

## The Political and Institutional History of Early Modern Japan\*

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### Introduction<sup>1</sup>

Western studies of late sixteenth to mid-nineteenth century political and institutional history have increased greatly in number and sophistication over the past quarter century. Scholars now explore domain and village politics as well as those associated with the Emperor and Shogun. They employ an array of documentary evidence that increasingly extends beyond the records of great figures and Shogunal administration (the *bakufu*) into the realms of village archives and handwritten manuscript materials. Analytical frameworks now encompass those of anthropology, sociology, and political science. The number of scholars has increased substantially and there may now be something close to a critical mass that encourages an increased diversity of interpretation and level of debate within the field.

Despite such advances, there are significant issues that remain. The field is still relatively small and that means that much work, some of it very basic, remains. Most notably, studies of the mid-seventeenth to early nineteenth century are relatively few in number. Most studies focus on the formation of a stable central authority or, more typically, the end of the Tokugawa Shogunate. While there are some very good recent studies that may lay a foundation for filling this void, in the political histories there is little sense of some substantive tie between the ends of the era that lends it some sense of unity. In the realm of political history the center of gravity is clearly located at the interstices of the Tokugawa (1600-1868) to Meiji (1868-1912) transformation. Since post-World War II scholars often identified

connections between the late Tokugawa era and post-Meiji developments, they found it attractive to characterize Tokugawa Japan as “early modern”, but there is much of Japanese history prior to the very late eighteenth century that has never comfortably fit this mold. Some recent works begin to evoke characterizations associated with feudalism rather than early modernity. Given further study of the era, we might conceivably recast the political and institutional history of late sixteenth to mid-nineteenth century Japan as something less than “early modern,” something more traditional even if we are not favorably disposed to use words like “feudal.”

Before exploring this issue and others, it is important to define the basic parameters of this essay and to define some key terms as employed here.

**Defining Terms:** I discuss materials that focus on the “early modern” period rather broadly defined, and I use the term here solely as the current, conventional shorthand for this era. I do not employ it with any presumption that it entails a specific set of characteristics such as those that were associated with the “modernization theory” of the nineteen-sixties or any other paradigm. It is not the purpose of this essay to take sides on this conceptual issue, but to encompass the range of positions taken in published work in the field.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> My usage here is not unusual. For the most part, scholars do not explicitly confront potential substantive use of the term “early modern” in their writings. While the term implies links with “the modern,” seldom does either term find explicit definition and informal discussions with Japan scholars reveals a range of definitions, from those that would encompass the Kamakura era to those that would treat Japan’s history into the twentieth century as “feudal” rather than anything approaching “modern.” Even where scholarly publication directly addresses operational definitions, there is not clear consensus on how to define the term or the era and its characteristics. Shmuel N. Eisenstadt is one of the few social scientists of the “modernization” school who have continued to develop these theories, explicitly rendering them less unidirectional and taking ultimate outcomes of the process as problematic rather than presumed. His work now clearly allows for cultural variation based on a vari-

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\* I would like to thank the anonymous reviewers for comments that helped sharpen this essay and also thank Patricia Graham and James McMullen for their very helpful suggestions.

<sup>1</sup> In the citations below, the following abbreviations are employed: *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* HJAS, *Journal of Asian Studies* JAS, *Journal of Japanese Studies* JJS, *Monumenta Nipponica* MN.

Into the nineteen-sixties scholars tended to treat the Tokugawa hegemony as defining the boundaries of early modern political history, more recent work has shown affinities between its organizational patterns and those of earlier years, extending back into the mid-sixteenth century. To cite one prime example: While John Hall (1961<sup>3</sup>) marked a clear distinction between the daimyo of the Oda and Toyotomi years (ca. 1570-1599) and those of the era the Japanese historian treats as *kinsei* (commonly translated into English as “early modern”), a more recent tendency elides that difference and extends the birth of more effective patterns of administration back a few decades (e.g., Michael Birt, 1985<sup>4</sup>). At the other

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ety of factors including historical experience prior to the commencement of “modernizing.” See Shmuel N. Eisenstadt and Wolfgang Schluchter, “Introduction: Paths to Early Modernities – A Comparative View,” *Daedalus* 127:3 (Summer 1998) 1-18. This essay focuses especially on developments associated with the emergence of “civil society” and a “public sphere.” (Eisenstadt is one of the very few sociologists who have maintained a long-term interest in Japan’s historical experience and that of other Asian societies.) David L. Howell, in the same issue, “Territoriality and Collective Identity in Tokugawa Japan,” 105-32, identifies this era as “feudal” rather than “early modern” and relies on a very broad Marxist definition of the term as an exploitative, coercive extraction by a variety of means of all surplus from peasants by landowners (see esp. 116-19). This is in marked contrast to the typical usage of “feudalism” as employed by scholars of the 1950s and 1960s, a definition that focused on decentralized political structures. See, for example, the essays in Rushton Coulborn, comp. *Feudalism in History*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1956, including an essay by Edwin O. Reischauer. Broader debates on the subject of “feudalism” are sketched by Elizabeth A.R. Brown, “The Tyranny of a Construct: Feudalism and Historians of Medieval Europe,” *The American Historical Review* 79:4 (Oct., 1974), pp. 1063-1088. As indicated below, there are even scholars who see “feudalism” and “early modern” as co-existing.

<sup>3</sup> “Foundations of the Modern Japanese Daimyo,” *JAS* 20:3 (May 1961): 317-29.

<sup>4</sup> “Samurai in Passage: The Transformation of the Sixteenth-Century Kanto,” *JJS* 11:2 (Summer

end of the era as typically defined, there is some recognition that the old ways did not fade as rapidly as early scholarly emphasis on the reforms of the Meiji Restoration (1868) suggested.<sup>5</sup>

Reflecting these developments, I focus on materials that largely deal with the period from mid-sixteenth century to the very early Meiji transition. Other periodizations are certainly possible, and the discussion below touches on some that scholars have suggested either explicitly or implicitly. This approach not only permits discussion of the wide range of definitions (often only implicit) that Japan scholars and others have brought to the term “early modern” Japan, it also permits inclusion of the early stages of developments that provided the building blocks of the Tokugawa political order.

Within this chronological framework I treat works that deal explicitly with “political history” and “institutional history,” very broad and amorphous categories for classifying historical studies despite the fact that they are often taken as the core of the broad range of historical studies. One can argue that all activity is political, for example. Today we recognize that many areas of activity that were not traditionally treated as part of political history have a clear political edge. *Ikki* or “leagues” provide a readily identifiable example. Formed on a temporary basis to protest perceived injustice, they consciously sought to redress official malfeasance, over-taxation, and the failure of domain or *bakufu* governments to provide for the obligatory minimum conditions of economic well being for villagers. The object of such protest is clearly political and designed to change policy, yet would often have been classi-

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1985): 369-399.

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, the monographic works of Karen Wigen, *The Making of a Japanese Periphery, 1750-1920*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995; David L. Howell, *Capitalism from Within: Economy, Society, and the State in a Japanese Fishery*. Berkeley, CA. University of California Press, 1995; and Edward E. Pratt, *Japan’s Proto-Industrial Elite: The Economic Foundations of the Gono*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University Press, 1999. Other periodical literature also develops this perspective.

fied as social history (the history of the actions of commoners, ordinary folk as opposed to major political leaders and elites) in the nineteen-sixties and nineteen-seventies. Similarly, we all recognize that villages, for example, have enduring structures of organization and governance. Are they to be considered part of a social history, or part of institutional history? Those who would classify this field of study as social history, like the adherents of the nineteen-sixties classification of *ikki* as social history, in effect stress a dichotomy between high and low society. In this view, institutional and political history dealt with high-level concerns, the activities of royalty, presidents, national armies, and the like, not the *hoi polloi*.

I have chosen to examine studies of politics and institutions at all levels. In the discussion that follows, for example, no effort is made to treat popular disturbances (*ikki*) comprehensively, but only to comment on their political dimensions as scholars have explored them. We will be concerned with the general level of commoner input into domain and Shogunal policy, but not with the classification and patterns of protest. These subjects are left to Professor Esenbel's essay on social history in this issue of *EMJ*. Studies of local institutions are discussed regardless of level, e.g., village governance, rural administration within domains, and other formal organizations, but not studies of informal organizations or economic organizations such as rural credit networks. I shall treat studies of the political - institutional context and policy side of economic activities, but not works related to the organization of individual enterprises. Intellectual movements may also have political implications, but we will treat intellectual histories only at the point where they are converted into significant efforts to challenge or change political practice. Such an effort at differentiation is admittedly imprecise and perhaps arbitrary, but it reflects concern with the links between political power or organizations and society at large.

By political history I mean the history of competition over who has the right to exercise and the actual exercise of administrative, governmental power. Political power is used to varying degrees to distribute the wealth a society produces but also exercises sanctions that define the boundaries of acceptable behavior. The former

function is largely one of taxation, but it can also include regulation of publicly shared facilities such as irrigation networks, defense, and the like, or public relief in times of famine. The latter function is largely composed of activities and regulations we associate with the legal system in all its aspects: administrative law, civil law, and commercial law.

Some might argue that there can be no institutional history and that individuals and groups make history; while not contesting the premise that individuals and groups make history, there are also frameworks built on formal regulation and custom that influence people's expectations and behavior. Within these frameworks they work, and against them they may rebel. While these frameworks may be delineated explicitly through a constitution or law, they may also reflect more informal but consistent patterns of political behavior. No one, for example, mandated that daimyo spend the legal maximum on their retinues as they traveled between Edo and their home provinces as part of their obligation of regular visits to the Shogun's capital, yet such behavior was a regular part of these excursions. Economists, political scientists, and sociologists as well as those we might designate as social science historians, broadly recognize the existence of such patterns that extend beyond a specific issue or law. In addition, scholars tend to cast their studies in ways that imply or explicitly generalize beyond the case(s) at hand. Given these predispositions, it seems reasonable to retain "institutional" as a descriptive term here.

### **Birth of the Field**

Institutional and political analysis of Japan from the late sixteenth to mid-nineteenth centuries has mushroomed in the last quarter of a century. Viewed from the perspective of the twentieth century as a whole, the smattering of studies by such early twentieth-century scholars as Neil Skene Smith and John Henry Wigmore did not spark a consistent flow of research. Even in the immediate post-war era, the period when some of the giants of the field first appear, the flow of studies was intermittent. A consistent pattern of publication only emerges well into the nineteen-seventies for both periodical and monographic literature.

The period from the end of World War II to the beginning of the nineteen-seventies produced some very important monographs and articles despite their limited number. Their energetic and prolific authors became the founders of the field: John W. Hall, Marius B. Jansen, Thomas C. Smith, and Dan F. Henderson. Others, while not so prolific (at least at that stage of their careers), still played a significant role in the development of the field: E.S. Crawcour, Charles Sheldon, Conrad Totman.

The number of publications in the political and institutional fields increased beginning in the nineteen-sixties, but many of these essays and books fall into two categories. The first is the publication of survey texts. These were designed to introduce Japanese history to American audiences, reflecting both its position in the cold war arena as “America’s unsinkable aircraft carrier” and, by the end of the sixties, to explain and tout its remarkable economic recovery and emerging prominence in the world economy and the realm of technological advancement. As the nineteen-seventies dawned, this interest in Japan even found its way into high school curricula; some states such as New York, added a Japan unit to its new, mandatory ninth grade social studies (Afro-Asian Culture Studies) curriculum.

Many survey texts began with the Meiji Restoration, giving virtually no attention to pre-modern antecedents and even acknowledgement of the groundwork laid by Tokugawa institutional and political changes was sometimes omitted. Those texts that did attempt to “cover” more of Japan’s history often crammed 1200 years of political and cultural change into only half of the book, and the early modern era typically comprised an even smaller percentage of the whole. Indeed, a number of texts continued to treat pre-Meiji Japan as “feudal” despite the relatively long-standing disenchantment with that characterization among leading American scholars of the late nineteen-sixties.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> It is fair to say that the nineteen-sixties and nineteen-seventies boomlet in the publication of survey texts and essays fell off quite sharply since that time. Although other texts appeared by Mikiso Hane, Peter Duus, and Kenneth Pyle, only in the past several years have we again had a burst of

A second clutch of publications attempted to crack the sharp divide between Tokugawa and the Meiji transformation. The Tokugawa essays in the Princeton series on Japan’s modernization typify this approach.<sup>7</sup> These essays often sketched a background for those studies that formed the core concern of each of these volumes, post-Restoration Japan. These essays were not without in-depth scholarly antecedents. Thomas C. Smith had already published his study of domain industrialization and his now-classic *Agrarian Origins of Modern Japan*,<sup>8</sup> for example. But most of these publications were surveys painted in quite broad brushstrokes, and clearly designed to serve the needs of the larger modernization series rather than to illuminate the history of politics and institutions during the three-hundred year period which preceded the Meiji Restoration. A number of other publications during the nineteen-sixties and nineteen-seventies duplicated this pattern (e.g., the James Crowley [1970<sup>9</sup>] and Arthur Tiedemann [1974<sup>10</sup>] essay collections).

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survey texts appear on the market in rapid succession: Conrad D. Totman, *A History of Japan*, Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers, 2000; James McClain, *Japan, a Modern History*, New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2002; Andrew Gordon, *The Modern History of Japan: From Tokugawa Times to the Present*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2003. To this list can be added Totman’s earlier *Early Modern Japan*, Berkeley: University of California, 1993.

<sup>7</sup> Marius B. Jansen, ed., *Changing Japanese Attitudes Toward Modernization*, 1965; William W. Lockwood, ed., *The State and Economic Enterprise in Japan: Essays in the Political Economy of Growth*, 1965; R. P. Dore, ed., *Aspects of Social Change in Modern Japan*, 1967; Robert E. Ward, ed., *Political Development in Modern Japan*, 1968; James William Morley, ed., *Dilemmas of Growth in Prewar Japan*, 1971; Donald H. Shively, ed., *Tradition and Modernization in Japanese Culture*, 1971; all published Princeton: Princeton University Press.

<sup>8</sup> *Agrarian Origins of Modern Japan*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1959.

<sup>9</sup> James B. Crowley, ed., *Modern East Asia: Essays in Interpretation*. New York: Harcourt Brace & World, 1970.

<sup>10</sup> Arthur Tiedemann, ed., *An Introduction to Japanese Civilization*. New York: Heath, 1974.

### Chronological Patterns of Emphasis

The concerns of these early works – the Meiji transformation and Japan's modern history – continue to shape student and recent academic interest. This is manifested in studies treating the impact of Japan's nineteenth century transformations of course, but it is also reflected in many studies that confine themselves chronologically to Tokugawa subjects (e.g., Luke Roberts, 1998<sup>11</sup>). A recent review of books and monographs published in the preceding decade alone showed that almost half of the publications were either directly concerned with the Meiji transformation or laying the foundation for the Meiji transformation and post-Meiji developments.<sup>12</sup>

A second chronological focus has been the subject of more intermittent interest, the transformations of the late sixteenth century that led ultimately to the founding of the stable and long-lived Tokugawa hegemony. The initial publications in this field were limited to articles. The editors of *Studies in the Institutional History of Early Modern Japan* (1968<sup>13</sup>) not only collected earlier articles on domain formation and development, they also commissioned a number of important new studies. While there was considerable excitement surrounding the publication of this collection, Hall's *Government and Local Power* (1967<sup>14</sup>), and Toshio G. Tsukahira's *Feudal Control in Tokugawa Japan* (1967<sup>15</sup>), the themes associated with the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries did not get substantial additional attention in extended treat-

ments until the nineteen-eighties. The publication of *Japan Before Tokugawa: Political Consolidation and Economic Growth, 1500-1650* (1981<sup>16</sup>), while comprised almost entirely of articles in which the principle author was a highly-regarded Japanese scholar, marks the beginning of a more consistent pattern in treating this era. Mary Elizabeth Berry's *Hideyoshi*<sup>17</sup> and James McClain's *Kanazawa: A Seventeenth Century Japanese Castle Town*<sup>18</sup> appeared in 1982. Neil McMullin's *Buddhism and the State in Sixteenth-Century Japan* (1985<sup>19</sup>) was the third major monograph to appear at this time. The publication of these extended studies was accompanied by a small flurry of institutional studies, often, scholarly articles, by these authors and others such as Michael Birt,<sup>20</sup> Beatrice Bodart-Bailey,<sup>21</sup> William Hauser,<sup>22</sup> Bernard

<sup>16</sup> Hall, John Whitney, Nagahara Keiji, and Kozo Yamamura, eds., Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981

<sup>17</sup> Cambridge, Massachusetts: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University Press, 1982.

<sup>18</sup> New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982.

<sup>19</sup> Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985.

<sup>20</sup> "Samurai in Passage: The Transformation of the Sixteenth-Century Kanto," *JJS* 11:2 (Summer 1985): 369-399.

<sup>21</sup> Bodart, Beatrice M., "Tea and Counsel: The Political Role of Sen Rikyu," *MN* 32:1 (Spring 1977) 49-74; "The Laws of Compassion," *MN* 40.2 (Summer 1985), 163-189; "The Significance of the Chamberlain Government of the Fifth Tokugawa Shogun," in Harold Bolitho & Alan Rix, eds. *A Northern Prospect: Australian Papers on Japan*, Canberra: Japanese Studies Association of Australia, 1981, 10-27; "Tea and Politics In Late-Sixteenth-Century Japan," *Chanoyu Quarterly* (Kyoto) 41 (1985) 25-34; "A Case of Political and Economic Expropriation: The Monetary Reform of the Fifth Tokugawa Shogun," *Papers on Far Eastern History* (Canberra) 39 (March 1989) 177-189; "Councilor Defended; Matsukage Nikki and Yanagisawa Yoshiyasu," *MN* 34:4 (Winter 1979) 467-478; "Tokugawa Tsunayoshi (1646-1709), A Weberian Analysis," *Asiatische Studien/Etudes Asiatiques*, XLIII:1 (1989), 5-27.

<sup>22</sup> "Osaka Castle and Tokugawa Authority in Western Japan," In Jeffrey P. Mass and William B. Hauser, Eds. *The Bakufu In Japanese History*, Stan-

<sup>11</sup> *Mercantilism In A Japanese Domain: The Merchant Origins Of Economic Nationalism in 18th - Century Tosa*. Cambridge, UK, Cambridge University Press, 1998.

<sup>12</sup> Philip Brown and Taniguchi.Shinko, "Amerika ni okeru Nihon kinsei-shi kenkyū no dōkō," (in Japanese), *Nihonshi Kenkyū* (May, 2000) 53-70.

<sup>13</sup> John W. Hall and Marius B. Jansen, eds. *Studies in the Institutional History of Early Modern Japan*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968 (hereafter cited as *Studies*).

<sup>14</sup> *Government and Local Power in Japan, 500-1700: A Study Based on Bizen Province*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1966.

<sup>15</sup> Cambridge, Massachusetts: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1966.

Susser,<sup>23</sup> Willem Jan Boot,<sup>24</sup> Philip Brown,<sup>25</sup> Reinhard Zollner,<sup>26</sup> and Kozo Yamamura.<sup>27</sup> These works examined land surveys, consolidation of domain power and finances, the *bakufu*'s use of castle re-construction to consolidate its control over daimyo, and other subjects. While hardly a torrent, a steady flow of books and articles on aspects of the politics, law and institutions of this era continued in the nineteen-nineties.

If the late Tokugawa developments comprise the most intensive era for Western political and institutional studies, and the period from the es-

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ford: Stanford University Press, 1985, 153-172.

<sup>23</sup> Including his works from the late 1970s: "The Cadastral Surveys of the Sengoku Daimyo," *Study Reports of Baika Junior College* 26 (1977): 35-46; "The Policies of the Oda Regime," *ibid.*, 28 (1979) 1-16; "The Toyoyomi Regime and the Daimyo," in *The Bakufu in Japanese History*, 129-152.

<sup>24</sup> Willem Jan Boot, "The Deification of Tokugawa Ieyasu," *Japan Foundation Newsletter*, 14:5 (Feb. 1987) 10-13.

<sup>25</sup> "Feudal Remnants" And Tenant Power: The Case Of Niigata, Japan, In The Nineteenth And Early Twentieth Centuries," *Peasant Studies*, 15:1 (Fall, 1987), 1-26; "Land Redistribution Schemes in Tokugawa Japan: An Introduction," *Occasional Papers of the Virginia Consortium for Asian Studies* 4 (Spring 1987), 35-48; "Practical Constraints on Early Tokugawa Land Taxation: Annual Versus Fixed Assessments in Kaga Domain," *JJS* 14.2 (Summer 1988), 369-401; "The Mismeasure of Land: Land Surveying in the Tokugawa Period," *MN* 42.2 (Summer 1987), 115-155.

<sup>26</sup> "Kunigae: Bewegung und Herrschaft in der Tokugawa-Zeit," In: Antoni, Klaus; Portner, Peter; Schneider, Roland, eds. *Referate des VII. Deutschen Japanologentages in Hamburg, 11.-13. Juni 1987*. Hamburg: Gesellschaft für Natur- und Volkerkunde Ostasiens, MOAG, Mitteilungen der Gesellschaft für Nat 1988, 323-330.

<sup>27</sup> "From Coins to Rice: Hypotheses on the Kandaka and Kokudaka Systems," *JJS* 14.2 (Summer 1988), 341-367; "Returns on Unification: Economic Growth in Japan, 1550-1650," in John Whitney Hall, Nagahara Keiji, and Kozo Yamamura, eds. *Japan Before Tokugawa: Political Consolidation and Economic Growth, 1500-1650*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981, 327-372.

tablishment of peace through the seventeenth-century consolidation of political authority in the hands of Shogun and daimyo represent an emerging, increasingly visible field, what of the middle years of the Tokugawa period? Two periods have received some concentrated attention. The first is the era surrounding the Kansei Reforms. We have monographic political biographies of Tanuma Okitsugu (J. W. Hall, 1955<sup>28</sup>) and Matsudaira Sadanobu (Herman Ooms, 1975<sup>29</sup>; Petra Rudolph, 1976<sup>30</sup>) as well as two articles on related subjects by Robert Bakus (1989<sup>31</sup>) and Isao Soranaka (1978<sup>32</sup>). The second concentration of studies focuses on Tokugawa Tsunayoshi. The "Dog Shogun" and his peculiar image have attracted Beatrice Bodart-Bailey (1985, 1989<sup>33</sup>), Donald Shively (1970<sup>34</sup>), and Harold Bolitho (1975<sup>35</sup>). Nonetheless, Tsunayoshi's charms

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<sup>28</sup> John W. Hall, *Tanuma Okitsugu, 1719-1788: Forerunner of Modern Japan*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University Press, 1955.

<sup>29</sup> Herman Ooms, *Charismatic Bureaucrat: A Political Biography of Matsudaira Sadanobu, 1758-1829*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975.

<sup>30</sup> Petra Rudolph, *Matsudaira Sadanobu Und Die Kansei-Reform: Unter Besondere Berucksichtigung Des Kansei Igaku No Kin*, Bochum: Brockmeyer 1976.

<sup>31</sup> Robert L. Backus, "Matsudaira Sadanobu and Samurai Education," in C. Andrew Gerstle, ed. *18th Century Japan: Culture and Society*. Sydney, N.S.W., Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1989, 132-152.

<sup>32</sup> Isao Soranaka. "The Kansei Reforms-Success Or Failure?" *MN* 33.1 (Spring 1978), 151-164.

<sup>33</sup> Beatrice Bodart-Bailey. "The Laws of Compassion," *MN* 40.2 (Summer 1985), 163-189; "A Case of Political and Economic Expropriation: The Monetary Reform of the Fifth Tokugawa Shogun," *Papers on Far Eastern History* (Canberra) 39 (March 1989) 177-189; "Tokugawa Tsunayoshi (1646-1709), A Weberian Analysis," *Asiatische Studien/Etudes Asiatiques*, XLIII: 1 (1989), 5-27.

<sup>34</sup> Donald Shively, "Tokugawa Tsunayoshi, the Genroku Shogun," in Albert M. Craig & Donald H. Shively, eds., *Personality in Japanese History*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970, 85-126.

<sup>35</sup> Harold Bolitho, "The Dog Shogun," in Wang Gungwu, ed. *Self and Biography: Essays on the*

have proved insufficiently enticing to stimulate a full monographic treatment.

One senses that rather fortuitous circumstances led to this clustering of interest, for these works – whether we look at the late eighteenth century or Tsunayoshi's era – do not play off each other in a significant way, and although Hall was once quite taken with Tanuma, his planning of volume four of the *Cambridge History of Japan* relegated treatment of Tsunayoshi, Tanuma, and Matsudaira Sadanobu to a single fifty-page chapter which also included discussion of the Shotoku era, Tokugawa Yoshimune, the Kyōhō Reforms, and the Hōreki era – a good century of political developments.<sup>36</sup>

This well reflects the problems that Western scholars have had in coming to grips with the political and institutional history of the mid-Tokugawa.<sup>37</sup> The fact that the Tenmei, Bunka and Bunsei eras – eras of some substantial reform efforts at least in a number of the domains – are also not singled out for much attention in either Volume 4 or Volume 5 of the *Cambridge History* further reinforce the lack of a strong, attractive theme underlying mid-period institutional and political history.<sup>38</sup> Even the theme of popular protest (*ikki*), the subject of about a half-dozen recent monographs, does not fill the gap. In contrast to the early Tokugawa, which is a story of pacification and consolidation of political authority in new and rebuilt institutions, and the nineteenth century, which is the story of crisis and collapse, the late seventeenth to early nineteenth centuries lack a discernable political identity.

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*Individual and Society in Asia*. Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1975, 123-139.

<sup>36</sup> John Whitney Hall, and James L. McClain, eds. *The Cambridge History of Japan*, Vol. 4: *Early Modern Japan*, Cambridge, UK and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991 (hereafter *CHJ*).

<sup>37</sup> Discussions with colleagues in Japan suggest similar issues, although there are certainly more book-length works on the period. The problem seems to lie in where and how to find an overarching theme to the era.

<sup>38</sup> Marius B. Jansen, ed. *Cambridge History of Japan*, Vol. 5: *The Nineteenth Century*, Cambridge, UK and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

This is not to say that the situation is intellectually terminal in some sense: Conrad Totman's *Early Modern Japan* (1993), Luke Roberts's study of Tosa (1998<sup>39</sup>), and Mark Ravina's examination of three large domains (Yonezawa, Tokushima, and Hirosaki; 1999<sup>40</sup>) indicate that we have a story of attempts to come to grips with an increasingly tense relationship between natural resources, population size, urban development and the consequences of efforts to squeeze as much as possible from nature's storehouse. Such studies indicate that within these parameters members of the samurai class struggled mightily, and sometimes very violently, over policy, threats to their status and to loss of income. In addition, through the example of Tosa, Roberts indicates the possibilities for non-samurai classes to exert effective influence on the formation of domain policy.

While the field of political and institutional history has grown considerably, especially in the last decade or so, a cautionary note is in order. In spite of the growth, the publication record reflects a continued heavy reliance on translations of the work of Japanese scholars. Our purpose here is not to explore this aspect of Japanese studies in the West, but a few well-known recent examples are worth noting as illustrative. As mentioned above, *Japan before Tokugawa* contains primarily work by Japanese scholars. Non-Japanese scholars solely author only two articles. While Volume 5 of the *Cambridge History of Japan* contains only one article by a Japanese scholar, Volume 4 relies heavily on translations of the work of Nakai Nobuhiko, Furushima Toshio, Tsuji Tatsuya, Bitō Masahide, Wakita Osamu, and Asao Naohiro. More than half of the articles in *Osaka: The Merchants' Capital of Early Modern Japan* (1999<sup>41</sup>) are translations of work by Japa-

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<sup>39</sup> Luke Roberts, *Mercantilism In A Japanese Domain: The Merchant Origins Of Economic Nationalism in 18th - Century Tosa*. Cambridge, UK, Cambridge University Press, 1998.

<sup>40</sup> Mark Ravina, *Land and Lordship in Early Modern Japan*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999.

<sup>41</sup> James L. McClain, and Wakita Osamu, eds. *Osaka: The Merchants' Capital of Early Modern Japan*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press,

nese scholars. Examination of *Edo & Paris: Urban Life and the State in the Early Modern Era* (1994<sup>42</sup>) also draws on the research of a number of Japanese scholars. Other works could readily be added to this list, but would only serve as unnecessary reinforcement of the point these examples make.<sup>43</sup>

This phenomenon has a very positive side. It exposes students in the West to a wider array of subjects than would otherwise be possible. In the long run, one hopes that publication of such work will stimulate non-Japanese scholars to explore new subjects. In addition, these publications bring Western scholars into broader contact with the Japanese scholarly world. The benefit here is not just one of exposing ourselves to subjects as yet unexamined by Western scholars, but also one of revealing some of the distinctive characteristics of western scholarly conception and interpretive style.<sup>44</sup> Yet even granting this benefit, there is no escaping the fact that Japanese scholars are called upon to “cover” subjects in which Western scholars have not yet published due our small numbers.

## Trends in the Field

### I. Diversification: From Top to Bottom

**Shogun and Emperor.** Traditionally, historians place the development of the institutions of central government and contests for control of them at the heart of their institutional and politi-

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<sup>42</sup> James L. McClain, John M. Merriman, and Ugawa Kaoru, eds., *Edo and Paris: Urban Life and the State in the Early Modern Era*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994.

<sup>43</sup> Although a number of the essays in these collections deal with political and institutional history, these collections go well beyond the confines of those fields. In this sense, my observation concerning the heavy reliance on Japanese scholarship extends to many other fields.

<sup>44</sup> If there has been a downside, it lies in the very long delay between the introduction of new perspectives in Japan and their dissemination in Western publications.

cal history. Post-war treatment of late sixteenth to mid - nineteenth century Japan began with the same emphasis. Except during the movement toward the re-establishment of a peaceful national order, attention focused overwhelmingly on hegemony, Shogunal institutions, and the relationships of emperor, domains and daimyo to them. Early examples of political and administrative history (Boxer's *The Christian Century in Japan: 1549-1650*, 1951<sup>45</sup> and Brown's *Money Economy in Medieval Japan: A Study in the Use of Coins*, 1951<sup>46</sup>, which treats the Tokugawa era in part, despite its title) focus heavily on the roles of Hideyoshi and the Tokugawa when they analyze policies related to the *kinsei* era. Thomas Smith's "The Introduction of Western Industry to Japan During the Last Years of the Tokugawa Period," (1948<sup>47</sup>) examined the role of daimyo efforts in the field of technological transfer in mid-nineteenth century. Hall's *Tanuma Okitsugu, 1719-1788: Forerunner of Modern Japan* (1955) and Donald Shively's "Bakufu versus Kabuki," (1955<sup>48</sup>) examined policies and reform movements in a *bakufu* setting. This emphasis on the center becomes much more pronounced when we include the numerous books and articles that deal with the movement toward the Meiji Restoration (e.g., Beasley 1972,<sup>49</sup> Craig, 1959 and 1961,<sup>50</sup> Sakata and Hall, 1956,<sup>51</sup> Jansen,

<sup>45</sup> C.R. Boxer, *The Christian Century in Japan: 1549-1650*, Berkeley: University Of California Press

<sup>46</sup> Delmer Brown, *Money Economy in Medieval Japan: A Study in the Use of Coins*, New Haven: Yale University Press.

<sup>47</sup> Thomas C. Smith, "The Introduction of Western Industry to Japan During the Last Years of the Tokugawa Period," *HJAS* II (1948), 130-152.

<sup>48</sup> Donald Shively, "Bakufu versus Kabuki," *HJAS* 18:3-4 (December 1955), 326-56.

<sup>49</sup> W. G. Beasley, *The Meiji Restoration*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972.

<sup>50</sup> Albert Craig, "The Restoration Movement in Choshu," *JAS* 18 (1959), 187-198; *Choshu In The Meiji Restoration, 1853-1868*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University Press, 1961.

<sup>51</sup> Yoshio Sakata & John W. Hall. "The Motivation of Political Leadership in the Meiji Restora-



1961,<sup>52</sup> Smith, 1961,<sup>53</sup> etc.).

These studies generally presume that Shogunal edicts and authority were pre-eminent and employed as a model pretty much throughout the land. T. G. Tsukahira's work on the *sankin-kōtai* (1966) suggested the degree to which even control of the person of the daimyo could serve to constrain vast financial resources that might have been devoted to creating a military base sufficient for launching a challenge to the Shogunate. Peppered throughout survey texts and through many scholarly works by Hall (1966, 1981, 1991<sup>54</sup>), Elison (1981<sup>55</sup>), Bolitho (1991<sup>56</sup>), Totman (1967<sup>57</sup>), Yamamura (1981), Berry (1982), and Zollner (1987<sup>58</sup>), land surveys, the inspectorate (*metsuke*), the Laws of the Military Houses, and fief transfer and attainder are all sketched as effective devices for keeping daimyo in their proper place and forcing them to implement *bakufu* policies.

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tion," *JAS* 16.1 (1956); reprinted in John Harrison, ed., *Japan*, Tuscon, Arizona: University of Arizona Press, 1972, 179-198.

<sup>52</sup> Marius Jansen, *Sakamoto Ryoma and the Meiji Restoration*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961.

<sup>53</sup> Thomas C. Smith "Japan's Aristocratic Revolution," *Yale Review* (1961), 370-383; reprinted in Jon Livingston et al., *Imperial Japan, 1800-1945*, New York: Pantheon) 1973, 91-101.

<sup>54</sup> John Whitney Hall, "Hideyoshi's Domestic Policies," in *Japan Before Tokugawa*, 194-223; "Japan's Sixteenth-Century Revolution," in George Elison and Bardwell L. Smith. *Warlords, Artists, and Commoners: Japan in the Sixteenth Century*. Honolulu: University Press Of Hawaii, 1981, 7-21; "Introduction [early modern Japan]," in *CHJ*, Vol. 4, 1-39.

<sup>55</sup> George Elison, "The Cross and the Sword: Patterns of Momoyama History" and "Hideyoshi, the Bountiful Minister," both in *Warlords, Artists, & Commoners*, 55-86 and 223-244 respectively.

<sup>56</sup> Harold Bolitho, "The Han," in *CHJ*, Vol. 4, 183-234.

<sup>57</sup> Conrad Totman, *Politics In The Tokugawa Bakufu, 1600-1843*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University Press, 1967 (reprinted by University of California Press, 1988).

<sup>58</sup> Reinhard Zollner, "Kunigae."

Although still focused on the Tokugawa elites, Harold Bolitho (1974<sup>59</sup>) uncovered unexpected fractures in the unity of the Tokugawa administrative structure. Harootunian (1969<sup>60</sup>), Koschman (1987<sup>61</sup>), Webb (1968<sup>62</sup>), and Earl (1964<sup>63</sup>) found cracks in the ideological foundations so carefully constructed and institutionalized at the start of the period and which Arai Hakuseki had hoped to build into a stronger central government in the early eighteenth century (see Kate W. Nakai, 1988<sup>64</sup>). Each of these studies focuses on long-term developments in political thought and action that laid a foundation for the Meiji Restoration.

These studies on the more routine relationship between Shogun and Emperor are worthy of note, especially since this sort of study is rare. Bob T. Wakabayashi (1991<sup>65</sup>) has argued that the Imperial institution was routinely more important than Western historians have traditionally assumed and he explored the role of dual sovereignty in a more constructive light than did studies of late Tokugawa court-*bakufu* relations. Lee Butler (1994) re-examined the Shogunal edicts that were designed to regulate the behavior of the Emperor and then extended his study to view fifteenth to seventeenth century characteristics of the Em-

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<sup>59</sup> Harold Bolitho, *Treasures Among Men: The Fudai Daimyo in Tokugawa Japan*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974.

<sup>60</sup> Harry D. Harootunian, *Toward Restoration*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970.

<sup>61</sup> J. Victor Koschman, *The Mitō Ideology: Discourse, Reform and Insurrection in Late Tokugawa Japan, 1790-1864*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987.

<sup>62</sup> Herschel Webb, *The Japanese Imperial Institution in the Tokugawa Period*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1968.

<sup>63</sup> David M. Earl, *Emperor and Nation in Japan: Political Thinkers of the Tokugawa Period*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1964.

<sup>64</sup> Kate W. Nakai, *Shogunal Politics: Arai Hakuseki and the Premises of Tokugawa Rule*. Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University Press.

<sup>65</sup> Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi, "In Name Only: Imperial Sovereignty in Early Modern Japan," *JJS* 17:1 (Winter 1991) 25-57.

peror and aristocracy.<sup>66</sup> Both attempt to see the Emperor in contexts other than in his position as focal point for anti-*bakufu* malcontents and suggest very significant roles for Emperor and court long before late Tokugawa.

Much early work through the nineteen-seventies sought the sources of the Restoration and its radical shift from apparent conservatism to radical reformation of the political and social order by government fiat. In addition to studies already introduced, Smith (1961, 1967<sup>67</sup>), Dore (1962<sup>68</sup>), Frost (1970<sup>69</sup>), Hall (1970<sup>70</sup>), Najita (1970<sup>71</sup>), Sakai (1970<sup>72</sup>), Totman (1970, 1975, 1980, 1982, 1983<sup>73</sup>), Wilson (1970, 1982, 1992<sup>74</sup>),

<sup>66</sup> Lee Butler, "Tokugawa Ieyasu's Regulations for the Court: A Reassessment," *HJAS* 54:2 (May 1994), 509-552; *Emperor and Aristocracy in Japan, 1467-1680*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University Press, 2002.

<sup>67</sup> Thomas C. Smith, "'Merit' as Ideology in the Tokugawa Period," in *Aspects of Social Change in Modern Japan*, 71 - 90.

<sup>68</sup> Ronald P. Dore, "Talent and the Social Order in Tokugawa Japan," *Past and Present: A Journal of Historical Studies* 21 (April 1962).

<sup>69</sup> Peter Frost, *The Bakumatsu Currency Crisis*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Council On East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1970.

<sup>70</sup> John W. Hall, "Tokugawa Japan, 1800-1853," in James B. Crowley, ed. *Modern East Asia: Essays in Interpretation*. New York: Harcourt Brace & World, 1970., 62-94.

<sup>71</sup> Tetsuo Najita, "Oshio Heihachiro (1793-1837)," in Albert Craig & Donald Shively, eds., *Personality In Japanese History*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970, 155-179.

<sup>72</sup> Robert K. Sakai, "Shimazu Nariakira and the Emergence of national Leadership in Satsuma," in *Personality In Japanese History*, 209-233.

<sup>73</sup> Conrad Totman, "Political Reconciliation in the Tokugawa Bakufu: Abe Masahiro and Tokugawa Nariaki, 1844-1852," in *Personality In Japanese History*, 180-208; "Tokugawa Yoshinobu And Kobu Gattai--A Study Of Political Inadequacy," *MN* 30:4 (Win 1975) 393-403; "Fudai daimyo and the Collapse of the Tokugawa Bakufu," *JAS* 34, no.3 (May 1975) 581-591; *The Collapse of The Tokugawa Bakufu, 1862-1868*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980; "From Reformism to Trans-

Steele (1976, 1982<sup>75</sup>), Bolitho (1977, 1983, 1985<sup>76</sup>), Fraser (1977<sup>77</sup>), D. Brown (1981<sup>78</sup>), Huber (1981, 1982, 1983<sup>79</sup>), Koschman (1982<sup>80</sup>),

formism: Bakufu Policy, 1853-1868," in Tetsuo Najita, and J. Victor Koschmann, eds. *Conflict In Modern Japanese History: The Neglected Tradition*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982, 62-80; "The Meiji Resoration: From Obsolete Order to Effective Regime," in Harry Wray and Hilary Conroy, eds., *Japan Examined: Perspectives On Modern Japanese History*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1983, 72-78.

<sup>74</sup> George M. Wilson, "Pursuing the Millennium in the Meiji Restoration," in *Conflict in Japanese History, 177-194; Patriots and Redeemers in Japan: Motives in the Meiji Restoration*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992; "The Bakumatsu Intellectual in Action: Hashimoto Sanai in the Political Crisis of 1858," in *Personality In Japanese History*, 234-263.

<sup>75</sup> M. William Steele, "The Rise and Fall of the Shoogitai: A Social Drama," in *Conflict in Japanese History*, 128-144; *Katsu Kaishu and the Collapse of the Tokugawa Bakufu*. Ph.D. Thesis, Harvard University, 1976.

<sup>76</sup> Harold Bolitho, "Aizu, 1853-1868," *Proceedings of the British Association for Japanese Studies* (Sheffield) 2, pt.1 (1977), 1-17; "The Meiji Restoration," in *Japan Examined*, 59-65; "Abe Masahiro and the New Japan," in Jeffrey P. Mass and William B. Hauser, eds. *The Bakufu In Japanese History*, 173 - 189.

<sup>77</sup> Andrew Fraser, "Political development in the Awa (Tokushima) domain: the final decade, 1860-1870," *Papers on Far Eastern History* (Canberra) 15 (Mar 1977) 105-161; "Local Administration: The Example of Awa-Tokushima," in Jansen, Marius B. & Gilbert Rozman, eds., *From Tokugawa to Meiji*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986, 111-132.

<sup>78</sup> David Douglas Brown, *From Tempo to Meiji: Fukuoka Han in Late Tokugawa Japan*. University of Hawaii, Ph.D. Thesis, 1981.

<sup>79</sup> Thomas M. Huber, *The Revolutionary Origins of Modern Japan*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1981; "Men Of High Purpose and the Politics of Direct Action, 1862-1864," in *Conflict In Modern Japanese History*, 1982,107-127; "The Choshu Activists and 1868," in *Japan Examined*, 66-71.

<sup>80</sup> J. Victor Koschmann, "Action as a Text: Ideology in the Tengu Insurrection," in *Conflict In*

Flershem (1983, 1988, 1992<sup>81</sup>), Fedoseyev (1985<sup>82</sup>), Jansen (1985, 1989<sup>83</sup>), Latyshev (1985<sup>84</sup>), Yates (1987, 1994<sup>85</sup>), McClain (1988<sup>86</sup>) and Quah (1988<sup>87</sup>) all treat aspects of this issue.<sup>88</sup> This brief listing, in combination with previously mentioned titles, however, also suggests that study of the Restoration movement has been of

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*Modern Japanese History*, 81-106.

<sup>81</sup> Robert G. Flershem, "Kaga Loyalists, 1858-1868," *Proceedings of the Fifth International Symposium on Asian Studies*, Hong Kong: Asian Research Service, 1983, 121-143. Flershem, Robert G. & Yoshiko N. Flershem, "Kaga's Tardy Support of the Meiji Restoration: Background Reasons," *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan* (Tokyo), 4<sup>th</sup> series, 3 (1988), 83-130; "Kaga's Restoration Politics: The Toyama and Daishoji Aspects," *ibid.* 4<sup>th</sup> Series, 7 (1992), 1-42.

<sup>82</sup> Pyotr Fedoseyev, "The Significance of Revolutionary Transformations," in Nagai Michio & Miguel Urrutia, eds., *Meiji Ishin: Restoration and Revolution*. Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 1985, 52-7.

<sup>83</sup> Marius B. Jansen, "Meiji Ishin: The Political context," in *Meiji Ishin: Restoration and Revolution*, 3-19; "The Meiji Restoration," in *CHJ*, Vol. 5, 308-366.

<sup>84</sup> Igor Latyshev, "Meiji Ishin: Unaccomplished Bourgeois Revolution," in *Meiji Ishin: Restoration And Revolution*, 43-51.

<sup>85</sup> Charles L. Yates, "Restoration and Rebellion in Satsuma: The Life of Saigo Takamori (1827-1877)." 1987: Ph.D. dissertation in East Asian Studies, Princeton University; "Saigo Takamori in the Emergence of Meiji Japan," *Modern Asian Studies* 28:3 (1994), 449-74.

<sup>86</sup> James L. McClain, "Failed Expectations: Kaga Domain on the Eve of the Meiji Restoration," *JJS* 14.2 (1988), 403-447.

<sup>87</sup> Esther Quah, "Factors Leading to the Collapse of the Tokugawa Bakufu," *Journal of the History Society* (Singapore) (1987-1988) 5-7.

<sup>88</sup> For a more detailed analysis of the recent scholarship on this and related issues, see Albert M. Craig, "The Meiji Restoration: A Historiographical Overview," in Helen Hardacre, ed. *The Postwar Development of Japanese Studies in the United States*, Leiden, Boston, Koln: Brill, 1998, 115-142, which also carries the story farther into Meiji than attempted here.

less intense concern since the mid-nineteen-eighties.

Official organization and control of merchant organizations and the problems both merchants and the Shogunate had in maintaining their exclusive privileges also comprised a subject of early scholarly attention. Charles Sheldon (1958<sup>89</sup>) first approached the question in the context of official control of large merchants such as Zeniya Gohei. William Hauser (1974<sup>90</sup>) introduced a more nuanced approach when he demonstrated the degree to which un-licensed merchants were successful in challenging official cotton monopolies in the Osaka region.

More recent "local" studies have revealed similar contests even within local domains (Wigen 1995<sup>91</sup>; Pratt 1999<sup>92</sup>). Constantine Vaporis (1994<sup>93</sup>) has examined Tokugawa efforts to maintain and control a national road system that provided the main trunk lines that linked major political and commercial centers. As Hauser revised Sheldon, Vaporis is also more sensitive to the constraints of *bakufu* power than Tsukahira.

Two areas are notable for having engendered few studies: the position of the military as a formal organization and the court system for delivering law and justice to the subjects of the realm, including to the daimyo. The former received much popular attention with the publication of Noel Perrin's *Giving Up the Gun* (1979<sup>94</sup>) and James Clavell's novel, *Shogun* (1980). Clavell's work even spawned a volume of scholarly essays designed to address issues raised by

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<sup>89</sup> Charles D. Sheldon, *The Rise of the Merchant Class in Tokugawa Japan, 1600-1868*, Locust Valley, NY: Augustin, 1958.

<sup>90</sup> William B. Hauser, *Economic Institutional Change in Tokugawa Japan: Osaka and the Kinai Cotton Trade*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1974.

<sup>91</sup> *The Making of a Japanese Periphery*.

<sup>92</sup> *Japan's Proto-Industrial Elite*.

<sup>93</sup> Constantine Nomikos Vaporis, *Breaking Barriers: Travel and the State in Early Modern Japan*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University Press, 1994.

<sup>94</sup> Noel Perrin, *Giving Up The Gun: Japan's Reversion To The Sword, 1543-1879*. New York: Godine, 1979.

the novel and television series/movie (Smith 1980<sup>95</sup>). Scholarly follow-through in the form of serious and extended studies has been very limited, however. The works of Stephen Turnbull survey samurai throughout the ages, but place most of their emphasis on pre-Tokugawa materials. John M. Rogers (1990<sup>96</sup>) treats martial training in an age of peace and Oguchi Yujiro (1990<sup>97</sup>) examines the circumstances of *hatamoto* and *gokenin*. Rogers' doctoral thesis and Howland's historiographical essay on samurai class, status and bureaucratic roles (2001<sup>98</sup>) hold out the possibility of future serious publication in this area.

In the early twentieth century the Tokugawa legal system proved highly interesting to scholars of comparative law but have not drawn much attention in the post-war era.<sup>99</sup> Dan Fenno Henderson is the most prolific of the clutch of scholars who have looked at the operation of law and the courts on the ground level. He is most known for his work on the Tokugawa era precedents using conciliation (1965), but has also written on the evolution of legal practice (1968), agreements and governance (1992) and village-level contracts (1975).<sup>100</sup> John Haley (1991<sup>101</sup>)

devotes only one chapter to the Tokugawa era, but stresses the limits of the legal system, a system that forced villagers to handle many issues in their own, often informal, way. J. Mark Ramseyer (1996<sup>102</sup>), like Haley and Henderson's study of conciliation, devotes only a section of his work to the Tokugawa era, but he introduces a new perspective, that of rational choice theory, to argue that Tokugawa law provided substantial protections for those often seen as exploited. Herman Ooms (1996<sup>103</sup>) has examined local uses of law (especially in status manipulation), and while he touches on criminal law, that field remains largely unexplored in Western language literature. Dani Botsman, however, has begun to focus on this subject (Botsman, 1992<sup>104</sup>).

**Domains.** Study of the structure and politics of domain administrations have been of sporadic interest for some time, but have received more concentrated attention in the past decade. For the period of domain formation, Hall's previously noted work on stages in the evolution of daimyo rule (1961) and the development of castle towns (1955<sup>105</sup>) have been very influential. The first wave of domain studies was largely confined to article-length publications. Jansen's work on

<sup>95</sup> Henry Smith, II, ed. *Learning From "Shogun": Japanese History and Western Fantasy*. Santa Barbara, California: Program in Asian Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara, 1980.

<sup>96</sup> John M. Rogers, "Arts of War in Times of Peace: Swordsmanship in Honcho Bugei Shoden, Chapter 5," *MN* 45.4 (Winter 1990), 413-447; *The Development of the Military Profession in Tokugawa Japan*, Ph.D. Thesis, Harvard University, 1998.

<sup>97</sup> Yujiro Oguchi, "The Reality Behind Musui Dokugen: The World of the Hatamoto and Gokenin," Gaynor Sekimori, transl., *JJS* 16.2 (Summer 1990): 289-308.

<sup>98</sup> Douglas R. Howland, "Samurai Status, Class, and Bureaucracy: A Historiographical Essay," *JAS* 60:2 (May, 2001), 353-80.

<sup>99</sup> The works of John Henry Wigmore and Neil Skene Smith are the best known.

<sup>100</sup> Dan F. Henderson. *Conciliation and Japanese Law: Tokugawa and Modern*. Seattle: University of Washington Press., 1965 (esp vol. I); *Village Contracts in Tokugawa Japan: 50 Specimens with English Translations and Comments*, Seattle: Uni-

versity of Washington Press 1975; "Agreements and Governance in Tokugawa Japan," in Bernard Hung-Kay Luk, ed. *Contacts Between Cultures*. Volume 4. *Eastern Asia: History and Social Sciences*, Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press, 1992, 231-235; "The Evolution of Tokugawa Law," in *Studies*, 203-230.

<sup>101</sup> John Owen Haley, *Authority without Power: Law and the Japanese Paradox*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.

<sup>102</sup> J. Mark Ramseyer, *Odd Markets in Japanese History*. Cambridge, UK, Cambridge University Press, 1996.

<sup>103</sup> Herman Ooms, *Tokugawa Village Practice: Class, Status, Power, Law*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996.

<sup>104</sup> Dani V. Botsman, "Punishment and Power in the Tokugawa period," Canberra, Australia: Institute of Advanced Studies, Australian National University, 1992.

<sup>105</sup> John W. Hall, "The Castle Town and Japan's Modern Urbanization," *Far Eastern Quarterly* XV: 1 (November 1955), 37-56.

Tosa (1963, 1968<sup>106</sup>), Sakai's on Satsuma (1968, 1970, 1975<sup>107</sup>), Hall's early work on Bizen and much more that appeared after the publication of *Government and Local Power* fall into this pattern.<sup>108</sup> Through the sixties only one monographic domain study appeared (Hall's *Government and Local Power*, 1966) and even that was not specifically a study of late sixteenth to seventeenth century domain formation.

This early work on domain institutions led to a number of dissertations that gave more extended attention to the subject. Les Mitchnick (1972, Chōshū<sup>109</sup>), Franklin Odo (1975, Saga<sup>110</sup>), and Ronald DiCenzo (1978, Echizen, Tottori, and Matsue<sup>111</sup>) completed doctoral theses on *kinsei* domains, but their work was not otherwise published. Indeed, no monographic domain study appeared again until Yale published

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<sup>106</sup> Marius B. Jansen, "Tosa During the Last Century of Tokugawa Rule," in *Studies*, 331-348; "Tosa in the Seventeenth Century: The Establishment of Yamauchi Rule," in *ibid.*, 112-130; "Tosa in the Sixteenth Century: The 100 Article Code of Chōsokabe Motochika," *Oriens Extremus* X:1 (April 1963)

<sup>107</sup> Robert Sakai, "The Consolidation of Power in Satsuma-han," in *Studies*, 131-139; "Introductory Analysis," Haraguchi Torao et al. *The Status System and Social Organization Satsuma: A Translation of the Shumon Tefuda Aratame Jomoku*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1975.

<sup>108</sup> John W. Hall, "From Tokugawa to Meiji in Japanese Local Administration," in *Studies*, 375-86; "The Ikeda House and its Retainers in Bizen," in *ibid.* 79-88; "Materials for the Study of Local History in Japan: Pre-Meiji Daimyo Records," *HJAS* 209:1 & 2 (June 1957), 187-212; "Ikeda Mitsumasa and the Bizen Flood of 1654," in *Personality in Japanese History*, 57-84.

<sup>109</sup> Les Mitchnick, *Traditional and Transitional Tax systems During the Early Modern Period: A Case Study of Choshu Han, 1600-1873*, University of California, Los Angeles, Ph.D. Thesis, 1972.

<sup>110</sup> Franklin Odo, *Saga - Han: The Feudal Domain in Tokugawa Japan*. Princeton University, Ph.D. Thesis, 1975.

<sup>111</sup> Ronald DiCenzo, *Daimyo, Domain and Retainer Band in the Seventeenth Century: A Study of Institutional Development in Echizen, Tottori and Matsue*, Princeton University, Ph.D. Thesis, 1978.

James McClain's case study of early castle town development (1982).<sup>112</sup>

From the late 1980s there has been a rising tide of domain studies published as both monographs and articles. John Morris (1988<sup>113</sup>) examined retainer fiefs in Sendai domain, Philip Brown explored domain formation and rural administration in early Kaga (1988, 1993<sup>114</sup>), James McClain (1992<sup>115</sup>) explored festivals and state power in Kanazawa, Luke Roberts (1994, 1997, 1998<sup>116</sup>) has analyzed development of economic policy in Tosa with a focus on mid-period fiscal challenges, Kären Wigen explored related issues as part of her study of Shimo-ina (1995), and Mark Ravina (1999) has also explored samurai rulers' attempts to deal with mid-period economic crises in Yonezawa, Tokushima, and Hirosaki domains. A concern for these and other mid-period issues lies at the heart of the Flershem's (1984) study of reform in Kaga domain.<sup>117</sup> Arne Kalland (1994) focuses on other issues, but includes fairly extensive discussion of the domain political context in his study of Fukuoka-region fishing

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<sup>112</sup> James L. McClain, *Kanazawa: A Seventeenth - Century Japanese Castle Town*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982

<sup>113</sup> John Morris, *Kinsei Nihon chigyōsei no kenkyū*, Seibundo, 1978.

<sup>114</sup> Philip C. Brown, *Central Authority and Local Autonomy in the Formation of Early modern Japan: The Case of Kaga Domain*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993.

<sup>115</sup> James L. McClain, "Bonshogatsu: Festivals and State Power in Kanazawa," *MN* 47:2 (Summer 1992), 163-202.

<sup>116</sup> Luke Roberts, "The Petition Box in Eighteenth-Century Tosa," *JJS* 20.2 (Summer 1994): 423-458; *Mercantilism In A Japanese Domain: The Merchant Origins Of Economic Nationalism In 18th - Century Tosa*. Cambridge, UK, Cambridge University Press, 1998; "A Petition for a Popularly Chosen Council of Government in Tosa in 1787," *HJAS* 57:2 (December 1997) 575-596.

<sup>117</sup> Robert G. Flershem and Yoshiko N. Flershem, "Kaga: A Domain That Changed Slowly," in Burks Ardath W., Ed. *The Modernizers: Overseas Students, Foreign Employees, and Meiji Japan*, Boulder: Westview Press, 1984, 85-143.

communities.<sup>118</sup>

Although focused primarily on medieval to late Sengoku developments, two other domain-level studies deserve note. Michael Birt (1983, 1985<sup>119</sup>) and Reinhard Zollner (1991<sup>120</sup>) examine the transformation of domain organization in the sixteenth century. Both discuss developments that, through the crucible of widespread civil war, laid foundations for the growth and final stabilization of daimyo rule.

In addition to studies of domain organizational structure, a number of scholars have taken an interest in closely examining the most fundamental aspects of revenue raising for the Tokugawa ruling classes, the land tax system. From a national perspective, Kozo Yamamura (1988) offered an explanation of the change from cash to rice-based assessments of land value for purposes of taxation. Thomas Smith's study of land taxation (1958<sup>121</sup>) first raised the possibility that land taxes did not keep pace with increases in agricultural output and even remained absolutely flat throughout the Tokugawa period. He analyzed data from several domains, but other studies focus more intensively on single domains. Philip Brown examined the accuracy land survey techniques that created the standard of the land's assessed value and three land tax assessment systems, especially in Kaga domain (1987, 1988, etc.<sup>122</sup>). Patricia Sippel (1994, 1998<sup>123</sup>) con-

ducted extensive investigations of the tax policy of the Tokugawa in their role as domain lords and stresses the difficulty of maintaining effective control over an agricultural base rendered unstable by the vagaries of nature. Les Mitchnick's (1972) study is the only extended effort to move beyond the land tax system into other forms of taxation in his study of Choshu, but Constantine Vaporis has explored corvee in a 1986 article that arose from his research on the Tokugawa-controlled system of national roads.<sup>124</sup>

Several studies have taken the investigation of domain economic activities in a different direction – direct exploitation of natural resources. Conrad Totman began to investigate the management of forest resources with two studies in 1984<sup>125</sup>, one of which focused intensively on Akita. The culmination of his work (1989<sup>126</sup>) was a major overview of village and domain response to a decline in readily available forest resources. Byung Nam Yoon (1995<sup>127</sup>) took the

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(1989) 53-79; "Practical Constraints on Early Tokugawa Land Taxation," "A Case of Failed Technology Transfer--Land Survey Technology in Early Modern Japan," *Senri Ethnological Studies* 46 (March, 1998) 83-97, *Central Authority and Local Autonomy, passim*.

<sup>123</sup> Patricia Sippel, *Financing the Long Peace: The Agricultural Tax in the Tokugawa Domain*. Harvard University, Ph.D. Thesis, 1994; "Popular Protest in Early Modern Japan: The Bushu Outburst," *HJAS* 37.2 (1977), 273-322.

<sup>124</sup> Les Mitchnick, *Traditional and Transitional Tax systems During the Early Modern Period: A Case Study of Choshu Han, 1600-1873*; Constantine N. Vaporis "Post Station and Assisting Villages: Corvee Labor and Peasant Contention," *MN* 41.4 (Winter 1986): 377-414.

<sup>125</sup> Conrad Totman, "Land-Use Patterns and Afforestation in the Edo Period," *MN* 39.1 (Spring 1984), 1-10; *The Origins of Japan's Modern Forests: The Case of Akita*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1984.

<sup>126</sup> Conrad Totman, *The Green Archipelago: Forestry In Pre-Industrial Japan*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989.

<sup>127</sup> Byung Nam Yoon, *Domain and Bakufu in Tokugawa Japan: The Copper Trade and Development of Akita Domain Mines*, Princeton University, Ph.D. Thesis, 1995.

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<sup>118</sup> Arne Kalland, *Fishing Villages in Tokugawa Japan*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press (Curzon Press), 1994.

<sup>119</sup> Michael Birt, *Warring States: A Study of the Go-Hojo Daimyo and Domain, 1491-1590*, Princeton University, Ph.D. Thesis, 1983.

<sup>120</sup> Reinhard Zollner, "Die Takeda als Feudalherren in Kai no kuni im Spiegel des Koyogunkan," in Eva Bachmayer, Wolfgang Herbert, Sepp Linhart, Sepp, eds. *Japan, von Aids bis Zen: Referate des achten Japanologentages 26:28. September 1990 in Wien*. Wien: Institut für Japanologie, Universität Wien, 1991, 165-180.

<sup>121</sup> Thomas Smith, "The Land Tax in the Tokugawa Period," *JAS* 18.1 (1958), 3-20. Reprinted in *Studies*, 283-299.

<sup>122</sup> Philip C. Brown, "The Mismeasure of Land," "Never the Twain shall meet: European land survey techniques in Tokugawa Japan," *Chinese Science* 9

investigation of domain economic activities into still another arena, the development of mining resources in Akita. In contrast to limited treatments of gold and silver mining in survey works, Yoon chose to look at copper mining. We still lack extended studies of development of domain monopolies although they do come in for some treatment in works focused on local economic policy and development (e.g., Roberts, 1998 and Ravina, 1999).

Our story thus far has emphasized politics and political organization at the top, first in the efforts to create national stability and solid institutional structures, and with a greater emphasis in recent years, examination of domain organization and politics. If one wished to treat the Shogun and Emperor as the apex of political institutions, even the increased attention devoted to domain organization and policies represents a shift in scholarly attention downward from the top. But recent scholarly gaze has shifted much further down the political hierarchy.

**Village, Town and City.** Studies at the district and village level have never been entirely absent from the scholarly agenda. Thomas Smith (1952, 1959<sup>128</sup>) did much to lay the foundation for the field, and William Chambliss produced the first extended village study (1965).<sup>129</sup> Anthropologist Harumi Befu (1965, 1966) considered the office of village headman, and Dan Henderson (1975) examined village contracts. William Kelly, another anthropologist, explored institutions of regional cooperation that developed around the need to share and cooperatively administer irrigation resources (1982).<sup>130</sup> Neil Waters (1983) chose to examine a district when he investigated the impact of the Meiji Restora-

tion on ordinary communities.<sup>131</sup> Arne Kalland (1994) departed from the typical focus on agricultural communities to look at fishing villages, also the venue for David Howell's (1995<sup>132</sup>) examination of the development of the Hokkaido fishing industry. While both of these works go well beyond a straight institutional history, descriptions of the relevant institutions and policy debates form an important part of each. The same may be said for Kären Wigen's (1995) study of craft industries in the Shimo-Ina region.<sup>133</sup>

Village – generated institutions have also been the object of some study. Tanaka Michiko's doctoral thesis (1983<sup>134</sup>) explored young men's associations (*wakamono nakama*). Late medieval and Sengoku village institutions that created self-governing patterns and paradigms for village institutions under the Tokugawa settlement have been the focus of Hitomi Tonomura (1992<sup>135</sup>) and Kristina Troost (1990<sup>136</sup>). A number of the examples of corporate control of arable land studied by Philip Brown were purely village creations (1988, etc.), and patterns of land ownership in one village, Chiarajima have been explored by William Chambliss (1965).<sup>137</sup>

The question of land ownership is fundamen-

<sup>131</sup> Neil Waters, *Japan's Local Pragmatists: The Transition from Bakumatsu to Meiji in the Kawasaki Region*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University Press, 1983.

<sup>132</sup> *Capitalism from Within*.

<sup>133</sup> *The Making of a Japanese Periphery*.

<sup>134</sup> Michiko Tanaka, *Village Youth Organizations (Wakamono Nakama) in Late Tokugawa Politics and Society*. Princeton University, Ph.D. Thesis, 1983.

<sup>135</sup> Hitomi Tonomura, *Community and Commerce in Late Medieval Japan: The Corporate Villages of Tokuchin-ho*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992.

<sup>136</sup> Kristina Kade Troost, *Common Property and Community Formation: Self-Governing Villages in Late Medieval Japan, 1300-1600*, Harvard University, Ph.D. Thesis, 1990.

<sup>137</sup> Philip C. Brown, "State, Cultivator, Land: Determination of Land Tenures in Early Modern Japan Reconsidered," *JAS* 56:2 (May, 1997), 421-444; "Warichi seido: soto kara mita omoshiroa, naka kara mita fukuzatasa," *Shiryōkan kenkyū kiyō*, (March, 1999): 161-227; Chambliss, *Chiarajima*.

<sup>128</sup> Thomas C. Smith, "The Japanese Village in the Seventeenth Century," *Journal of Economic History* 12.1 (1952), 1-20. Reprinted in *Studies*, 263-282.

<sup>129</sup> William Chambliss, *Chiarajima Village: Land Tenure, Taxation, and Local Trade, 1811-1884*. 1965: Tuscon, Arizona: University of Arizona Press, 1965.

<sup>130</sup> William Kelly, *Water Control in Tokugawa Japan: Irrigation Organization in a Japanese River Basin, 1600-1870*, Ithaca, New York: Cornell China-Japan Program, 1982.

tally related to how land was registered for tax purposes – primarily seen as a function of hegemony like Hideyoshi and domains. Prior to the 1990s, standard interpretations stressed the role of national land surveys in determining who has the right to exploit farmland and the obligation to participate in the payment of a village's land tax. Kozo Yamamura relied on this analysis when he proposed that seventeenth to nineteenth century Japanese who held superior cultivation rights in effect had rights of nearly modern private possession that assured them of the fruits of investments they might make in land (1979).<sup>138</sup>

Yet in more recent, ground level studies, Philip Brown (1987 ["Mismeasure" and "Land Redistribution Schemes"], 1997, 1999) has argued that the situation is more complex and determination of land rights lay at the domain and village level. In part as a result, in about a third of Japan's villages, villagers exercised corporate control over arable land. In these villages there was no direct tie between any particular plot of farmland and a village "shareholder" who had the right to manage arable land and pay taxes.

Studies of village institutions have been matched recently by more extensive examination of the institutions of urban centers. James McClain (1980, 1982, 1992, 1994, 1999)<sup>139</sup>, McClain and Ugawa Kaoru (1994)<sup>140</sup>, McClain and John Merriman (1994)<sup>141</sup>, McClain and Wakita Osamu (1999)<sup>142</sup>, and their co-authors in

<sup>138</sup> Kozo Yamamura, "Pre-Industrial Landholding Patterns in Japan and England," in Albert M. Craig, ed. *Japan: A Comparative View*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979, 276-323.

<sup>139</sup> James L. McClain, "Castle Towns and Daimyo Authority: Kanazawa in the Years 1583-1630," *JJS* 6.2 (Summer 1980), 267-299; "Edobashi: Power, Space and Popular Culture in Edo," in *Edo and Paris*, 105-131; "Space, Power, Wealth, and Status in Seventeenth-Century Osaka," in *Osaka: The Merchants' Capital*, 44-79.

<sup>140</sup> James L. McClain and Ugawa Kaoru, "Visions of the City," in *Edo and Paris*, 455-464.

<sup>141</sup> James L. McClain and John M. Merriman, "Edo and Paris: Cities and Power," in *Edo and Paris*, 3-41.

<sup>142</sup> James L. McClain and Wakita Osamu. "Osaka Across the Ages," in *Osaka: The Mer-*

*Edo and Paris: Urban Life and the State in the Early Modern Era* (1994; William Coaldrake<sup>143</sup>, William Kelly<sup>144</sup>) explore urban institutions.

A common theme has begun to emerge from these studies of local communities: In typical studies prior to the nineteen-eighties which viewed the commoners as largely passive or ineffective in modifying or opposing their seigneurial overlords, recent studies explicitly recognize that commoners had a very active role in creating local institutions and running them.<sup>145</sup> The role of commoner initiative even in the formation of domain policy is given especially strong emphasis in Roberts (1997), and Herman Ooms (1996) has stressed the way in which some villagers were capable of transforming laws and edicts to serve their own ends or of successfully getting domain authorities to act on their behalf against other villagers. Some of these themes are also reflected in Mark Ravina's work on domain politics (1999).<sup>146</sup>

Cutting across a number of the themes noted already, the study of popular disturbances, *ikki*, experienced a boom in the 1980s and 1990s, with contributions from Herbert Bix (1986<sup>147</sup>), Selcuk Esenbel (1998), William Kelly (1985<sup>148</sup>), Anne

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*chants' Capital*, 1-21.

<sup>143</sup> William H. Coaldrake, "Building a New Establishment: Tokugawa Iemitsu's Consolidation of Power and the Taitokuin Mausoleum," in *Edo and Paris*, 153-74.

<sup>144</sup> William W. Kelly, "Incendiary Actions: Fires and Firefighting in the Shogun's Cap[ital] and the People's City," in *Edo and Paris*, 310-331.

<sup>145</sup> This is a major theme of the essays cited in the preceding paragraph, but also in my work on land redistribution systems (see, for example, "State, Cultivator, Land") and the development of rural administration (*Central Authority and Local Autonomy*).

<sup>146</sup> Roberts, *Mercantilism in a Japanese Domain*; Ooms, *Tokugawa Village Practice*, Ravina, *Land and Lordship*.

<sup>147</sup> Herbert P. Bix, *Peasant Protest in Japan, 1590-1884*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986.

<sup>148</sup> William W. Kelly, *Deference And Defiance in Nineteenth-Century Japan*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.1985.



Walthall (1986<sup>149</sup>), James White (1988, 1992, 1995<sup>150</sup>), George Wilson (1982)<sup>151</sup> and Stephen Vlastos (1986<sup>152</sup>). Some protests were sparked by domain or *bakufu* policies, especially taxation, but others concerned issues of village governance or attempts to gain administrative redress for the growing influence of the market. These latter issues form an important part of William Hauser's early study of the Kinai cotton trade.<sup>153</sup>

Finally the interest of historians in the transformation of institutions at all levels during the Bakumatsu-Meiji transition merits notice. An early collection of essays on the subject edited by Jansen and Rozman (1986<sup>154</sup>) focused on these problems and included essays on the central government by Albert Craig, the military by Eleanor Westney, Gilbert Rozman on urban structures, Richard Rubinger on education, Umegaki Michio on domains and prefectures, Henry Smith II on the transformation of Edo into Tokyo, Andrew Fraser on local administration, Martin Collcutt on policy toward Buddhism, and Marius Jansen on the ruling class. Neil Waters (1983) and James Baxter (1994) examined district and prefectural transformations in much greater depth.<sup>155</sup> Other shorter treatments include works by John Hall

and Marius Jansen.<sup>156</sup>

## II. New Perspectives

The field of institutional and political history now has a sufficient history and a large enough contingent of practitioners to have produced some important, competing perspectives. The most significant of these discussions concerns the characterization of the state from the late sixteenth to mid-nineteenth century. The oldest characterization cast Tokugawa and its immediate predecessor regimes as feudal, a term typically defined in more often political-structural terms than specified as an economic or Marxian conceptualization when it was defined at all.<sup>157</sup> By the 1962, John Hall had begun to question that characterization and by 1968, when he and his co-editor, Marius Jansen, sought a title for their collection of new and republished essays, they labeled the period "early modern." *Studies in the Institutional History of Early Modern Japan*. In no small part this re-characterization was sparked by their perception that ties between daimyo and Shogun, retainer and daimyo, quickly became depersonalized and routinized in the seventeenth century. In place of personal ties of loyalty, a stable, very bureaucratic organization lay at the core of domain institutional life. In the nineteen-sixties this transformation was the wave of the future (based in part on the emerging application of contemporary functionalist-structuralist definitions of modernization to Japan which were heavily influenced by Talcott Parson's, Reinhard Bendix's and others' readings of Max Weber's and Emile Durkheim's work), but some textbooks in the nineteen-seventies continued to refer to pre-Meiji warrior government as "feudal." Indeed, Joseph Strayer's introductory essay in *Stud-*

<sup>149</sup> Anne Walthall, *Social Protest and Popular Culture in Eighteenth-Century Japan*, Tuscon, Arizona: University of Arizona Press, 1986.

<sup>150</sup> James White, "State Growth and Popular Protest in Tokugawa Japan," *JJS* 14.1 (Winter 1988), 1-25; *Ikki: Social Conflict and Political protest in Early Modern Japan*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995; *The Demography of Sociopolitical Conflict in Japan, 1721-1846*. Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley, Center for Japanese Studies, 1992.

<sup>151</sup> George M. Wilson, *Patriots and Redeemers*.

<sup>152</sup> Stephen Vlastos, *Peasant Protests and Uprisings in Tokugawa Japan*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986.

<sup>153</sup> *Economic Institutional Change*.

<sup>154</sup> *Japan in Transition*.

<sup>155</sup> Waters, *Japan's Local Pragmatists*; James C. Baxter, *The Meiji Unification Through the Lens of Ishikawa Prefecture*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University Press, 1994.

<sup>156</sup> Hall, "From Tokugawa to Meiji," Jansen, "Tosa During the Last Century."

<sup>157</sup> *Feudalism in History* was one of the early post-war efforts to explore feudalism in a comparative historical context based on a single definition of the term for purposes of the project. David Howell is one of the few scholars who now explicitly embrace a Marxist definition of feudalism as applicable to the Tokugawa. See "Territoriality and Collective Identity."

ies, comparing Japan and early modern Europe, used both terms, early modern and feudal, without a sense of mutual exclusivity or contradiction.<sup>158</sup>

Regardless of whether the political order and the era were treated as feudal or early modern, the vexing question of how to describe the relationship of political periphery and center has not been resolved. A number of characterizations have been offered, all of which focus in varying degree on the balance between centralization and decentralization in the early modern state. Totman's *Politics in the Tokugawa Bakufu* (1967) and Bolitho's *Treasures Among Men* (1974) explicitly considered the Tokugawa failure to centralize authority along the lines of the strongest European absolutist rulers. Totman, from the publication of *Japan Before Perry* (1981) came to characterize the political order as an integral bureaucracy.<sup>159</sup> Mary Elizabeth Berry (*Hideyoshi*, 1982) treated the political structure as a federal system. Mark Ravina adopted Mizubayashi Takashi's characterization of the state as "compound" and one in which domains not only retained an identity as independent states, but in which relations of authority between daimyo and Shogun on the one hand, and daimyo and retainer on the other are described in terms that represent a rejection of the order as non-feudal: feudal authority, patrimonial authority and seigniorial authority.<sup>160</sup> Luke Roberts saw domains as acting in ways that straddle the line between independent states conducting foreign affairs among themselves and components of a larger, unitary political order.<sup>161</sup> Why these latter characterizations should be preferred over "federalism" or even "confederation" is not entirely clear, for in that federal system with which we are most fa-

miliar, the United States, the sense of state identity and negotiations with other states as "foreign" entities is still a prominent characteristic of political life, even in the face of the central government's expanding power. Ronald Toby has taken Roberts and Ravina to task for over-emphasizing the autonomy of domain authority, particularly in the context of his view that Tokugawa Japan is an emerging nation-state and domains clearly are functioning within a Tokugawa-dominated political framework.<sup>162</sup>

One suspects that the reason Ravina and Roberts separate themselves from Berry lies partly in the different eras on which each focuses. Berry treats Hideyoshi, the kingpin who laid the foundation for national peace and a stable political order. Ravina and Roberts are interested in later domain-level developments and perspectives. Berry's subject must contend with openly hostile, external opponents in the form of other daimyo alliances led by the Tokugawa, Date and others; the domains in Roberts's and Ravina's studies have a very stable relationship with the Shogunate and other domains, and certainly one that does not come to a military confrontation that would illuminate the degree of forceful control the Shogun might be capable of imposing.<sup>163</sup>

Quite apart from characterization of the structural order in its entirety, Brown (*Central Authority and Local Autonomy*) has attempted to assess the capacity of central political figures, especially Hideyoshi and to a lesser degree, the early Tokugawa, to impose their administrative will on the daimyo through purportedly national policies – land surveys, class separation, for example. Rather than stress state fiat, based on his case

<sup>158</sup> Joseph Strayer, "The Tokugawa Period and Japanese Feudalism," in *Studies*, 3-14; on the influence of contemporary sociological and economic theory, see the various volumes in the Princeton series on Japan's modernization listed above, note 7.

<sup>159</sup> *Japan Before Perry: A Short History*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981.

<sup>160</sup> "State-building and Political Economy in Early Modern Japan," *JAS* 54:4 (November 1995), 887-1022.

<sup>161</sup> *Mercantilism in a Japanese Domain*.

<sup>162</sup> Ronald P. Toby, "Rescuing the Nation from History: The State of the State in Early Modern Japan," *MN* 56: 2 (Summer 2001), 197-238.

<sup>163</sup> Given the very sparse definition of key terms (such as federalism, feudal, seigniorial, patrimonial) in these works, it is also possible that there is more agreement among these scholars than might appear to be the case. Terms of political analysis like these have a long history of discussion in Western scholarly literature and creating good operational definitions requires rather fuller treatment than most of the literature on early modern Japan provides.

study of Kaga domain and its local administration, he suggests common problems encouraged daimyo to move in similar directions that were manifested in a variety of institutional structures, an argument also made by Ravina for a later period.<sup>164</sup> John Morris (*Kinsei Nihon chigyōsei*, 1990) has also questioned the dominance of central models of administration. His studies suggest that *hatamoto* lords, widely treated as akin to automatons of the Tokugawa, actually display a substantial degree of autonomy in their policies and administrative development.

Two short studies, White's on the legitimate use of force (1988) and Totman's on river conservancy (1992) both suggest that the reach of *bakufu* authority became stronger with the passage of time.<sup>165</sup> While the picture they present contrasts sharply with the image of the Bakumatsu *bakufu* administration as inept, it does not by any means contradict that impression. Both treatments focus on limited areas of operation – quelling civil disturbances and flood prevention – in which domains and *bakufu* were likely to share interests rather than contexts in which they came into conflict.

These studies by White and Totman, and in subtle ways, those of Ravina and Roberts, raise the important question of how the relationship between the domains and Shogun changed over time. Even if the *bakufu* never achieved central control to the degree of eighteenth and nineteenth century England, for example, even if it failed to build sufficient resources to keep itself together to fend off the Restoration, this subject is of great importance and deserves further attention, especially if we are to understand the under-studied political realm of the late seventeenth to early nineteenth century. We can anticipate that changes in these relationships were not uniform

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<sup>164</sup> Brown describes state-society relations as “flamboyant” (lots of bark, little consistent “bite”) rather than typical of a “strong state” as political scientists might describe define it: having a substantial capacity to formulate and implement policies on a wide variety of issues; see Ravina's *Land and Lordship*.

<sup>165</sup> White, “State Growth,” Conrad Totman, “Preindustrial River Conservancy,” *MN* 47.1 (Spring 1992), 59-76.

across the domains, but that they would vary based on factors such as size, geographical and social distance from the Shogunate, and other characteristics.

Perception of the relative strength of central political authority has important implications for explaining institutional and legal history. If we determine that Hideyoshi's edicts on issues such as class separation were instrumental in generating reforms outside of his own domains, then we not only have evidence for very substantial national administrative authority, we can also explain the motivations for such policies largely by examining Hideyoshi and his advisors. In later periods, we could examine only the motives for Shogunal edicts on the sale of land and people, or specific reform efforts such as the Kyōhō Reforms, strictly in terms of central planners.

If, however, we conclude that central initiatives of this sort are not determinant, then explanations for both divergent and similar domain policies must be sought at lower levels. New questions arise. Which kinds of daimyo were most subject to Shogunal models? How much institutional or policy variation is there throughout Japan on a given issue? Are there indirect influences of Shogunal policies that we can discern (e.g., by regulating the central markets of Osaka, does the *bakufu* encourage the spread of its mercantile practices to the provinces)? The possibility of regional variation in domain institutions and policy has been addressed to some degree in the work of Luke Roberts (e.g., commoner initiative in domain policy), Mark Ravina (e.g., disparate patterns of retainer control), Philip Brown (e.g., village landholding rights) and John Morris (retention of retainer control of fiefs and *hatamoto* administrative autonomy), and some of this perspective has been incorporated in Conrad Totman's survey, *Early Modern Japan*, but the widespread impression remains one in which domains are seen as similarly structured and following largely similar policies. To the degree that future studies bear out the findings of these studies, the impression of *bakufu* administrative, legal and policy patterns as typical would have to be substantially modified.

Finally, the debate over the degree of *bakufu* authority over domains has a bearing on how we view the process of Restoration in the mid-

nineteenth century. As pre-1990s interpretations have it, early modern central authority moves from the great power of Hideyoshi and the early Tokugawa to a struggling, internally divided and largely ineffective authority in the Bakumatsu era. If, however, scholarly evaluation of the early Shogun's authority is reduced along the lines suggested by recent studies, we at least sense that the loss of authority and administrative effectiveness was not as great as we had perceived. This may not suggest completely new explanations for the Restoration, but it does indicate a less dramatic decline over the course of the eighteenth century on the one hand while still allowing for some actual enlargement of *bakufu* authority during the period as James White ("State Growth") and Totman ("Preindustrial River Conservancy") suggest. (N.B.: We can look forward to a rather different perspective on the nature of the early modern state and the transition to the new political order of post-Restoration Japan in the forthcoming publication of David Howell's *Geographies of Identity in Nineteenth Century Japan*.<sup>166</sup>)

Issues of this sort run deeper than *bakufu* and domain structure or policy issues. Thomas Smith (*Agrarian Origins*) postulated a tendency for villages to abandon hereditary village headship under the pressure of parvenus. Herman Ooms (*Tokugawa Village Practice*) has suggested that increased efforts to create legal restrictions on outcastes grew out of a rural status insecurity that resulted from a blurring of old class lines. Village political conflicts erupted over continued use of common land (*iriai*) by the community as a whole in the face of demands that it be privatized. A number of prominent examples of these and other phenomenon can readily be identified, but an important issue remains: How typical of the general pattern of institutional change were they? As village organizations changed, how effective or ineffective were domain administrations in capitalizing on the changes or managing them? It is almost passé for historians to indicate that large contiguous domains were more effective in controlling their subjects than rulers

of small or scattered domains. Although the logic underlying this argument is attractive (large, contiguous domains offer fewer chances for escape into less heavily regulated communities), the pattern has never been verified and given the increased long-distance mobility of villagers during the eighteenth century, there is even reason to doubt this widely accepted claim.

Such issues suggest that a more systematic approach is needed to assess regional patterns of variation. Simple divisions of Japan into advanced and non-advanced regions, common in characterizations of regional differences in economic history, will not suffice since many subjects of potential interest are not grounded in the market economy. For example, many regions with only modest commercial and economic diversification converted retainers to a stipend and withdrew their seigneurial rights, others did not or did so incompletely. What combination of factors made complete confiscation of such rights desirable and feasible? Household disturbances (*oie sōdō*) wracked a number of seventeenth-century domains. Are there underlying patterns to them that reveal systematic sources of political tension and/or weakness within domains?

Regardless of the answer to these kinds of questions, the current state of English-language scholarship clearly indicates the existence of multiple – sometimes, competing – institutional patterns that discourage simple reliance on motives of the political center to explain either stability or change during the period. Political power was spread throughout different layers of Japanese society, and even if that held by the Shogun was preponderant, it was nonetheless shared.

### III. Theories, Methods and Materials

The shifts in focus and interpretation just outlined partly result from a tremendous expansion in the kinds of materials and methods scholars employ and in the theoretical frameworks that stimulate or aid their investigations.

**Methods and Theory.** While rather traditional approaches to the study of political and institutional history still dominate the field, multidisciplinary methodological and theoretical influences appear in a smattering of works. Kalland (*Fishing Villages*) and Kelly (*Water Control*) pro-

<sup>166</sup> Berkeley: University of California Press, forthcoming.

duced major studies from an anthropological perspective. Kalland, Howell (*Capitalism from Within*), and Totman (*Green Archipelago, Early Modern Japan*), for example take up a concern with the influence of natural environmental factors on man typically understood to be the concern of geographers, and Kären Wigen explicitly argues for the introduction of geographic perspectives into our study of Tokugawa history.<sup>167</sup> Ooms's (*Tokugawa Village Practice*) employs the perspectives of Pierre Bourdieu in analyzing manipulation of law at the local level and his analysis of status issues in local politics, but others in diverse fields find much of value in this sociologist's work. James White's study of monopolization of the use of legitimate force and his clear differentiation of claims to authority from the ability to implement policies ("State Growth") as well as his studies of popular disturbances (*Ikki, Demography of Sociopolitical Conflict*) are solidly grounded in concepts and theories of the political scientist. Literary criticism has informed a number of more recent studies of Bakumatsu politics (see, for example, the 1982 studies by Harootunian, Koschman and Steele; Koschman 1987).<sup>168</sup> Gregory Smits takes some of this perspective to heart in his analysis of the ambiguous position of Okinawan political leaders as they dealt with their Satsuma overlords.<sup>169</sup> The wave of interest in sophisticated statistical analysis that characterized a substantial segment of social science history in the nineteen-seventies and nineteen-eighties was not much applied to the problems of Tokugawa political history. Only White

<sup>167</sup> Kären Wigen, "The Geographic Imagination in Early Modern Japanese History: Retrospect and Prospect," *JAS* 51.1 (1992), 3-29.

<sup>168</sup> Harootunian, *Toward Restoration*; Koschman, "Action As Text," Mitō Ideology; Steele "Rise and Fall." The list of publications influenced by literary-critical theory becomes longer when we move outside the realm of political action into the sphere of intellectual and religious history. See the essays by James I. McMullen and Janine Sawada, *Early Modern Japan: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 10:1 (Spring, 2002), 22-38; 39-64 respectively.

<sup>169</sup> Gregory Smits, *Visions of Ryukyu: Identity and Ideology in Early Modern Thought and Politics*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1999.

(e.g., *Ikki*), Brown ("Practical Constraints") and Ravina (*Land and Lordship*) have taken advantage of this approach. Even in the realm of theoretical perspectives to which historians traditionally feel more open, Marxism, only David Howell (e.g., *Capitalism from Within*) currently employs an avowedly Marxist perspective.

Biography has not received a great deal of attention, at least relative to the large number of candidates for such treatment one can readily envision. Biographical works are widely scattered across time and few in number. Hall's study of Tanuma (1955), Jansen's of Sakamoto (1961), Herman Ooms's (1975) and Petra Rudolph's (1976) work on Matsudaira Sadanobu, and Masato Matsui on Shimazu Shigehide (1975<sup>170</sup>) have been followed more recently with extended biographies by Berry on Hideyoshi (1982), Totman on Tokugawa Ieyasu (1983<sup>171</sup>), and Kate Nakai's study of Arai Hakuseki (1988). Finally, it was only in 2000 that a book-length study of Oda Nobunaga appeared in English, that of Jeroen Lamers.<sup>172</sup> The list gets extended a bit if we add article-length treatments; nonetheless, we could profitably add to this listing studies of a number of early *kinsei* daimyo, key Shoguns (e.g., Hidetada, Iemitsu, Tsunayoshi), as well as prominent figures in the Restoration Movement, all people who were the movers and shakers of their day.

While seldom the choice for doctoral thesis and first major publication, there can be little doubt that greater availability of biographies has the potential to personalize Japan's historical experience in ways that increase its appeal. The challenge to historians of pre-modern Japan has always been to convey a sense of individual character to figures who left us very little in the way of personal observations, detailed descriptions of their meetings with others or other tracks by which we can explore their personalities.

<sup>170</sup> Masato Matsui, *Shimazu Shigehide, 1745-1833: A Case Study of Daimyo Leadership*. 1975: University of Hawaii, Ph.D. Thesis, 1975.

<sup>171</sup> Conrad Totman, *Tokugawa Ieyasu: Shogun*, San Francisco: Heian International, 1983.

<sup>172</sup> Jeroen Lamers, *Japonius Tyrannus: The Japanese Warlord Oda Nobunaga Reconsidered*, Leiden: Hotei Publishing, 2000.

**New Materials.** In the realm of research materials, the diversification in subjects studied, the analysis of the actual operation of political institutions and the implementation of laws on the ground level necessarily entailed exploitation of new sources. The shift from *bakufu* policy-making and pre-Restoration political activities to domain administration and policies itself meant moving beyond collections of primary materials such as *Dai Nihon Shiryō* and similarly massive “national” compendia, to materials collected at the prefecture, city, town and village levels. The Japanese publication boom in local histories since the end of World War II has greatly facilitated our access to these important sources. The past two decades also evince movement toward exploitation of non-traditional sources such as archaeological artifacts and artwork.<sup>173</sup> Increased archaeological activity by our Japanese colleagues promises further enticement for us to focus greater attention on these kinds of evidence.

We have come a long way from the nineteen-fifties when John Hall could claim new scholarly advances based on the increased ability of Western scholars to employ primary documents in printed form; today, recent studies increasingly engage subjects for which reliance on printed materials alone is insufficient. Thomas Smith’s study of the land tax system (“Land Tax,” 1958) and William Chambliss’s village study (*Chiaraijima*, 1965) are early examples, Kate Nakai employed some manuscript materials in her political biography of Arai Hakuseki (1988), as did Anne Walthall (*Social Protest*, 1986) and Philip Brown (e.g., *Central Authority*, 1993). Most of the exciting and innovative aspects of Luke Roberts’s work (especially *Mercantilism*, 1998) would have been impossible without examination of handwritten diaries, ordinances, and petitions. Mark Ravina (*Land and Lordship*, 1999) similarly relied extensively on manuscript materials.

Efforts to examine the fate of policies, administration of justice, and local institutions of landholding and the like increasingly about the limita-

<sup>173</sup> Constantine N. Vaporis, “Digging for Edo: archaeology and Japan’s Pre-Modern Urban Past,” *MN* 53:1 (Spring 1998): 73-104, “A Tour of Duty: Kurume Hanshi Edo Kinbun Nagaya Emaki,” *MN* 51:3 (Fall 1996): 279-307.

tions of printed sources. Printed sources typically select documents representative of particular sorts of records kept by authorities (tending to include the earliest examples) or documents that are clearly pivotal – indicating a major shift in policy, for example. Even very large compendia of transcriptions tend to be very selective rather than comprehensive. When serial statistical data are needed one has no recourse but to descend into dusty archives, rummage through indexes of varying utility, and sometimes just peruse unclassified records to uncover appropriate documents with which to construct a series.<sup>174</sup>

At this point it would not be fair to say that the turn to manuscript materials is mainstream, of course, but the trend does seem to be growing not only in the realm of political history but also in other fields. The studies enumerated above represent a very incomplete complete listing of works reliant on manuscript sources, and younger scholars show an increased interest in exploiting these kinds of sources.<sup>175</sup> While studies of *bakufu* and domain policy formulation may continue to rely heavily on printed primary sources, other areas of current interest simply cannot be explored effectively based solely on printed sources. Consequently, it is hard to imagine a

<sup>174</sup> Philip Brown’s studies of land taxation, land survey methods and corporate landholding and David Howell’s study of Hokkaido fishing (1995), for example, have required use of exactly this kind of data. Herman Ooms (1996) exploited a number of manuscript materials in sketching the operation of institutions in ordinary village disputes and the manipulation of local and domain institutions by villagers.

<sup>175</sup> I base my conclusions on an Internet survey of primary source use patterns to which 326 individuals responded. Survey conducted August to October, 2001, and reported in *Gakujutsu shiryō riyō no jūshōka to guroobaruka*, in Koide Izumi, ed., *Kenkyū to shiryō to jōhō wo musubu: “Nihon kenkyū gakujutsu shiryō jōhō no riyō seibi ni kansuru kokusai kaigi no kiroku*, Tokyo: Kokusai Kōryū Kikin, 2002, distributed by Nihon Toshokan Kyōkai, 12-25, article appendix, 240-255 and “State of the Field: The Odd Couple? Digital Data and Traditional Primary Sources in Japanese Studies,” *Asian Studies Newsletter* 48:1 (February, 2003) 16-17.

decline in the need to exploit manuscript sources. Yet despite this emerging trend, there is no regular program in Western institutions that concentrates on training scholars to read manuscript materials.

### **Periodization and Connections to Non-Japanese Histories**

The preceding sections have raised questions that help us understand the development of Tokugawa administrative organizations, law and legal practice, political disputes and policy shifts in their own context rather than in terms of what the Tokugawa may have contributed to Meiji. The “Tokugawa as Foundation for the Meiji” perspective was in large part the stimulus for the creation of the field. It reverberates through the very earliest work of John Hall, Marius Jansen and Thomas Smith. These individuals and others were sufficiently broad-minded historians so that their own intellectual reach extended much further back in time and they made considerable efforts to develop our awareness of elements of the Sengoku, Shokuhō and Tokugawa past even though such work may have had little direct relationship to the birth of Meiji. Nonetheless, that set of intellectual concerns occupies the largest place in the entire range of Western political and institutional studies for this period.

This tendency to stress the Meiji connection partly reflects the newness of the field. The act of compiling the bibliography for this essay drove home very forcefully the newness of our enterprise. My impressionistic sense is that even by comparison with Chinese political history for a comparable period, a field that also did not “take off” until after World War II, the volume and range of early modern studies is small.

Institutional factors are also at play. For many years the graduate program in Japanese history at the University of Chicago has characterized itself as one focused on Japan’s nineteenth and twentieth century history. The Meiji connection has been explicitly institutionalized in this setting, although that connection has not been defined in the same way as it was for the “modernization theory” perspective of the Princeton series. Elsewhere, for much of the post-war period programs at Harvard and Princeton have been guided

by figures with a very strong Meiji connection. While we have yet to see how career interests will play out for a number of younger scholars, one can not help but be struck by relatively recent hires for positions advertised as “early modern Japan” that were filled by people whose initial work at least was focused on the Meiji connection or questioned it. In institutions that cannot afford more than one specialist in Japan or East Asia, the pattern of hiring tends to favor modernists or those whose work has a clear Meiji tie.

In reflecting on hiring tendencies of this sort, certain affinities appear to be influential. The process of “modernization” (broadly conceived) is one with which non-Japan specialists feel conversant at some general level. In the institutional realm, it involves processes that are familiar: the emergence of generally stronger central governments, the extension of state interests into the promotion of new technological and business innovation, the transformation of the legal context in which businesses can be organized and promoted, the assumption by governments of a direct role in education, and the like. Similar issues could be listed for other fields of history, too.

When the non-Japan specialists who dominate history departments hire a Japanese historian, they tend to feel they can make at least some general intellectual connections with candidates who specialize in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. I do not wish to take this observation to an extreme, for recent essay collections on urban history suggest that some scholars are making successful connections between Japanese historians and others for earlier periods. Nonetheless, I do sense a pattern of increasing isolation of those Tokugawa specialists who lack the Meiji connection and I believe there is a *de facto* tendency for *non-Japanese historians* to exert a strong pressure on the field of Japanese history to re-define “early modern Japan” as the period from the very late eighteenth through nineteenth centuries.

If part of the tendency to stress Tokugawa history as the foundation for Meiji lies in the predisposition of non-Japanese historians, part of the responsibility may also lie in the approaches of Western, largely American, historians of Japan to their subject. For one, scholars tend not to

translate descriptions of pre-modern Japanese institutions into terms that connect us with historians of other lands. At the most basic level, we typically treat *bakufu* governance as *sui generis*. We make no effort to compare or contrast it with other forms of military government. Indeed, in the late nineteen-sixties the field gave up the one conceptual framework that helped us connect to pre-modern European historians (for example): feudalism. It was replaced for the most part with “early modern,” a term that, in its political and institutional implications, is extremely diffuse and vague as applied to Japan. Japan lacked the foreign pressures that encouraged the extended, active “state-making” of the Western world – the context that gave birth to the concept of early modernity in the political sphere in European history. The loss of this intellectual handle has made it more difficult to draw useful parallels to the historical experiences of other regions that form the point of reference for historians who study Western nations/regions generally. While some interdisciplinary conceptualizations have been introduced into the study of the late-sixteenth to mid-nineteenth century institutional and political history of Japan, none has yet proven satisfactory, perhaps because we present the terms – federalism, compound state, etc. – without much discussion of the model we have in mind and without sustained efforts to place them in broad conceptual and comparative context.<sup>176</sup>

I have suggested that (mostly) English language literature presents us with the image of a period often referred to by its ruling house’s names (Oda, Toyotomi, and Tokugawa) but that lacks a strong identity in its entirety and lacks ties that link its beginning to its end in the political sphere. Indeed, the period’s personality is rather split. The story of Tokugawa political history appears to move directly from robust youth in the early seventeenth century to doddering old age without the benefit of a period of maturity in between.

The structure of the *Cambridge History of Japan* appears to have codified the split. The structure of the volumes treats the late sixteenth

through eighteenth centuries as one unit, and nineteenth and twentieth century Japan as another. The latter part of what was typically treated as a single, pre-modern period is cut out and appended to the modern era as explanatory prologue. In combination with the emerging, more somber evaluations of the Meiji reformation, the nineteenth century increasingly takes on the cast of the “early modern” period that is manifested in the twentieth century.

The self-descriptive statements sent to me by people who want to join two professional electronic networks I administer (Early Modern Japan Network and H-Japan) reinforce this image of periodization. It is not uncommon for people to say something along the lines of, “I am a specialist in early modern Japanese history. I’m working on Meiji popular movements,” or “I specialize in early modern literature and I’m working on late nineteenth century novels.” Often graduate students or recent Ph.D.s author these notes, suggesting a consciousness of periodization that is different from that seen twenty years ago. Have they quietly rejected the old periodization as intellectually vapid or have they just never engaged this issue directly during their careers? Regardless of the answer to this question, their statements suggest a definition of “early modern” that extends well into Meiji at the least.

Periodization helps us organize our understanding of history and it should be more than a rigid formula: periodization may legitimately be different when history is viewed from different perspectives. An institutional historian need not employ the same scale in dividing a history as a social historian concerned with Braudelian underlying structures. No scheme is cast in stone. We need not treat pre-Meiji Japan back to the late sixteenth century as a single unit of historical time. We can re-construct our standard models.

The question is how the profession and its individual members go about this process of creating and defining periods, and whether it is undertaken self-consciously.

The discussion here raises two fundamental questions regarding our periodization of “early modern Japan.” The first, of course, is whether treating the period from the rise of Oda Nobunaga, Toyotomi Hideyoshi or Tokugawa Ieyasu to the Restoration’s eve as a unit of analysis retains

<sup>176</sup> See, e.g., Philip Brown, review of Ravina’s *Land and Lordship* in the *HJAS* 61:2 (December 2001), 428-29.



any utility, at least in the context of political and institutional history. Despite the fact that hegemonic rule and domain structures share some broad characteristics, a number of treatments of the period do not create a very unified picture. Instead, they create a rather segmented one. Can a period that has a scholarly image that lacks a connecting middle stand? The second question is who is going to control the definition of appropriate historical periods? Will it be our colleagues in other fields, or will we find ways to define periods based on the trajectory of Japanese history and then make the efforts needed to defend that conceptualization to our non-Japan colleagues?

### Unfinished Business

The problem of the balance between central and local influences (seen in both local studies and the discussion of how to characterize the Tokugawa state), in combination with the pattern of chronological emphases in our studies to date suggests areas in which additional research may be useful. I believe two areas in particular deserve more of our attention.

**In the Beginning.** First, the period from the rise of Oda Nobunaga through the end of the seventeenth century begs for further investigation. Within this period we have very little study of the adaptation of samurai to the emerging conditions of peace. We have materials that touch on the formal ideological statements of how samurai should act in the new age, but little that deals directly with how the adjustment was made. Analysis of domain house disorders (*oie sōdō*) would help to tell this story, but the issue is broader, involving *rōnin*, factions within domains that were dissatisfied with the limitations the Tokugawa tried to impose on domains, and the like. We have studies of the formation of large domains, Satsuma, Kaga, Tosa, Bizen, Hirosaki, Tokushima, Sendai, and even to some degree the Shogun's domains, but most domains were considerably smaller than these. Do we see somewhat different processes at work in their early institutional and political development? Did they generally have an easier or more difficult time exercising control over their landed retain-

ers? This story not only involves the degree of samurai submission to daimyo control, it also must include study of the relationship of samurai to commoners, study of their role as administrators and managers and as fief holders as well as their role, heretofore neglected, as a standing military force.

Sometimes intimately related to the household disturbances is an equally important issue, that of how domains adjusted to a stable relationship with the *bakufu*. Some factions in Kaga, for example, continued to push for more autonomy from the Shogun into the fourth decade of the seventeenth century. In other domains, too, the degree to which different factions were willing to sit in quiet submission is open to question. Were such tensions dealt with only in the context of domain politics, or did the Shogun play an active role? If so, in what ways?

*Oie sōdō* were also bound up with another source of seventeenth century tension, the disposition of retainer fiefs. While we have gotten comfortable with the image of retainer fiefs being effectively confiscated or controlled by daimyo, work by John Morris (1980, 1988, 1999<sup>177</sup>), Ravina (1999), and Brown (1993) show this process to have been more complicated. The movement was not always a one-way street (Ravina), and even when it was, it might be highly contested (e.g., Kaga), at least in the short run. The degree to which fief-holders retained autonomous powers also varied substantially. All this hints at a dynamic story that remains to be told.

Further, institutional history of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries assumes that a largely homogeneous pattern of district and local administration along with institutions of land rights, corvee and the like were quickly established and changed little. However, this is clearly not the case. In Kaga, village boundaries were redrawn for many villages; district organization and the role of commoners in it changed

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<sup>177</sup> John Morris, "Some Problems Concerning Fiefs in the Edo period," *Transactions of the International Conference of Orientalists in Japan* (Tokyo) 25 (1980) 60-73; "Kinsei ryōshusei shikiron: ka-i ryōshu wo chūshin ni," in J.F. Morris, Shirakawabe Tatsuo and Takano Nobuharu, eds. *Kinsei shakai to chigyōsei*. Shibunkaku 1999, 3-38.

radically from the early years of the domain through mid-century. In areas such as Echigo, evidence indicates that land surveys were conducted in the classic manner and according to standard interpretations these same documents should have created a direct tie between cultivator and specific plots of land. Yet within a year or two villagers were reallocating land under systems that clearly show that such a direct tie was being ignored – if surveyors had attempted to establish it at all.

**At the End.** To date, our studies of the Restoration and the movement towards it have focused on the disruption of domain – *bakufu* relations created by Perry and the “opening” of Japan in elite circles. But the impact of that arrival had a far greater reach. There is, of course, the sense of curiosity and wonder that commoners experienced in regions where foreigners were housed and traveled, but there is also something quite different: The arrival of unwanted Western ships stimulated an institutional response that reached into many towns and villages across the land, the strengthening of coastal defenses. At the pinnacle of power strengthening defenses required policy decisions and an element of coordination that the Shogunate had not been required to exercise since the mid-seventeenth century. Did the experience reinforce dissatisfaction with the Shogunate, or do we find fairly effective inter-domain cooperation alongside a dissatisfaction that grows for other reasons? At the local level, in the coastal regions that were the first line of defense, districts and villages had to be mobilized to provide materials and create or refurbish defense infrastructure. Were local resources strained and hostilities generated by this process? How did local populations respond? Do we see evidence of an emerging nationalism or simply a conservative nativism at the local level?

**In the Middle:** The middle years of the Tokugawa institutional setting also deserve much more attention, as I have already noted. The response of domains (including the *bakufu*), districts and villages to increased demand, dwindling supplies of natural resources, and slowing increases in per hectare crop output form one significant area of concern. Some of the re-

sponses to these pressures led to efforts to radically modify existing institutions, once again including the legal structure of landholding rights (Tōdō and Kaga domain come to mind: both toyed with and began policies of a wealth-redistributing land reform). Luke Roberts (1998) has raised the specter of Osaka merchants being able to keep even a large daimyo like the Yamauchi under their thumbs even though daimyo renunciation of indebtedness to Osaka merchants has been widely recognized. How much did merchant power compromise the financial and fiscal flexibility of domains in dealing with budgetary red ink? How effective in relieving budget pressures were domain monopolies and how did they interact with non-monopoly enterprises as the economy diversified in the eighteenth century? One eighteenth-century *bakufu* response to budget problems was to reduce expenditures by having villagers foot the bill for officials who came to their villages on official business. While we can sympathize with that motivation, it also seems to open the door to bribery by villagers and extortion by officials. Did the quality and effectiveness of rural administration decline with this reform?

In addition to issues associated with the growing tension between population, resources, and the costs of domain administration, a variety of problems, most common in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, revolve around domain-*bakufu* and domain-subject relationships. Scholars have long assumed that the ability of the hegemony to shift domains like potted plants meant that Shogunal laws could be enforced through fief confiscation and transfer, yet examination of fief confiscation (*kaieki*) and transfer (*tenpu*) data suggests a much less clear-cut picture (Brown 1993; Ravina 1999). Evidence for the effectiveness of the *bakufu* inspectors (*junkenshi*) as an enforcement tool is also very limited. Especially in the seventeenth century, supposition of its effectiveness seems to supersede actual analysis of more than an anecdotal nature. How did the *bakufu* employ these tools? Were they really used to ensure enforcement of Shogunal edicts? Were they used for some other purpose? Were fief transfers considered by either Shogunal officials or the transferred daimyo to be punishment, even when the new fief was the

same size or only somewhat larger than the old? What impact did fief transfers have on administrative control over commoners? Did villagers and townsmen have more latitude in practice to develop and elaborate their own institutions and to thwart the will of their overlords in regions where transfers were relatively common?

Both from the standpoint of academic interest and for its potential to put a human face on the era, works that focus on major figures (whether formally cast as biographies or not), would be useful. Tokugawa Yoshimune is an obvious candidate, but one who, to date, has not been the sole focus of even one study. As noted above, Tsunayoshi has been the subject of several articles, but we have no comprehensive effort. Aspects of the careers of such figures have a bearing on a number of the issues we have raised above (e.g., *bakufu* - domain relations, reform eras). The careers of early daimyo have only been encompassed by studies devoted to other subjects (e.g., castle-town development and rural control), but more direct approaches might reveal a good deal about the stability or instability of their relationship to the Shoguns in the middle to late seventeenth century.

Mid-period domain reforms touched on by Ravina and Roberts raise the question of how representative *bakufu* reforms are, but in so doing, also encourage us to ask what the pattern of diffusion of institutional innovation actually was. Was the *bakufu* actually the innovator of reforms, an image with which we are left largely by default? Or was it a gatherer and re-transmitter of information about policies and institutions from across the land? Or perhaps the mechanisms of transmission involved contact among daimyo and their subordinates in Edo or the national kitchen, Osaka, while visiting or resident on other business?

One way, perhaps, to tie these political questions and a number of other non-political phenomena together might be to follow the current practice in Western studies and treat the "long" eighteenth century as a unit of analysis. In the political realm there are a number of direct parallels. As in eighteenth century France, the century was one of experimentation with efforts at centralization that often failed. Like many European nations, at both the national and local

levels (the estates of the nobility) leaders confronted the challenge of squeezing revenues from their subjects sufficient to meet the expenditures they felt essential. Challenged by new market forces, local populations engaged in increased levels of political protest. In the Americas, Europe and Japan, this century (especially considered as a "long" century) combines "feudal" elements from the past, with elements that lay a foundation for nineteenth-century transformations and shifting balances among them over time, even when they are not directly linked to "modernization."

A "long" eighteenth century has been something of a center of gravity for two recent comparative experiments in which Japan plays a role. The first, directly derived from a transformation of "modernization theory," one that conceives of multiple "modernities," asks if Japan, along with China, Europe and South Asia, shared in the growth of some sort of "public sphere," an arena in which private and official realms meet, giving the non-official realm some influence on the official in some way that was acknowledged by the members of these societies.<sup>178</sup> Answers to this overall question and related issues are not presumed, and there is not any consensus, but as a focus for investigation and discussion, this problem offers possibilities for constructive engagement of Japan specialists with those who study other regions of the early modern world. The second thrust springs from Southeast Asian specialists' efforts re-envision the development of pre-colonial societies in the region and has been brought into explicit focus by Victor Lieberman.<sup>179</sup> Like the old "modernization theory" of the fifties and sixties, the issues of increasing "convergence" and "uniformity" are present here, but treatments are much more sensitive to the ways in which the two tendencies may co-exist rather than result in the extinction of one by the

<sup>178</sup> See the essays in *Deadalus* 127:3 (Summer 1998), "Early Modernities."

<sup>179</sup> Victor Lieberman, ed., *Beyond Binary Histories: Re-imagining Eurasia to c. 1830*, Ann Arbor, Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 1999, with an essay on Japan by Mary Elizabeth Berry, "Was Early Modern Japan Culturally Integrated?" 103-37.

other. There is also a distinct effort to avoid the essentializing that many find in the early modernization studies. Although concerned with issues of proto-nationalism, international connectivity, and government policy, the issues that spring from Lieberman's to give this comparative approach a focus extend well beyond the sphere of the political and institutional.

These approaches do not resolve the problems associated with comparative studies of history, but they represent a more nuanced approach than that witnessed by some of the mid-twentieth century practitioners of the genre. These efforts are subject to much debate and their potential to draw meaningful cross-cultural conclusions are subject to considerable question. Nonetheless, to the degree early modern specialists in political and institutional history engage these discussions, we take advantage of opportunities to re-consider the nature of Japan's historical experience while simultaneously building bridges to non-Japan colleagues that can help demonstrate to them the intellectual value of our work. Considered in this light, study of mid-period "early modern" Japan may lead to a more robust, more unified scholarly image of the period as a whole than we have had heretofore.<sup>180</sup>

### Concluding Remarks

Any suggestions for further investigation such as these necessarily reflect personal experience and preferences and this list is only intended to be suggestive.

The expansion of the field, both in terms of the number of scholars and the volume of publications over the past quarter century are very exciting to see. We may now have a critical mass of scholars to generate perspectives independent of the "modernization" orientation that has been so prominent to date. We may have a foundation for thinking about the late sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries on their own terms as

well as a movement toward Meiji, a foundation for recognizing the retention of significant "traditional" or even "new-but-not-modern" elements within the Tokugawa polity. Our sensitivity to the complexity of Tokugawa political and institutional history is enhanced by the better preparation of scholars and their increased willingness to exploit manuscript documents and other non-traditional materials that scholars heretofore have shunned as too arcane or difficult. All of this is very promising.

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<sup>180</sup> At least in adopting such a focus the Japan field would join the growing ranks of participants in the internationally affiliated scholarly societies that focus specifically on the eighteenth century (e.g., the American Society for Eighteenth Century Studies, International Society for Eighteenth Century Studies).

**Political-Institutional History  
of Early Modern Japan:  
A Bibliography**

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I have reserved the heading "Politics" for studies that deal with major, far-reaching political trends and the events associated with them and I have used the "Policy" section to deal with more temporally and spatially limited studies. Thus, events leading to the establishment of the Tokugawa *bakufu* are treated in the "Politics" section, while studies of government relations with merchants (domain or *bakufu*) are treated in the "Policy" section. "Institutional/Government Structures" has been reserved for studies of the long-lasting arrangements through which political power was distributed throughout the late sixteenth to mid-nineteenth centuries rather than studies that focus on specific events or policies. I classified materials based on my understanding of where the major emphasis of each book or essay lies, even when the work may have substantial

implications for other subjects even within the realm of politics.

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