

THE CONTINUITY OF LEADERSHIP
AND MODERNIZATION IN MEIJI JAPAN

by

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INTRODUCTION

It is known well that the nature of leadership is related to the process of modernization. At the moment of transition, the type of elite, traditional or non-traditional in form, is not as important as the ideology and attitude. "There are many factors that contribute to the propensity of a nation to develop, the first requisite being the existence of a competent elite motivated to modernize their society."¹ Under well-established leaders, a given society will transfer smoothly from tradition to modernity without completely destroying its old values. This assertion is clearly expressed in the words of Black. He says:

In thinking about the process of modernization, one must take into consideration not only its universal characteristics and the fundamental difference in the traditional ideas and institutions of the diverse politically organized societies, but also the vital importance of leadership, both within and among societies, in determining the policies under which traditional institutions are adapted to modern function.²

The leadership is the standard of the values by which the society lives. "By learning the nature of elite, we learn the nature of the society."³ In terms of the nature of elite, it is concerned with the sources and the way of elite recruitment: achievement,

¹This referred to what Lipset says "We are interested in elites because of our larger concern with social economic, and political development. And while there are many factors which affect the propensity of a nation to develop, it is clear that regardless of differences in social systems, one of the requisites for development is a competent elite, motivated to modernize their society." See M. S. Lipset, Elite in Latin America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), preface viii.

²C. E. Black, The Dynamics of Modernization, (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1966), p. 158.

³H. D. Lasswell, D. Lerner, and C. E. Rothwell, The Comparative Study of Elites; and Introduction and Bibliography, (Stanford: 1935), p. 1.

or ascription. The background and outlook, whether homogeneous or heterogeneous, of the national leaders, are part of the elements that indicate the future of development. Of this, Lasswell has better description:

The manner in which the leadership is chosen, the breadth of social bases from which it is recruited, and the way in which it exercises the decision-making power, the extent and the nature of its accountability - these and other attributes are indicators of the degree of shared safety in a given society at a given time.⁴

The transition of leadership is relevant to the study of change. It is said that all societies undergoing change are involved to some extent in the transfer of political power from old hands to new. Therefore, the continuity or discontinuity of strategic elite is essential to social, economic and political development. The wishes and perspectives of the younger generation have always been of considerable importance in the succession of leadership. If there is a strong commitment between the old and young leader group, the process of social transformation will be stable. But if the modernizers are part of the traditional elite, the change would also be smoother and the outbreak of social disobedience can be prevented.

It is difficult to make a generalization that all the traditional political institutions are an obstacle of progress. It is rather valid to assume that the existence of the traditional institutions is helpful to the process of modernization. If the traditional political institutions are weak or non-existence or are destroyed by colonialism or other means during the decomposition

⁴H. D. Lasswell, D. Lerner, and C. E. Rothwell, The Comparative Study of Elites: An Introduction and Bibliography, (Stanford: 1935), p.1.

of one society, the result is as Rustow says with regard to the condition in the former colonial areas. He says:

Colonialism long ago destroyed both the traditional political structure at the top and much of traditional culture among the masses; African countries in particular have no precolonial political traditions embracing the entire territory of the postcolonial state. By the time an independent, . . . both the best and the worst of tradition have disappeared beyond easy restoration, beyond any hope of using them to reinforce the modernization process. Non-colonial countries such as Japan and Turkey had the advantage of a continuing political structure that could be transformed from a traditional dynastic or oligarchic system into a more national one.⁵

Because of different culture and historical background, every society develops in its own way, presumably as is assumed to be the best for it. In general, there are two types of elite groups; one is the traditional elite whose goal of modernity is to preserve the old social political values; and the other one is made up of those whose aim is to modernize their society by a revolutionary approach. Both of them are from the traditional ruling class, yet the latter is far more radical than the former in its ideology. Certainly, under their leadership, their societies developed in two distinctive patterns. The reasons supporting this distinction are worthy of studying.

The area study of this paper is Japan, chosen because the experience of Japan's rapid modernization provided a good example to support the generalization that the change from tradition to modernity need not involve total rejection of a society's basic values. In other words, the traditional elite may not be hostile to modernization; they often make the change smoother.

⁵Dankwart A. Rustow, A world of Nations, (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1967), p. 120.

The transition from feudal to modern Japan began from "the internal social and political reconstruction of the ruling groups themselves."⁶ These ruling groups were traditional in form, yet they were the only groups with the advanced Western technology. Facing external and internal insecurity, they first gave up their feudal identity and transformed into the modern elite to save their country from being colonized.

Since the intrusion of the Western power, the history of Japan represents one type of traditional society struggling bitterly for its national survival. The roads that were open for her were either completely to resist the exogeneous force, or to accept Westernism entirely. Of these two choices, one would lead Japan to losing its old order and the other would threaten her integration.

In Japan, the motive of modernization was itself anti-Westernism. However, those who came to guide Japan through her transformation were the young men with specialized Western knowledge. They were inspired by their class ethic and their loyalty to the Emperor. The decline of their economic condition and their social status forced them to challenge the feudal system. The rise of a money economy that blurred the class distinction also affected the social mobility of the lower elite.

There were many other factors that also contributed to the development of Japan besides the group of modernized leaders, such as the protected location, the unity of language, the tradition of cultural authority and feudalism, the high level education, and the habit of borrowing from overseas. However, these may be viewed as the starting points of Meiji Westernization. Japan and China both were traditional societies that devoted their

⁶Reinhard Bendix, Nation-Building and Citizenship, (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1964), p. 181.

national resources to modernization in the last century. It was Japan that first became a strong military state in Asia. All other factors being equal, it was the nature and the attitude of the leaders that caused the difference. In Japan the feudal elite transformed into modernizers by giving up their class privileges and status, while in China the gentry class resisted the renovation in fear of losing their interests.

The focus of this paper is, therefore, on the reasons that explain why the feudal elite continued to rule after the overthrow of the Tokugawa regime. In other words, the purpose of the writing is to study why the lower samurai became the modernizers despite their traditional commitment. In order to understand the nature of this lower elite, social background, education, ideology and other elements that relate to the explanation will be discussed. There are other questions that the paper also intends to answer, such as: why were the other social classes unable to challenge the legitimacy of the traditional elite? What have been the consequence of the continuity of leadership?

It has been necessary to use several Japanese terms identifying aspects of the social system. Since there is no precise English equivalent, a short glossary of the more important terms is added as an appendix and brief definition provided.

II. SOCIAL STATUS AND THE FORMATION OF FEUDAL ELITE

Social status is considered as the first criterion to decide one's role in a feudal society. A feudal system is defined as having closed social classes, a well-defined hierarchy of power-holders, the identification with one's respective overlord and an ascribed distribution of goods and services.¹ Tokugawa Japan was a feudal system. The elite stratum consisted of those having access to some degree of political power. The high status of occupations combining military and political roles was reflected in the economic rewards of this elite. The legal rewards were specific rights and privileges not accorded to the non-elite. One's role in society was determined by birth. A merchant or peasant had little chance of entering the elite stratum. Among the elite class, the mobility from low rank to high rank was also restricted.

For understanding the social background of Feudal Japan, a short introduction of the class system is necessary. Tokugawa Japan was established by Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542-1616) after he defeated his rivals in the battle of Sekigahara in 1600.² Since then, Tokugawa family had hegemony over the lands for two and a half centuries by a military dictatorship, the so-called Shogunate. The regime was based on the support of the vassalage of fudai and tozama. For the social control, the society was

¹The definition of feudal system is that of Marion J. Levy, Jr., in his article "Contrasting Factors in the Modernization of China and Japan" in Simon Kuznets, et al. Economic Growth: Brazil, India, Japan. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1955), p.498 footnote 4.

²Hugh Borton, Japan's Modern Century, (New York: the Ronald Press Company, 1955), p. 15.

divided into four classes. The ranking of these social classes of the time was the samurai, the peasant, the artisan and the merchant (shi-nō kō-shō). The samurai occupied the highest rank, the farmer came next, followed by the artisan and merchant. There were several other classes, such as the court nobility, the Shinto priests, Buddhist priests, scholars of the Chinese classics, and a body of social outcasts called eta or hinin.

However, the classes of importance were those of samurai and chonin.³

Social stratification is esteemed as a social value system. In every society there is a system of functionally differentiated roles of activity considered as important in achieving social goals. The most highly valued roles are those requiring the greatest generalized knowledge and responsibility. As the paper mentioned before, of the ruling class, rank indicated one's occupation, duty, economic income, and office holding. Therefore, the ruling class was considered as the elite in feudal Japan, because its members can claim a position of superiority and have the corresponding measure of influence over the fate of their community.⁴ It is due to the superior qualities of skill, knowledge, virtues, and possessions that the elite can be the holders of high position in a given society. However, in feudal Japan, the value of one's role was determined by birth. Therefore, the most important roles are Shogun, the Emperor, daimyō, and the samurai. Using the prestige which is combined with social, economic, and legal status, the social hierarchy of

³Chonin means merchant or trader.

⁴The original text is that "The elite is a stratum of society which can claim a position of superiority and hence a corresponding measure of influence over the fate of the community." see Thom Kerstiens, The New Elite in Asia and Africa: A Comparative Study of Indonesia and Ghana (New York: Frederick A. Praeger Publishers, 1966), p. 4.

Tokugawa Japan is as follows:⁵

High Status	1. Shogun and branch families
	1a. Emperor and court aristocracy
	2. Daimyō
	3. Daimyō related families
	4. Upper samurai
	5. Lower samurai
	6a. Wealthy local merchants
Intermediate Status	6. Middle and lower urban and rural merchants
	7. Upper peasant, village leaders
Low Status	8. Artisans
	9. Peasants

Tokugawa Shogun and his branch families occupied the highest positions and had the highest prestige in feudal Japan. Feudalism was based on land ownership and its economic wealth was from rice production. In theory, all the land belonged to the Emperor. Actually over ninety-eight per cent of the registered territory of Japan was dominated as the military estate. The distribution of the land right was the indication of the political and social controls. Using the rice assessed production capacity as the unit of comparison, the distribution of power was as follows:⁶

	<u>koku</u>	<u>percent</u>
Imperial lands	143,000	.5
Shogunal lands	6,800,000	25.8
Daimyō lands	19,100,000	72.5
Temple and shrine lands	316,000	1.2
TOTAL	26,357,000	100.0

⁵ Bernard S. Silberman, Ministers of Modernization: Elite Mobility in the Meiji Restoration 1868-1873, (Arizona: The University of Arizona Press, 1964), p. 13.

⁶ Robert E. Ward and Dankwart A. Rustow, ed., Political Modernization in Japan and Turkey, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), p. 20, John Whitney Hall "The Nature of Traditional Society".

The shogunal families controlled about a fifth of the territory of the realm and ruled directly over a third of the entire population. The Emperor obtained not more than one per cent of the total land distribution. The significance of the throne in the feudal system was based on the fiction that the sovereign emperor had delegated ruling powers to the Shogun. In theory, the Emperor was the ruler; in practical terms, the Bakufu was the center of authority. Over his lands, the Shogun played a dual role as chief of state and supreme suzerain. He exercised general public authority over national defense and foreign affairs and legislated for the entire country. He also controlled the minting of money, standardized weights and measures, and regulated trade.⁷ However, his legal right to collect taxes, maintain local order, dispense justice, and to manage the civil service was confined to his own domains.

The majority of the lands were concentrated in the hands of 264 daimyō. The daimyō were the vassals of the Shogun. They held only limited obligation to the feudal government. They received no income from any superior; therefore, they had high prestige which was only next to the Shogun and the Emperor.

In general, the daimyō had rice production of over 10,000 koku. According to their relation with the Shogun, the daimyō can be classified in two groups: the fudai and the tozama. The fudai were those grouped around Shogun's domain and occupied most of the central positions of feudal government. They were the associated descendants of lords and retainers who had recognized Tokugawa suzerainty before 1600. The total of fudai were about sixty-eight. The tozama, the outsider hans, had been enemies or rivals of Tokugawa family before the war of Sekigahara. They were in the southwest and northeast of the country. Because of the close relation with the Shogun, the fudai

⁷Toshio G. Tshkahira, Feudal Control in Tokugawa Japan, the Sankin Kotai System, (Cambridge: the East Asian Research Center, Harvard University, 1966), p. 13.

ranked higher than the tozama.

The important function of the daimyō was that they were the holders of local power. They enjoyed autonomy within their own hans. Their economic resources were based on taxation of goods produced within their own fiefs. The daimyō were subjected to civil restriction imposed by Tokugawa such as movement, and the marriages of daimyō had to be approved by the Bakufu, as well as the repair of the castles, and the establishment of toll stations. All these were subjected to permission of the Shogun. The obligation of the feudal lords to the Bakufu has been expressed as follows:

They (daimyō) were free from close control except for periodic visits by Bakufu representative and supervisory functions connected with controls on Christianity. Most importantly, the lords contributed no regular part of their tax revenue to the Shogunate, they limited their tribute to ceremonial gifts, guard service and attendance at the Shogun's capital.⁸

The samurai were the direct retainers of Shogunate and daimyō. They served their respective lords as hereditary officials. Their income depended on the reward from their immediate lords in the forms of fiefs and rice stipends. Their social status was inferior to the daimyō since the latter were the former's feudal overlords. The samurai were, before pax-Tokugawa, organized into military units and bound by oath to their superiors. They were expected to live by the codes of loyalty and duty which were their heritage.⁹

Using the fief holding as a criterion, the samurai could be categorized as those who had and those who had not. The more important samurai were granted fiefs by their lords. They usually lived at the capital cities (castle town) of their respective lords. The vast majority of retainers had no land at all and received their incomes as rice allotments. The

⁸Marius B. Jansen, Sakamoto Ryoma and the Meiji Restoration, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1961), p. 6.

⁹John Whitney Hall, "The Castle Town and Japan's Modern Urbanization", Far Eastern Quarterly, 15, 1 (1954) 37-56.

bureaucratic posts of the hans were limited to the samurai of specific ranks. In the feudal system, the rank symbolized the appropriate income from subfief or from stipend of the status holders. The rank and title signified command in the military organization. The highest ranks of samurai of the late Tokugawa period were the following:

Upper samurai (joshi; osamurai; also termed shikaku)

Karō (House elders) eleven in number
 Lands with tax base of 1500 - 10,000 koku
 Headed the Court and Internal Administration departments and served as Commissioners General (Bugyōshoku).
 Headed the major military formations. Granted permission to use the daimyō family name and the most loyal group to the daimyō.

Churō eleven in number
 Lands with tax base of 450-1,500 koku
 Staffed some of the more important offices, usually at a level closer to that of implementation than the more honored karo.

The upper samurai's prestige was derived primarily from their relation with the daimyō, or the Shogun. Their hereditary family rank gave them the opportunity of access to the highest administrative positions which were restricted to the lower samurai. They obtained a fief income more than the smallest category of daimyō. Their social status was higher than the regular and lower samurai. Because the upper samurai held high administrative positions by virtue of their hereditary family rank rather than by personal achievement, they did not have to acquire special knowledge or skill to enter the upper stratum of society. The scholastic records at the fief school were considered as the criteria of selection among the candidates of the same ranks.

¹⁰ This rank hierarchy is taken from the system of Tōza han, because it is similar to the Shogunate and the other major hans; for the general system see Ward op. cit., p. 29.

Different from the upper samurai who occupied the higher posts in the han and the Edo governments, the regular samurai performed more localized han administrative or judicial functions. There were three grades in the regular samurai stratum. The range of the land production was from 50 to 700 koku. The stipend and position of the regular samurai is described as follows:

Regular samurai

Unamawari (Mounted Guard) Approximately 800 in number
Lands with tax base of 100-700 koku
Their name derived from their position around the daimyo's headquarters in the field - grade officers in battle formations.
Furnished the bulk of the leadership at the administrative level, particularly in the Assistant Ministry (shoiki-yaku) which they and churō staffed.

Koshogumi number not definitely fixed
Lands producing 70-250 koku
Staffed with unamawari, most magistracies 11

Rusuigumi number not fixed
Lands producing 50-200 koku
Staffed with koshogumi, some magistracies, and lesser offices.

The samurai occupied about five percent of the total population in the Tokugawa period. About seventy-five percent of the samurai were made up of the lower Samurai. The ranks, positions, and rice income of this lowest elite stratum is as follows:

Lower Samurai (Kasi; keikaku)

Goshi 900-1000 in number
Lands producing 30-250 koku

Yonin number not fixed

Kachi number not fixed (who attends on foot when a daimyo goes out; a foot soldier)
Income 12-17 koku

Kumigai number not fixed - 10 koku

Ashigaru foot soldier, further subdivided into many groups, and maintained on the subsistence level at 3-7 koku.

¹¹ Ibid.

Among the lower samurai, the goshi, the foot soldiers, constituted the most distinguished group. After the development of castle towns, most of the samurai moved into the cities to serve their immediate lords. The goshi remaining in the rural area functioned as the gentry class or the local elite. It was the goshi that dominated the loyalist movement in the years prior to Restoration. Ashigaru was the lowest rank in the samurai class, performing labor services. In terms of the political role, the lower samurai were responsible for the lowest administration and had little or no access to the power center except in an informal manner. ¹²

Shogun, daimyō, and samurai were all part of the elite structure, as well as the Emperor. The role of Emperor was not as significant as those of the other elite classes in feudal Japan. This was because it was out of the nexus of the feudal vassalage. The function of the throne is to delegate his power to the Shogun. Both the Emperor and his kuge (court aristocracy) were under the protection of the Shogun. It was the Shogunal officials that dominated the appointment of nobles to the offices of Chancellor and other posts created to transmit messages to the government in Edo. ¹³

During the Tokugawa period, the Japanese only knew their immediate lords and Shogun. Loyalty to the Emperor remained in a few of the scholars or the samurai from the outside lands. The majority of the population was alienated from the throne as the result of a policy that operated to prevent the growth of political and social contact between the Court and the vassals.

Upon the arrival of foreign ships in 1853, the political impotence of the throne was changed. When the security of the regime was endangered, the members of the Court began to participate in political activities. The throne also had gained

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Tsukahira, op. cit., p. 10.

greater physical mobility and more chances of association with persons other than the hereditary countries. The first events in which the Emperor demonstrated political activity was in his letter to the Shogun over the state of Japan's coastal defenses in 1846. The other event was when the Emperor refused to ratify the treaty of commerce with the United States. The significance of these action was that, as Robert Ward says, "Emperor and Court thus formed ways to carry on the kind of intrigue which became possible to those transition periods when the power structure was being shaken."¹⁴

It is said that during the transitional era, the throne was the political agent functioning as the sybol of national unification. The Emperor did not represent a powerful vested interest capable of obstructing political and institutional change. Before the Restoration, the throne was the source of legitimacy and during the period of national reconstruction, the Emperor was the aspiration of nationalism. Under his name, many social, political and economic changes had been carried out. It was by his name the modernization of Japan was accomplished, not by his wish.

Compared with the Emperor, the role of the Shogunate is less valuable in the process of modernization. Its authority relied on tight social control; therefore, in a time of change, its existence^e became the obstacle of development. In other words, the continuity of the Shogun in power meant delay of social transformation, which was intolerable for those discontented samurai. Unless the Shogun was able and willing to industrialize Japan, his disappearance from the political stage was predictable.

When the Western force knocked at the door of Japan, the feudal government faced two choices. The delemma was that of (1) opeing the door and trading with the foreigners which plainly would cost resentment from the society, or (2) refusing to trade

¹⁴Robert E. Ward, ed., Political Development in Modern Japan, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), p. 11-64.

with the result of being colonialized by the Western powers. Signing the treaty with the United States at Kanagawa in 1854, the Bakufu chose the lesser evil, collaboration with the foreigners. This cost the decline of the Shogunate.

The Tokugawa Shogun surrendered his suzerainty to the Meiji Emperor in 1868. Since the nature of the Shogunate was feudalistic, as long as it was in power, it would impose restrictive policy to maintain the feudal system. However, during the long period of the pax-Tokugawa, the means of production had been changed. The result was the rise of the middle class who would not tolerate the suppression of economic activities. The formation of strong nationalism among the impoverished samurai and the population would not allow a government adopting weak economic policies towards the foreigners to continue to rule. In addition, the corruption and weakness of the officialdom of the Tokugawa faction had degenerated the capability of the regime. The lack of outstanding leaders among the Shogunate was one of the important reasons that contributed to the dissolution.

Among the roles that were discussed above were those of the military aristocracy, which is the result of years of civil war. Until the late sixteenth century, warriors had been scattered over the land, where they cultivated the soil, administered justice, levied taxes and kept the peace of the villages. Years prior to the Tokugawa rule, the great lords restricted the power of these vassals over their fiefs, in administering these duties and taking the power of taxation into their own hands. They compensated their warriors directly by stipends in money or in kind.¹⁵ By 1560, most land was concentrated in the hands of about 200 daimyō. These feudal lords established their government seat in the castle towns. Following their respective lords, the samurai came to the castle towns to serve their lords as retainers

¹⁵ Bendix, op. cit. p. 190.

and officials. Thus, separated from the land the samurai became an unproductive class, living on the burden of the farmers. Under the policy of Hideyoshi's sword hunt of 1588, the samurai became the only class that were allowed to bear arms. However, these policies - the consolidation of local daimyō rule through the establishment of castle towns (1580-1610), the consequent removal of samurai from the land, and the formalization of the sankin-kotai system - were aimed at controlling the military aristocracy. In result, these policies helped the warrior become a so-called demilitary aristocracy. The tradition of physical prowess and chivalric honor were still practiced by the samurai; yet it became more and more limited as individual military stance (personal cultivation).¹⁶

Of the military hierarchy, the upper stratum occupied the higher position of the feudal government, while the lower stratum remained as the modest retainers. Most of them were cut off from all opportunities for appointment.¹⁷ Though they were trained to be loyal to their lords, yet they did not have any chance to serve their lords. They were living in a pretension when their rice income could not support their status. The outcome of this lower samurai is described in the following terms:

Military men who live as retainers and have little chance to see action may strut about in language and gesture, but the most sensitive among them must have become restless and many more developed strong hostilities against the higher ranks of the aristocracy, especially at the Shogunal Court.¹⁸

It was this discontented group that in the time of transformation was free of bias against change. Their educational preferment under the Tokugawa regime provided them with an immediate advantage over all competitors (which will be discussed later). Moreover,

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 191.

¹⁸Ibid.

their traditional cult of action, habits of frugality, aristocratic aversion to money-making and ideology of aspiration had prepared them psychologically for a bureaucratic career.¹⁹ In the following chapter, the paper will discuss the economic factors that affect the role of the samurai as they rise to leadership.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 193.

III. ECONOMIC CHANGE AND SOCIAL MOBILITY

Economic change is the decisive factor that affects the social mobility of the lower elite. The Tokugawa period was an era of rice economy, because its finance and economy were based upon rice. Land had been considered as the only form of wealth, but after the use of money as the medium of exchange was developed, gold and silver became an important form of wealth. The economy shifted from a land economy to a money economy. In other words, besides agriculture, there were commerce and manufacturing developed especially in and after the middle part of the Tokugawa Shogunate. The results were the rise of the Chonin, the growth of cities, and an impoverished governing class.

The feudal system was based on land ownership. The rice production was limited by the amount of cultivated fields. Yet the expenditure of the feudal government increased every year when the economic system shifted from rice to money. Finally, agriculture could not support the livelihood of the samurai class. Consequently, these classes (the samurai and the peasant) had to bow to the new economic power and look to the chōnin for financial help. Some of the samurai even turned to chōnin themselves or became like chōnin. To solve the economic difficulty, both the Tokugawa Shogun and the Daimyō tried to meet the situation by developing new rice fields for the purpose of increasing their annual rice revenue, by encouraging industrial activities, by establishing something like monopolies, by recognizing money and issuing han notes, and more generally by imposing heavy taxes on farmers.¹ The result of these policies was that the samurai had the opportunity to be trained as modern industrial workers and entrepreneurs. The extreme poverty had forced the samurai to fight for betterment of their class.

¹Eijiro Honjo, The Social and Economic History of Japan, (New York: Russell & Russell, Inc., 1965), p. 77.

There were many factors that caused the economic change, such as the expansion of cultivated land, the improvement of transportation and communication, the penetration of capitalism in the rural area, and the change of currency. However, the most important reason was the sankin-kōtai (alternate attendance)², which not only affected the financial condition of the daimyō, but also contributed to the expansion of the market. In a closed society, it was the only stimulus to the growth of an internal commerce.³ A further discussion of the system is necessary because it provides some insights of the economic problem of the governing class.

The sankin-kōtai is a system designed by the Tokugawa Shogunate to ensure political control over the daimyō. The system required most of the daimyō to travel biennially from their domains to the capital of the Tokugawa at Edo and to spend alternate years in personal attendance at the shogunal court. Each daimyō was also required to maintain residence at Edo where his wife and children were permanently detained.⁴

The advantage of the system was that it stimulated the development of a nation-wide communication system. The daimyō

²The sankin Kōtai system had been practiced for a generation before Iemitsu came into power. Iemitsu legislated the existing arrangements and standardized them as hard and fast rules. Formalization of this system for tozama daimyō in 1635 and for fudai daimyō in 1642.

³Since the merchant and trader were prohibited to develop market outside the country the sankin kōtai system provided as a stimulus for economic growth. The reasons explained later.

⁴Nobutaka Ike, The Beginnings of Political Democracy in Japan, (Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1950), p. 8. Also see Tsukahira, op. cit., p. 49-50.

made regular journeys to and from the capital from all parts of the country, accompanied by their many retainers. All these feudal aristocracy concentrating in Edo created a huge demand for goods and services and attracted a large population to Edo.⁵ The growth and prosperity of Osaka as the commercial center of feudal Japan was also related to the operation of the sankin-kōtai system. The explanation was that, as Toshio said, most of the lords converted their rice revenues into money for their sankin expense in Osaka. The alternate attendance also promoted the intellectual and cultural unification of the country. The reason was explained in the following terms:

The system brings large part of the leadership elements from the whole country together in one place and to keep a constant stream of leaders and intellectual moving back and forth between the capital and all parts of the country.⁶

Above all, it is the sankin-kōtai that brings down the economic superiority of the feudal lords. In order to fulfill the obligation, the daimyō had to spend much of his income for the expenditures of the journey, for the residence in Edo, and for his retainers following to Edo. All of these expenditures were in the form of money. And the money income of the hans was dependent primarily on the rice surplus. Therefore, the amount of rice to be changed into money was limited by the han's relatively inflexible capacity. Eventually, it was difficult for the feudal lords to keep pace with the constantly mounting money needs of the times. The following table represents the economic condition of a normal han, Kaga, related to the expense of the sankin journey. The spendings were categorized in three area for budgeting purposes: internal (home), Edo and Osaka-Kyoto.

⁵Tsukahira, op. cit., p.2.

⁶Ibid, p.3.

TABLE 1⁷

The Estimated Revenues and Requirements for the Years 1791, 1803, 1835 and 1848 of Kaga Han.

Year of Estimate	Income (Kamme)	Home	Requirements (Kamme)		Total	Deficit (Kamme)
			Edo	Osaka-Kyoto		
1791	7,162	3,609	5,746	1,000	10,355	-3,193
1803	6,475	3,140	3,998	235	7,373	-898
1835	9,750	5,162	5,860	700	11,722	-1,972
1848	8,215	6,500	4,000	1,000	11,500	-3,285

The data of Table 2 indicate that the daimyō of the Kaga han was in serious debts year after year. From the Kaga han one also can make an observation of the other feudal lords. For a comparison, five fudai daimyō were used in the following table with the expenditure classified by home and outside areas.

TABLE 2

Sankin Kōtai Expenditures of Five Fudai Han by Home and Outside Expenditures.

Fudai Han	Date of Data	Home Expenditures (Percent)	Outside Expenditures (Percent)		
			Edo	Kyoto-Osaka	Total Outside
Sakai Shonai, Dewa (140,000 <u>koku</u>)	1702- 1706	18.0	82.0	0.0	82.0
Makino Nagaoka, Fachigo (74,000 <u>koku</u>)	1864- 1865	16.9	79.3	3.8	83.1
Okabe Kishiwads, Izumi (53,000 <u>koku</u>)	1776	16.0	84.0	0.0	84.0
Itakura, Matsuyama Bitchū (50,000 <u>koku</u>)		16.7	77.8	5.5	83.0
Tozawa Shinjō, Dewa (68,200 <u>koku</u>)	1885	23.0	77.0	0.0	77.0
Average percentages:		18.1	80.0	1.9	81.9

⁷The Table is given as an example of the sankin spending of a normal han. Actually the expense of the journeys to and from Edo varied with the size of the han retinues and their distance from the capital. They also varied for a given han from period to period according to the state of finance at a given time. See Tsukhaira, op. cit., p. 88.

The data of Table 2 give the idea of the percentage of sankin expenditure of fudai hans. Because the number of hans in the comparison is only a small sample, it can not be used as to generalize the situation of the whole fudai daimyō. However, it tends to support the conclusion that by the middle of the nineteenth century, the average spending of the fudai hans in Edo was about 70 to 80 percent of its annual cash expenditures. The tozama hans spent a smaller percentage of their annual income in Edo than the fudai. The reason is that the fudai hans because of their close relation with the Shogunate, had spent most of the time in Edo rather than in their own fiefs. Thus, it cost them more to maintain their living in the city. Nevertheless, the tozama still had to spend around 70 percent of their total expenditures to fulfill the feudal obligation.⁹ Plus other expenses, the budget of the sankin journey constituted a ruinous drain on the resources of the han government. As a result, the system served to "promote the wealth and power of the merchant class and eventually to weaken that of the entire feudal ruling class, from the ordinary samurai and the daimyo up to the Shogunate itself."¹⁰

The discussion of the sankin-kōtai system gives the general idea of how the feudal control affects the well-being of the daimyō. The system motivated the economic development on one hand; on the other hand, it more or less caused the decline of the feudal barons and their retainers, especially the lower samurai. Before discussing the financial difficulty of the samurai, it is necessary to see the economic condition of the Shogunate.

⁹The tozama hans, average spending of outside expenditure (edo, Kyoto-Osaka) were ranged from 63.5% to 76.0. In other words, 71.0% was the average.

¹⁰Tsukahira, op. cit., p. 3.

The financial condition of the Shounate was the best among the various hans. However, its economic difficulty increased gradually, and by the end of the nineteenth century, the feudal treasury was almost empty. The main reasons for the embarrassed financial condition were the natural disasters, a financial system based on the assumption of unchanging conditions, and the thrift of the Shogunates. It is said the first two Shoguns were conservative and frugal, but the following three Shoguns, for a variety of reasons, all spent a great deal more than the amount of the Bakufu annual revenue. During the reign of Iemitsu, the government expended much of the accumulated reserve on public construction and on the Shimabara Rebellion (1637-8). Shogun Iemitsu gave lavish gifts in money to relatives and feudal lords, which consumed a great amount of the feudal reserves. Besides, the fire of Edo also cost much of the Shogunate's income to rebuild and give aid to the sufferers.¹¹

Facing economic difficulty, some of the Shoguns, such as Yoshimune, were eager to reform the financial condition but most of them were not able to maintain a thrifty policy. Gradually, the feudal government had to depend on the merchants to relieve its economic problem. Nearly three decades before the Restoration, the government's deficit in ordinary accounts had reached more than five hundred thousand yen. The regular revenue and expenditure of Tokugawa Shogun in 1842 (the thirteenth year of Tempo) is listed as follows:

¹¹Charles D. Sheldon, The Rise of the Merchant Class in the Tokugawa Japan: 1600-1868. (New York: J. J. Augustin Incorporated Publisher, 1958), p. 87.

Receipts and Expenditures for¹² the
thirteenth Year of Tempo

Ordinary revenue	925,099	ryō
Land tax	550,374	"
River navigation tax	3,205	"
Tax paid by the <u>hatamoto</u> in lieu of their labour service to the State	34,633	"
Contributions	16,633	"
Tax paid by traders at Nagasaki	22,792	"
Contributions raised for river administration	25,932	"
Debts paid back by samurai	76,686	"
Contributions made in good value	146,846	"
Special revenue	587,049	"
Profit from re-coinage of gold and silver money	557,322	"
Annual quota of contribution from the lords in connection with the repair of the Nishimaru Palace	29,727	"
Government expenditure	1,453,209	"
Special expenditure	156,409	"
Deficit in ordinary accounts	528,110	"

The figures indicate that the revenue of feudal government relied on the various incomes, taxes, contributions and re-coinage. Even with these extraordinary income items, the deficit was large.

For balancing revenues and expenditures, the government relied on the profit from the recoinages and the contributions from the wealthy merchants. The following indicate the unbalanced annual spending of the Edo government and the amounts of the profit of recoinages used to relieve the deficit during the thirteen years of Tempo era.

¹²Honjo, op. cit., pp. 278-9.

TABLE 3
REVENUE EXPENDITURE, AND DENE FROM TEMPO 3-13¹³ YEAR

Year	Revenue	Expenditure	Deficit	Dene	Surplus of Deficit(*)
3	1,218,011	1,593,909	375,898	394,200	18,304
4	1,223,241	1,646,832	423,591	540,000	116,409
5	1,172,907	1,790,051	616,144	470,596	145,547*
6	1,031,786	1,760,288	728,502	600,000	128,502*
7	1,651,527	1,963,750	312,223	499,844	187,621
8	1,901,817	2,467,902	566,085	629,263	63,173
9	2,202,436	2,512,666	310,230	1,075,950	765,720
10	1,706,451	2,180,922	474,470	694,745	220,275
11	1,422,487	2,001,958	579,471	997,000	417,529
12	1,090,590	1,962,684	872,094	1,155,000	282,906
13	1,259,702	1,963,911	704,291	501,445	202,764*

The data in the table above indicate the condition of the Edo government. To make the ends meet, the feudal government depended largely on the deme (profit of recoinage). Even with that, the revenue and the expenditure still could not be balanced. (See table above.) A large part of the spending was made up from the merchant's contributions and loans.

The economic difficulty of the Tokugawa family has its consequences on the lower classes. Merchants were the only class that benefitted from the impoverishment of the ruling class. Under feudal theory, the merchant was supposed to be a non-productive class and therefore not to be taxed. However, the merchants were required to pay special fees for the right of monopoly of trade and commerce. When the feudal treasury was finally exhausted, taxes were imposed on the merchant class. The following list is a distribution of the tax burden borne by the different classes:

¹³Ibid, p. 284.

Burden on the Samurai Class

Contributions	16,633 ryō
Contributions raised for river administration	25,932 "
Tax paid in lieu of labour service	34,633 "
Percentage	12%

Burden on the Farmer Class

Land tax	550,374 ryō
Percentage	84%

Burden on Chonin Class

River navigation tax	3,202 ryō
Tax paid by traders at Nagasaki	22,792 "
Percentage	4%
Grand Total	653,566 ryō
Percentage	100% 14

The samurai made up five percent of the total population; however, it was burdened with twelve percent of the taxation of Tokugawa Japan. After the samurai moved to the castle towns, they lived on the fiefs and stipends granted by their overlords. When the economic condition of their lords became worse, they suffered corresponding financial difficulty. Especially when the daimyō tried to reform their economic condition, reduction was made in the samurai's stipends. In addition, the growth of a money economy, the development of the standard of living, and the reduction of feudal revenue, all contributed to the decline of the samurai's economic status.

The economic difficulty of the samurai, Honjo described, as that sometimes the samurai had to pawn their swords and armour in exchange for cash. They depended on the government's financial

¹⁴Ibid, p. 280.

help and on the loans from chonin. Some of the samurai adopted the sons of merchants as their heir for the betterment of their economic condition. The case of buying and selling the status of samurai was not rare during and after the Hoei and Genroku eras.

How did the economic impoverishment affect the samurai? It can be explained in two ways. One interpretation is that the loyalty of the samurai towards their feudal lords had declined and in such a time of change, the samurai would join any movement that might bring betterment for them, as it is well known that the relation between samurai and their lord is on the basis of the material rewards. If the material foundation is weakened, the relationship is threatened. The samurai lived on the stipends granted by their respective lords. As the economic pressure on the daimyō became heavier, the feudal lords were not able to pay the stipulated amount of rice to their retainers after the Genroku era (1688-1703). Thus, the daimyō found many ways to cut the samurai stipends such as hanchi - that is, the feudal lords borrowed half of the retainers' stipend or sometimes paid only 40 percent of the amount due to the samurai. Under this policy, the higher rank samurai still lived in a good condition, but the lower samurai, with 3 to 7 or 12 to 17 koku of rice income, could no longer maintain their living in accordance with their status. Most of the lower samurai lived in a pretension that they should ignore their material condition and highly praise their class virtue and devote their loyalty to their lords. Some of the samurai became masterless samurai and most of them were harboring strong discontent towards the feudal system which was transferred to the loyalist movement.

The other explanation is that due to the economic difficulty, many hans had managed to carry out drastic reforms and started its trading and even industrialization programs. Of

these innovations, the suzerain relied on the samurai class. As it is said that "The specialization could not have taken place without the utilization of lower samurai to oversee this rigid and severe form of monopoly or direct mercantile intervention."¹⁵ Especially in the hans of Satsuma, Choshu and Tosa, where lower-ranking samurai were brought into positions of administration and policy-making which men of this stratum had never held before.¹⁶ The daimyō of these hans also, to some extent, encouraged the entrance of lower samurai into Western studies and experimentation in Western science and industry.¹⁷ Thus, in these hans, the great economic pressures led to the institutionalization of non-traditional patterns of behavior in the lower stratum. Thus, the hans' innovational activity provided the lower samurai the opportunity to learn Western knowledge and technology, which made them become the modernizers during the Meiji Restoration.

The new wealth in the shape of money was monopolized by the shonin class. With the progress of currency economy, the military power of the samurai class gradually gave way to the money power of the merchant. The merchant class was burdened with about four percent of the Tokugawa taxation, but most of the national wealth was in their hands. At the end of the Tokugawa regime, it was generally believed that 70 percent of the entire state-wide wealth was concentrated in Osaka.¹⁸ In spite of the lower social status, the merchant had a very high economic status in Tokugawa Japan. According to the suggestion of

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Honjo, op. cit., p. 139.

Silberman, the economic hierarchy of feudal Japan can be classified as that:¹⁹

High

Shogun, shogunal families, daimyō, imperial family, court aristocracy, wealthy merchange.

Upper

Upper samurai, middle urban merchants, and well-to-do local merchants.

Lower Middle

Lower samurai, lower urban merchants, middle local merchants, wealthy artisans, wealthy peasants.

Lower

Artisans, peasants.

From this hierarchy, it is clearly indicated that the merchants, despite their lower social status, had a very powerful economic role in feudal Tokugawa. Some of the wealthy merchants even maintained an extravagant living style that most of the feudal lords could not compete with. The merchant filled up most of the upper and lower middle of the economic hierarchy. Because of this powerful economic role, some of the merchants in Osaka and Edo had informal political influence upon the feudal government.

With the strong economic power as resources, the merchant without hesitation stood behind the coalition of lower samurai, and the court nobility in their loyalist movement. It is said that the campaign funds of the battles for overthrowing the feudal regime and the contributions made to the Meiji government came from the coffers of the wealthy merchants of Osaka.²⁰ Even

¹⁹Silberman, op. cit., p. 18.

²⁰Honjo, op. cit., p. 83.

after 1868, the founders of the Meiji Restoration "sagaciously" invited the wealthy merchants of Osaka to take sides with them in the great political reformation.²¹ However, it was the samurai of the lower strata of the warrior class that carried on the work of political transformation in their anti-foreign agitation, as well as in their political movements for the overthrow of the Edo government.²² The merchant could not extend their activities beyond merely economic support of the samurai. Why, holding economic power, did the merchants not try to take over the ruling class, and place themselves as the modernizers of the new regime? Takigawa Masajiro gives an explanation:

The reason why this nascent class of chonin did not even think of overthrowing the bushi (warrior) class was that the latter were their customers, and if they ruined their customers, if only for a brief period, the shock to their own economic power would have been disastrous. For this reason, the samurai were able to maintain their position right up to the Restoration long after they had lost their real power in the country."²³

Because of the feudal legal system, the chonin was a class of political impotence. The merchant had to integrate themselves with the officials of the han governments of the Shogunate in order to obtain privileges or legal protection for their trade or commerce activities.

Thomas Smith has a different explanation of why the Japanese townsmen failed to launch a democratic movement to challenge the traditional elite. He contends that the weakness of class, poverty, illiteracy, political innocence, and a lack of resentment toward the ruling class can not serve as an answer.²⁴

²²Ibid, p. 84.

²³Takigawa Masajiro, Nijon Sakakai Shi :A Social History of Japan, (Tokyo, 1935), pp. 746-7.

²⁴Bendix, op. cit., p. 183.

He says it is because the resentment of the merchant towards the ruling class never reached the pitch of ideology and the private hurts were never raised to a great principal of struggle between right and wrong.²⁵ Owing to the national exclusion policy, the merchant's economic activities were limited to the domestic market and the foreign political ideology stimulated the loyalty of the samurai class.

The peasants were the base of the agrarian society of feudal Japan. They composed about 70 percent of the total population during the Tokugawa period. They bore about 84% of the tax burden of Edo government. Yet they shared the least of the national wealth. In the norms of Confucianism, the peasant were the class only next to the samurai. However, they had the lowest status either in the social or economic hierarchy.

In a feudal society, a letdown of agricultural production would cause the dissolution of the vassalage foundation. To insure maximum rice production and make the nation's foundation more secure, the feudal lords imposed many heavy restrictions on the farmers. The peasants were regulated as to what to eat and what to wear. Their freedom to move out from villages to cities was limited. The rate of land tax the farmers paid to their lords was about 40% or 50%; that is, a farmer kept 60% or 50% of his rice products and turned the rest over to the feudal lord. In the years of Yoshimune (1716-1745), the rate was changed to more than 50%.²⁶ Actually, the land tax was different from area to area. After taxation, there was left only a bare subsistence for the small landholding peasant, even in the best years.

As the economic difficulty of the ruling class became worse, the daimyō and the samurai needed the tribute of the peasant more and more and they tried to squeeze the farmers as much as they could. In addition, with the penetration of money

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ See Andrew J. Grad, "Land and Peasant in Japan: An Introductory Survey", (New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1952) p. 13.

economy into the countryside, the farmers had to sell their crop in order to buy the necessities for their cultivation. To meet the rise of living costs, with the limited income sources, the peasant had turned to usurer for aid, offering his land as surety. In result, many of the farmers became tenants or emigrated to cities. Developing of other home industry in the rural areas was common.

The policy of Tokugawa regime was to "impose taxes upon farmers to such an extent that they could neither live nor die."²⁷ Under this exploitation, the peasants were not able to accumulate any capital which they could use as economic resources to bargain with the governing class. By two ways, the farmers expressed their demands. One is that to limit the population by various means to lighten their burden of expense.²⁸ The other was that under the leadership of village headman to revolt against authority. The uprisings only cost their lives. Though some of the times the demands of the peasants were accepted by the feudal governments, the realm never adopted a goal to improve the peasant's living condition and relieve his sufferings.

MacIver says, "When a people is poor, they do not struggle among themselves for wealth. They do not contemplate the possibility of changing their lot in life. They do not think about rising in the world."²⁹ It is true of the mass of peasant in Tokugawa Japan. They merely wanted no more mouths to feed. No matter how hard life is, they do not think of overthrowing the regime. Under the doctrine of feudal system, the peasants became obedient subjects. Therefore, the peasants' rebellions had only a narrow aim during the feudal ruling. Their motivations were as it is said "directed not against the system as a whole but only against some particular excess, some deviation

²⁷ Grad, Ibid, p. 23.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Robert M. MacIver, Democracy and the Economic Challenge. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1952), p.4.

from custom."³⁰ That meant the peasant "accepted the established one but protested against a further deterioration of their status."³¹

The headman, holding a higher prestige than the mass of peasants, was the leader in the countryside. The shōya (headman) was responsible for the communication between the feudal lords and the basic social units in Tokugawa Japan. Through them, the rulers controlled more than 60,000 villages.³² The village leaders had to see the tax was paid and to reinforce the law. They enjoyed popular respect from the villagers but they could not compete with the warrior who had the right to bear arms. The Shōya had the power of justice and police but they lacked the military power. Because the sons of the headmen and the gōshi were educated in the same school, they shared the general outlook. Many of the shōya were promoted into the rank of gōshi. The shōya and the gōshi became the active members in the loyalist movement.

To see how the four classes of Tokugawa Japan participated in the anti-Shogun and the loyalist movement, the role of the headman is of importance. Two volumes of biographies of persons given court rank posthumously between 1867 and 1927 recorded the

³⁰ Harumi Befu, "Duty, Reward, Sanction, and Power," Bernard Shilberman and Harry D. Harootunian, ed., Modern Japan Leadership, (Arizona: the University of Arizona Press, 1963), p. 25.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

class origin of Restoration leaders. From these biographies, the numbers of those active between 1800 and 1867 were as follows:³³

<u>SOCIAL ORIGIN</u>	<u>NUMBER</u>
Warriors	1,005
Peasants	132
Merchants	63
Physicians & Priests	119
Unknown	152
 TOTAL	 1,471

Because of the definition of class, the data given above are used as reference to help the understanding of social origins and political participation. The data show that the warrior was an over-whelming majority group compared with the other classes. From this, the explanation is that the samurai held power at the expense of other classes, particularly the peasantry. The above figures also confirmed with the discussion before that this traditional ruling class was not only active in post-Restoration era but also in pre-Restoration era. Next to the warrior was the peasant class as the second largest group in the data shown above. Most of the members of the peasant class were the rich peasants holding land; in other words, they were the head men of rural areas. If one defines the peasant as living in the village and holding lands, then many of the goshi of the warrior class should be classified as wealthy peasant and frequently they were the head men. In that case, it would not be incorrect to say that the village leaders had a very distinguished role in the anti-Shogun movement. Even among 63 members of the merchant class, many can be classified as peasants because most of them were rural, or at most provincial, merchants.³⁴

³³Thomas C. Smith, Political Change and Industrial Development in Japan: Government Enterprise, 1868-1880 (Stanford University Press, 1955), p. 16.

³⁴Ibid., p. 17.

That is, in the words of Thomas Smith, "... the great city merchants were either neutral or sided with the Tokugawa; and that such outside help as the warrior class received came from the countryside."³⁵ However, it should not be ignored that the head men only represented part of the peasant. The majority of the peasant were indifferent to politics. They were the silent section of the anti-foreign movement. They did not have a strong connection with the ruling class. After the overthrow of the feudal regime there were several peasant uprisings which could be given the usual interpretation as the peasantry trying to express their resentment.

The above discussion gives a general idea of how economic change affects social mobility. The following chapter is concerned with the education and ideology that contribute to the elite role of the lower samurai.

³⁵Ibid.

IV. EDUCATION AND THE LOWER SAMURAI

In feudal Japan, the right of learning is based on the social status. Those that were legally of ruling strata became educated classes. Those who had the knowledge and skill usually were the governmental position holders. The samurai made up the highly educated class. Their role was considered as the integration of military, brueaucrats and scholars. However, not every samurai could enter into administrative positions. Though merits and skill were counted as the standard of recruitment, the ascription was the principle. Limited by social rank, some of the lower samurai were not able to rise to become higher officials. It was not until the Meiji Restoration that the lower elite with Western knowledge and skill were recruited into the central government to reconstruct Japan.

One of Silberman's hypothetical points is that non-traditional education is one of the important elements that contribute to the success of the ruling elite in their bureaucratic career. The generalization is also valid to support the assertion that Western education (contact, influence) is part of the reasons that account for the traditional lower elite rising to the political stage and continuing to rule after the overthrow of the Tokugawa regime.

Using the type of education, traditional or non-traditional, as a criterion to examine a sample of 253 bureaucrats in the upper civil service in the period 1868-73, the result is shown in Table 4.

TABLE 4¹

EDUCATION BY PRE-1868 STRATUM

Social Stratum	Education							
	Traditional				Non-Traditional			Totals
	N	% of Trad. Education	% of Sample	N	% of non-Trad. Educ.	% of Sample	N	% of Sample
<u>Daimyō</u>	17	9.8	6.7	4	5.5	1.5	21	8.2
Upper samurai	36	20.5	14.2	14	19.4	6.5	50	20.7
Lower samurai	43	24.8	17.0	47	65.3	18.5	90	35.5
Peasant-arti. Merchant (commoners)	5	2.8	2.0	1	1.4	.3	6	2.3
<u>Kuge</u>	65	37.0	25.7	6	8.3	2.2	71	27.9
Imperial family	4	2.3	1.5	-	-	-	4	1.5
Others	5	2.8	2.0	-	-	-	5	2.0
Totals	175	100.0	69.1	72	99.9	29.0	247	98.1
N.A.	6		2.2				6	2.2
Total	181		72				253	100.0

The figures of the data indicate that two thirds of the sample despite social origin are in the traditional educated group, while nearly 29 percent or one third of the sample had acquired some form of Western or non-traditional education. This could be interpreted that immediately after 1868, social status was still considered the decisive element of emerging to civil service. The lower samurai was the majority group having some form of Western contacts or influence. This indicates that there was a

¹Bernard S. Silberman "Elite Transformation in the Meiji Restoration: the Upper Civil Service, 1868-1873", Silverman and Harootunian, op. cit., p. 238.

higher motivation among the lower samurai to participate in innovational behavior. To see how Western education affected the role of the lower samurai in the civil service as well as the other ruling class, the success in bureaucracy is used as a criteria. Table 5 is the result of the analysis of the relation between success and type of education.

TABLE 5 ²

Education by Success and Social Stratum (Successful)				
Pre-1868 Social Stratum	Traditional Education		Western Education and/or contact	
	N	% of Successful	N	% of Successful
Daimyō	1	1.4	1	1.4
Upper Samurai	6	8.6	5	7.1
Lower Samurai	11	15.7	37	53.6
Peasant-artisan-merchant	-	-	-	-
Kuge	5	7.1	3	4.3
Imperial family	-	-	-	-
Others	-	-	-	-
Total	23	32.8	46	66.4
N.A.	7			

The data of Table 5 indicate 66.4 percent of the successful bureaucrats are from the Western education group, while 32.8 percent are from the traditional education group. It may be concluded from this analysis that the non-traditional education was important for success, especially for the lower samurai.

²Ibid, p. 240.

The lower samurai composed more than half of the successful group. Among them, seventy-seven percent had non-traditional education. The figures of the data also indicate that none of the members from the peasant and commoners were successful.

Table 6 is an indication of relation between the non-successful bureaucrats and their education.

TABLE 6 ³

Education by Success and Social Stratum					
Non-Successful					
Pre-1868 Social Stratum	Traditional Education		Western Education and/or Contact		
	N	% of non- successful	N	% of non- successful	Died before 1875
Daimyō	17	9.7	2	1.1	
Upper samurai	29	17.1	8	5.1	2
Lower samurai	31	17.6	9	5.3	2
Peasant-artisan- merchant	5	2.8	1	.6	
Kuge	58	34.3	2	1.1	3
Imperial family	3	1.7	1	.6	
Others	5	2.8	0	-	
Totals	148	86.0	23	13.8	7

The finding of Table 6 is that the majority of the non-successful group had traditional education. While only 13.8 percent of non-successful had Western education or Western contact. Of the non-successful, traditional education group, kuge is the dominant majority. Their failure to be successful is that they

³Ibid.

were the higher social stratum in feudal Japan. It is easier for them to enter the center of power but after the expansion of governmental function, because of their traditional educational background, they can not compete with those who are holding Western knowledge. There were six of the non-successful bureaucrats from the social status of peasant and commoners. Five of them had traditional education and one had Western education. This indicates that despite the restrictive class distinction, there was some possibility of social mobility of the lower class. But because of their social background, it was more difficult for them to gain upward mobility.

It may be concluded from the above analysis, social status is relevant to the elite mobility. Western education and contact also were effective in elite recruitment. Two thirds of the sample were from the traditional education group. The explanation is that at the early years of Meiji modernization, social mobility was limited by social status. When the government institutions began to differentiate, they needed more of the strategic elite who, trained with modern knowledge and technology, were able to deal with the problems of national development. Since the old ruling class, especially the lower samurai, was the only group that obtained the innovational knowledge that none of the other classes could compete with, eventually they became the modernizers after the decline of the feudal regime.

The warrior class became the scholars after the seventeenth century. It is said that before a samurai who could not read or write was very common. It was the Tokugawa Shogun who ordered the samurai to become a cultivated class by studying Confucianism. By the nineteenth century, nearly every fief has an endowed school and private school. The private schools, numbering many thousands, were to teach the children of the commoners to read, write

and count. The fief-endowed schools were for the samurai only. The core of samurai study was Chu Hsi Confucianism.

The education developed in the samurai schools of the Tokugawa period had political relevance. It was the type of so-called "elite education." The concept of "moral basis and aims of politics" was, as Dore describes it:

Society consisted of the rulers and the ruled; the former endowed with breeding, learning, and morality; the latter ignorant and ignoble, prone to laziness, extravagance, and immorality - responsive, nevertheless, to moral exhortation and example and amenable to good treatment.⁴

In other words, a good society was a society with social hierarchy. The ruler should be the guardian for the ignorant mass.

The ideology of Confucianism, such as the virtue of filial piety, was heavily emphasized. The leader-follower principal gave the samurai respect for order in social organization. By learning early Japanese history, the samurai understood the legitimate position of the Emperor and in time, became advocates of his Restoration. By studying the ancient historical chronicles, the pupils realized the existence of the virtue of national institutions; the imperial family and the Shinto religion.⁵ It is the traditional learning during the two and a half centuries that furnished the samurai the spirit to prolong their guardianship after the Restoration.

Western knowledge and skill were factors that made the traditional elite able to lead the Japanese to modernization after the decline of the feudal system. The Western influence entered Japan in the early sixteenth century. The Christian

⁴R. P. Dore, "Education: Japan" Robert Ward and Dankwart Rustow ed., Political Modernization in Japan and Turkey, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), pp. 178-9.

⁵Arthur, Tiedemann, Modern Japan: A Brief History, (New York: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1955), p. 16.

missionary and the trader all contributed to the introduction of Western civilization to Tokugawa Japan. Since the adoption of the exclusive policy in the Kan'ei, it was Tokugawa Yoshimune who first authorized the importation of scientific works into Japan and encouraged the scholars to study Dutch. Many of the samurai had thrown themselves into the Western learning at that time. In the last several decades of Tokugawa, it is said many of the fief schools had added new departments of Western studies which contained the teaching of Dutch, French and English languages, Western science and technology, and eventually as elementary knowledge of Western political and economic institutions.⁶

The learning of Western knowledge affected the thinking of the samurai. Enriched with the concept of Western political criticism, samurai formed their own political ideology. They looked for an ideal political system which was taken after the Western countries to reconstruct Japan. Compared with the Western societies, they realized the continuity of the feudal system was a threat to the integration of Japan. After the overthrow of the Tokugawa regime, they did not think to go back to the old system. Instead of that, they determined to abolish the feudal system and begin the modernization of Japan.

The difference of the type of education between the samurai and the commoners is that the former is a classical education, the latter is of more practical nature. The parents in Tokugawa Japan provided their children the best education they could afford. In the 1860's, the rate of literacy in Japan was approaching 30 percent.⁷ By the time of Restoration, approximately forty to fifty percent of Japanese boys and perhaps fifteen percent of girls were getting some formal school outside their homes.⁸

⁶Hugh Borton, Japan's Modern Century, (New York: the Ronald Press Company, 1955), p. 41.

⁷E. Sydney Cawcours "Tokugawa Heritage: William W. Lockwood ed., The State Economic Enterprise in Japan, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), pp. 34-5.

⁸Ibid.

According to the records, the numbers of schools were between 7,500 and 11,000 village schools and perhaps a thousand or more other educational institutions of various kinds. It is said that the importance of education is that "a population which has received some education is more responsive to further training, has an awareness of and a desire for self-improvement, and is responsive to written directives."⁹ With this popular literacy, the Japanese government was able to move its society from tradition to modernity easily. However, the peasants and the commoners failed to challenge the authority of the ruling class. The type of education received by the peasants and the commoners is worthy of study.

The education of the non-ruling class placed emphasis on practical purposes. The content of teaching was that "apart from some elementary classical texts, instruction in reading and writing emphasized the kinds of texts and correspondence with which the pupils would later be mainly concerned."¹⁰ Mathematics only for measurement and accounting were taught. For the merchants and business men, there was considerable formal commercial education. Larger business ran schools for their apprentices and private commercial schools were very common in the large cities. However, the teaching of these commercial schools was aimed at the management. It failed to provide them with perspective and inspiration. It is said that the educational tradition was formal and philosophical; thus the samurai developed

⁹R. P. Dore, "The Legacy of Tokugawa Education", in Marius B. Janses, Changing Attitudes Toward Modernization, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964).

¹⁰Crawcour, op. cit., p. 35.

a willingness to "start something new." "Since direct job education and practical training made the mind less flexible than a general education,"¹¹ the peasants and the commoners were less able to face the challenge of the social, political and economic changes.

¹¹Johannes Hirschmeier, The Origins of Entrepreneurship in Meiji Japan, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964), p. 61.

V. LEADING ROLE OF SAMURAI AFTER MEIJI RESTORATION

In the foregoing chapters, the factors that directly or indirectly affected the role of traditional elite in the Meiji Restoration were discussed. Here, the paper will be concerned with the areas where the traditional elite are active, because it also provides the understanding of the nature of the samurai.

Without distinguishing the upper or lower samurai, the most important area of the traditional feudal ruling class reassumed their ruling role was in the central government. Years after the promulgation of the Charter Oath, around 78.3 percent of the office holders listed in the central government were samurai.¹ Another figure from the Hyakkan rireki mokuroku recorded that of the 450 important offices, 399 were held by samurai. The rest were filled by court nobility, the kaoku and commoners. The following figures give the number and percentage of the samurai in the total government offices.²

Year	Offices	Samurai Officials	Percentage
1876	23,135	17,935	77.7
1877	23,694	17,529	77.7
1878	31,898	23,976	75
1879	31,624	23,305	74
1880	36,560	26,970	74
1881	78,328	53,033	68
1882	96,418	59,041	63

The increase of the offices indicates that the functions of the government had expanded following the fall of Tokugawa regime.

¹Harry D. Harrotunian, "The Progress of Japan and the Samurai Class", Pacific Historical Review 28 (1950) 255-66.

²Ibid.

In other words, after the abolition of the han suzerain, the government needed more bureaucrats to deal with the increased demands. The samurai occupied more than 60 percent of the total offices during the seven years. In the year of 1876 and 1877, the percentage of the samurai in the total governmental offices was 78%, which seems to support the generalization that recruitment by the bureaucracy depended on ascription, rather than achievement. The decline of the percentage of the officeholders of samurai can be explained as that the class reference was no longer the dominant factor of recruitment. Many of the other classes began to fill the governmental positions.

The samurai also dominated the local government administration. Even after the establishment of prefectures, the local administration depended largely on the former samurai. The following figures show the records of the samurai in the local government.³

<u>Year</u>	<u>Office (fugun)</u>	<u>Samurai- Officials</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
1878	2,984	1,866	63
1879	6,245	4,075	65
1880	6,658	4,299	65
1881	11,567	6,889	59
1882	14,171	8,148	57

Between the years 1872 and 1877, over 70 percent of total offices in the local government were held by the former samurai. Since 1878, the number of the samurai officials decreased. However, the active role of the samurai in the bureaucracy of the local areas is not deniable.

³Ibid.

From the area of education, the leading role of the samurai can be seen. In Tokyo University, which was established in 1877, the samurai had a majority of the faculty members. Out of sixty-seven faculty, forty-eight were samurai; the rest were the commoners. The other school systems were dominated by the former samurai. It is described as follows:

By 1882, there was listed a total of 43,467 administrative and teaching positions, of which 32,488 or 72 percent were held by former retainers. A few years later, the samurai grip in educational institutions dropped to 41 percent. But in some areas samurai still remained a dominant position in Meiji Educational institutions.

The other area - police department - is one in which the samurai had an important role, but lacking data, the discussion is omitted. The economic field is another area that exemplifies the leading role of samurai. Respecting the valuable qualities of the samurai class, the government intended to restore the samurai to a position of leaders in the economic area. To see the samurai's activity in business, banking may be selected as an area representing the attitude of the deprived class. In the banking business, the merchants fell far behind the samurai as contributors of capital to the whole banking system. A report of the Banking Bureau between 1879 and 1889 gives the following picture of percentage of capital supplied by classes for the national banks.⁵

Nobility	44.10%
Samurai	31.86%
Merchants	14.85%
Peasants	3.45%
Artisans	.12%
Others	5.62%
Total	100.0 %

⁴Ibid.

⁵Hirschmeier, op. cit., p. 56.

Banking only represents an exceptional case of the success of the samurai in business activities. For a more complete discussion, the study of fifty successful innovators is used as a complement.

The fifty men were selected by the criteria that their innovating activities achieved some prominence before the Sino-Japanese War, and that they were active in banking, trading or industrial enterprise along modern lines. Although the sample is not large enough to make many generalizations, it can provide the understanding of the nature of the samurai in the area of enterprise. The social origin of the fifty-man group is:⁶

<u>Class</u>	<u>Number</u>
Samurai	23
Peasant	13
Merchant	12
Unknown	<u>2</u>
Total	50

The figures indicate that samurai made up the majority group. The explanation is that the samurai, due to their class ethic, were able to adjust to the new environment and new values. The economy is entirely different from that they had been trained for; yet they were able to break away from the traditional ideology and become successful entrepreneurs. However, the merchants and the peasants are nearly equal in the number in the total fifty members, which indicates that the class origin is not very significant in the molding of entrepreneurs. What matters is ability to assimilate "the new ideology - the new system of values - that each man had to absorb."⁷

⁶Ibid, pp. 248-9.

⁷Ibid, p. 256.

VI. COMPARISON OF JAPAN AND CHINA

A comparison of Japan and China is provided in this chapter. The purpose of the comparison is to understand their relation between the type of traditional elite and the result of modernization. If the traditional elite in a given society in time of change were able to transform into a strategic elite, then the political reformation would be easy to carry out. In that case, national resources and time would not be wasted on the struggle for power from one sect to the other. If the traditional elite were not able to face the new challenge due to its nature or if new leaders were lacking to respond to the exogeneous force, then the process of modernization would be slow.

Every society has its own cultural background; therefore, it is difficult to make a comparison between two different societies. But it is possible to make a distinction from one type of elite to another in terms of elite structure and social factors.

China was not a feudal society in the nineteenth century nor did it have a caste system. It was an open class society, which is contrary to Japan's feudal system. Under the Imperial civil service examination, social mobility was possible. Any Chinese with ability to pass the civil service examination could enter into the ruling stratum.

The traditional social system of China was "a non-economically based ethically oriented bureaucracy as an elite at the apex, in control of an inert peasantry."¹ The peasant engaged solely in the fundamental occupation of cultivating the lands. The superior man of the society was the literati-official who,

¹Norman Jacobs, the Origin of Modern Capitalism and Eastern Asia (Hong Kong, Hong Kong University Press, 1958), p. 138.

by mastering classical literature and hence holding public offices, gained his status. There was no class comparable to the warrior in Japan. Because of the absence of a military tradition, the army was controlled by the civilians who represented the interests of the government officials. The militia was not able to threaten the class interests of the officials, nor could they force the overthrow of the regime. The political and economic powers were in the hands of the landlord in cooperation with the gentry, army and the local officials. As long as the government authority allowed this kind of cooperation to exist, the landlord or the gentry would be reluctant to support change that might eliminate their interests and privileges.

The other important factor of Chinese society which is also determinative of the nature of its elite is the family structure. Family structure was the basis for social control. Levy has said that traditional Chinese society is the most extreme case of a large scale society whose members oriented most of their action ideally and actually to kinship consideration. The individual's obligation was to the family first, the society second. In Japan, although the family is the basic unit of society, one's loyalty is to the lord first, and secondly the family. Because of a different consideration of loyalty, the response to change is not the same.

At the end of the Chi'ng Dynasty, the Western powers came to knock at the door of the isolated land. After several defeats in the battles with the foreign countries, the result was that China opened trade with the Western countries. It was difficult for the Chinese to recognize the supreme military power of the Western barbarians. However, facing the moment of national existence, the privileged class realized the power of the Western powers; yet they could not but defend the traditional

order from the infiltration of Christianity and industrialization. In other words, owing to their traditional ruling role, they could not sacrifice their interests and privileges. The slogan of "expel the barbarians" was common in the last decades of Manchu Dynasty. The slogan emerged under the support of the ruling class, inspired by xenophobic feeling. The anti-foreigner movement ended up with the intrusion of the foreign troops deep into the land of China. It also gave the common people a feeling "that actually amounted to hostility and that divorced the ruling class from the vast majority of the population."²

The samurai of Japan also cried out the slogan of "expel the barbarians, Honor the Emperor." But after the defeat of Chōshū and Satsuma by the Western black ships, the slogan changed into "strong military, and rich state." Once the ruling class realized that social change was necessary, they turned their efforts to the reconstruction of the new orders.

The superiority of Western industry, technology, and armament frustrated the Chinese traditional elite. They deplored the enemy's great ships and powerful ammunition, yet they could not deny the truth that if they intended to defend their country from colonialism, they had to accept the enemy's civilization. The dilemma of the Chinese gentry was that:

They could no longer maintain the old world without adopting European civilization, yet if they adopted it en toto, they would likewise destroy the old system and undermine their own power.

²David Titus trans. "Nationalism in Japan: Its Theoretical Background and Prospects: in Masao Maruyama's Thought and Behavior in Modern Japanese Politics, ed., by Ivan Morris (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 139.

³Ibid., pp. 139-40.

To solve the dilemma, the slogan "enlighten the traditional culture and learn the Western technology" was considered useful. That meant tradition was still highly praised among the privileged class.

The response of the ruling class toward modernization began from Marquis Tseng Kuo-Fan and ended with Kan Yu-Wei's Reform and Restoration policy.⁴ Due to the strong reactionary forces, the attempts failed. If there had been a strong intellectual class that had been exposed to the Western influence and that would have sacrificed their class interests in order to keep the country integrated, the fate of China would be different. The Manchu Court, involved in a series of anti-foreign movements, became the obstacle of modernization. It is the reluctance of the Chinese old elite that brings out the breakdown of the traditional political system.

⁴Ibid, p. 141.

CONCLUSION

Since the Restoration of 1868, Japan has not only industrialized but to considerable extent has modernized its society. It was transformed from a predominantly agrarian state to one of urban unity. In other words, the success of Japan in nineteenth century is described in the words of Harry J. Bendo as a success:

Which achieved the fullest degree of Westernization attained anywhere in the non-Western world through the guidance of the samurai, a military feudal class that adapted itself, and directed the adaptation of the rest of the country, to a modern economic and political order without abdicating its intrinsic control, even though in time it came to share power with other classes, notably a new economic middle class of non-Western intelligent sias as political elites.¹

The samurai was a group of lower traditional elite who had suffered economic difficulties and achieved limited upward mobility under the feudal system. Owing to their class status, the samurai became the only scholar-military administrators. But because of the feudal regulation, the lower rank samurai were not able to get into the higher government positions. Their discontent was dramatized when the foreign ship docked in the Edo bay. Their economic difficulty, which was caused by the economic change, also increased their hostile attitude toward the upper elite. All these factors contributed to their active role in the loyalist movement. It was their Western learning and ability that enabled them to become the modernizers in the Meiji Restoration.

The Restoration was not a revolution. It was that the lower ruling elite replaced the upper ruling elite. In other words, it was the transfer of power from the upper elite stratum to the lower elite stratum. Because the lower samurai was part

¹Harry J. Benda, Political Change in Underdeveloped Countries: Nationalism and Communism, John H. Kantsky ed., (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1962), p. 198.

of the traditional strata, therefore, their rise to the ruling power was considered as the continuity of the traditional elite in governing role.

Though modernization seems to include the democratization as part of its process, in fact, the restoration and innovation did not take place from below through the mass revolution. It was, rather, a movement directed from above, autocratically. Such a slogan as "freedom, liberty and equality" was non-existent during the power transformation. The common people were passive and guided by the patriarchal authority into modernity. It was not until the promulgation of a Constitution that the mass began to participate in political activities. However, the promulgation of a Constitution was considered as a gift from the government.

The samurai was the predominant group in the centralized bureaucracy. Because of their traditional elite ethic, their attitude toward popular government was not favorable. They were "pre-disposed by the Tokugawa past to think in terms of the Confucianist ideal of the welfare of the nation as a whole."² In other words, the notion that government should be basically for the people does not necessarily mean that it should also be by the people.³ As Mason says, the Meiji bureaucrats often took the Cromwellian view that their duty was to do what was good for the people, and not what the people wanted. It was only those who were far-sighted and influential persons such as Okubo and Kido who believed that the State would function better as a constitutional monarchy. Under the constitutional monarchy, the subjects would be allowed some say in policy-making. The development of authoritarianism and the expansion of imperialism had everything to do with the continuity of the traditional elite.

²Manson, R. H. P., Japan's First General Election 1890, (Cambridge: The University Press, 1969), p. 198.

³Ibid.

APPENDIX

Bakufu (幕府)	The Shogunate, originally the head quarters of the Shogun. The Shogun's government. The central government of feudal Japan.
Chōnin (町人)	Merchants and artisans.
Daimyō (大名)	Feudal lords who were direct vassals of the Shogun and who were granted fiefs with an officially rated productive capacity of at least 10,000 koku.
Eta (江戸)	A class of people who has continued to occupy the lowest social position until the Meiji Restoration, their chief occupations having been those of leather dressers, cobblers, or buriers of dead animals.
Fudai-daimyō (譜第大名)	A daimyō in hereditary vassalage to the Tokugawa family. They were the associated descendants of lords and retainers who had reorganized Tokugawa suzerainty before 1600.
Gōshi (郷士)	A kind of samurai who lived away from the castle-town of their immediate lord and cultivated land.
Han (藩)	A feudal han in the Tokugawa period.
Hanchi (半知)	The reduction of the stipends of samurai by their overlord.
Hatamoto (旗本)	The low grade direct retainers of the Tokugawa Shogunate, or the household troops of the Shogun.
Hinin (非人)	A begger.
Koku (石)	Unit of measure of capacity in the Tokugawa period. One koku equals 5.11902 bushels in U.S.A.
Kuge (皇族)	Court nobles, court aristocracy.
Rōnin (浪人)	A masterless samurai, a samurai dismissed from the service of his lord in the Tokugawa period.

- Ryō (兩) Monetary unit, gold piece; one ryō equals 60 momme in silver, and 400 mon in copper.
- Samurai (侍) A general name for the person who wore two swords in former times from the Shogun down to the lowest retainers of daimyō's vassals. A warrior or bushi.
- Shogun (將軍) The Barbarian subduing Generalissimo; head of the Shogunate.
- Shōya (庄屋) The head of a village in former times, a village headman was sometimes elected but ordinary was a hereditary officials.
- Tozama-daimyō
(外様大名) The outside daimyo, (not hereditary vassals of the Tokugawa Shogunate), who had been enemies or rivals of Tokugawa shogun before the war of 1600.

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THE CONTINUITY OF LEADERSHIP
AND MODERNIZATION IN MEIJI JAPAN

by

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Modernization has been a universal phenomenon in the developing nations. In the process of changing from tradition to modernity, the role of leaders has an important place. Therefore, the nature and structure of the elite is crucial to the social development as well as the ways of leadership succession. If there exists a group of leaders motivated to modernize their society in the early era of transition, the success of the state is predictable.

Japan is an example that tests this proposition. Under two and a half centuries of feudal rule, Japan has achieved a certain degree of social and economic change. These changes became the basis of the national reconstruction after 1868. The changes that took place during the feudal rule were limited by the feudal system, as Japan undertook natural development. The result of that evolution had brought impoverishment to the feudal ruling class and the peasants. Of the lower ruling elite, samurai is the group that suffered most from economic difficulties, and the commoners with their increasing economic power gradually replaced the feudal elite. At the later years of the Tokugawa period, Japan's society was full of discontent among all classes.

When the arrival of Commodore Perry became known throughout the Empire in 1853, the disintegration of the feudal system began. Facing internal and external insecurity, the lower ruling elite and other nobles, with the support of the merchants, forced the surrender of the Tokugawa Shogun in 1868.

In the Meiji Restoration, the new elite began to carry out a serious reformation and within a few decades, they brought Japan to the rank of world power. The new elite was actually part of the traditional ruling class. They were the lower samurai