

Why has Japan 'succeeded'?

Western technology and the
Japanese ethos

MICHIO MORISHIMA

 **CAMBRIDGE**
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Published by the Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge CB2 1RP
40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011-4211 USA
10 Stamford Road, Oakleigh, Melbourne 3166, Australia

© Cambridge University Press 1982

First published 1982
Reprinted 1992, 1983
First paperback edition 1984
Reprinted 1985, 1988, 1989, 1994, 1996

Library of Congress catalogue card number: 81-15544

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

Morishima, Michio

Why has Japan 'succeeded?': Western technology
and the Japanese ethos.

1. Japan—Industries—History

2. Japan — Civilization

I. Title

338.9'00952 HC462

ISBN 0 521 26903 2 paperback

Transferred to digital printing 2003

Contents

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-----|
| <i>Preface</i> | vii |
| <i>Acknowledgement</i> | xi |
| <i>Map</i> | xii |
| Introduction | 1 |
| 1 The Taika Reform and after | 20 |
| 2 The Meiji Revolution | 52 |
| 3 The Japanese empire (I) | 88 |
| 4 The Japanese empire (II) | 124 |
| 5 The San Francisco regime | 158 |
| Conclusion | 194 |
| Postscript to the paperback edition | 202 |
| <i>Index</i> | 205 |

Introduction

I

Whereas Karl Marx contended that ideology and ethics were no more than reflections of underlying material conditions – in particular economic conditions – Max Weber in his ‘Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism’ made the case for the existence of quite the reverse relationship. He considered that it is the ethic that is given, and any type of economy which necessitates the people’s possessing an ethos incompatible with that ethic will not develop; rather the emergence of an economy compatible with this ethic is inevitable. It was from this standpoint that Weber examined the world’s major religions.¹

Weber’s conclusions concerning Confucianism can be summarised as follows. They are that Confucianism, like Puritanism, is

¹ Max Weber, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie*, I (1920), II (1920), III (1921), J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck) Tübingen. The famous ‘Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism’ (*Die protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus*) and ‘Confucianism and Taoism’ (*Konfuzianismus und Taoismus*) are both contained in the first volume.

There are, of course, criticisms of Max Weber’s thesis; for example the idea that the capitalist spirit had already been in existence since before the birth of Protestantism put forward by L. Brentano. What Weber was interested in, however, was the relationship between the Protestant ethic and ‘modern capitalism’, and he believed that there existed a fundamental difference between Modern Capitalism and the capitalism which had previously existed. There is also the criticism made by R. H. Tawney that Weber not merely oversimplified both Calvinism and the spirit of capitalism, but that he also either underestimated or totally disregarded the part played by factors unconnected with religion (for example the political ideas of the Renaissance) in the intellectual movements conducive to the development of economic individualism. Even more criticisms can probably be brought forward by specialists in the case of Weber’s work on China. What we are concerned with here, however, is not whether Weber was, or was not, right. The problem here is to consider the questions raised by Weber in relation to Japan. See L. Brentano, *Die Anfänge des Modernen Kapitalismus* (1961) and R. H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*.

rational, but that there exists a fundamental difference between the two in that whereas Puritan rationalism has sought to exercise rational control over the world Confucian rationalism is an attempt to accommodate oneself to the world in a rational manner. Furthermore, Weber concluded, it was exactly this sort of mental attitude among Confucianists that was a major factor in preventing the emergence of modern capitalism in China.

Despite this judgement Weber observed: 'The Chinese in all probability would be quite capable, probably as much as if not more capable than the Japanese, of assimilating capitalism which has technologically and economically been fully developed in the modern culture area.'² It must be said, however, that the ideology of Japan, or at least the most important of Japan's ideologies, is also Confucianism. Since Weber made very few positive observations on Japan, it is not at all clear, at least from his 'Confucianism and Taoism', whether or not he himself considers Japan to be a Confucian country.³ Furthermore, whether or not Weber considers that the 'capitalism' which the Japanese have acquired is of the same kind as the 'modern capitalism' in conformity with the Protestant ethic is also very unclear. Here again no positive statement is made. However, despite these imperfections the above extract is in itself sufficiently suggestive of new lines of research.

In the following study I hope to throw light on the fact that in certain important respects Japanese Confucianism is very different from the Confucianism of China. In addition the Taoism which was introduced to Japan at the same time as Confucianism underwent considerable modifications and changed to emerge as Japanese Shinto. In Europe, Protestants split off from Catholics as a result of a different interpretation of the same bible; the rebels then built up a completely new work ethic – Weber's so-called

² M. Weber, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie*, I, 1920, p. 535.

³ In 'Die asiatische Sekten und Heilandsreligiosität', however, Max Weber does discuss Japan. (See *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie*, II, pp. 295–309.) But his knowledge of Japan is not very extensive and his understanding would not appear to have been very deep. He regards the warrior class as having played the most important social role in Japan, and believes that the whole ethos and attitude to life of the Japanese was formed quite without regard to religion. However, as we will see later on, during the Tokugawa period the warrior class received a profoundly Confucian education (in the Kamakura period the samurai was deeply influenced by Zen Buddhism), and in the Meiji period compulsory education meant the people as a whole received a Confucian education. Weber makes no more than a passing reference to Japanese Confucianism, perhaps because he did not regard Confucianism as the principal ideology of Japan.

‘spirit of modern capitalism’. In exactly the same way Japanese Confucianism started from the same canons as did Chinese Confucianism, and as a result of different study and interpretation produced in Japan a totally different national ethos from that prevailing in China. In Europe, with its contiguity of land between one country and another – and compared with the distance Japan lies from the Chinese mainland and the Korean peninsula even such countries as the British Isles, divided from mainland Europe by the English Channel, are as good as contiguous with their neighbours – because it was Catholicism which was first disseminated, any subsequent extrication from the arms of the Catholic faith necessitated a revolt or a revolution.

In an isolated Japan, however, it was impossible for Chinese Confucianism to spread in an unmodified form, and it was inevitable that from the very beginning the Japanese people should to a greater or lesser degree take over the doctrines in their own way and apply different interpretations to them. The religious revolution was carried out quickly, and probably unconsciously, on board the ships coming from China and Korea or on the beaches of the Japanese coastline. If one looks at things in this way the chain of events whereby differing interpretations of the same bible nurtured different ethoses among different peoples and helped to create totally different economic conditions can be said to have a certain validity not just when applied to the West but also when applied to the East.

Confucius regarded benevolence (*jen*), justice (*i*), ceremony (*li*), knowledge (*chih*) and faith (*hsin*) as among the most important virtues, but believed that of these it was benevolence (*jen*) which was the virtue which must be at the heart of humanity. Confucius believed that man’s nature was fundamentally good, and considered in particular that the natural affection existing between relatives within one family was the cornerstone of social morality. According to Confucius the practice of morality did not lie in people’s discharging the dispensations or commands of any transcendent being; it was when the natural human affection found within the family was extended absolutely freely beyond the confines of the family, both to non-family members and to complete strangers, that human nature had reached perfection and the social order was being appropriately maintained. Those who had acquired this kind of perfect love of humanity were spoken of as men of benevolence, or men of virtue (*jen-che*).

Confucius believed that to become such a person should be the ultimate objective of all moral cultivation. As might be expected, filial piety (*hsiao*) and the discharging of one's duty as a younger brother (*t'i*) became important virtues under Confucianism. Filial piety consisted of respecting one's parents, taking good care of them and acting according to their wishes; the obedience commensurate with a younger brother meant adherence to the wishes of elder brothers and seniors. In addition harmony (Ch. *ho*, Jap. *wa*) was essential for the achievement of benevolence. Harmony signified people's being in accord with one another and preserving accord within society, but this concept of *ho* also embraced a kind of harmony which was essentially harmful, being no more than one person's blindly following another. Similarly bravery (*yung*) was also frequently regarded as a precondition for this achievement of benevolence, but a brave person was not necessarily a benevolent person; bravery was something which must be directed towards the right ends. Confucius detested those people who, though they might be courageous, had no regard for courtesy.

Loyalty (*chung*) and faith (*hsin*) were the two virtues of sincerity. Loyalty implied sincerity vis-à-vis one's own conscience, i.e. an absence of pretensions or selfishness from the heart; faith meant always telling the truth. Faith was therefore the external expression of loyalty; whereas loyalty was a virtue which existed in relation to oneself, faith was a virtue which existed in regard to relationships with others. However, in just the same way as the keeping of a promise to commit an injustice was an act of wrongdoing, so faith by itself could not be considered perfect virtue. Faith could only be practised in conjunction with justice, or righteousness (*i*). Similarly the most important virtue, benevolence (*jen*), had to be tempered by justice and reinforced by knowledge; a simple, spontaneous humanity was not enough. Confucius described a true gentleman (a *chün-tzu*, or one replete with virtue) in the following manner:

For the perfect gentleman there are nine considerations. These are a desire to see clearly when he looks at something; a desire to hear every detail when listening to something; a desire to present a tranquil countenance; a desire to preserve an attitude of respect; a desire to be sincere in his words; a desire to be careful in his work; a

willingness to enquire further into anything about which he has doubts; a willingness to bear in mind the difficulties consequent on anger; a willingness to consider moral values when presented with the possibility of profit (*The Analects of Confucius*, chapter 16).

Confucius advocated what he called the principle of virtuous government – meaning a method of government which would strengthen the people by means of morality and serve naturally to bring about order in society by raising the level of virtue among the people. He strongly rejected any idea of constitutional government on the grounds that under the principles of constitutionalism order is imposed upon society by law and those who break the law are penalised, so that people come to think how they can best avoid punishment, and the resulting society has no sense of shame. However, even in a society under the sway of the principle of government by virtue something analogous to the laws found in a constitutional society is essential. This was referred to by Confucius as *li*, or ceremony, by which he meant norms established by custom but which were less rigid than laws. Confucius' maxim was 'guidance by morality, control by ceremony'. Given this he believed that 'people will come to have a sense of moral shame, and to act correctly'. Confucius' belief was that it was especially incumbent on those in the upper levels of society to act in accordance with the dictates of ceremony. A ruler must deal with his subordinates in the fashion stipulated by custom; a rich man as well must conduct himself with decorum and according to ceremony.

However the Confucianism which was understood and disseminated in Japan was not of this kind. It is also generally believed that the differences between Japanese Confucianism and Chinese Confucianism became greater and greater with the passage of time. This can be shown by looking at the imperial injunction issued to members of the Japanese armed forces in 1882. This injunction was written from a Confucian standpoint, but was in no way a specific ethical code allotted to a limited social group, i.e. members of the armed forces. Following the establishment of the Meiji government the traditional caste system had been abolished, the warrior class had lost its prerogatives and a system of conscription had been introduced. As a result the obligation of national defence fell to the population as a whole, and all Japanese people were considered as

potential soldiers. The Imperial Injunction to Soldiers and Sailors was written on the basis of this sort of consideration, and was simultaneously an imperial injunction to the nation which had to be observed by the people as a whole. In this document five of the Confucian virtues were emphasised – loyalty, ceremony, bravery, faith and frugality; no special consideration was given to benevolence, the central virtue in China. This neglect of the virtue of benevolence can be said to be quite natural in as far as the injunction was specifically aimed at members of the armed forces or the people as potential soldiers; but if we compare this with what was considered to be the essence of the soldierly or warrior spirit in China under Chiang Kai-shek or in ancient Korea certain characteristics of Japanese Confucianism become absolutely clear. In Chiang Kai-shek's army the major elements required for a soldierly spirit were wisdom, faith, benevolence, bravery and strictness; in the ancient Silla dynasty of Korea the qualities stipulated for soldiers according to the *hwa-rang do* (way of the perfect soldier – the Korean equivalent of Japanese *bushido*) were loyalty, filial piety, faith, benevolence and bravery.⁴ Only faith and bravery are virtues common to all three countries. Benevolence is common to both China and Korea, but there is no mention of it in the case of Japan. Loyalty is common to both Japan and Korea but does not appear on China's list of virtues.

The neglect of benevolence in this fashion, and the emphasis placed on loyalty, must be regarded as characteristics peculiar to Japanese Confucianism. As mentioned earlier, benevolence was considered in China to be the central virtue of Confucianism. In Japan no especial importance was attached to it even in Shōtoku Taishi's Seventeen-Article Constitution of 604, which was written very much under the influence of Confucianism. It would not be true to say that the virtue of benevolence has continued to be completely disregarded throughout the history of Confucianism in Japan. However, this relative neglect of benevolence does not date only from the Meiji period; it is something which goes back a very long way. In Japan it was loyalty rather than benevolence which came to be considered the most important virtue, and this became more and more the case as Japan approached the modern period.

Furthermore the meaning of loyalty (Ch. *chung*, Jap. *chū*) was not

⁴ See Ozaki Tomoe's essay (in Japanese) in *Dai-ikki Heika Yobi – gakusei no Ki*.

the same in both China and Japan. As previously mentioned, in China loyalty meant being true to one's own conscience. In Japan, although it was also used in this same sense, its normal meaning was essentially a sincerity that aimed at total devotion to one's lord, i.e. service to one's lord to the point of sacrificing oneself. Consequently Confucius' words 'act with loyalty in the service of one's lord' were interpreted by the Chinese to mean 'Retainers must serve their lord with a sincerity which does not conflict with their own consciences', whereas the Japanese interpreted the same words as 'Retainers must devote their whole lives to their lord.' As a result loyalty in Japan was a concept which, in conjunction with filial piety and duty to one's seniors, formed a trinity of values which regulated within society the hierarchic relationships based on authority, blood ties and age respectively. In Japan there was no question of the concept of loyalty and faith being considered two sides of the same coin, as was the case in China.

This concept of loyalty became more and more apparent from the Tokugawa period, and was especially obvious in its last years, becoming widely diffused among the Japanese people. This view of loyalty was not something of recent origin. As early as the time of the *Manyōshū* (an anthology of poems compiled in the latter half of the eighth century), poems spoke of loyalty towards the Emperor. In 749 Ōtomo no Yakamochi wrote:

At sea be my body water-soaked,
On land be it with grass overgrown,
Let me die by the side of my Sovereign!
Never will I feel regret.

It was in 753 that Imamatsuribe no Yosofu, a frontier guard, wrote:

I will not from today
Turn back toward home –
I who have set out to serve
As Her Majesty's humble shield.⁵

Loyalty in this sense of service to one's lord could frequently find itself in conflict with loyalty in the sense of being true to one's own

⁵ Translations from Nippon Gakujutsu Shinkokai version of *The Manyōshū* (Tokyo, 1940).

conscience. However, in Japan this contradiction was not a serious one. In much the same way as conscientious pacifist activity was not permitted in Japan up to 1945 (and since then the Japanese constitution has nominally precluded the existence of a fighting force), so in Japan in earlier times the command of a lord counted for far more than the conscience of the individual. Throughout Japanese history up to the present individualism has never prospered, and, as a result, a strong, serious advocacy of liberalism has been virtually non-existent. The Japanese have been required to obey their rulers, to serve their parents, to honour their elders and to act in accordance with the majority factions in society. There has been little margin left over to grapple with problems of conscience.

Such an interpretation of loyalty could also conflict with the ideals of filial piety (Jap. *kō*)⁶ and harmony (*wa*) (the Chinese virtues of *hsiao* and *ho*). This was because the orders of a ruler could conflict with parental wishes or with the majority opinion in society. As we shall see later,⁷ Japan's first great political thinker, Shōtoku Taishi (573–621), prohibited dictatorship by the Emperor, so that his orders would not be in conflict with the majority opinion in society. Even so orders issued by the Emperor could still contradict parental wishes. Taira Shigemori (1138–79) encountered just such a paradoxical situation as this, and lamented it with the words: 'If I want to demonstrate my loyalty I must be deemed not to have filial piety; if I try to show filial piety I shall not be loyal.' But Japanese long after Shigemori would probably have chosen loyalty above filial piety. This was the case even when the Emperor's command might not reflect the feelings of the majority. When the Emperor issued a command which was unreasonable and tyrannical it was the man who overcame his own conscience and obeyed his master's injunction who was the loyal retainer, not the one who complied with the dictates of his own conscience and the will of the majority in society and refused to obey. The Japanese do not reproach such a person with an inadequate conscience; when he is in the wretched position of being unable to follow the dictates of his own conscience he attracts only their sympathy. While Chinese Confucianism is one in which bene-

⁶ The structure of the Chinese family was very different from that of the family in Japan. The concept of filial piety, therefore, was quite naturally not precisely the same in both countries.

⁷ See Chapter 1 below.

volence is of central importance, Japanese Confucianism is loyalty-centred Confucianism. Use of the word Confucianism in the first and subsequent chapters will normally refer to this kind of Japanese Confucianism.

II

Our earliest clear knowledge of Japanese history can be dated from about the fourth century. This gives us a historical era of some 1650 years from three centuries prior to the enactment of Shōtoku Taishi's Seventeen-Article Constitution in 604. The imperial family continued to be the ruling family of Japan throughout this period, but it was during no more than a third of this whole period that the Emperor was the ruler in fact as well as in name. For the remainder of the time essential control rested in the hands of regents (*sesshō* or *shikken*), chief advisers (*kanpaku*), retired Emperors (*hōō*), Shōguns (military chiefs) and others, and the Emperor was no more than a figurehead. At times there were prime ministers (*Dajō Daijin*) acting for retired Emperors, or regents acting for the Shōgun, so that even the retired Emperors or Shōgun were no more than figureheads themselves. However, even at such a time it fell to the Emperor to appoint the chief adviser, retired Emperor, Shōgun etc., so he remained nominally the ultimate ruler of Japan, and he continued to carry on his own administration, i.e. to maintain the imperial court. This means that some two thirds of the historical era in Japan were years of dual, and at times triple, government. Apart from antiquity and the years since the Meiji Revolution it has only been for a very few years, and intermittently, that there has existed a single government under direct imperial rule. Furthermore, for over 70% of this period of dual government, real political power was controlled by Shōguns, or prime ministers or chief advisers backed by military power. Under the influence of China a bureaucratic system was introduced into Japan's primal imperial government very early on and her dual military government also became highly bureaucratized in its final years; but there has been no tradition of civilian control of the armed forces.

China, in contrast, has had a purely civilian bureaucratic system. The Chinese continent, at least by the yardstick of premodern means of communication, was so vast that it rendered

control by a single central government very difficult; but during a large proportion of the historical period the whole territory (the exact area varied according to the actual period) was, nevertheless, controlled by a single, unified Imperial regime. There were, of course, periods of disturbance in China as well, and also times when several dynasties divided the territory between them and existed side by side. The time when Confucius himself was living (551–479 B.C.) was one such period. It was a time when the Chou dynasty had lost its authority and several feudal city states were in conflict with each other. The Chou dynasty itself was no more than one of these. Following the Chou the first Emperor of the Ch'in dynasty united the whole region under his control, building a single large empire; the final imperial dynasty, the Ch'ing, fell some 2100 years later. While for about 500 years of this period the country was divided among different localised dynasties, for the remaining 1600 years it was unified under the control of various nationwide dynasties. Some of these dynasties, for example the Han, T'ang, Ming and Ch'ing, lasted over 200 years; others had short lives of no more than 30–40 years. Therefore the first consideration of any dynasty had to be how to prolong its own existence; whatever the situation the system of civilian bureaucracy was traditionally taken over by almost all the unified dynasties.

Confucius' greatest achievement probably lay in throwing open to a greater number of people the culture and education which had hitherto been the monopoly of the aristocracy. Confucius' disciples dispersed after his death, but one group of them took up service in the feudal states and became involved in politics as bureaucrats. Since Confucius himself had advocated the principle of government by virtue, and had been opposed to constitutionalism, his followers were not people who merely implemented laws and carried out administration; they were either politicians, or, if not, political advisers who suggested their own political ideas to their rulers. They also acted as teachers to the next generation. Thus in the period after Confucius' death when China was divided into several small states there appeared the small, feudal states which were civilian states run by officials fully trained in the principles of Confucianism, and on these states were modelled the vast majority of China's later unified dynasties.

However, the Ch'in dynasty (246–207 B.C.), the first unified post-Confucian dynasty, was opposed to Confucianism, and re-

treated from the principles of 'virtuous government'. The first Emperor of this dynasty prohibited the possession of books relating to Confucianism and other learning, ordered that all such books should be burnt and massacred large numbers of Confucians. He then drew up a series of regulations and orders, imposed a purely constitutional system of government, and ended up with a state which was an absolutist despotic monarchy resting on a centralised bureaucratic system. This first Emperor devoted his efforts to such things as constructing the thousands of miles of the Great Wall, and also created huge imperial palaces and detached palaces. He also engaged in frequent incursions outside China's borders. As a result large-scale disturbances among the harshly exploited peasantry broke out after his death and the great empire in which he hoped he had built the legal and military foundations for a strong country was eventually very short-lived, collapsing within a very short time.

The Han dynasty which followed the Ch'in (the early Han lasted 206 B.C.—A.D. 8, and the later Han dynasty A.D. 25—220) quite naturally learnt from the mistakes of its predecessor. The Han revived Confucianism and, moreover, actually recognised it as the orthodoxy of the state. Confucian intellectualism was respected; entry into the government was widened to include members of the intelligentsia and made more difficult for those related to the dynasty and the rich. At the same time the Han took over what they saw as the strong points of the Ch'in. The country was provided with a legal code and equipped with a system of bureaucracy. In addition regional governors were appointed by the central government. Under the ancient pre-Ch'in dynasties the provinces had been handed over to the relatives of the imperial family; the centre of the empire and the provinces were held together by the ties of imperial blood. The Ch'in had abolished this kind of Chinese feudal system and had instituted a 'prefectural' system whereby regional governors were appointed by the central government. At first the Han apportioned the provinces to members of the imperial family, but these regional branches of the imperial family were compelled to live in the capital. Their territorial rights became purely nominal and a prefectural system was implemented in full. The government was able to take in talented individuals from every class of society, because provided he had received sufficient Confucian training any man could

become not only an ordinary official, but even Prime Minister or provincial governor. Moreover, it was civilian officials selected in this fashion who were in control of the army. Gradually a system of national examinations for entry into the bureaucracy was set up, a system which was more or less perfected by the early part of the T'ang dynasty (618–907).

This meant that the central government annually brought together school leavers from both the capital and the provinces, and individuals from all areas of the country who had obtained recommendations, and conducted examinations. Those who were successful were appointed to the bureaucracy.⁸ The children of the nobility were at an advantage in these examinations because the things that were tested were, for example, how far an individual had mastered the Confucian classics, what were his literary powers of expression, whether he could write well and what were his powers of deduction. However, the sons of medium or small-scale landlords and other members of the lower classes did have the opportunity of being successful. Thus the prototype of the Chinese imperial state, with its laws and politics founded on the ideology of Confucianism, its prefectural system, its examination-appointed bureaucratic system and its civilian control of the army, was virtually complete by the end of the sixth century. China had already reached this stage when Japan first came into contact with her.

The forces which brought down this kind of dynasty were the peasantry, eunuchs and the peoples who lived on China's northern borders. It was sometimes just one of these factors which brought down a dynasty, but not infrequently two of these elements, or even all three, concurred to play a part in overthrowing the existing regime. The destruction of a dynasty might typically take the following pattern. The Emperor, for some reason or other, might die young. (Since Chinese Emperors showed a tendency to be addicted to a debauched lifestyle many of them did die young.) Since it was no longer the custom in China for succession to pass from one brother to another the Emperor would be succeeded by the Crown Prince, who was probably still a baby. Real political

⁸ This kind of examination system was continued even when China was under the control of alien peoples. During the Yüan period (1280–1367) when China was under the control of a Mongol dynasty the examinations for entry into the bureaucracy was initially (to 1313) not conducted, but after that the examinations system was revived. The Ch'ing dynasty of the Manchus (1644–1911) was highly sinicised and consequently never took the step of abolishing the examinations.

power would pass into the hands of the Empress (Dowager Empress), or her parents or brothers. When the Empress herself was in control of the administration the voice of eunuchs in the running of affairs was often extremely great. (Apart from the official Empress, of whom there was only one, Chinese Emperors possessed over a hundred concubines, ranked in a carefully defined hierarchy, as well as thousands of court ladies. Affairs within the court were managed by eunuchs, who numbered several thousand. At times there were in excess of 10,000.) Furthermore, when it was the parents of the Dowager Empress who wielded power the influence of the eunuchs was frequently used to try and exclude such parental influence. Where it was the eunuchs who dominated nothing could be done without their agreement and for this bribery was invariably necessary. Officials would exact heavy taxes from the peasantry and bribe the eunuchs. As a result peasant uprisings and disturbances would break out, and in the ensuing confusion non-Chinese peoples would take advantage of the situation to cross over the Great Wall and make incursions into China proper. The army would be sent to repulse these enemies which in turn would necessitate the levying of further heavy taxes to meet the expenses of the campaign. The peasantry would thus become even more disaffected. In an agricultural country such as China, if the regime loses the support of the peasantry the power of the nation at once starts to decline, and the fall of the dynasty is inevitable.⁹

All dynasties met their downfall through a course of events very similar to these, though with certain variations. Whether or not a dynasty was able to endure was totally dependent on its agricultural policies, but appropriate measures were rarely taken. In ancient China there existed what was called the *ching-tien* (well-field) system. According to this each area of land of a given size was subdivided into nine smaller portions of equal size. These were in turn distributed to eight families, with the central section (the division was done on a 3 by 3 basis) being cultivated jointly by the eight families, with its produce being paid to the government as tax.¹⁰ This system appears to have been implemented on a purely

⁹ See, for example, Kaizuka Shigeki *Chūgoku no Rekishi* (History of China) vols. I, II, III (Iwanami Shoten, Tokyo, 1964, 1969 and 1970).

¹⁰ The Chinese character for well (*ching*) consists of two vertical lines and two horizontal lines crossing each other (#). The division of a square field into 9 plots on a 3 by 3 basis meant that it was subdivided along the same lines as the shape of this character. Hence the system was called the well-field (*ching-tien*) system.

local basis. Both the Sui and T'ang dynasties had plans to try and implement this equal distribution of land on a nationwide scale, but all such ideas had finally been abandoned by the middle period of T'ang dynasty rule. Thus the poverty of agricultural policies provoked disturbances among the peasantry and eventually brought about the downfall of the dynasty. Typically, when the subsequent dynasty was established the Confucian literati would again occupy all the offices of the government and control would again be in the hands of the bureaucratic intellectuals. Measures to deal with the peasantry would be neglected very much as before, the Emperor would give himself over to debauched living, the exasperated peasantry would rise in revolt and this dynasty as well would finally collapse.

If we compare the political structure of Japan with the dynastic control of this kind that we find in China, certain points of broad similarity and dissimilarity can be indicated. Japan was throughout a dynastic country in the sense that the imperial family reigned unbroken, but, except for a few years, throughout the period from 1192 to 1867 the state was subject to dual government, with the Emperor's government (the court) and the Shōgun's government (the Bakufu) existing in parallel. The court was a civilian government controlled by civilian officials, the Bakufu a military administration controlled by soldiers. Since the court had been established long before the Bakufu (late sixth century—mid seventh century) and had taken China as its model it was a government with a code of laws (*ritsuryō*) and a system of civilian bureaucracy, whereas the Tokugawa Bakufu (1603–1867), which of all the Bakufu administrations was the most well-organised form of warrior government, was the government of a military bureaucracy founded on a hereditary status system. In Japan neither the imperial family nor the Shōgun's family ever possessed a harem on the scale of the Chinese Emperor's, and compared with the Chinese dynasties both the imperial and shogunal families led irreproachably frugal lives. Furthermore there were no eunuchs. The religion of the imperial family was Shintō, but the ideology of the bureaucracy of the Emperor's administration was Confucianism, as was that of the Tokugawa Bakufu. If one compares China and Japan during the Tokugawa period one is forced to conclude that China was a civilian Confucian country and Japan a military Confucian country. Chinese Confucianism, with its regard for 'benevolence' as the