchant money was evil, rural peasant produce was good. The cancer afflicting Edo society, scholars asserted, could be remedied by a return to physiocratic principles. Mizuno actually sought to implement such a policy, known as *hitogaeshi* ('sending people back', by implication to the country), whereby a forced migration from the cities to the villages was to be undertaken. Mizuno's *hitogaeshi* was never able to develop extensively; he himself was dismissed from offices in 1843, and shortly afterwards his programme was abandoned in its entirety. The principles lying behind *hitogaeshi of* 'feudal' Japan arc certainly reminiscent of

the programme of *hsia-fang* (Agoing down to the villages') in Maoist China, whereby cadres and intellectuals were sent into the countryside in order to be purified from the polluting corruption of the cities, and, of course, the comparable measure adopted by the Vietnamese communist regime and with tragic consequences by the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia.

The fact that in the last half-century or more of the Edo era the bakufu economy was in dire straits cannot by any means be entirely attributed to the city merchants. The bakufu administration was itself responsible, mainly because of its incapacity to resolve a fiscal situation which was chaotic and a currency system which had degenerated into anarchy. In its attempts to improve the economy, however, the bakufu was not able to rely on the support of the cAont'n, apart, that is, from the *gnyo-kin.* When in its final convulsions the bakufu sought to innovate and introduce modern industries and technology, in the 1360s, it had to depend on its own enterprising human resources and not on, the paralysed merchants, as was also, in fact, the case in some of the han, In other words, capital could be extracted from the merchants, but not the genius and foresight of talented entrepreneurship.

This is the situation which the Mciji government inherited and, in the early stages at least of its regime, perpetuated; the human capital of the established commercial enterprises had by and large dried up. Innovatory ideas and practices had to be extracted from elsewhere, and in lieu of fertile entrepreneurship outside the new bureaucracy, and in anticipation of the emergence of new entrepreneurs, the government was willy-nilly forced to go it alone.

The preceding chapter ended on die introduction of the concept and pattern of *kanryo-shugi* (bureaucratism) in Japan as part of the early Tokugawa settlement. A'anryo-jAuji developed and broadened; ultimately the samurai/bureaucrats of the Edo era extended their scope and control to hitherto despised merchant activities. By the end of the Edo era the samurai/bureaucrats were forced to assume the role of capitalist entrepreneurs. A new entrepreneurial class did eventually emerge in Mciji Japan and the bureaucratic quasi-monopoly of the new sectors of industry teased. Between bureaucrat and entrepreneur, however, the separation never amounted to a total divorce. The close relationship between the bureaucracy in contemporary Japan and the business community is also, therefore, a phenomenon - and Otic which has no exact comparison in other so-called free economies - which has its roots in the Edo era.

THE SAMURAI

The *kalana-gari*, the development of ihe *joka-machi* and rhe officially enforced hierarchy of *shi-no-ko-sho* were all policies designed to segregate the samurai

socially, functionally and to a degree geographically from the *heimin* (commoners). Samurai were forbidden to marry into the other estates, as indeed inter-marriage between all estates was forbidden. The Tokugawa settlement sought to freeze society; in other words, whereas in the past men had been able to rise and penetrate into samurai ranks, in theory, according to Tokugawa law, this was impossible. It was not difficult to distinguish a samurai in a crowd: only samurai were able to bear swords, generally two, one short, one long, carried on the side. They enjoyed other exclusive privileges, for example that of having a surname *(myoji)* and also the exclusive right to commit *seppuku* (disembowelment, more generally known in the West as *hara-kiri).*

The first point to establish in regard to samurai is that there were a great many of them. The samurai estate is generally estimated to have corresponded to approximately 6 per cent of the population; assuming a total population in the later Edo period of about thirty million, this means that the samurai estate totalled not much less than two million. It is important to stress the large number of samurai for three reasons. The first is economic. Generally speaking, samurai were not supposed to engage in any form of productive or commercial activity - to put it another way, they were not supposed to 'make' (as opposed to receive) money. What percentage of the bakufu's or a han's budget was allocated to paying the samurai their stipends (Acroiu) is virtually impossible to determine; it stands to reason, however, that this must have been a substantial amount, all of which was borne by the peasantry through taxation. Samurai were, among many other things, an expensive luxury.

Secondly, the comparatively large number of samurai tells us something about the social composition of Tokugawa Japan and distinguishes her from European feudal societies where the percentage of the upper feudal orders was very much smaller. Similarly, as has already been suggested earlier and will be stressed here again, in the course of the Edo era many samurai came to perform some form of bureaucratic function; the *konryo-shugi* (bureaucratism) phenomenon can be gauged to some extent quantitatively as well as qualitatively.

Thirdly, the large number of samurai must qualify certain misconceptions regarding the nature of the mid-ninetecnth-ccntury revolution and the decades which followed it. There has been a somewhat unfortunate tendency in the literature on Japanese history to refer to the Restoration and (he early programme of modernisation as having been carried out by 'the' samurai. As has already been pointed out, in fact the distinction between samurai and the better-off peasants and some successful merchants came to be blurred; a number of the so-called samurai leaders of the early Mciji years were not fully Deditrreed samurai, but recent parvenus into that estate. Seen in numerical

terms, it also follows that the article 'the' is misleading, hence inappropriate. Even excluding women and children from the samurai estate, one is still left with an estimated figure of not much iesp than half a million adult samurai. Thus the operative qualifier would have to be 'some', not 'the', so far as samurai leadership of early Meiji Japan is concerned. There occurred in the course of the latter part of the Edo and early Meiji eras a process of selection within the samurai estate; a differentiation between a select, talented, progressive group on the one hand, with on the other a larger mass once described as a lumpen-aristocracy. It was, needless to say, the first group which spearheaded the process of modernisation, while the latter, albeit in occasionally somewhat raucous manner, faded away into historical oblivion.

The samurai estate was by no means a homogeneous group. There were variations from han to han and obviously the larger the han the more samurai there were and the more complex their organisation, this being particularly true of a number of the *tozama* han, notably Satsuma and Choshu. Generally, however, one can speak of upper, middle and lower samurai, though within each major category there might be a further grading of as many as five or six subdivisions. Rank was determined by revenue, the source of which was cither a fief (cAigyo), or more commonly an allotted stipend (AoroAa). The essential principle here was hereditary: a samurai's status was defined at birth. Elaborate rules were devised to govern social intercourse among samurai and their ceremonial functions. In certain circumstances the rules of *apartheid* could be as strict within the samurai estate as between samurai and Arhni'n. Thus, for example, marriage between upper samurai *(joshi)* and lower samurai *(kashi)* was forbidden, as indeed was adultery, though not unlike a great deal of Tokugawa legislation this rule was obviously difficult to enforce.

The bureaucratic machinery of the bakufu was described in the preceding chapter. In many respects han administration was a smaller replica of the bakufu. At the top of the scale were the daimyo's chief retainers (iaro, literally house elders), who performed advisory functions comparable to those of the *roju* at bakufu level. While the *karo* acted as councillors to the daimyo and were generally responsible for the overall administration of the han, the more detailed and defined civil and military offices were placed as the responsibility of the middle samurai, *hirazamurai,* comparable in status, though not always in revenue, to the bakufu's *hatamoto.* These included finance, liaison with the bakufu, administration of the castle* tow ns or of the rural areas, collection of taxes, the daimyo's household affairs, education, administration of shrines and temples, security, military procurements, supervision of the han guard, and so on. Some offices were simply hereditary, while others, though not strictly hereditary, were limited to samurai of a particular rank. The system was in principle, therefore, strongly aristocratic.

At the lower end of the scale the situation was, if anything, more complex. One might simply mention here two categories, though once again there were considerable variations of status and income among these. One was the *ashigaru* (foot soldiers), in fact somewhat on the periphery of the samurai estate, whose name indicates their military function, while their civil responsibilities consisted mainly of acting in subordinate positions in the various offices administered by the *hirazamurai.* Another category was that of the *goshi* (rustic samurai), especially prevalent in Satsuma, who varied somewhat from the general pattern of the Edu era in that they lived in villages rather than the *joka-machi,* and engaged in agriculture.

A samurai's rank determined his relationship with the daimyo, The *karo* were his close advisers, *hirazamurai* had the right of audience, lower samurai did not. Protocol in Edo society was sacrosanct and minute in detail. In the shogun's palace, for example, different reception rooms, in greater or lesser proximity to his living quarters, were used depending on the quality of the visitor; the same kind of ceremony applied to the daimyo's entourage. Caste distinctions were equally reflected in income; a *hirazamurai* might receive an annual stipend of as much as 500 *koku* of rice per annum, an *ashigaru* as little as fifteen. The^ro/nfj *seigneurs* of the Edo and han courts lived in splendour, while at the bottom of the scale the poorer samurai had great difficulty living on their meagre income.

To simplify a complex historical development, one might postulate the following. The Edo era witnessed the erosion, ultimately the disintegration of the han; there were, it is true, a number of han uprisings in the post Meiji Restoration years, such as the Saga (1874) and Satsuma (1877) rebellions, but although their immediate impact was considerable, seen from a longer historical perspective, their significance is negligible. At the same time as the disintegration of the han was taking place - though it must be stressed that this was a very slow, evolutionary and by no means nationally uniform movement - a process of unification, albeit imperceptible at first, was taking place, ultimately leading to the creation of the Japanese nation under the political legitimacy of the tenno. The basic structures and values of the han ideal, however, were eventually retained at the levels of enterprise, village and family. The heads of all three enjoyed an authority over their constituent members, comparable to that of the daimyo over his vassals, and the organisation within the three tended to be hierarchically organised; also, whereas the head expected absolute loyalty from his subordinates, he was in turn morally obliged to look after their welfare in a generally authoritarian paternalistic manner. What is being |»ostulated here is a model, and therefore readily admits of variations whether in regions, types of organisation and indeed time. The tenno reigned not really over so many individuals, but over

a large number of units all basic-ally derived from the han and eventually metamorphosed into more manageable entities, generally referred to as the *ie.* This pattern has remained to this day and accounts for what is termed the verticality of Japanese society. The process to be studied now could be described as the rise and fall of the han in terms of the ideal daimyo-samurai relationship.

The daimyo was surrounded by his samurai, generally geographically isolated in the *joka-machi,* With the exception of a small and constantly dwindling number of upper samurai who were permitted to maintain (heir own sub-fiefs and the peasant samurai (fos/if) of some han, the vast majority of the samurai derived their livelihood exclusively from the stipends which they received from die daimyo's treasury. The first point to establish in this daimyo-samurai relationship, therefore, is that it was an economic one, and indeed one which involved the samurai's complete economic dependence on his lord. It is important to bear this in mind, for the erosion of the daimyo-samurai relationship was to be partly caused by economic forces.

All samurai swore an oath of allegiance to the daimyo. The relationship between daimyo and samurai, however, was not contractual, but moral. This is a phenomenon of absolutely crucial significance, both in terms of Edo society and for an understanding of the nature of certain facets of Japan's subsequent modernisation and indeed of her contemporary society. It was stressed in the former chapter that a constant leitmotiv of Lhe early Tokugawa settlement was the determination to restore a *moral* order to society. In the course of the preceding pages reference has occasionally been made to the terms law, rules, regulations, and so forth. Among the differences between Western civilisation and East Asian civilisation (namely those areas coming under Chinese influence), perhaps one of the most significant lay in two radically different approaches to the concept of law. The ancient Greeks appointed Themis as goddess of justice and to this day we still find her represented all over the Western world, invariably clutching on to her scales. In the course of European history law, both as a concept and as a system, has been in a position of paramountcy. Practically all forms of social intercourse came to be legally defined and in the course of time individual legal rights were recognised. Although there were variations in both content and philosophy, between natural and positive law, civil and canon law, and so on, law in the European tradition was a recognisable, supreme and guiding principle - leaving aside economic and other factors of causation, the French revolution, mainly carried out by lawyers, can be said to have originated in a jurisprudential dispute.

The contrast with East Asian civilisation is striking. There existed, it is true, a legalist tradition in China, namely in the *Fa chia* school, which maintained

that good government should be based on a fixed code of law instead of on moral precepts. Always in somewhat of a heterodox position, however, by the time of the Sung dynasty (960-1280) Confucianism was in a period of full renaissance, The Confucianist tradition by no means negates the necessity of laws, but relegates the science and codification of law to a minor branch of ethics. In other words, the greatest emphasis in the social order is placed on morality and especially on virtuous conduct. Within this scheme of things the individual had no rights (indeed no term existed in the Chinese or Japanese languages to correspond to 'rights' and had to be invented in the mid-nineteenth century), but was responsible to a host of various obligations, words for which abound in Japanese. It was this reinvigorated, highly moral Sung Confucianism, seen especially in the writings of Chu Hsi (1130-1200), that the Tokugawa founding fathers were to impose as the ideological orthodoxy of Edo society. The Chu Hsi school of Confucianism did not, by any means, enjoy a complete monopoly during the centuries of Pax Tokugawa, The point is that the other schools as well all stressed the supremacy of virtue as the fundamental essence necessary for the preservation of the moral, hence social, order.

The principles of *bushido are* not solely derived from Confucianism, but rather represent an amalgam of various Japanese traditions, whether wholly indigenous or imported. The fact that it was termed the way of the bushi is a recognition of the role of the samurai in the last five centuries or so ofjapancse history and of his paramount position in society - a striking contrast to China where the man of arms was always inferior to the man of letters. And, of course, the bushi were the top layer of society, far removed in every respect from the *heimin,* hence theirs was the responsibility of moral example. *Bushido's* emphasis on the futility or evanescence of human existence was largely a product of Buddhism. The moral principles of *bushido,* however, were Confucianist. Although the moral code of the *bushido* was treated in numerous and lengthy treatises, its essence can be summed up fairly simply. Society was organised hierarchically according to the five basic relationships (£®-nn), described in Chapter 2; whereas it was incumbent on the inferior to be absolutely loyal to his superior, the superior was expected to show benevolence to his inferior. These two virtues, loyalty *(chu)* and benevolence *(Jen),* were the very essence of the moral code of the *bushido.* The pattern established in the daimyo-satnurai relationship devolved into other sectors of society; thus a wife was expected to show complete loyalty to her husband, an apprentice to his master, a tenant to his landlord, while they in turn should treat their own dependants benevolently.

So far as the samurai were concerned, however, it must be made clear that *bushido,* elaborated by a whole scries of moralists in the Edo period, but

notably initiated by Yamaga Soko (1622-85), was not a recognition, far less a description, of reality, but an exhortation to an ideal. This is not to say that samurai were not loyal to their dairnyo. There are numerous instances of acts of absolute and fearless loyalty in the Edo era - notably in the incidents occurring in 1701-2 from which was derived the heroic epic of CAurAin^urti, the story of the forty-seven *ronïn.* whose graves in the Scnkakuji in the Takanawa district of Tokyo are still the venue of annual pilgrimages. The fact remains, however, that for this ideology to remain operative, certain objective conditions within the han were necessary, which, especially in the latter part of the Edo era, were either absent or limited.

In any case, apart from the supreme virtue of loyalty, there were other moral injunctions in *bushido* which do not appear to have been conspicuously practised. A samurai was supposed to lead a life of austerity, but many lived in opulence; samurai were supposed to be sexually reserved, whereas both heterosexual and homosexual relationships appear IO have been frequently indulged in - including visits to thejiuAofat, theoretically off-limits to samurai. It is not the intention here to deny the existence of *bushido* or to denigrate its influence in samurai society during the Edo era. The concept of loyalty remained in a predominant position and ultimately it was loyalty - albeit to the tenno - that was the moral justification for the overthrow' of the *ancien rėgime.* Nevertheless, so far as samurai society during the Edo era is concerned, *bushido* should be recognised as what it was; an ideal. The moral bond between dairnyo and samurai weakened because increasingly contradictions arose between reality and the ideal.

The objective conditions which came to weaken the daimyo-samurai relationship were both economic and political. There was the increasing indebtedness of both dairnyo and samurai to the merchants, which arose out of a number of factors. The expenses of *sankin-kotai* borne by the dairnyo were exceedingly onerous; as much as 70-80 per cent of a han's cash outlay was necessary to meet the requirements of *sankin-kotai.* Extravagant life in Edo really got under way during the reign of the shogun Tsunayoshi, with the dairnyo in general feeling it incumbent upon them to emulate his example. The number of *yashiki* (mansions) maintained by the dairnyo in Edo increased, the total number surpassing 600 in due course; this obviously involved expenses of construction, maintenance, repair, staffing, and so on. The income of the dairnyo consisted essentially of that part of the tax in kind which could be converted into cash; generally speaking, therefore, income was fixed, especially by the eighteenth century when the earlier process of land reclamation had reached an end and technological improvements were nor of a nature to increase significantly output per acre. While income, therefore, was limited, requirements for expenditure were not.

In order to make revenue and expenditure meet, the daimyo could contemplate five alternatives. One was to cut down on expenses. Although this was occasionally resorted to, frugality went against the grain of the prevailing Edo atmosphere, especially since wealth indicated power and importance - and it is perhaps a fairly universal phenomenon that economising is held in contempt by any ruling dite, and at worst is contemplated as a last resort. A second alternative was to seek other sources of revenue. This alternative was engaged in by a few han, some with considerable success. A third alternative was to raise taxes; this was not often resorted to because of endemic peasant uprisings. Although one, two, or all three of these alternatives may have been occasionally adopted, the most common were the last two. The fourth alternative, then, was simply to borrow more money from the r'fonin; the majority of the daimyo by the end of the Tokugawa era were hopelessly in debt, which partly accounts for the meekness with which they accepted the new order and their own demise, especially since the new government was thoughtful enough to cover their debts. The fifth alternative was to renege on the payment of the samurai's stipends. Generally this took the form of samurai being informed that their stipends would be temporarily forfeited. Loyalty also has its price. One of the features of the later Edo era was that the economic link lietween daimyo and samurai, if not necessarily completely severed, was nonetheless seriously jeopardised, especially at a time when samurai too were facing serious economic difficulties.

The samurai's economic difficulties can be largely ascribed to three major causes. The first is that the samurai, in wishing to emulate their lords, also engaged in a life of extravagance. The second is a consequence of the fifth daimyo alternative indicated above, namely that they were not being regularly paid. The third is that their income, when they received it, was also fixed and in kind; the monetisation of the economy meant that samurai had to exchange their stipends for specie, while the exchange rate fluctuated significantly, with samurai invariably coming worse off. Their economic plight, therefore, was of considerable proportions. The samurai too had a number of alternatives when trying to alleviate their financial distress. They could seek to economise, although for samurai al the bottom of the stipendiary scale this was virtually impossible, for a mere subsistence existence does not allow scope for saving. Although both bakufu and han occasionally attempted major fiscal reforms, there was a constantly recurring assumption and insistence that the economic plight of the samurai estate was essentially caused by a moral decline. The Kyoho reforms of Yoshirnune, the Kansei reforms of Matsudaira Sadanobu and the Tenpo reforms of Mizuno Tadakuni all laid great emphasis on the need for the samurai to return to practising the moral values of sobriety and frugality; the arrest of economic decline could be achieved only through moral regeneration.

Another means of meeting expenses, albeit illegal, was for samurai to obtain capital from *chonin* either by marriage or adoption. Alternatively, and equally illegal, samurai might simply abandon their status and enter the commercial field or turn to agriculture.'Another method, as with the daimyo frequently indulged in, was to go further into debt by borrowing from the *chonin.* Finally, however, samurai could also seek alternative sources of income and at the same time maintain their samurai status.

This last alternative requires some elaboration. One of the most significant features of Tokugawa society was the development ofcducation, to be looked at in more detail in Chapter 4. The point here, however, is that if the supply of educational facilities grew, so did the demand. Thus talented samurai, irrespective of birth, who had achieved a high standard ofcducation and were able to establish an academic reputation, might find themselves either employed in the proliferating bakufu or han schools or indeed set up their own academies. At the same lime, as both bakufu and han affairs became increasingly complex and required adequate human resources to staff the various offices, a demand for able administrators also developed. Most of these offices, it is true, remained open only to samurai from certain ranks; within these ranks, however, selection was increasingly made on the basis of ability and educational achievement. In some cases, rank qualifications might be dispensed with, for example by giving a truly promising samurai incremental stipends *(tashidaka),* thus enabling him to rise in the samurai social scale.

Along with the economic deterioration of the samurai estate, this development was to be of fundamental significance. The Tokugawra settlement in its inception, it was stressed, was based on a rigid aristocratic principle: status, function and income were determined by birth. What was taking place within the samurai estate, however, albeit in evolutionary and initially imperceptible manner, was the introduction of the meritocratic principle into the aristocracy. In Japanese the operative term became *jinzat* (men of talent), ultimately leading tn a doctrine *of jinzaishugi* (which can be translated as meritocracy).

In other words, we have here the reassertion of the lawrs of *gekokujo.* The *gekokujo* of the *sengoku* period witnessed the ascendance of talented warriors; by and large the *gekokujo* of the mid-ninctccnth century consisted primarily of the ascendance of talented bureaucrats. The reforms which followed the Meiji Restoration could be summed up in terms of opening careers to talents, even though initially talent was to be recruited almost exclusively from samurai. The educated, talented, progressive, meritocratic samurai in the latter part of the Edo era were objectively still members of the samurai estate; subjectively, however, their attitudes differed radically from the bulk of their oafish,

parasitic, backward-looking fellows. It was in this sense that within the samurai estate a revolutionary class developed.

The daimyo-samurai particularistic bond, therefore, was weakened by economic forces. There were other negative forces. The fact that owing to *sankin-kotai* the daimyo had to spend a considerable amount of time in Edo meant that his links, if only geographic, with those samurai who stayed behind were significantly weakened, especially in the cases of those daimyo who for economic reasons tended to stay on in Edo for much longer periods than was required. The emergence and proliferation of rontn (lordless samurai) also led to an erosion of the daimyo-samurai relationship.

A samurai might become a ronxn as a result of a number of possible causes. For example, he might be sent into exile from his han because of an offence; alternatively he might decide to abscond and seek fortune elsewhere of his free will, possibly because his daimyo was not paying him at all, or not paying him enough and the attraction of greener grass elsewhere proved too alluring; or because he was invited by another han to join in some capacity due to the good reputation he had been successful in establishing. The latter part of the Edo era witnessed a spiralling increase in the number of ront'n, a phenomenon related to the rise of the meritocratic samurai. Thus a talented samurai in a progressive and sizeable han would find an outlet for his intelligence and energy', A talented samurai in a retrograde or very small han would have no such opportunity; he might on the other hand find a suitable occupation elsewhere.

The samurai enjoyed considerable freedom of movement in Edo society. Geographic mobility of the samurai, therefore, was a prominent feature of their estate during the Edo era. By travelling, or by being billeted in Edo during their daimyo's period of attendance, samurai of one han got to know samurai of other han; they were able to exchange ideas and impressions and the more educated among them would find kindred spirits with whom to discuss all manner of things. This paved the way intellectually and politically for the national unification and centralisation which were to be achieved with such remarkable speed in the years immediately following the Restoration.

A distinguishing characteristic of these educated, meritocratic samurai was that they were pragmatists and not ideologists. This does not mean that they lacked principles or indeed that the tenets of *bushido* were abandoned; but *bushido* as originally conceived, with its emphasis on the daimyo-samurai relationship, was certainly jettisoned. It must be stressed that here one is identifying trends. The major factor which was to result in these various trends coalescing was going to be an external one, namely the impact and menace of the Western powers. The process described here was how the evolution within the samurai estate had occurred. Those samurai who

emerged as the leaders of modernising Japan were in most respects, intellectually, socially and politically, very different kettles of fish from their forebears and indeed from the majority of their kinsmen. In other words, as in the peasant and merchant estates, from *within* the samurai estate the Edo era witnessed a new elite in the process of formation.

WOMEN

In terms of social status samurai were the most privileged group within Edo society while the female sex, taken *in toto,* were the least significant Perhaps for that reason it is quite common for books on Japanese history to ignore them, or simply to mention (and more often dismiss) them *en passant.*

The status of women in Japan presents something of an anomaly. Compared to most non-European societies, Japanese women have suffered neither physical disgrace nor impairment: there was no female circumcision in Japan, no binding of feet, widows were not burnt at the pyre of their deceased husbands, nor were they forced to cover their faces with a veil. There were a few customs associated with the female sex, though none of these were of a particularly barbarous nature. In the Edo era women of the higher orders shaved their eyebrows and blackened their teeth with a thick paste; whereas the origins of the former are unknown, the latter was clearly for preservative purposes. The pigeon-toed gait, commonly associated with Japanese women today, seems to have been of comparatively recent origin; early Edo paintings of Japanese females show them with their feet in a parallel position, whereas by the Genroku era the more familiar inward inclination of the toes appears. Widows were not forced to accompany their husbands to the grave, the practice ofJunrAi, as we saw earlier, being limited to male retainers. A woman of the samurai estate might, under certain circumstances, follow her husband in suicide, though she would not disembowel herself *(seppuku),* but thrust her own small dirk *(kaiken)* into the jugular vein. Court ladies, wives, concubines and so on, whether in Kyoto or Edo, were kept segregated from the rest of the household and were not to be visited by strangers.

Although there are a few formidable female figures in the Nara era, generally the more recent political history of Japan can be written while excluding women altogether, or perhaps with the occasional insertion of a forceful mother or wife. In terms of post-Heian history this can no doubt be explained by the martial nature of Japanese society. Another factor, however, which may have accounted for the insignificance of females is that they did not bring large domains with them; there were political marriages, but although these might serve to cement an alliance, they did not as such alter the domainal geography of Japan. Women's role was in the interior; the degree of an individual's influence would presumably be dependent on the force, or

otherwise, of her own personality and that of her husband, lover or son, as the case might be.

The subordination of women in Japanese society was part of a general East Asian pattern. The fact remains, however, that while rare, even in Gonfucianist China it was possible for a woman to play an influential political role - the modern history of China could hardly be written without frequent reference to the Empress Dowager Ts'u-hsi (1835-1908). Similarly, other contemporary Asian societies have produced their female political figures, notably in the cases of Sirimavo Bandaranaike (b. 1916) and Indira Gandhi (b, 1917). In Japan the anomaly to some extent continues; although, in fact and as things stand at present, the percentage of women in the Diet (the Japanese parliament) is higher than that of the House of Commons, it is for the time being inconceivable that there should be a female prime minister in Japan, nor has a woman ever been a member of Cabinet. The alleged inferiority of women in Japan, however, is more apparent than real; in fact women do wield a considerable amount of power, not in the limelight, but from the concealed confines of the interior, The historical roots of the status of women in contemporary Japanese society arc complex; some of these can be isolated here, while the more modern nineteenth-century transformations, or lack of them, of the female condition will be looked at in a subsequent chapter.

It has been suggested in this chapter that whereas the dairnyo'-samurai relationship disintegrated in the course of the Edo era, a number of *bushido* ideals inherent in this relationship were absorbed and ultimately rooted into other types of organisation, namely the village and the firm (i>), The model samurai family incorporated both AurAtdfo and the official Gonfucianist ideology (including the *go-ṅn,* five basic relationships, according to which woman was clearly man's absolute inferior). In the course of the Edo era *bushido,* the daimyo-samurai relationship and the model of the samurai marriage gradually came to be absorbed into the upper layers of the other estates. Historians have spoken of the social development of the Meiji years as one where a process of ' samurai-isation[1] took place. It is in the second decade or so of the Meiji era, the 1880s, that this process gathered momentum; it had however already begun in the course of the later Edo era.

Two things should be made clear at the outset. First, an analysis of this kind inevitably involves one in an element of generalisation, Thus, if we say that samurai women did not work, that their position was clearly relegated to the interior, there will, of course, be exceptions. It is more than likely that the wives and daughters of the poorer *goshi* (rustic samurai) participated in farming. It is also known that especially in the latter part of the Edo era some poor samurai sought to find remunerative activity for their females, albeit perhaps clandestinely; certainly in the north-east of Japan (the Tohoku

region), poor samurai females worked in textiles and a number of regional products, notably the &iu&n-A:ra or *Yonezawa shoku.* were produced by samurai female labour. Samurai girls of destitute families joined the ranks of the labour force in the Meiji era. This point also serves to illustrate the social differentiation taking place within the estates; that poorer peasant and merchant women, like their samurai sisters, worked, while richer peasant and merchant women along with better-off samurai fernales did not.

Secondly, it will also be clear that the evolution of the economic function of women in Japanese society, *mutatis mutandis,* does not vary significantly from more universal patterns. A woman's role and status in society, however, is a function of both economic conditions and ideology'; when poverty is the rule, then ideology must accommodate itself. Thus the distinction between poor Japanese women and poor Western women will be only marginal; with affluence, however, the separation may intensify, simply because of prevailing ideologies.

Japan was theoretically a monogamy, (hough the practice of concubinage was accepted, indeed institutionalised. Thus, the tenno took one principal wife, called the *kogo,* generally chosen from the highest ranking *kuge* families, though, as we have seen, occasionally, whether willingly or not (in fact will had very little to do in these arrangements) he might marry a relative of the shogun. In the early Edo era the *kogo* seem to have served the purpose of producing an heir, but most of the later ones were childless. In spite of the relative national obscurity and impotence of the imperial court, conjugal politics and intrigue nonetheless continued; the tenno's marriage was a political marriage, but given that his heir need not be his wife's offspring, consummation of the marriage was unnecessary. The tenno had a large entourage of female attendants, some official mistresses, others serving other purposes, most of whom were lodged in separate apartments within the palace grounds. The *kogo,* who lived in her own palace, the *Higyo-sha,* had a number of ceremonial duties to perform, while the rest of the tenno's women did not appear in public.

The same pattern applied on the whole to the shogun's court and to the daimyo, though obviously there would be a variation in the number of females depending on the daimyo's wealth. The function of these women was to provide progeniture and otherwise cater to their lords' needs and w'hims. The main shogunal palace was estimated to have a female staff of somewhere in the region of 250. It goes without saying that by no means were all of these expected to perform sexual services; in fact in many cases the shogun is unlikely even to have cast his eyes, concupiscent or otherwise, upon them. If one adds to the shogunal palace the numerous J-OJAI'AI of daimyo and *hatamolo,* it is clear that the demand for women reached the thousands.

The shogun's and the daimyo's chief consorts and official concubines would be recruited from certain specific social groups and indeed families. Other female attendants, however, and ones who could become unofficial mistresses, would be provided from a variety of different groups. For the Edo *chonin* it was a matter of some ambition to place a daughter in a daimyo's household. The girl might, if pleasant and lucky enough, bear the daimyo's child, or alternatively be offered by the daimyo to one of his samurai; in cither case the *chonin* family's prestige and standing would improve. Most of these women, however, were segregated in their own quarters in the palaces and could not freely engage in court social life; a Madame de Pompadour (1721-64) was an inconceivable phenomenon in Edo court society,

Tcnno, shogun and daimyo would, presumably, find within their harems enough (or more than enough) to satisfy their sexual appetites. In any case, however, their freedom of movement w[r]as limited; even had they wished to venture outside this would have been virtually impossible. As for the samurai and *chonin* of Edo, three brief points need to be made here, First, (he social etiquette governing court ladies applied to all women who aspired to follow the general guidelines of itwAtdb. Secondly, family life in Edo Japan was a microcosm of the total society, hence involving strict hierarchy and ceremony in every respect; place, speech, and so on. Thirdly, although higher samurai may well have kept women in both their *joka-machi* and Edo, this was clearly impossible financially for the lower samurai, for example the *ashigaru,* who also had to accompany their lords on *sankin-kotai* to Edo and would have to leave their wives behind. These reasons (with the exception of the third in regard to cAanin) explain the great popularity and proliferation of the *yukaku.* As these were such a prominent feature of Edo society and also as to some extent they help give an historical explanation for the continued practice of 'professional' female entertainers (which by no means need be synonymous with prostitute), a brief description of the *yukaku* institution and the role they came to play is called for.

The *yukaku,* as pointed out, were districts in the cities, usually on the outskirts, where legalised prostitution could be exercised: the most famous of the *yukaku* was the Yoshiwara situated in the northern boundaries of Edo. The atmosphere here was by no means seedy, but colourful, indeed flamboyant. The brothels were interspersed with restaurants, tea-houses, theatres, and so on. The *yukaku* were designed to provide pleasure for all the senses, while inside the various establishments the emphasis was above all placed on a tnood of relaxation. The *yukaku* were, therefore, a refuge from the highly status-conscious, rigidly formal society of Edo Japan, which pervaded all levels, whether the council of the daimyo's government or the home. In the jruAotu, flippancy could be engaged in, idle chatter with the inmates, as well as other

activities, while enjoying a good meal anti *sake.* The inmates of the yuAaAu were, therefore, much more than just prostitutes. The reputation of the various establishments was based not simply on the beauty of their women, but on the sophistication of their discourse, the skill of their repartee, the quantity and quality of their gossip - for, needless to say, the *yukaku* became notorious centres of intrigue - and their artistic accomplishments. The girls were expected to be versatile not only in the arts of love, but also in dancing, singing and playing musical instruments, especially the *shamisen,* a balalaika-type instrument originating from the Ryukyu islands and imported into Japan towards the end of the sixteenth century. These facts help to provide an explanation for a linguistic phenomenon, namely the use of the term *geisha.* The generic term for prostitute in Japanese is *joro,* though there were numerous other appellations meant to indicate both type and status of the different *joro. Geisha* literally means 'artistic or talented person* and originally applied to the Kyoto court male musicians and other professional male entertainers. As in the *yukaku* the function of the inmate became more sophisticated and she was expected to show artistic talent in various fields, the term *geisha* came to be applied; hence the use of the word *geisha* for a female professional entertainer dates from the seventeenth century.

A number of rather disparate points regarding the *yukaku* and *geisha* can be made. The relaxed atmosphere provided by the entertainers of the *yukaku* - who, incidentally, were not only women but also included males, generally called *taikomochi* or *hokan* - fulfilled, to use contemporary jargon, a role of 'tension management[1]; here the stiff etiquette of society and the family could be left behind. This function of 'tension management' provided by Japanese professional female (and male) entertainers remains not only among *geisha,* but also among the thousands and thousands of bar-hostesses.

Although we have spoken here of thc/uAoAa, it should also be clear that, in spite of official regulations to the contrary, prostitution was practised in areas outside the licensed quarters. The inns at the relay stations (jfttiAttfAt) along the routes of the *sankin-kotai* were almost invariably staffed with girls who would act as both servants and prostitutes. The proliferation of prostitution in the Edo era was not simply a reflection of men's lust, but also of the economic conditions of the time. Recruitment of girls to service the various inns, brothels, tea-houses, and so on was carried out in the rural districts, a poor peasant receiving a payment in cash in exchange for the sale of his daughter, who left her village never to return. The recruitment of girts from poor rural districts, again especially the Tohoku region, continued in the decades following the Restoration and indeed reached a peak during the Depression years of the 1930s.

The profession of prostitution and the brothel came to reflect certain

characteristics of the Edo era. Ah hough the visitor might bathe in an atmosphere of insouciance, the organisation within the profession was rigidly hierachical, the prostitutes being accorded ranks which determined both the fees they received for their services and the social prestige they enjoyed within thc^'iitaAti society. Normally a girl would be introduced into a brothel at a very young age, about five or six years old. She would then serve an apprenticeship, learning to dance, sing and play musical instruments, while generally helping in a number of menial capacities, for example carrying messages. She was the property of the brothel and could only be released if she were bought from the establishment by another one - in a manner perhaps comparable to football players today - or by someone who wished either to marry her or set her up as a concubine for his exclusive use. On the whole, however, once she entered a particular brothel, this was for 'life-time employment[1]; having served her apprenticeship, depending on the degree of her versatility, she would rise up the ranks.

Prostitution existed (exists) in all societies, but in comparison with Western societies of the same period there were a few commendable features in the Japanese system. First, Japanese prostitutes did not suffer the social disgrace which was the fate of their Western sisters. Secondly, given the fact that the *geisha* at least was sought after not only for her physical charm but also for her artistic and social talents, ageing was less of a problem, indeed the disaster, that is was in the West. As the years passed, perhaps less called upon for copulation, she continued to fulfil an important and esteemed role as entertainer and tutor, namely in educating the new recruits. The life-long employment, the hierarchical ranking, the association of belonging to the brothel and, so far as one knows, the degree of benevolence (Jen) exercised by the proprietor in looking after the well-being of the inmates, all attest to the brothel's quality as another example of the *it.*

One final point needs to be made in regard to the*yukaku.* In view of ail the facts cited so far in regard not only to the *yukaku* but also the condition of upper-stratum women in general, it is hardly surprising that the *yukaku* became a centre of the cultural scene of Edo Japan. The beauties portrayed in the *ukiyo-e* (coloured wood-block prints of the 'floating world') were from the *yukaku,* while many plays, usually romantic tragedies, centred round the amorous intrigues and accompanying emotions of the *yukaku* inmates, perhaps the most famous being *'The Love Suicides at Sonezaki* by Chikamatsu Monzaernon (1653-1725), first performed in 1703. In the closed society that was Edo Japan and the restrictions imposed on women in accordance with the minatory prescriptions of *bushido,* there was relatively little outside the jwAtitu which could serve as inspiration for romantic stories.

Apart from prostitutes, concubines and domestic servants, women in Edo

Japan were, needless to say, engaged in other activities. There were, for example, women employed in various capacities in the Shinto shrines and staffing the Buddhist nunneries: here again the principle of birth often operated, the headship of certain nunneries in Kyoto, for example, being restricted to females of prescribed Awge families. Education proliferated considerably during the Edo era and although the main beneficiaries were men, some girls were also exposed to learning. In the samurai estate those girls who did receive an education would concentrate on Japanese letters *(ivaju no naraf),* rather than the more demanding, 'masculine' Chinese studies. Education opened the doors to a number of (albeit very limited) possibilities, including the writing of poetry and prose, teaching, and so on. Again the phenomenon of private, rather than public, scholarship may have been operative in a few instances, it being suspected, for example, that the *Onna Daigaku* ('Greater Learning for Women', of which more shall be said shortly), attributed to the Confucianist moral scholar, Kaibara Ekken (1630-1714), was in fact written by his wife. Among the merchant estate, women participated in a number of activities, including book-keeping, retailing, and so on, hence a knowledge of the three Rs would be an advantage in a merchant's prospective bride.

It is, however, of course especially in the primary sector that women were most numerous and economically most functional. In fishing, for example, it was women who were the fishmongers and it was also females who dived for seaweed; patterns of continuity can be seen here in that since diving was traditionally a female activity, when Mikimoto Kokichi (1858–1954) founded his cultured pearl empire women were employed as divers (dtna) - generally not the case in other pearl-diving communities, for example in India, the Persian Gulf and Mexico - and this remains the case to this day. In agriculture there were also a number of activities generally carried out solely by women, the hulling and milling of grain and the annual transplantation of rice shoots being two examples. Sericulture w[r]as almost exclusively a female domain and treatises were written in the course of the Edo era giving advice to women on how best to breed worms, and so on; the advice, some of it scientifically advanced, some of it not, went into considerable detail, including for example warnings about talking too loudly when in the presence of worms and staying clear from them during periods of menstruation, the main reason for this presumably being the association in Shinto of menstruation with unclcanness (frond). In the cottage industry' which proliferated in the Edo era, women played an important role, especially in spinning and weaving; and in the primitive types of textile factories which began emerging in the later Edo era it was generally farm girls who were employed as operatives.

In view of the fact that peasant women represented the overwhelming

majority of the female population, a brief, fairly general description of their way of life is called for; partly also in order to illustrate the point made earlier - the evolutionary process of the 'satnurai-isation' of society which occurred in the course of the later Edo and Meiji eras.

If one ignores the poorer tenants on a subsistence or indeed below subsistence existence, the richer landlords whose women would experience the same fate as those of the samurai estate, and if one excludes periods of obvious hardship, such as famines, it is reasonable to conjecture that peasant women must have led a much happier, more fulfilled, freer existence than their samurai counterparts. The ordinary peasant, it goes without saying, could not afford to keep concubines, hence sexual relations would be generally limited to the couple; similarly, the ordinary peasant, tied to his land, would have neither the resources nor the opportunity to visit the*yukaku,* which presumably also meant that venereal disease - a scourge of vast proportions in urban Japan - would be far less common in rural districts. Women worked side by side with their men and though certain customs might have been observed in the household, for example in seating arrangements, peasant women were obviously on a plane of far greater equality with their men. Nor were women excluded from the village celebrations and festivals, so peasant females could have an easy-going, entertaining social life, denied to females of the upper strata.

Thus, during the Edo era the strict ideological code in regard to women, as manifested in the concept of *danson-johi* ('revere man despise woman'), or illustrated in the pages of the *Onna Daigaku,* in fact affected only women of samurai and quasi-samurai standing. The so-called 'traditional' Japanese marriage of more contemporary society was derived from samurai custom and did not affect the general community until much later, as a fairly widespread phenomenon perhaps not until the Showa era (1926 –). Real traditional conjugal relations among commoners were of a very different order. Though practices varied considerably from region to region, traditional marriages included the following characteristics.

Both courtship and pre-marital sexual relations were the norm. One found, for example, the custom of *yobai* (literally 'night crawling[1]), whereby a suitor would go at night to sleep at the house of an eligible girl. Though there were regional variations, generally speaking what this implied w[r]as that when a girl became of marriageable age she would be left to make her bedding in some easily accessible and reasonably private part of the house. A young man would come to sleep with her; if he decided he wished to marry her, he would stay till morning to be 'discovered' by the girl's parents. If he decided against beirothal, he would abscond in the night. More informal methods of courtship also took place. In fact it is reasonable to assume that a lad would have secured

the girl's permission before the *yobai.* Thus sampling and selection of mates took place and the decision whether or not to marry was left mainly to the two individuals concerned.

In the case of the ideal samurai marriage, neither courtship nor pre-marital sex took place, the bride was chosen by the family in consultation with and through the help of an officially appointed go-between *(nakodo)* and the marriage was not so much a contract between individuals as between families; thus personal choice, of cither groom or bride, had very little to do in the matter, nor, needless to say, did love. Japan was of course by no means exceptional in this respect and in spite of certain differences in structure and ceremony the same general pattern would apply to European upper-class families, especially in the sense that marriage was an affair more between families than between the individuals concerned; among the various differences, however, one should point out that although in both societies pre-marital sex was not the norm, in Europe extra-marital sex on the part of both partners was, if not the rule, at least not exceptional, whereas in Japan it was generally the exclusive prerogative of the male.

A second feature of traditional marriages among the peasantry in contrast with the samurai had to do with the ceremony itself. In weddings of the bushi estate, the bride was brought to the groom's family home *(yome-iri,* literally 'bringing in the bride*'), and the ceremony and the consummation of the marriage were held under the roof of the husband's parental home; henceforth the bride belonged to the same *u* as the husband, a property to lx used, abused or disposed of virtually at will, and her iunctions included not only those of mot her and wife, but also daughter-in-law; in fact her ministrations in early marriage, apart from the sexual act, were more likely to be at the behest of her mother-in-law than her husband, until she herself became a mother-in-law. Among the peasantry, in some regions it was the practice to have the wedding ceremony in the groom's home, in others in the bride's *(muko-iri,* 'bringing in the groom'). In some cases the groom might remain in his wife's if for periods ranging from one to five years; he would subsequently return to his father's *ie* sometimes with his wife, sometimes without her. In fact it was not uncommon for peasant girls to join their husbands only once they had set up their own *ie.* In other regions, after the marriage the husband would work for his *ie,* the wife for hers, with the husband only joining her at nights; they would corne and live and work together once they had set themselves up independently. In all of these cases, apart from the partnership being both far more egalitarian and relaxed, the emphasis was on the conjugal, rather than the lineage, relationship.

In the course of the modern era, European marriages of the lower orders have tended to follow a process of *cmbourgeoi-iement,* while in Japan it has tended

to be one of *ensamouraisation.* The fact that the *femme bourgeone* has been able to maintain a greater degree of independence - albeit in very relative terms - than her Japanese homologue is partly due to ideology, partly to custom, but also partly to economics. If the development of^vmz-in' has taken place in a consistently evolutionary manner and without significant resistance, this is, among a number of factors, due to the general absence in Japan of the dowry. The Japanese bride, irrespective of which estate she belonged to, rarely took with her more than items of purely personal use, such as clothing, a chest of drawers (fanju), which contained her cosmetics, and even if she took a sum of money *(jitankin),* the amount was minimal. A more substantial dowry would normally figure only in cases of *chonin* girls marrying into samurai families. The general practice of primogeniture, whereby the eldest son was left everything, plus the fact that when a bride entered her husband's *ie* the links with her parents' *ie* were severed, also meant that she had nothing to expect following the death of her parents. Wives, therefore, were a very cheap commodity; they had practically no economic value of their own, hence the proprietary rights exerted by the husband's trover them.

Among the peasantry, therefore, women in the household were freer and more equal to their husbands. This resulted from the fact that peasant women had a higher economic value, in terms of labour, and from the remoteness of the villages from the more urban-centred official Confucianist ideology. As peasants rose in the social and economic scale and as Confucianist moral teaching spread in rural areas ~ a process begun in the Edo era and subsequently continued with far greater effect in the Meiji period - the peasant Hearne to follow' the example of the samurai. Samurai women, apart from the economic factor already mentioned, were in a very subordinate position because of both ideology' and certain institutions inherent in the family system. The latter included the widely recognised practice of concubinage, the absorption of the wife into the husband's *ie (yome-in)* and the husband's virtually absolute power of divorce - causes for which could include not only failure to produce offspring, contraction of disease (including venereal ones which the husband was likely to have passed on to the wife following a bout in the j'itAdAa) and disrespect shown to his parents, but also a fairly general heading of talking too much and thereby disturbing the peace of the *ie* – without the need for financial compensation. In its essentials this system remained operative in Japan until the reforms imposed by the American occupying forces following defeat in the Second World War; these included the wife's right to divorce, which in turn led to the not surprising result that the majority of divorce suits filed in the immediate post-war years were by wives.

In terms of ideology Japanese women were relegated to a very inferior

position, partly as a result of the martial values inherent in *bushido* and the emphasis which it placed on the daimyo-samurai relationship to the practical exclusion of all else. This was reinforced by the highly phallocratic Confucianist social doctrines. The numerous moral tracts written for women in the Edo era in some respects did not differ markedly from, say, their Victorian counterparts in the West, stressing as they did sobriety, propriety in demeanour, and so forth. One difference which can be noted is that in regard to attitudes towards sex. As is well known, the Victorian ideology' regarding sex for women was that it was an evil necessary for the sake of procreation, an intolerable burden for girls whose best course of action was 'to close their eyes and think of England*. Traditionally in Japan there were practically no sexual taboos (apart from incest); adultery on the part of the wife or pre-marital sex on the part of the samurai girl were proscribed not so much because of laws of chastity, but because of laws of property - in other words a girl belonged, literally, to her father before marriage, to her husband after marriage and to her son in widowhood, hence her body was not hers to offer of her free will, but a commodity which was the property of the *ie* in which she lived. Under the proper circumstances, however, there was no shame attached to sexuality and indeed part of the education of young girls was that they should be properly instructed in the art of love and to that end were given *makura-zoshi* (pillow books consisting mainly of illustrations) as part of their pre-nuptial training - not, however, it should be emphasised, in order to secure their enjoyment, but that of their husband.

The most famous of the moral tracts for women of the Edo era was Kaibara Ekken's *Onna Daigaku.* It may be appropriate to close this section with two selections from this work. The first quotation will illustrate the point made about the absorption of dainiyo-samurai relationship within the marriage; while the second will provide a reasonably colourful impression of the esteem with which women were held according to the prevailing ideology.

> A woman has no particular lord. She must look to her husband as her lord, and must serve hirn with al] worship and reverence, not despising or thinking lightly of him. The great life-long duty of a woman is obedience , , . When the husband issues his instructions, the wife must never disobey him ... A woman should look on her husband as if he were Heaven itself, and never weary of thinking how she may yield to her husband, and thus escape celestial castigation.

> The five worst maladies that afflict the female mind are: indocility, discontent, slander, jealousy, and silliness. Without any doubt, these five maladies infest seven or eight out of every ten women, and it is from these

that arises the inferiority of women to men . . . The worst of them all, and the parent of the other four, is silliness.

ETA AND *HININ*

If women receive only cursory mention in most general histories of Japan, generally the *eta* and *hinin* receive none at all. To say that this is the equivalent of writing the history of the United States without the Blacks or of Germany without the Jews would be a considerable exaggeration; the *eta* were neither enslaved nor were they exterminated in concentration camps. Nor were their numbers comparable in percentage terms to more widely known discriminated minorities in other societies. When the legal distinction between outcast groups and other commoners was abolished in 1871 it was estimated according to the census - and hitherto outcasts had not figured in Edo censuses that there were approximately 400,000 *eta* and a further 750,000 or so other types of outcast. Another reason why the problem of *eta* may not have received attention is that they are not an international group: Blacks exist not only in Africa, but in both American continents and, of course, more recently in some countries of Western Europe, while the Jewish diaspora is a well-known phenomenon; whereas *eta,* on the other hand, exist only in Japan. The *eta* and other outcasts can hardly be labelled a powerful force in Japanese history and although the last century or so has witnessed a number of emancipation movements, no *eta* leading figure has attracted international artention to warrant, for example as in the case of Martin Luther King (I929~fi8), the award of the Nobel Peace Prize. So far as modern Japan is concerned, however, the *eta* remain a social and political problem; although the roots of this problem lie as far back as the Nara period, they were given a further twist in the course of the Edo era.

In the pre-Edo era all outcast groups (.rtmmin, literally 'despised people') had been lumped together. While they were discriminated against, society was not particularly ordered (in the *iengoku* era far from it), so they enjoyed a considerable degree of freedom of movement and financial remuneration since, as we have seen, in the period of civil wars demand for leather goods was significant. Edo legislation, however, drew a distinction between the *eta* and the *hinin* (non-human), mainly along occupational lines. The *eta* slaughtered animals and manufactured leather products; they were also the only group in Japan at the time to eat meat. Apart from leather w[r]ork, they made *zori* (sandals), *geta* (wooden clogs) and other goods. The *hinin* consisted of a variety of mendicant groups, acrobats, strolling minstrels, actors, and so forth. Although there were different responsibilities accorded to *eta* and *hinin,* generally both were engaged in the various jobs associated with criminals: as prison wardens, torturers, executioners, whether by transfixing with spears

those who were crucified (normally Christians) or sawing off heads in decapitation.

A whole series ol' minatory rules were issued regarding their way of living. *Eta* were forbidden to marry or to have sexual intercourse with non~eta; they were forbidden employment by commoners as servants; they were not permitted to reside outside designated rto villages or ghettoes- hence the current terminology for *eta, burakumtn,* literally 'village people'; nor were they permitted to cross the threshold of non-rtrx or *hinin* houses, or to sit, eat or smoke in the company of ordinary citizens. Although, as pointed out above, *eta* and *hinin* did not figure in the census, if they had to be counted the numeral form for animals was used. (In the Japanese language different numerical forms are used depending on the objects being counted; hence one, two, three human beings will be *hiton, futari, tannin,* while one, two, three animals will be *ippiki, nihiki, sanbiki] ela* and *hinin* were counted according to the latter rather than the former,) It is probable that it is as a result of these extreme forms of both segregation and discrimination that popular beliefs regarding the habits and physical peculiarities of the *eta* arose, the latter including the myths that they arc born with only four fingers and that they are not capable of urinating and defecating simultaneously.

The *eta* and *hinin* had their own rulers and administration, though needless to say these were answerable to the bakufu. The chief of the *eta* of the Kan to area was always called Danzaemon and he had his residence and offices in the Asakusa district of Tokyo. Danzaemon's legitimacy was partly based on the claim that he was the direct descendant of Minamoto no Yoritomo (1147-99), founder of the Kamakura bakufu, and a peasant girl; although this lineage appears to have been bogus. Danzaemon was neverthless permitted to carry two swords. Danzaemon and leaders of the other regions were responsible for law and order among the *eta* and *hinin-,* their ranks could swell as criminals and fallen samurai (that is, from the grace of their lord) could be placed temporarily or permanently (in the latter case this would also affect all their descendants), in the outcast group. Otherwise, the bakufu undertook to protect *eta* monopoly, in a manner comparable to the guilds, over their traditional activities; this practice has also survived to the contemporary age in that to the annoyance of countries such as Italy, Spain and France that export manufactured leather goods, the Japanese government imposes strict import controls on leather goods in order to protect this still traditional *eta* activity and, owing to continued discrimination, one of the few remunerative areas open to them.

The *sengoku* era, as we have seen, was one in which the *eta* were aisle, relatively speaking, to prosper. In the early Edo period their economic standing appears to have been quite reasonable and indeed a number of them

were wealthy. As the years and decades passed, however, and mainly as a result of the falling demand for leather goods, poverty increasingly became the lot of the rM. To social discrimination and popular abuse, therefore, was added precipitous economic decline - a fate which, generally speaking, remains the case for the *buraJcumin* in the 1980s.

RYUKYUANS AND AINU

Among the advantages Japan enjoyed in the development of a nation-state indicated in Chapter 1 were the internal and external recognition of what constituted the territory of Japan and the ethnic homogeneity of the inhabitants. While these remarks remain true, qualifications need to be made in order to illustrate certain trends of the Edo era, which were accelerated in the ensuing Meiji period. Thus, whereas today no one would deny that the Ryukyus and Hokkaido are part of Japan, such was not necessarily the case in the Edo era.

There arc certain ethnic and linguistic differences between the people of the Ryukyus and the Japanese, but these arc not of great significance. The differences which do exist are more marked in regard to the lower orders of the Ryukyus and far less so in the case of the ruling elites. The ancient Ryukyuan monarchy also claimed divine ancestry, namely in Tinsunshi (Grandson of Heaven), though, unlike die Japanese imperial institution, it was not 'unbroken for ages eternal[1]: a dynastical change occurred in the late twelfth century with the new king, Shunten, being a Minamoto offspring. The Chinese had been visiting, occasionally invading, the Ryukyus since the early part of the seventh century at least, but it was not until the latter part of the fourteenth that they obtained from the Ryukyu monarchy the recognition of supremacy and henceforth the Ryukyus were included in the Chinese sphere of tributary states.

The Ryukyus, in view of their strategic geographic position and also especially at a time when official relations between China and Japan had been suspended by the former, played a pivotal role in Sino-Japancse trading relations. Tension developed between Japan and the Ryukyus when the king at Shuri (the capital) refused to assist in Hideyoshi's continental campaigns. Not surprisingly, in view of their geographic proximity, Ryukyuan affairs were mainly of interest to the Shimazu daimyo of Satsuma. In 1609 Satsuma invaded the main island of Okinawa and kidnapped the king, bringing him to Kagoshima. Although he was eventually allowed to return to Shuri and his throne, this was on condition that he should recognise Satsuma suzerainty and pay tribute. The Ryukyuan monarchy, therefore, for over 250 years found itself having two masters and having to pay tribute to both of them. The Ryukyus served the Satsuma han well, both in terms of trade and in terms of

gathering intelligence on events in the outside world. Although the Ryukyus were formally - and unilaterally - absorbed into Japan in 1879, when they were renamed and reorganised as the Okinawa prefecture, in the course of the Edo era these islands can be said to have been part of a Japanese 'informal empire*, albeit administered by the Satsuma han.

In the north, the area which used to be called Ezo, now Hokkaido, the situation was completely different. The northernmost han of Edo Japan was that of Matsumac which was situated on the souihernmost tip of Ezo. The founding daimyo of this han was Matsumae (alias Kakizaki) Yoshihiro (1550-1618) whose great-great-grandfather had originally settled there in the mid-fifteenth century. Under the Tokugawa settlement the Matsumac han was responsible for Ezo affairs, in a manner somewhat analogous to the So daimyo of the Tsushima island han being responsible for Korean affairs and Satsuma for the Ryukyus. So far as the rest of Ezo was concerned, this was wilderness inhabited by the aboriginal barbarians. They were generally referred to by the Japanese as *ebisu,* the Chinese character for *ebisu* being the same as the T in *sei-i-tai-shogun,* 'barbarian-repressing generalissimo', and, for that matter, the same as the 'i* of Jet, 'expel the barbarians', the xenophobic slogan of the mid-nineteenth century and intended to summarise and direct the policy which the bakufu should adopt in regard to the recently arrived Westerners.

The fihu, however, called themselves Ainu which in their language simply means 'man*. We shall not dwell here on the numerous interpretations given to the possible origins of the Ainu people - including, inevitably, the theory of their being one of the lost tribes of Israel; suffice it to say, however, that they differ from the Japanese in practically every respect. The Ainu economy was based almost exclusively on hunting and fishing. There was a link with the Japanese and especially with Shinto in that the Ainu worshipped nature and the term for a deity is *karnut* - Shinto pronounced differently but with the same characters becomes *Kami-michi,* the way of the deities, though it is not known whether *kami* comes from tatnuf, or vice versa. Apart from the sun, the wind, the ocean, and so forth, the Ainu also worshipped the bear, although unlike, say, the Hindus with the sacred cows, Ainu ate bears, albeit ceremoniously, in essence comparable to the Christian custom of communion and other similar fairly universal religious traditions, though the rite itself was perhaps more reminiscent of the Spanish *corrida de toros.*

The Ainu arc the most hirsute of any known human racial species, while their women had the custom of tattooing, not simply by painting but also by carving, moustaches on to their upper lips. There are other interesting contrasts. For example, as Western sailors and others discovered when relations with Japan were established, the Japanese did not engage in

kissing - not surprisingly, therefore, the Japanese vocabulary for the word 'kiss' is somewhat limited, in fact today generally the term used is *kissu* (that is, a Ioan word from English). Among the Ainu, however, not only kissing, but indeed nibbling, constituted an important part of affectionate or sexual demonstrations and the Ainu vocabulary is rich in this area: *chopehopse-kara, chopohopse-kara, eehopnure, chokchokse-kara, nankotukie* and *eharonunnun* all refer to the action of kissing, though the last might be more exaedy translated as to suck the lips (see J. Batchelor, Jn *Ainu-English-Japanese Dictionary,* 1926). In spite of considerable intermarriage between Ainu and Japanese in the past, the Japanese, as the dominant culture, do not seem to have adopted the Ainu custom of kissing/nibbling, but the integrated Ainu seem to have abandoned it. Apart from intermarriage, a considerable amount of mutual influences obviously occurred over the centuries, that is, when the aboriginal tribes still resided in parts of the main islands; and a number of toponyms arc derived front the Ainu language; notably the mountain Fuji, *Fuji* in Ainu meaning fire.

During the first 150 years or so of the Edo era nothing of much consequence occurred in Ezo, By the second half of the eighteenth century, however, bakufu interest in these northern areas awoke and developed. The motivations for this new direction were essentially two-fold, albeit somewhat contradictory. The latter part of the eighteenth century, as has been seen, was a period of stagnation, occasional famines and general economic decay. A small number of officials and scholars, but most notably Honda Toshiaki (1744–1821), believed that Japan's economic ills might be partly cured by developing foreign trade and to that end argued in favour of establishing trade links with Russia via the northern territories of Ezo and Sakhalin. The second motivation was the fear generated by reports of Russian visits, incursions and indeed occasional invasions of parts of these northern territories. Interest in Ezo, therefore, was prompted by both economic ami strategic considerations.

The first major fact-finding mission occurred in 1785 under the orders of the *roju* Tanuma Okitsugu (1719-88). For the next thirty-five years, although no clearly defined and consistent policy regarding either what to do with the Ainu or establishing control over Ezo can be identified (partly because of the fairly frequent changes in the Bakufu, Okitsugu, for example being forced out of office in 1787 and replaced by Matsudaira whose views on Ezo differed), nevertheless bakufu activity in the area was considerable. Surveying expeditions occurred at frequent intervals, especially those of two intrepid explorers, Mogami Tokunai (1754–1836) and Mamiya Rinzo (1775-1844), leading to occasional armed confrontations between Russians and Japanese. These events in turn led to a revived interest in, and numerous publications on, economics, geography, maritime affairs and military science, Honda

being one of the most prolific writers, but equally influential was the scholar Hayashi Shihei of Sendai (1738 93), whose work *Kaikoku Heidan* ('Military Talks for a Maritime Nation') represents a major milestone in Japanese expansionist thought.

The importance attached to Ezo and Edo's suspicions regarding the efficacy of Matsumac's administration - in fact the bakufu sent espionage teams to Matsumae to gather intelligence on their operations in due course led to the bakufu taking over direct control of Ezo and the surrounding territories; in 1799 the southern half of Ezo was placed under bakufu administration, and in 1807 this was extended to include all of Ezo and Sakhalin. In 1821 the bakufu lost interest, and Russia in the intervening period was more absorbed with affairs in the West anti in particular with the Ottoman Empire. Japanese colonisation of Ezo did not begin in earnest until after the Mciji Restoration, when the island was renamed Hokkaido.

The general area of E20, Sakhalin and the Kuriles, all of which were inhabited, though sparsely, by Ainu, constituted in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries what one might term open frontier country. The Russians, it will be recalled, were expanding in Siberia and, following the explorations and discoveries of the Dane Vitus Behring (1681-1741), had begun settling in Alaska by the mid-eighteenth century - where they remained until it was sold to the United States in 1867. Sakhalin, the Kuriles, ultimately E20, were further routes for possible expansion. Russian expansion was forestalled owing to a variety of factors, including Japanese resistance, but also the lack of adequate relaying facilities on the mainland and Russia's increasing absorption and ultimately confrontation over peripheral areas of the Ottoman Empire. The element of Japanese resistance during this period, however, must not be exaggerated; lor ail the forcefulncss of the arguments of Honda, Hayashi and others, scepticism - indeed, outright hostility - towards northern expansion also had influential and no less forceful advocates in bakufu circles, who were at an advantage in that expansionism was certainly anathema to the *i>akoku* ideology and mentality.

One thing is certain, however, and that is that the destiny of these areas was not going to be shaped by the wishes or activities of the inhabitants - the Ainu. The Ainu might prove resistant in certain circumstances, and indeed rebellious, as was the case in 1789 when a sizeable Ainu rebellion occurred on the island of Kunashiri (today one of the disputed islands between Japan and the USSR), while under other circumstances they might prove more amenable. They were, however, little more than pawns in the Russo-Japanese confrontation. As the British or the French might, through various means, incite Indian tribes in the North American continent to join with one against the other, so both the Russians and the Japanese used the Ainu, widi

alternative policies of intimidation, brute force and indoctrination to win the natives over to their side and have them comply with their demands. The Russians appear to have relied exclusively on force. So far as the Japanese were concerned, the situation varied considerably. Under the Matsumac bait's administration the Ainu were treated with ruthless, exploitative contempt; and indeed Mogami had got into trouble with Matsumac officials when it was discovered that he had taught an Ainu how to read and write the Japanese syllabary, *kana.* Some Edo scholars and notably Honda, however, had argued that Ainu too were descendants of the gods (Aartti) and hence to be treated as Japanese. Whether out of ideological or strategic considerations, when the bakufu took over control of Ezo it issued an edict according to which a programme of japanisation of the Ainu was to take place. In other words, the bakufu carried out a policy of assimilation, Ainu being encouraged to take Japanese names, learn to speak, read and write the Japanese language, wear Japanese clothes and indeed miscegenation was positively encouraged, while certain customs, including the ritual killing and eating of the bear, were proscribed. Mogami, whose interest in the Ainu people was genuine and humane - in fact, in view of his study and knowledge of the Ainu people, he could be described not only as an explorer and geographer but also as an early anthropologist - was opposed to this policy, realising that by destroying the Ainu sense of identity, the result would be alienation, rather than assimilation. In the short term Mogami's reservations proved correct, with many Ainu absconding to Russian-held territory, presumably preferring the brutality of the Russians to the civilising efforts of the Japanese. In the long term, the Ainu were doomed.

It is impossible to know what was the Ainu population of the Edo era. According to census taken during the Mciji period they would appear to have numbered somewhere in the region of seventeen and a half thousand, while today they are reckoned to be about sixteen thousand out of a total population in Hokkaido of some five and a quarter millions. Thus whereas the total population of Japan from the end of the Edo era to the present has almost quadrupled, the Ainu population has decreased, or at the very least remained stationary. In the Darwinian scheme of things, the Ainu race was not one to emerge among the fitter for the struggle for survival. It is true, as indeed has been briefly mentioned in these pages, that the Ainu were for a while at the mercy of conflicting marauding groups of Russians and Japanese and thereby suffered the consequences. However, nothing remotely comparable to genocide occurred at any time. The colonisation of Hokkaido in the Mciji era would appear to have been conducted by reasonably peaceful and indeed comparatively humanitarian methods; the Ainu were certainly better treated than, say, the Indians in North .America. The apparent stagnation in their

numbers is largely to be explained by the process of assimilation, originally conceived in the Edo era, but systematically carried out in the Meiji period: in other words, the Ainu were increasingly absorbed into the Japanese population, leading to half-breeds, quarter-breeds, and so on. Of course the disappearance of any of the species of humanity is bound to be a matter of regret; but on the other hand there w[r]as here an clement of inevitability. It would be a mistake to construe an idyllic existence for the hunting-fishing, bear-w'orshipping Ainu of the pre-modern era. The Ainu race was already in demographic decline in the course of the Edo era; polygamy, and possibly polyandry were practised, while on the other hand endogamy was the rule, exogamy a very rare exception. This situation resulted not only in sterility, but also obviously in all the usual consequences of excessive in-breeding.

Objectively there can be little doubt that Meiji Japan's colonisation of the northern territories and the japanisation of their populations probably accelerated the movement towards near extinction. Ainu were taught Japanese, indeed they were given schools and educated in the same manner as the Japanese, the young men were recruited into the army, and, as already pointed out, there was considerable intermarriage with the Japanese. On the other hand, some, whether by intention or accident, remained true to their race and their customs; today those who still remain can be visited in certain specified [4]Ainu villages', where, as one guide-book puts it, 'these primitive people may be seen in their native surroundings'. Between exhibition and extinction, perhaps the latter is preferable if it occurs in a reasonably peaceful and dignified manner.

SOCIAL ROOTS OF MODERNITY

In the course of the Edo era a protracted evolutionary process had taken place which laid the foundations for the revolution which occurred in the mid-nineteenth century. It will be made clear, however, that in spite of the very perceptible and rapid changes which occurred as a result of the revolution, namely the modernisation of Japan, in fact a good deal of it could be described as a 'cleaning-up operation'. In die eleven decades or so following the revolution, a number of major transformations have taken place; the greatest stimulant was undoubtedly provided by the West.

By the end of the Edo era, society had been significantly modernised. One must be cautious here not to exaggerate, not to be too wise after the event. Not only in the course of the decades immediately following the Restoration, but indeed throughout the first half of the twentieth century there were major obstacles and antagonisms to the transformations inherent in a process of modernisation. Nevertheless, in laying the roots for modernity the achievements of the Edo era are significant, impressive, and probably unique

outside the Western world. It remains, by way of conclusion, simply to summarise these.

Sankin-kotai resulted in considerable political centralisation and geographic mobility. These in turn led to a definitive trend towards national unity; fief particularism was being eroded in favour of the creation of a nation-state. Not only was this true of the three main islands of Honshu, Shikoku and Kyushu, but, as has been seen, the process of including Hokkaido and the Ryukyus was well under way.

Economically Japan had emerged as a national market; major centres, primarily Osaka, acted as the axes of economic life; there developed a significant amount of inter-regional trade, diversification, regional specialisation, improvements in transportation and so on. This is not to say that geographic disparities in terms of distribution of wealth disappeared. On the contrary, it is probable that the Edo era witnessed an intensification of geographic differentiation; economic distress and a tendency to political extremism remained a feature of the poorer districts of Japan, notably southern Kyushu and the Tohoku (north-east) area, well into the twentieth century. But geographic differentiation, like social differentiation, has been a characteristic of all industrialising societies.

The social differentiation which took place in the course of the Edo era resulted in the emergence of so-called middle sectors. The high feudal orders and their allies, the big city merchants, were swept away in the transformations of the latter part of the nineteenth century. The new groups of meritocratic samurai bureaucrats, rural landlords and innovative merchants in due course coalesced as the ruling class.

Finally, the basic social unit of Japan, the *ie,* had been to a considerable extent institutionalised in the course of the Edo era. It came under attack in the early Nleiji years and in the ensuing decades it experienced a number of alterations. No moral value should be attached to the *ie*\ it can, depending on the wider national circumstances, be a force for progress, as it can lead to regression. It is perhaps in contemporary Japan that it can be seen in its most favourable light. From the late Edo era on, however, it was undoubtedly the *ie* which provided the social basis for Japan's modernisation.

4 Intellect in the Edo Era

'The term 'intellectual' is used here in its broadest sense: we are interested in developments which affected the mentality and the outlook of the Japanese people during this prelude to modernity. It is, needless to say, a vast subject. It will be impossible to treat it either extensively or indeed intensively, 'fhc major concern will be to identify those trends which ultimately contributed to and influenced the course of modern Japanese history.

In regard to the general cultural climate of Edo Japan, no doubt the most negative factor was the policy of *sakoku.* Even here, however, certain areas can be singled out where *xakoku* may have had positive side-effects, at least in the years leading up to the Genroku era. Peace, relative prosperity in some quarters, urbanisation and the exchange of ideas facilitated by *sankin-kotai* contributed greatly to artistic and intellectual activities and these in turn may have benefited, possibly stimulated by a period of contemplative seclusion.

Certainly there was a veritable boom in artistic productions of all kinds. In regard to ceramics, for which Japan was to acquire an international reputation, one finds an interesting blend of expansionism at the end of the *xengoku* era and isolationism in the Edo era contributing towards the development and refinement of this art in Japan. When Hideyoshi's troops invaded Korea, the Japanese were impressed by the cxquisitcncss of Korean porcelain and faience products. A number of daimyo brought Korean artisans back with them to their han and there set them to work both to produce and to instruct native artisans. For example, the much-sought-after Irnan' ware dates from this period, being first produced in Hizen han in north-west Kyushu in about 16-00.

Merchant wealth, in Edo Japan as in Renaissance Italy, greatly facilitated the expansion of artistic productions. Also *chonin,* not restricted by samurai ceremony and supposed asceticism, were able to indulge their purses and fancies in new, more flamboyant forms, perhaps especially visible in the colourful de'cor of Kabuki theatre in contrast to the austerity of Noh. There was a tremendous proliferation in publications of all sorts - poems, prose stories, moral tracts, historical essays, legends, religious pamphletsand a great deal of pornography. Printing on a movable type, originally introduced by the Portuguese, was an activity of quasi-fcbrile dimensions in Edo Japan and one

characteristic of the period was the booklets and their vendors widely dispersed throughout the cities.

Culture as such was by no means new to Edo Japan, indeed Japan's cultural legacy stretched back at least a millennium. It was, however, only in the Edo era that Japan can be said to have acquired a reasonably popular culture; in other words, aesthetic experiences whether of the mind or the senses were not limited to a narrow court dite or to the more richly endowed temples. It was, it is true, an urban phenomenon of the Edo era, hence not touching the vast majority of the population, but in die urban areas popular culture proliferated and gradually encompassed most groups irrespective of estate; samurai, albeit surreptitiously, attended Kabuki performances. On the eve of modernisation the urban population had, *mutaiis mutandis,* a common cultural base. Secondly, it will be seen that in the course of the early Meiji years one of the chief characteristics of the period was the seemingly insatiable appetite with which the citizens devoured all kinds of literature: the press proliferated, new journals were constantly appearing and translations of Western works were rife. Indeed the urban Japanese of the early Meiji years could lie described as indiscriminate culture vultures - a quality that contributed to the nature and pace of modernisation. The avidity for reading, thereby widening the national cultural horizons, could not have been possible unless its roots had been firmly planted in the Edo era. In terms of shaping the intellectual outlook which Edo Japan bequeathed to the modern era, attention will be focused primarily on religion and morality, education, and the development of Western studies.

RELIGION AND MORALITY

During the Ezio era numerous temples were built, expanded, or simply-spruced up. The whole of the Nikko ensemble, for example, with its highly ornate temples and bridges and *torii,* where the remains of the Tokugawa shogun were laid in mausolea, dates from this period. Buddhist temples also benefited from the custom of shogun and daimyo to retire from the world of mundane matters to the sacerdotal for a life of sophistication and indeed some grandeur; generally speaking, the emphasis was hardly on frugality and chastity, but more on art, the tea ceremony and literature. Buddhist monks were also able to take advantage of the peace which reigned and the availability of printing material in order to compile and systematise various doctrinal *magna opera* of their respective sects.

Buddhist affairs came under the jurisdiction of the bakufu office ofjüAa-*bugyo* (commissioner of temples and shrines, hence also responsible for Shinto affairs). The Buddhists, who in the *sengoku* era had to contend with and confront the doctrines of the Christians, enjoyed considerable privileges and protection under the Tokugawa settlement. It was, for example, the

responsibility of the temples to compile the census and to ensure that there were no concealed Christians. During the Edo era, at least in theory, the Buddhists enjoyed what amounted to a monopoly over metaphysics. Partly no doubt because of this religious nationalisation, in no period of Japanese history since (he introduction of Buddhism in the Nara era was that faith in a more parlous state: the general image being comparable to that of pre-Reformation Christianity. The Buddhist clergy appear on the one hand to have sought indulgence in all manner of sensual pleasures, while on the other the various sects engaged in petty doctrinal squabbles. The image is of course, both in regard to Edo Buddhism and pre-Re format ion Christianity, somewhat of a caricature and just as in the case of the latter it is derived from the ecclesiastical hierarchy, so it is probably the case that what applied to the more imposing and well endowed temples in Kyoto and elsewhere need not represent reality at the lower levels. The point is, however, that in the Edo era the Buddhist clergy neither earned nor obtained the respect of the intellectuals.

The religious picture of Edo Japan is complex and we shall try here to disentangle some of the difficulties. So far as the spiritual life of the Japanese people are concerned, it is in fact misleading to isolate one of the faiths. Indeed the Edo era witnessed a considerable degree of eclecticism. *Bushido,* as already pointed out, was derived from a variety of sources, but included certainly both Confucianism and Buddhism. As to the Shinto revival, which will be looked at more closely in the next chapter, it too was by no means solely a reproduction from its own sources.

On a more popular level, one may note the eclecticism of the *shingaku* movement of Ishida Baigan and its appeal to the *chonin,* already mentioned, as well as the *hotoku* movement (literally indebtedness or recompense) which spread among the peasantry and was founded by Ninomiya Sontoku (1787-1856). These arc two of the better known of a fairly large number of 'new' faiths or sects which sprouted in the Edo era and were generally founded on the teachings of a particular individual. In general, however, while these sects catered to certain emotional needs, they can hardly be deemed theologically sophisticated.

It would be incorrect to view the Edo era as irreligious, and one could certainly not call it ungodly; on the contrary there was an abundance of gods. The point would seem to be that in metaphysical terms, in terms of beliefs and faith, religion in Edo Japan (with the exception of Christianity, which was proscribed) was a private affair. In villages ritual observances, whether at Buddhist temples or Shinto shrines, were encouraged, indeed the norm, partly because this is a universal feature of village life - as is the case, for example, in rural Roman Catholic areas with their village saints and the ceremonies and

fun engaged in by all on the occasion of the saint's feast day. The temples served as meeting places for the villagers, the feasts and rituals as a means of strengthening the bonds between the families, and the gods were prayed to for clement weather and abundant crops. The line between 'religion' and 'superstition' here, as in all comparable rural societies, is, needless to say, a thin one, but it is not necessary to enter theological or semantic discussions in order simply to ascertain the fact that in terms of religious observances the rural Japanese of the Edo era tended to correspond to fairly universal patterns. Nor would it by any means be the intention to denigrate the role, the general joy fulness, indeed heartiness of these religious observances to state that the kind of faith one is talking about is of a primitive nature. This is a pattern which has been on the whole preserved in the course of modern Japan. The Japanese, it is often avowed, are not religious, but this is missing the point; rather one should say that in general cultural terms religion caters almost exclusively to an emotional rather than intellectual need, hence it is not that traditionally the Japanese are irreligious, but that they are not metaphysically inclined - the distinction is an important one.

This general gaiety, carthincss - indeed one could almost say irreverence - of popular Japanese religion in the latter part of the nineteenth century was Io incur the severe censure of some Westerners, especially missionaries, but equally the admiration of others, notably Lafcadio Hearn (1850-1904). The absence of a national religious orthodoxy, the relegation of matters of faith to the individual, resulted among other things in a high and possibly incomparable degree of religious tolerance. Religious fanaticism, a characteristic at some stage or other even in the modern era of practically all societies, is conspicuous by its absence in more recent Japanese history, 'llic lifting of the ban on Christianity in 1873 led neither to mass conversions nor to popular fanatical anti-Christian movements, in contrast to, say, the fanatical, rnillenarian proto-Christian Taiping rebels (1851 -64) or equally fanatical anti-Christian Boxers (1898-1901) in China. It was not, needless to say, the absence of anti-Christian movements or persecutions which upset the missionaries, but rather the perhaps inevitable converse of the absence of religious fanaticism, namely that in terms of the general cultural atmosphere religion is not a subject which is taken desperately seriously.

There was, however, an important countervailing development which mainly originated in the Edo era and a pattern was established which, in spite of a number of permutations, remained constant until 1945. This phenomenon might at the outset best be described by contrasting it with the European and Islamic traditions. In the European tradition the role of the state was generally limited to collecting taxes, administering justice and waging war. Morality was within the jurisdiction of the Church. Thus

Europeans were governed by a form of diarchy, generally following Jesus's prescription of rendering unto Caesar what is Caesar's and unto God what is God's. Of course, jurisdictional battles did occasionally occur; at times the Church sought to expand its temporal power, while the state might occasionally resort to invading the spiritual domain. All things being equal, however, this duality was recognised and persists to this day. In the European tradition, therefore, legality and morality are by no means necessarily equated; for example, in most European countries today contraception and abortion arc legal, yet according to the precepts of the Catholic Church both are immoral, indeed sinful. The same general pattern can be discerned in Islamic societies. Thus in the Ottoman Empire whereas the Caliph exercised spiritual power over the world of Islam, the Sultan was vested with temporal power over the affairs of the Empire. Both in Islamic and Christian states, even when these have been secularised, the power of the clergy and the moral authority which they enjoy have remained considerable. It must be stressed, therefore, that in both Christian and Islamic traditions - which together account for a fair percentage of the world's population - there is at the very least a potential conflict vdthin the individual as well as vdthin society at large between the legal order, namely the government, and the moral order. A 'good* Christian or a 'good' Muslim may feel that according to his conscience and spiritual beliefs it is incumbent upon him to seek to overthrow a godless state. The most recent illustration of this phenomenon is obviously the so-ealled Islamic Revolution which occurred in Iran in 1979; while in the Christian world perhaps the best recent example is that of the support of the clergy in the overthrow of the Spanish Republican regime and the consequent spiritual justification given to the putsch and subsequent government of Franco (1892-1975).

If some time has been spent on this tangent it is in order to give the greatest possible emphasis to ihe contrast with Japan. In writing about Japan of the immediate pre-Second World War period, Professor Maruyama Masao *(Thought and Behaviour in Modern Japanese Polities,* 1963) elucidated the power of the state in the following manner:

> In Japan we are faced with a situation in which national sovereignty involves both spiritual and political power. The standard according to which the nation's actions arc judged as right or wrong lies within itself (that is, in the 'national polity'), and what the nation does, whether within its own borders or beyond them, is not subject to any moral code that supersedes the nation.

The reasons for the development of this form of *etatisme* or what one could

almost call, in spite of the apparent contradiction in terms, a secular theocracy arc various. Firstly, one might point out that no religious body or set of beliefs ever enjoyed a complete monopoly in Japan in the manner of Christianity and Islam. Thus Buddhism may have occasionally been in the ascendant, as was ±c case in the Edo era, but at no stage in Japanese history' would it be possible to identify the country' as Buddhist, as would be the case for example of Thailand, Laos, or Cambodia prior to the revolution. Secondly, the process of the secularisation of the nation was established and developed by various means by Ieyasu, his predecessors and successors. Thus Oda Nobunaga, as we have seen, ruthlessly suppressed the Buddhist clergy' and destroyed some of their temples. We also return to the point made earlier, that Ieyasu and his successors sought to establish a moral order as part of the 'T'okugawa settlement. Apart from officiating at ceremonies, both private and public, the clergy in Japan of whatever denomination has not since the end of the sengoku era played any significant role or exercised any power. In the so-called Shinto revival of the latter part of the Edo era, or in the Shintoist legitimacy bestowed on the spiritual and temporal power of the tenno, or indeed in the development of State Shinto (as opposed to Shrine Shinto) which reached its apogee in the 1930s and early 1940s, the Shinto clergy itself was little more than the instrument, if that at all, of lay scholars or government officials.

The development of *bushido* as at least a quasi-official code of ethics and the Tokugawa adoption of Neo-Confucianism as the social ideology meant that the state bestowed upon itself the legitimate power to exercise moral authority over its subjects. What applied to the general social order could also lx* found, with minor variations in emphasis, in more particular groups, such as han or *ie.* Thus the famous *Hagakure* (Hidden Among Leaves), a fairly extreme version of the *bushido* propounding a rather morbid fascination with death, originated in Hizen han and was a particular code to be followed primarily by the sarnurai of that domain. Similarly the Mitsui Constitution of 1722 was meant, among other things, to be a moral guide for the members of the Mitsui *ie.* Religious beliefs, namely whether one believes in a god or not and which one, are purely personal matters. Mora! conduct, however, is a public country, han or *ie* - matter, leading to what Professor Maruyama has called the ‘exteriorization of morality in Japan’. Thus, if we return to the point made earlier in regard to Europe, that what is legal is not necessarily moral - and in Europe generally morality, obviously within certain limits, is a matter for the individual to decide - in Japan one can say that what is legal, namely what is within the rules, is moral by definition.

The term ‘legality’ here should be understood in a very broad sense; one is not necessarily referring to written laws, but rather to official ideologies and codes of conduct. Edo Japan, therefore, developed and systematised public

morality, to which it was incumbent upon every individual to adhere, both at a national level and at the level of various organisations and groups. So far as the state was concerned, this basic pattern remained operative until Japan's defeat in 1945. Public morality in the form of codes, however, has been retained as a characteristic of most Japanese institutions, whether businesses, schools, factories, and so on. One may add a footnote here. The Westerner arriving in contemporary Japan may express surprise, amusement, scepticism or derision upon discovering that Japanese companies, for example, have their own moral codes, along with mottoes, songs, and so forth. The point to remember is this. Whereas the European may (or may not) go to Sunday service and receive in the form of a sermon moral injunctions and sing that he intends to walk in the path of righteousness, the Japanese will probably receive moral guidance from his section chief or company president and sing that he too will walk in the path of righteousness, but in his place of work rather than in a church.

If one were writing about intellectual developments in Christian, Islamic, Hindu or Buddhist societies, a great deal of space would have to be accorded to religious thought. The intellectuals of these cultures will, of course, concern themselves with matters of this world, but generally in relation to the domain of God. Politics and the Social order in all of these cultures were subordinate considerations to theology. It is, by contrast, the absence of theological thought which is striking in Japan and the consequent evaluation of social and political considerations to a level of absolute primacy. It is for this reason that the development of philosophy in Edo Japan will not be looked at in this section, but will be reserved for consideration in the chapter dealing with politics.

EDUCATION

In regard to education three points can be made by way of introduction. First, the development of education in the Edo era further underlines the emphasis in regard to the secularisation of Tokugawa society. In Europe, until fairly recently, education was almost exclusively the prerogative of the clergy and educational institutions were ecclesiastical establishments; a similar pattern would be found in Buddhist South-East Asia, and so forth. From the early decades of Edo Japan responsibility for education at practically all levels was taken away from the bonzes and placed in the hands of Confucianist scholars; thus village schools for the *heimin* continued to be called *terakitya* (literally, temple school), but their links with the temples were in fact severed.

Secondly, we noted earlier that in Japan's early absorption of Chinese culture, one element which was lacking was that of a civil service chosen by competitive examination. The point was made that whereas in theory China's

administrative system was that of a meritocratic bureaucracy, Japan's was an aristocracy. In reality, however, whereas in the course of the Ch'ing dynasty China's administration increasingly became rigid and confined to a closed self-preserving élite, in the course of the Edo era Japan's administrative apparatus became increasingly open to talent, hence evolving in the direction of a meritocracy.

The third point is essentially a derivation of the second. Japan today is probably the most meritocratic society; in fact the Japanese themselves have come to label it the *gaku-reki shakàt* (literally, 'school record society'). It is one of the major features and forces of the Japanese revolution and of the modernisation which ensued that merit by educational standards replaced privilege of birth; this transformation having been achieved far more radically than is the case in Western societies. As suggested in the pages dealing with the evolution of the samurai estate, this too is a phenomenon which finds its roots in the Edo period; not only in regard to the meritocratic principle in general, but also to a number of more particular features of the education system. Thus, education in Japan, certainly from the late nineteenth century to 1945 and especially at primary level, placed great emphasis on moral teaching; this was (he case in the Edo period. Furthermore, however, critics of the contemporary education system -and there are many -complain that it is entirely geared towards passing examinations, that there is excessive stress on rote learning at the expense of innovatory and imaginative thinking, that consequently the pupil is more of a jug pedagogically filled than a candle intellectually lit. The typical product of the system, therefore, possesses, once he has been processed, a number of qualities, including perhaps above all that of sheer perseverance, but is lacking in others, notably that of originality. Although this criticism would be valid only with a number of serious reservations, it is nevertheless the case that here again there is a significant legacy from the Edo era.

So far as the development ofcducation in Edo Japan is concerned, the first point to make is (hat the general atmosphere was conducive to learning, at least among the upper ranks of (he samurai estate. Learning in this context, however, should be understood in terms of a reasonably leisurely pursuit: one does not have here the mad rush to acquire knowledge which was a characteristic of the early decades of the Meiji era. The peace which enshrouded Edo Japan enabled samurai to metamorphose from rustic warriors to urban and urbane men of letters. The transformation was certainly significant. In the early Edo period probably very few samurai could even read or write; by (he end of the era many had acquired the attributes of the literati. It has been noted that the climate of Edo Japan, certainly in its first century or so, was one which facilitated, indeed encouraged, initiative in

many diverse enterprises. This equally holds true of the realm of the intellect. Similarly, although stagnation may have developed in certain areas of economic activity, for example among urban merchants, dynamism emerged in others, as in the case of provincial landlord-entrepreneurs, the same generally applies to education in that while the more orthodox avenues may have become intellectually limited, others grew up and proliferated. Edo Japan, therefore, witnessed significant intellectual development, though a shift is discernible in terms of the more fertile environments.

It is important to perceive the establishment of education not simply, by any means, as the initiative of officialdom, but as a response on the part of the authorities to a growing demand among the samurai to spend their time usefully and to improve themselves, while the same generally applies to the upper strata of the common population. To that end the bakufu established schools, as did a good number of han, increasing in proportion throughout the Edo era until towards the end practically all han had an official school and in some cases two (or more), namely one in Edo and one in the domainal capital.

Formal education was officially endorsed, indeed encouraged, for a numtar of reasons- At least in respect to samurai, the ethic of learning was part of the official ideology. Here again, therefore, the influence of Confucianism was significant. Thus Buddhism stresses enlightenment (wXon) as a desirable end to be achieved primarily by contemplative means; reading is not necessarily altogether shunned, but it is certainly subordinate to pure meditation which aims at purging the mind rather than filling it. Buddhist exercises - for example, *zazen* which involves sitting in a single, rigid position for hours on end - are certainly more physical than they are intellectual. Confucianism, on the other hand, places great emphasis on the acquisition of wisdom, one of the cardinal virtues; in the manner interpreted by the Sung Confucianists and adapted by Japan in the Edo era, Confucianist intellectualism, it is true, is not characterised by innovatory thinking, for truth is to be found in the writings of the Sages. It is in that respect backward rather than forward looking. Nevertheless a great deal of reading was demanded both of the classical texts themselves and of later cxcgetical writings.

Secondly, and especially in view of the intensive input of moral teaching, education was deemed an important means of maintaining the peace of the realm. This view certainly held sway in regard to samurai education, but was also gradually accepted as an argument in favour of educat ion for commoners, the general desirability of which was by no means initially recognised for fear that learning might encourage them to develop ideas above their station. Thirdly, again especially in regard to samurai, the purpose of education was also to secure more able and better qualified administrators. The Edo era, therefore, was marked by a desire to learn for a variety of reasons among

increasingly wider sectors of the population and the opportunities to fulfil these aspirations were by and large provided.

Ronald Dore *{Education in Tokugawa Japan,* 1965) has estimated that by the end of the Edo era approximately 40 per cent of boys and 10 per cent of girls had received some form of formal education outside the home. The literacy rate was undoubtedly higher, for it is reasonable to assume that different categories of people would have received some form of basic education in the *it:* samurai girls, for example, are more likely to have been tutored at home, apprentices will have received instruction in basic numeracy and literacy in their work-place, and so on. While it is impossible to establish figures with any degree of scientific accuracy, it is nevertheless safe to assume that on the eve of modernisation probably about half the Japanese population knew how to read. As Dore has pointed out, this is, on the whole, a far higher average than is the case in many developing countries today and indeed at least equal to, perhaps even higher than, the more advanced European states of the period. It is a generally accepted axiom that reasonably extensive literacy and education are prerequisites to successful development. Having assessed the quantitative side of Japanese education in the Edo era, however, a few words on the qualitative side are called for.

For this exercise one has to distinguish between the various types of institution which existed, The curriculum of the tfraioya, namely those schools catering for commoners, included the three Rs along with a heavy dose of moral instruction. The system here was conservative, seeking to preserve peace and rectitude among the commoners; by no means, therefore, was it progressive and it was most certainly not the intention that the *terakoja* should serve as the base for a meritocratic pyramid. The search for *jinzai* (men of talent) was intentionally restricted to the samurai and indeed generally to those above low rank. Towards the end of the Edo era, however, a few fief schools were opening Lheir doors, albeit only slightly, to commoners.

As far as samurai education was concerned, the majority would have received their instruction from the bakufu or han official schools. By the end of the Edo era most samurai boys above the rank of *ashigaru* would have spent a few years in these institutions. Generally, the schools did not deviate from the patterns of wider social hierarchy; where one sat in the classroom, the number of attendants one was permitted to have accompany one to school, and so on were all fixed by regulation according to one's rank. The teacher was invariably a *jusha* (Confucian scholar) and generally the position was hereditary. The curriculum consisted essentially of the following: reading of the Chinese classics, calligraphy, a little arithmetic, ethics and the martial arts. In respect to the last element, it must be remembered that samurai were, after all, warriors and therefore proficiency in military skills received a high

premium; these included archery, riding, swimming, *kendo, judo,* and so on. Physical and intellectual efforts were combined according to a *mens sana in corpore sano* philosophy. Indeed, the combination of rigorous orthodox intellectual exercise, emphasis on physical training, a strict moral code and the inherent assumption that this was the training of the dite all contributed to a system which might perhaps be labelled proto-jesuitical.

Although the point has already been made, it must nevertheless once again be stressed that the pedagogy was highly conservative. Memorising was certainly more at a premium than thinking; exarns, introduced by the bakufu and some fiefs in the late eighteenth century, essentially tested one's ability to regurgitate the classics and received knowledge. Another point to emphasise is that relationships within the school were not primarily institutional and horizontal, but personal and vertical: the key relationship was that between master (if/uet) and disciple *(deshi),* thus we see here once again the adoption of the basic daimyo-samurai relationship as the operative one in education as in other spheres. Devotion, dedication, loyalty were directed towards a person, not an idea; this basic general pattern continues to apply to Japanese academe to this day.

The purpose of the official schools was to train the ruling élite to be good rulers. The basic assumption was that such training could only adequately be provided by sticking closely to the orthodoxy of Neo-Confucianism. Morality, it must once again be stressed, was the predominating concern: the good ruler was he who possessed virtue (/is) and virtuous rulers could cure all social ills, whether corruption, economic stagnation, and so on. This idealism did have its critics, most notably perhaps Ogyu Sorai (1666-1728) who preached a much more realistic gospel and who indeed has been compared by Maruyama (puttier *in the Intellectual History of Tokugawa Japan,* 1974) to Niccolo Machiavelli (1469-1527). The establishment and development of heterodox schools by Ogyu, his disciples and many other prominent scholars of the Edo era led to considerable intellectual debate, centred mainly in Edo, and no doubt significantly contributed to a certain scholastic dynamism. The bakufu did, however, occasionally retaliate; Matsudaira Sadanobu's reforms, for example, included virulent attacks on heterodoxy.

It was suggested earlier that developments in the field of education paralleled to some degree developments in the economic life of Edo Japan. Once the urban merchants established themselves, were protected by guilds and succeeding generations guided by precepts of the founding fathers, institutionalisation set in which in turn led to stagnation. The same pattern can be discerned in education. The bakufu and fief schools no doubt served a useful purpose in the early stages of the Edo era. With the passage of time, however, both their pedagogical orthodoxy and their strict enforcement of

hierarchical principles, their emphasis on respect for the sages and opposition to critical thinking, made them increasingly parasitical institutions. Apart perhaps from keeping young samurai boys off the streets, their function came to be more negative than positive; the ruling administrative elite was inculcated with a mentality which when applied to real problems probably resulted in the exacerbation, rather than alleviation, of these.

The dynamic clement in Japan's pre-modern intellectual life is not to be found in the official institutions as in other areas. First, reputed scholars set up their own private academies, or simply surrounded themselves with disciples in a quasi'Socratic manner. The more stimulating thinkers of the late Edo era tended to be found outside the established system and it is they who were primarily responsible for the intellectual maturation of the men who subsequently became leaders of the Mciji era of modernisation. Secondly, however, although Sung Confucianism continued to predominate throughout the Edo era, a number of other trends of deviant or possibly eclectic nature developed. In the latter category can be found the emergence of *kokugaku* (national learning) which, although generally associated with the Shinto revival, embraced both nativist and various strands of classical Chinese thought. Although *kokugaku* in its inception was undoubtedly academic, in the course of time its significance came to l>r primarily political, hence we shall look at it in the following chapter. A very different sort of intellectual exercise was the proliferation of *Rangaku* (Dutch studies) which took off in the early part of the eighteenth century and which also contributed significantly to the education and outlook of the Meiji leaders.

Before turning to *Rangaku,* however, one might draw up a preliminary balance sheet on the legacy of general Tokugawa education. The Confucianist nature of education, albeit hardly progressive, nonetheless ensured that mental concentration centred round matters of this world rather than speculative metaphysical thinking. In the period of modernisation a difference in direction was called for, as well as a shift in the optic, from the past to the future and from China to the West, but the emphasis on the overall pragmatism of education, namely how society should be administered, was by no means a radical departure from the past. The intellectual activities and occasional controversies and debates also ensured that spirits were not dormant. The official schools may not have catered satisfactorily to those with an avid intellectual curiosity, but other institutions developed to satisfy these needs. The desire to learn and to set learning to good use for overall social improvement became a tradition in Japan, not something, as is the case in many developing countries today, to be created *ex nthilo.*

If one adds that widespread literacy facilitates the acquisition of technical skills and the employment of a reasonably talented work-force and also, as we

shall see, that in the course of the Edo era advances were made in various scientific domains, then it is clear that one important legacy of the education of the Edo era was to help lay the infrastructure for subsequent modernisation. All these points can lx* written up on the credit side of the balance sheet. There is also, however, the debit side. One might suggest the proposition that whereas the Tokugawa education system perhaps enabled enlightenment to be attained by the very few, so far as the vast majority were concerned the excessively official moral content of the syllabus resulted in indoctrination rather than education. This duality remained on the whole the basic pattern of education for the Japanese until 1945,

To the extent that education is a means of buttressing the current ideological and political order then its function lies primarily in the superstructure. It follows, therefore, that governments will seek to ensure that the education system is compatible with their ideology; this is a universal phenomenon though there are, needless to say, significant variations in degree. The cohesiveness of Japanese society in the mid-nineteenth century was achieved as a result of a number of objective factors, frequently mentioned in this book, but also as a result of subjective political and ideological pressures which were widely disseminated throughout society. If there was a period of mild educational anarchy in the 1870s and early 1880s, by the latter part of that decade orthodoxy had been re-established and the purpose of schools, at least at the lower levels, was not to enlighten the masses but to indoctrinate them. The Meiji government was successful in its educational policies of imposing orthodoxy, partly because all that needed to be done was to re-orientate slightly an already existing pattern: the Japanese were accustomed to schools telling them what they should think, how they should behave, and above all that they should obey. Modernising Japan was constituted from many parts.

WESTERN STUDIES

Certainly another significant element in the process of Japanese modernisation was the general receptivity to ideas and techniques from the West; these were comprehended and applied within a short space of time, Ir must be emphasised that it is not the comprehension among certain individuals that makes the case of Japan, among non-Western societies, unique, but (he degree to which comprehension was translated into fairly extensive application. The remainder of this chapter, therefore, will be devoted to a brief study of the role and impact of the Netherlands in Edo Japan.

The islet of Dcjima at the head of Nagasaki bay (today attached to the mainland) was claimed from the sea in 1634 and served as the residence for the

Portuguese prior to their final expulsion. Initially the Dutch maintained their factory on the larger island of Hirado lying off the western coast of Kyushu. In 1641 the Dutch were transferred front Hirado to the much more claustrophobic Dejima. Dejima (or Dtshima as it is sometimes spelled) arouses certain connotations in the imagination when projected on to Japanese history, being, for example, fairly frequently referred to as 'Japan's small window on the West', The general impression, therefore, is that throughout Japan's isolationist 'dark ages', a small beacon of science and rationality flickered off Nagasaki bay to where Japanese scholars wishing to find Western enlightenment might turn. It is important to get reality into proper perspective.

For the first eight decades or so of the Edo era the most that <^an be said about Dutch Studies (/tan^aAu) is that there were practically none. This was partly due to official censorship. It was also due, however, to the fact that the appointed interpreters of the Dutch language were, as was customary in Edo Japan, hereditary offices, hence by no means reflecting individual linguistic ability; and, according to contemporary accounts, what ability there was was indeed limited. Intercourse between the Dutch and the Japanese was severely curtailed by a plethora of regulations and an equal number of policemen who kept an eye on what was going on in Dejima and prevented their curious compatriots from venturing over the bridge which linked the islet to the mainland.

The Dutch factors in Dejima, like their counterparts elsewhere, tended towards the boorish and philistine, rather than the refined and cultivated. It has already been pointed out that the Dutch were forbidden to be accompanied by their wives or to allow any *predikanten* to reside on the island. In the early period they did enjoy the right to keep their Ambionesc slaves - a Japanese print of the late seventeenth century depicts Dutch factors being entertained with a chamber music recital by a slave orchestra- but this practice gradually disappeared. The number of European residents was generally limited to eleven. Japanese servants might attend during the day, but they had to leave at sunset. This rule did not apply to prostitutes who were permitted to remain in order to minister to the factors' needs. The children of such union, however, were taken away from their fathers at an early age. For most of the time, life in Dejima appears to have been excruciatingly monotonous, the day being taken up mainly in drinking and smoking. Intellectual life in Dejima was far more likely to be characterised by vapidity rather than stimulation.

Relief from boredom might be obtained, at least for the director of the factory and one or two assistants, at the time of the annual visit to Edo. It was a bakufu regulation that every year the *opperhoofd* (chief factor) should come to

Edo, present tribute in kind and provide an annual report *(fusetsugaki).* The original intention behind the submission of these *Jmeljugaki* was for the Netherlanders to inform the bakufu on the activities of the Iberians. With the passage of time, however, the scope of the reports was significantly widened, namely to the affairs of Europe in general. The information contained in the *Juseisugakt,* however, was not widely diffused, but on the contrary- made available to only a very small number of bakufu officials, mainly the *roju.* These reports served a useful purpose, to the extent that they were actually read rather than simply filed away, and the journey to Edo might well provide diversion from the sedentary life of Dejirna. On the other hand, generally the reception at Edo could hardly be described as cordial, let alone flattering. The Dutch factor came to attend upon the shogun's court and was to obey his command including occasions when the *opperhoofd* and assistants were asked to dance together and generally move about for the distraction of the shogun and his court. Generally speaking, therefore, the Dutch were treated with crushing contempt.

A major motivation lying behind *sakoku,* it will be recalled, was to purge Japan from the JatAuwitm, the evil craft of Christianity. As part of this exercise the bakufu in 1630 imposed a near-total embargo on the importation of Chinese books which treated Western topics. Interestingly, though perhaps not surprisingly, it was China which served as the source for the reintroduction of Western learning into Japan, although the process was by no means rapid, llic early Edo period in Japan corresponded to the last stages of the Ming dynasty and the golden age of the early Ch'ing dynasty in China. This period of Chinese history witnessed intense cultural activity; many books were compiled and published and a number of them were shipped to Nagasaki. It was also during the early part of this period that the Italian Jesuit Matteo Ricci (1552-1610) exerted a significant influence on the development of science in China.

Ricci had first reached China in 1583 and after numerous and strenuous efforts on his part, he was finally able to take up residence in Peking in 1601 where he remained until his death. It is arguable that no single European until Marx (whom the Chinese first read in Japanese translation) has had as much influence in China as did Ricci, who is better known in China under his Chinese name, Li Ma-Tou. Ricci wrote numerous works in Chinese himself, but also under his supervision or that of other Jesuits, their Chinese disciples compiled extensive treatises on mathematics, astronomy and the calendar, geography and so on.

The paranoia of official bakufu censorship was such, however, that not only books mentioning Christianity were banned, but indeed any book making even the slightest reference to Li Ma-Tou. This state of affairs remained

operative until the third decade of the eighteenth century and the advent to the shogunal throne of Yoshimune. As we shall see shortly, Yoshimune's personal initiative was responsible for the reintroduction and ultimate proliferation of Western studies in Japan. There is, however, an interesting point worth noting in passing. As has already been indicated the atmosphere in Peking in the late Ming and early Ch'ing period was receptive to the absorption of Western knowledge, in particular the sciences, indeed especially under the patronage of the second Ch'ing Emperor, K'ang-hsi (1654 -1722), who, among other things, was responsible for the compilation of some ten thousand volumes known as the *Ku-Chin T'u-shu Chi-Ch'eng* (Collection of Books Old and New). Following K'ang-hsi's death, however, the Jesuit order was banned in China; although subsequently relations were resumed for a brief period - until in fact the Jesuit order was suppressed by the Vatican of Clement XIV (1705-74) in 1773 mainly because of a dispute over the propriety of allowing Confucianist flavouring in the practice of the Catholic mass in China - no publishing activities comparable to what had been undertaken previously were resumed. Western scientific studies in China, therefore, began to wane precisely at the time that they began to pick up in Japan. In the early eighteenth century Western knowledge was transmitted from China to Japan, where it established a fairly secure base with the result that in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries much Western knowledge was transmitted to Chinese scholars from Japanese works and Japanese translations.

Western scientific studies in the *sengoku* era, as we have seen, fell under the general label of *nanban-gaku,* studies of the southern barbarians - the Iberians. In the Edo era Western studies arc normally referred to as *Rangaku,* namely Dutch studies, the 'ran' being the middle syllabic of the Japanese word for Holland, Oranda. The initial source of Western scientific studies, however, came not from the Netherlands so much as from Chinese works. The reason for this is quite simply a linguistic one. The official interpreters of Dutch were, as we have seen, by and large next to useless and in any case it was not until the end of the eighteenth century that the first Japanese-Dutch dictionary was compiled. Nor were the Netherlander avid to teach or indeed to learn about Japan, barring a few notable exceptions. In due course their services and their books were to be used, but their role was more passive than active. This, generally speaking, with the possible exception of the American occupation in the years 1945 to 1952, has corresponded to the basic pattern of Japanese absorption of Western knowledge. In other words, at certain periods in Japanese history, such as the mid/latc sixteenth, the late eighteenth/early nineteenth and later nineteenth centuries, the Japanese have sought Western instruction as an official or at least semi-official policy. Although there were in

all of these periods a number of very capable European tutors, invariably these have filled roles, rather than created them.

The significant shift in regard to Western sciences which occurred in the 17205 resulted from Yoshimune's concern over general economic and social decline and his attempt, visible in the so-called Kyoho reforms, to reverse the situation, Four years after ascending rhe shogunal throne in 171 ft, the first partial lifting on the book-banning policy dating from 1630 occurred. The motivation behind Yoshimunc's reversal of official policy was his desire to promote *jitsugaku.* Literally *jitsugaku* means the study of real things; in this context *jitsugaku* was mainly applied to the necessity of carrying out revisions in the calendar system and generally the application of science and mathematics to practical use, Although knowledge of the Dutch language was circumscribed, indeed practically non-existent, reading of Chinese was, of Course, widespread, Yoshiraunc's reforms initially resulted in a very large-scale acquisition of die Chinese texts prepared by Ricci, his colleagues, and their disciples. Thus Euclidean geometry, for example, was introduced into eighteenth-century Japan through a Chinese treatise, the CAf-A(j Yuan /wn, on the subject. Furthermore, however, and in the longer term, Yoshimune's reforms can be said to have had two major consequences. The first was that *Katignku* was emancipated from its narrow Nagasaki environment and imported to Edo, in due course to spread throughout most of the country. Secondly, it is possible to translate *jitsugaku* more figuratively by suggesting that it corresponds, io some degree at least, to empiricism. In intellectual terms this constituted a major revolution in Japanese history: *jilsugaku* is perhaps rhe vital link in the chain of modernisation which extends from the early Edo era onwards,

Confucianism was orientated to this world, rather than metaphysical, On the other hand, the doctrinaire approach of the Sung Confucianism and their Japanese followers resulted in recognising the classics as nothing less than holy writ. In the field of medicine, for example, in keeping with Confucianist dogma Edo Japan's orthodox anatomical sciences were based on rhe theory of *goto rtippu;* literally this means hhr five viscera and six entrails', but more generally illustrates the classical Chinese view of human activities and human organs, namely that every bodily function had an exact correspondence in external nature. Anatomy, therefore, wag not an empirical science, but a basically philosophical and rather speculative view of man's place in the universe.

In the mid-eighteenth century, however, it came to the notice of a Kyoto physician, Yarnawaki Toyo (1705-62), when gazing upon the dissected corpse of a criminal, that his insides varied somewhat from what they were supposed to be according to Chinese anatomical theory; moved by his discovery he

proceeded to compile a brief work, which he entitled *Zoshi* (Reflections on Entrails) and published in 1759. A further major landmark was achieved in early March 1771 when two men, who subsequently became perhaps the chief pioneers of *Rangaku,* Maeno Ryotaku (1723-1803) and Sugita Genpaku (1733–1817), received bakufu permission to carry out a dissection themselves on the corpse of a female criminal at Senju Kotsukahara, the Edo execution grounds. Maeno and Sugita carried with them a Dutch translation of *Tabulae anatomicae in tjuibus corporis hunuini,* written by the Silesian anatomist Johan Adam Kulmus (1689-1745) and published in 1733; the woman's interiors, they discovered, corresponded neatly to Kulmus's charts. Maeno undertook the supervision of the translation into Japanese of the Dutch translation, entitled *Onlleedkundige Tafelen,* of Kulmus's work and in 1774 published it as *Kaitai Shinsho* (New Treatise on the Understanding of the Human Body). From this point onwards *Rangaku* took off.

In 1788 another *Rangaku-sha,* Otsuki Gcntaku (1757-1827) published his two-volume *Rangaku Kailci* (An Introduction to Dutch Learning) and in the following year set up one of the more famous academies of JtangiaAu in Japan, namely the Shirando in Edo. One of his pupils, Imamura Sanpaku (1759-1811), published the first Japanese–Dutch dictionary in 1796. This, however, represented the culmination of decades of w[r]ork undertaken by a number of men; the 1796 dictionary was in fact a Japanese adaptation of a French-Dutch dictionary, the *Woordenboek* der *Nederduitsche en Frans the Taalen,* edited by Francois Halma (1652-1722) in 1710.

The early development of Rangaku may have been slow, painful, indeed tortuous- By the late eighteenth century, however, it flourished. Following Otsuki Gentaku's founding of die Shirando, a number of other centres of Rangaku excellence were established, notably die Shosendo of Ito Genboku (1800-71) and the Teki-Teki-Sai of Ogata Koan (1810-63). By the early part of the nineteenth century, not only had the Nagasaki monopoly been broken, not only were there *Rangaku* research and educational institutions, but indeed approximately sixty han created *Rangaku* schools. Needless to say, the increase in the number of establishments resulted in a proliferation of the number of scholars.

Although originally *Rangaku* was mainly concerned with medicine and a few of the applied sciences, in the course of time painting also became a favourite activity *of Rangaku-sha,* especially in the cases of Hiraga Gennai (1729-80) and the perhaps better known Shiba Kokan (1747-1818). The appeal of the Western form of painting was not simply the pursuit of an aesthetic ideal - it was equally prized for its practical value; that is to say the major distinction between Japanese and Western painting was that the latter involved realism - things are painted as they are. One point which should be made

about these *Rangaku-sha* is that their field of interests was markedly catholic; the works of any given individual might include treatises on anatomy, medicine, philology, geography, painting, and indeed navigation, gunnery and Western military strategy.

These men were the pioneers and indeed protagonists of Western culture in Japan. Their praise of Western sciences struck a reasonably receptive chord among those who were getting somewhat tired of the excessive sinophilism of the age and were not displeased to find alternative areas to study and at the same time to use these as a stick to beat the doctrinaire Neo-Confucianists. At the same time, one also sees a phenomenon which here in embryonic form was to achieve full flowering in the decade or so immediately following the Restoration; an uncritical, highly adulatory Western mania. Respectable scholars adopted Dutch *noms de plume,* wrote to each other in Dutch, and so forth. This was known as *ranpeki* (Dutch mania), though it covered the West in general, many aspects of which were praised to ludicrous extents – in a manner perhaps reminiscent of the Western adulation for Maoist China in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Indeed, Western monarchs had fanatical admirers in Japan, though they could hardly have been conscious of the fact; Honda Toshiaki, for example, adored Catherine the Great of Russia (1729-96), while Rai San-yo was so upset upon hearing of the defeat of Napoleon (1769-1821) at Waterloo that he was moved to write a eulogistic poem in his honour.

The development and significance of *Rangaku* were certainly considerable, but certain points need be made in order to keep the general picture in perspective. In spite of the *ranpeki* of the late eighteenth century, it nevertheless remained the case that the Edo atmosphere remained highly volatile; *Rangaku-sha* might enjoy encouragement, indeed patronage, under certain circumstances, in certain domains at certain times, but they might equally find persecution, indeed execution, at other times. Again, one finds here striking analogies with more contemporary totalitarian states: a hundred Dutch tulips might be allowed to bloom for a while, only to be nipped in the bud shortly afterwards. Secondly, and again in spite of *ranpeki,* although it gradually came to be agreed that Western science was no doubt superior to that of the East, the spirit of the East should not be altered for that reason. Indeed, in the immediate pre-modern era scholars, such as Sakuma Shozan (1811-64) or Hashimoto Sanai (1834-59), one finds the attempt to blend the spirit of Western scientific enquiry with the spirit of Eastern ethical mentality. The approach, therefore, at this stage at least, remained firmly ensconced in a Confucianist framework; while for some of the more nationalist or 'japanist' thinkers, namely those of the *kokugaku,* such as Hirata Atsutane (1776-1843), Western science was perceived as a means of achieving a sort of millcnarian Japanist drcam. Finally, in spite of the considerable achievements to Lhe credit

of the *Rangakusha* - including, for example, experimenting with electricity - it goes without saying that their knowledge remained limited when compared to Western scientists' and that it was derived mainly from books rather than practical experience.

Nevertheless, *Rangaku* in the very broad sense of the term was a vital factor in preparing Japan for her heady course of modernisation which followed in the later nineteenth century. The academics of Dutch studies counted among their pupils some of the leading figures in numerous domains of the post'Meiji era. The 'father* of the Japanese navy, Katsu Kaishu (1823-1900), Nishi Arcane (1829-97), one of the men most responsible for introducing Western administrative and jurisprudential practices into Japan, and Fukuzawa Yukichi (1835-1901), the intellectual and educator *par excellence* of the Meiji era, to mention only three out of many, were all pupils of *Rangaku* academies. When facing the Western menace fully, the bakufu was able to set up an institute in 1856, the *Ransho Tonshtrabesho* (Office for the Study of Barbarian Writings), which was ably staffed and enabled the government to avoid pitfalls more rapidly than was the case with Ch'ing China's homologous institution, the *Tsungli* Kamen, established in 1860; in other words, the bakufu and some of the han had at their disposal a reservoir of human resources skilled in the knowledge of the West which was conspicuously lacking in other countries of the East. The, speed with which the Japanese were able to learn from the more advanced Western countries, Britain, France, Germany, would hardly have been possible without the preliminary Dutch tuition.

The annual visits of the *opperhoojd* to Edo and his *fusetsugaki* enabled the bakufu to keep reasonably abreast of events in Europe, certainly more so than was the case in China - the Portuguese in Macao were only given a commercial role and were not called upon to visit Peking to submit reports. *Rangaku* itself, though encompassing diverse fields, also played a significant role in instructing the Japanese in Western military technologies such as gunnery, navigation, strategy, and so forth. Although the academic knowledge of these subjects hardly sufficed to gain them the wherewithal to defy the Western powers, it did nevertheless enable them to appreciate their own military inferiority - a notable achievement and advantage.

It will be recalled that we have stressed the conflicting centrifugal and centripetal forces in Japanese history. By liberating *Rangaku* from its Nagasaki enclave and having it spread throughout the country, the result was that in almost all areas of Japan there was at the very least an awareness of the nature and advance of Western science. Furthermore, *Rangakusha* from Sendai, Kagoshima, Edo, Osaka, Kanazawa and so on came to know each other, study together, and therefore this coterie of intellectuals also came to provide a national intellectual £lite. *Rangaku,* in that sense, was a centripetal force.

INTELLECTUAL ROOTS OF MODERNITY

Intellectual developments also, therefore, contributed towards the unification of the country into a nation-state and laid certain foundations for subsequent modernisation. Among the more marked characteristics of this period one would include the following.

First, a high degree of secularisation was achieved. The Japanese were not to be plagued by religious shibboleths or annoyed, possibly pilloried, by fanatical monks with national prestige and influence. Secondly, there was a widespread development in education, resulting in both a broad basic literate base and a reasonably enlightened £lite. There developed a respect for knowledge, a recognition of the advantages of education for the administration of human affairs, hence the incursion of a meritocracy within a hitherto aristocratic framework. Thirdly, the importation of Chinese books on Western science, the discovery of the inadequacy of Chinese medical theory, the subsequent proliferation of *Rangakti,* all helped to accelerate the emphasis on a rational, empirical approach to the physical world.

These features represent a good deal and help to explain the pace with which the Japanese were able to modernise in the later nineteenth century. The picture, however, must not be excessively embellished. In terms of progress, there were also a number of regressive elements, some of which have been indicated in the preceding pages. Having looked at how Edo Japan became increasingly unified in social , economic and intellectual terms, it now remains to study the political ideology and movement which ultimately gave birth to the modern Japanese state.

5 Ideology, Politics and Revolution

GENESIS OF A NATIONAL IDEOLOGY

The Edo era witnessed significant economic, social and intellectual developments. The forces at work, in all these fields, were mainly of a centripetal character. In objective terms it is clear that national unification was in the process of formation. In order to weld these forces together, however, two further conditions were necessary: a national ideology and external pressure. Both of these emerged in the latter part of the Edo era. The element of hostility from the outside, real or perceived, is a *iine qua non* for the reinforcement of the sense of a common identity, namely Ibn Khaldoun's concept of 'tuaAryyo. Internal differences diminish significantly in proportion when the interior is under siege, The crucial factor in being able to resist external pressure, however, is that of timing. If the external threat is not properly perceived and especially if there is no consensus on the means to be used for withstanding it, then the forces of coalescence will be dispersed and possibly counter-productive. In a word, this is what happened in China under the impact of the West; China possessed a cultural ideology, not a national one. Japan's remarkably rapid response to the West was greatly facilitated by the fact that the national ideology had been evolved, it was there, it was simply a question of effectively projecting it.

In terms of understanding the evolution of the national ideology, several points regarding the general background need to be stressed. In the first place as was indicated in the former chapter, education and learning had developed significantly in the course of the Edo era. It was difficult for a samurai to be an active man of arms, for there was no fighting, but it was possible for him to become a man of letters. Although stress was still placed on the Au (the martial character), the way of the warrior also recognised, indeed elevated, the importance of *bun* (letters). The atmosphere, therefore, was conducive to learning and to research. Secondly, although it is true that official orthodoxy was rather dogmatically attached to the Chu-Hsi school of Confucianism, it is nevertheless the case that a number of heterodox schools emerged. These were