

## Japan and Western Europe\*

### *A Comparative Presentation of Their Social Histories*

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#### I. The Fundamentals

TAKAO TSUCHIYA'S BOOK on "The Development of Economic Life in Japan"<sup>1</sup> begins with the following phrase: "One finds various peculiarities of the economic life of Japan as compared with that of European countries; there is very little difference, however, in their fundamental course of development."

In fact, the parallelism of their development is amazing—the same stages in almost the same lengths of time, frequently even at the same time. And this is extremely interesting from the point of view of universal history, because it proves as wrong nearly all the theories of history presented up to this time, *viz.*, those regarding as the decisive factor *climate*, *race*, *geopolitical situation*, or, finally, *technics*. The fundamentals of Japanese culture are, in all these regards, diametrically opposed to those of Western Europe.

#### I

TECHNICS IS THE EXPLANATION given by the "materialistic interpretation of history" of Marxist philosophy. Friedrich Engels' dictum is widely known, that the hand-mill means feudal and the steam-mill capitalistic economy. Technics is maintained to be the "substructure," the independent variable, upon which the "superstructure" of policies and ideas is dependent.

Japan's history proves this doctrine to be false. Up to the Meiji restoration in 1868, the foundation of the Japanese State and economy was, without any doubt, agriculture. *Technically*, however, Japanese agriculture was and is utterly different from European agriculture. Instead of the plough and stock breeding, we find here spade-culture and cattle-less management. Ryūzu Torii reports<sup>2</sup> that horses and cattle, although already imported in prehistoric times, were used economically neither for production nor for consumption. Murray finds<sup>3</sup> that horses were exclusively

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<sup>1</sup> Tokyo, 1936.

<sup>2</sup> "Ancient Japan in the Light of Anthropology," Tokyo, 1937, p. 13.

<sup>3</sup> "Japan, the Story of the Nations," No. 37, London, 1894, p. 14.

used as saddle- and pack-animals, and that cattle, possibly under Buddhist influence, were never eaten and milk, butter and cheese never consumed. Sheep were almost unknown until foreigners imported them. Goats were to be found here and there. Dogs, cats, and poultry were the sole domestic animals kept everywhere.

## II

RACE-PHILOSOPHY as the popular explanation is just as incapable of solving the enigma. The population of Japan is as different as possible from that of Europe.

This divergence had its roots in the most remote prehistoric conditions. The "science of the spade" does not find in Japan the least trace of the "primal culture" of primitive hunters and gatherers which is uncovered almost everywhere in the world, and certainly in Europe.<sup>4</sup> The group of islands seems to have been empty of human population during the whole paleolithic era, at least during its first stage, old-paleolithicum. Masai Oka, as cited by W. Schmidt, holds it to be not improbable that young-paleolithic remains might be discovered. Fossils of early types of men like the *Simanthropus Pekinensis* or the Neanderthalian have never been found.

Of even greater importance is the fact that the merging of the three "primary cultures," and most probably *races*, did not occur in Japan, because one of them, the "totemist culture of higher hunters," did not exist there alone and unmixed, but appeared merely as a component of a mixture, the other component of which was the "matriarchal agrarian culture," which, Schmidt notes, "manifestly is the oldest and original of the country," observing that "it developed gradually into a kind of higher village-culture under the pressure of Asiatic influences."<sup>5</sup>

This stage was reached when, in the "period of Migration and Conquest,"<sup>6</sup> the third primary culture intruded upon that of the large "stock-breeders," the herdsmen. Its representatives, the Central-Asiatic nomads, Mongols, Altaians, etc., had been imprisoned as in a cage up to this time by the glaciers encompassing their homeland. During this isolation the riders of horses and camels among them had developed into the hardest and best disciplined warriors of the time. When the glaciers melted away they broke out in all directions, and either subjugated the groups they met or changed them into "secondary herdsmen"<sup>7</sup> with the same warlike psy-

<sup>4</sup> W. Schmidt, *Neue Wege zur Erforschung der Ethnologischen Stellung Japan*, Tokyo, 1935, p. 35.

<sup>5</sup> Schmidt, *loc. cit.*

<sup>6</sup> W. Schmidt.

<sup>7</sup> *System der Soziologie*, IV, p. 18.

chology and driven by the same lust for conquest: Indo-germans, Semites, Hamites, Polynesians, Malays.

In this manner everywhere in the world the "State" was created, the historical State arranged in orders or classes, in which the conquering group takes the rank of a dominating nobility. Such a state is Japan.<sup>8</sup>

It is a moot question which "races" played the part of hammer and anvil in this historical process of welding.<sup>9</sup> It is certain that the Ainu formed the main part of the subjugated group or groups, but it is not at all certain to which race the Ainu belong. Most writers count them members of the North-Asiatic race, together with the Tchouktches, Aleuts, Korjaeks and Eskimo.<sup>10</sup> Baelz, however, believed them to be "Caucasoids"<sup>11</sup> because they have white skin, strong beards, non-slit eyes, and no Mongol stain, and look, as he maintains, all of them like the late Count Leo Tolstoi. The Mongol stain, however, is no longer regarded as a reliable symptom of racial identity, and Denikin reports that the Ainu are similar to the Toda of India and the aborigines of Australia.<sup>12</sup>

Some writers believe that the Ainu are not the oldest inhabitants of Japan, holding that they have been found exclusively in historical times in the northern parts of the main island and farther north in Hokkaido (Yezo) and in Saghaline and the Kurile islands. This opinion is untenable. The neolithic remains (*Kjoekkenmoeddinger*) are identical in the whole country and prove that "the culture was the same from the North of the Kuriles to the South of Formosa,"<sup>13</sup> and that it was that of the Ainu.<sup>14</sup> Chamberlain concludes from the geographical names that they originally inhabited the whole south.<sup>15</sup> Baelz even states that the inhabitants of the Ryu-Kyu-islands in far south are physically very similar to the Ainu.<sup>16</sup> Possibly they were remnants which, unlike the great bulk of the tribes, were dispersed southward instead of northward. Also, the warlike Hayato of Kyushiu island were possibly related to the Ainu.

The Ainu came probably from the north over Saghaline, which can be reached by canoe over almost its whole length.<sup>17</sup> Near Norota, on the

<sup>8</sup> Schmidt, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

<sup>9</sup> Katsurô Hara, *Histoire du Japon*, Paris, 1926. Cf. Munro, "Prehistoric Japan," p. 680.

<sup>10</sup> Torii, *op. cit.*, p. 8. Murray (*op. cit.*, p. 28) counts them as belonging to the northern group of the Mongols.

<sup>11</sup> Nachod, *Geschichte von Japan*, Gotha, Vol. I, 1906, p. 33.

<sup>12</sup> Gowen, "An Outline History of Japan," London and New York, 1928, Vol. I, p. 27.

<sup>13</sup> Koganei, quoted by Nachod, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

<sup>14</sup> Gowland, quoted by Nachod, *ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>15</sup> Nachod, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 367.

<sup>17</sup> Murray, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

52nd parallel, the distance is only eight kilometers, and the sea is so shallow at ebb-tide that it is sometimes possible to cross dryfooted.<sup>18</sup>

The conquerors, however, assuredly landed in the South. They came either from the West over the narrow strait between Korea and the main island, with the islet of Tsushima in its midst facilitating the crossing, or they came from the South with the warm "Pacific Gulf-Stream" (Black Stream), which reaches the two great islands of Kiushiu and Shikoku and washes the eastern shores of the main island up to Tokyo.<sup>19</sup> This Gulf-Stream brought "Vikings,"<sup>20</sup> probably crossbreeds of Malay, Indonesian and Polynesian elements,<sup>21</sup> possibly with some admixture of Melanesian Negro blood, as Nitobe supposes.<sup>22</sup> They brought with them the national lightly-built house, the like of which is only found in southern countries, as for example in Dutch-India, in the Philippines, and even in the South-West of the Asiatic continent.<sup>23</sup> They brought with them, furthermore, the most important cereal, rice. Neither of these could possibly have originated in Korea or North-West-Asia. This is confirmed by one of the earliest reports on Japan. In the Chinese "San Kuo Tche," written about 250 A.D., we read that the Japanese are very like in customs and morals to the inhabitants of the island of Hainan in South-West-China.<sup>24</sup> Gowen indentifies these elements of Southern origin with legendary Komasu, a bear-like warrior-tribe in Kiushiu.<sup>25</sup> Nachod, however, sees no reason for this supposition, and believes the Komasu were Ainu.<sup>26</sup>

Some other writers deny that strong Malay elements have entered the Japanese people. They appeal to the fact that not the slightest trace of Malay language and culture are found on the Ryu-Kyu-islands, which the Black Stream touches on its way to Japan.<sup>27</sup> This opinion, however, is almost without any weight before the strong arguments of Hara quoted above, and, as Kaji writes,<sup>28</sup> it has been generally relinquished. Likewise affected is the opinion that the "plebeian" type, with dark skin, broad face, flat nose and slit eyes (characteristics to be found also among the aristo-

<sup>18</sup> W. E. Griffis, "The Mikado's Empire," twelfth edition, 1912, p. 26.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>20</sup> By "Vikings" we understand not only the Scandinavian, but all conquering sea-tribes: Phoenicians, Hellenes, Malays, etc. Cf. *System der Soziologie*, II, p. 273.

<sup>21</sup> Gowen, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

<sup>22</sup> "The Japanese Nation," quoted by Gowen, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

<sup>23</sup> Hara, *op. cit.*, pp. 39-40.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 59.

<sup>25</sup> Gowen, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

<sup>26</sup> Nachod, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

<sup>27</sup> Murray, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-1.

<sup>28</sup> *Japan, ein Kultur-Ueberblick*, Tokyo, 1918, p. 8.

crats)<sup>29</sup> is caused by the mixture with Ainu blood, since it seems rather to originate in the southern elements.

*Linguistic investigations* are notoriously unable to solve questions of national origin or race, because the victors adopt the language of the conquered just as often as the latter take up the language of the conquerors.<sup>30</sup> They are of exceptionally little use in the case of the Japanese language because the linguists disagree completely on this. Hara believes it to belong in its bulk to the North-West-Asiatic idioms with little admixture of Pacific elements.<sup>31</sup> Nitobe calls it next related to the Korean, but differing from this language more than the Mongol and Manchu dialects. He considers the Japanese neither "a lateral nor collateral with any other language."<sup>32</sup> Von Wlislocki, following the best European authorities, attributes the language to the Mongol family, as belonging to the one of its main departments, the polysyllabled, the other members of which are the "Touranians," embracing the Finns, Altaians, etc.<sup>33</sup>

The origin and race of the invaders who came from the West are somewhat dubious as well. It is certain, however, that they were members of the great family of Mongol-speaking peoples. They are the ancestors of the "patrician type," the type of the "chieftain," slender, well-proportioned figures with light-yellow or white faces. How much of these differences rests upon real inheritance, and how much on influence of the social environment, is a moot question which we cannot discuss here.<sup>34</sup>

These elements obviously landed in several, possibly in many consecutive bands. Even in historical times "Sushu," Vikings of the tribe of Tunguses, the ancestors of the Manchu, plundered the shores of Nippon. This lasted up to the eleventh century.<sup>35</sup> Similar raids must have occurred frequently in pre-historic times and have sometimes led to lasting settlement, just as in the case of all other seafaring tribes. Legends and prehistoric remains seem to be in favor of this hypothesis.

Murray supposes with Baelz that an earlier, more primitive immigration invaded the South of the main island, and a later, a more highly civilized band, the South-West in Kiushiu.<sup>36</sup> Clement reports, following Brinkley,

<sup>29</sup> Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. *System der Soziologie*, IV, pp. 18-172 ff.

<sup>31</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 44.

<sup>32</sup> *Op. cit.*, quoted by Gowen, p. 32.

<sup>33</sup> *Donauvoelker*, (*Helmolds Weltgeschichte*), Vol. V., p. 367.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. *System der Soziologie*, IV, p. 182 ff., our important study concerning "mock-hereditary races." The American-born and *fed* Japanese appear to be a much more "patrician" type than the Japan-born. They are taller and possess better teeth, because they chew harder food than rice and fish.

<sup>35</sup> Gowen, *op. cit.*, p. 30; Nachod, *op. cit.*, p. 383.

<sup>36</sup> Murray, *op. cit.*, pp. 29-30.

that one branch of the ancestors of the present-day Japanese buried their dead in barrows, in which weapons and tools of bronze were found, whereas another band buried in "dolmens" in which only weapons and tools of iron were unearthed.<sup>87</sup> Torii, however, states that Japan never knew a bronze period, but that the iron period followed immediately the stone period.<sup>88</sup>

More obscure still is the greatest of all prehistoric questions: that of the origin, location and social influence of the people of the megalith buildings. Besides the barrows and dolmens just mentioned there are, as Torii relates,<sup>89</sup> menhirs, tumuli, cairns, stone-circles, etc. Thus we meet here traces, if not of a *people*, certainly of a *culture* which is found on almost all the shores of the Old World—on the Baltic and the Northern sea, on the Atlantic, on the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean, on the eastern shore of the Black Sea, in Syria, Palestine, Northern Persia, in India and the Sudan.<sup>40</sup>

The very numerous Japanese dolmens—there are several hundreds of them—are said, it is true, to bear no likeness at all to those of the other countries.<sup>41</sup> The present author does not possess the competence to decide this question, but believes it advantageous to place the description of a Japanese dolmen by Aston<sup>42</sup> beside another given by Schuchhardt concerning the European dolmens. According to Aston the "Missagi" contain a sepulchral chamber, constructed of big stones fitted together without mortar. The roof is formed out of giant stone slabs. The entrance is a corridor covered by similar slabs of stone. Over the whole a tumulus of earth is heaped. Schuchhardt writes: "These big stone tombs are constructed on the natural soil. The walls of a rectangular chamber are formed out of cleaved erratic blocks, flat slabs are put on as roof, and a mound piled upon it."<sup>43</sup> The bigger and younger ones, which he calls long-beds or gallery-tombs (*Ganggraeber*), possess a lateral exit, the whole covered up by a long rectangular mound sometimes more than a hundred meters in length. Since Gowland himself states that the Japanese mounds had originally not two summits, as was first supposed from the appearance, but only one, the formation being caused by disintegration,<sup>44</sup> the difference seems not overwhelmingly important.

<sup>87</sup> Clement, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

<sup>88</sup> Torii, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> Much, *Die Heimat der Indogermanen*, second ed., 1904, p. 163.

<sup>41</sup> Gowland, quoted by Nachod, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

<sup>42</sup> Aston, quoted by Nachod, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

<sup>43</sup> "Alteuropa, A Prehistory of Our Continent," 2nd ed., p. 123 ff.

<sup>44</sup> Gowland, quoted by Nachod, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

We have here to choose between two hypotheses: these megalithic buildings are either an invention of the Japanese themselves or belong to the cultural circle of the people of the megalithic buildings, which are restricted almost wholly to the coasts of the Old World. Adherents of the theory of the cultural circles will be favorable to the second supposition. It is easily possible that sailors of Japanese or foreign race brought to Nippon the news of the huge tombs constructed for the rulers of those distant countries, possibly even of the creed occasioning them: veneration of the dead.

The Japanese dolmens are comparable in size with the biggest buildings of this kind in the West. The most important are the so-called "emperors' tombs" (Missagi). These, however, are found not only in Yamato, the home province of the emperors, but also in other parts of Japan, where they are the tombs of great chieftains "who were regarded as equals of the ruling family."<sup>45</sup> One of these dolmens is 674 feet long, 425 wide and 65 high. The oldest, as Gowland supposes, were erected during the last centuries before the Christian era, in the fully developed iron period. Bronze was never found in any of them. The emperors were buried in this manner up to the seventh century of our era. Then the custom was abolished by law, allegedly in 646, to be replaced by the Buddhist practice of burning corpses on the funeral pile.<sup>46</sup>

To summarize: the *racial* foundation and mixture of the Japanese people is no less different from that of the European nations than their technics.

### III

THE GEOPOLITICAL SITUATION is equally different. This will be best understood by comparing Japan with England. Japan remained a typical "Land-State" up to the Meiji restorations, whereas England, now Japan's model and most dangerous rival, showed, from the very beginnings, strong traits of the "Sea-State." Both countries are big islands, situated on the extreme borders of the Eurasian continent, of about the same size and capacity of population. Both are provided with excellent harbors and fertile plains. Nevertheless, even in Saxon times, before the conquest by William, the English merchant was so highly estimated that anyone became a Thane (noble) who had made three journeys to the Mediterranean in his own ship.<sup>47</sup> On the contrary, in Japan no profession was so deeply despised as that of the merchant; the merchant is of much lower rank than the peasant.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Nachod, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 312-3; Sansom, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

<sup>47</sup> Brodnitz, *Englische Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, I., 1918, p. 385.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Honjo, "The Social and Economic History of Japan," Kyoto, 1935, p. 77.

This contrast is explained by the wholly different relationship of the two countries both politically and economically to the nations of their geographical sphere. England was already, millennia before the Christian era, the centre of gravitation of the most important intercourse of the time, the trade in tin, the one component of bronze, which was mined only there. Japan never possessed a similar natural monopoly. Consequently, she did not experience the early contact with higher developed nations through the mediation of sea-faring merchants and missed the settlement of foreigners in particular quarters which we find everywhere in Europe: the "Stahlhof" in London, the "Tyske Brygge" in Bergen, the "Fondaco dei Tedesh" in Venice, the Ghetti of the Jews everywhere before the great pogroms and expulsions.<sup>49</sup> Those colonies always enjoyed their own legislation and administration and were strong enough economically and in a military sense to hold their own against any violence; their power frequently affected the decision in the inevitable feuds over succession and thus, as Max Weber states,<sup>50</sup> they became the nuclei of a peculiar kind of cities which are known only to the Occident but not to the Orient—cities with *burgesses*, i.e., bearers of political rights. Only in the Occident exists "the township as a municipality with its own law and courts, and possessing autonomous particular magistracies." In Japan there are hardly the beginnings of such autonomous townships; the towns of Japan never became the political powers which, allied to the central authority, broke the might of the refractory feudal nobles in all of Western Europe. Still less did they rise to that complete political independence which so many cities of Italy, Germany and Switzerland attained. Their development went at most to the formation of certain monopolistic guilds.<sup>51</sup> Consequently they seem never to have played a political rôle. No earlier than in the period immediately before the Meiji restoration did the rich capitalists of Osaka begin to exercise a certain influence on the policy of the country.

There is, however, one exception, if only a short-lived one—the city of Sakai. Situated on the borderline of two provinces, she could not become garrison and seat of government, but was highly favored by being the starting point of the shortest route to Shikoku Island. Thereby the town gained importance during the civil wars and was able to obtain from her feudal lords the same privileges by which the Hansa-cities came to power, to which Hara expressly compares Sakai.<sup>52</sup> She acquired the right to erect

<sup>49</sup> Cf. *System der Soziologie*, II, p. 379; IV, pp. 786, 863, 953.

<sup>50</sup> Max Weber, *Wirtschaftsgeschichte* (1923), p. 273. Cf. *System der Soziologie*, II, p. 551.

<sup>51</sup> Honjo, *op. cit.*, p. 200–1.

<sup>52</sup> Hara, *op. cit.*, p. 196.



fortifications and was governed by an almost sovereign guild of wealthy merchants, much as Ghent by her "Poorters."<sup>53</sup> These patricians maintained a troupe of "knights-errant," i.e., Samurai out of service who were very numerous at that time, and could even defy powerful feudal lords, because they were able to rely upon other lords whose creditors they were, and even upon the Shoguns themselves who were also in their books.

The great period of the city, the sole island of peace and security in lawless conditions, in which art and science came to a high flowering, began in 1476, when she, for the first time, sent a fleet to China. Chinese weavers were imported who developed their trade to high achievements. In 1541, after the Portuguese had brought fire-arms, the fabrication of these weapons<sup>54</sup> was also begun.

The proud city fell a victim to rising absolutism. Nobunaga, the first of the Condottieri who had attained complete princely power, broke her walls in 1571 and subjugated her.<sup>55</sup> This is the only example of a Japanese town approaching the European type.

Sea-States developed in Europe not only about commercial harbors but also from pirate-lairs.<sup>56</sup> Why not in Japan, although she possesses so many excellent ports and, in her numerous fishing population, the most efficient crews? Her ruling class came by sea, must therefore have been accustomed to navigation, and we know actually that the Japanese were daring Vikings in different periods of their history. Korean annals report no less than five and twenty big onslaughts on the reign of Silla during the first five centuries of our era.<sup>57</sup> These, however, are not mentioned in the Japanese annals.<sup>58</sup> Later this kind of profession seems to have been neglected for a long time. We hear again of such piracy in the thirteenth century when Koreans complained of it before Kublai Khan. This was the cause of his two unfortunate expeditions of 1274 and 1284 against the island empire. This latter one as is well known, met the fate of the great Spanish Armada; it was destroyed by a tempest. From this time on the pirate raids seem never to have ceased. In the anarchy of the Ashikaga period "Japanese Vikings raided all the coasts of Asia from Tartary to Siam."<sup>59</sup> In the year 1369 an embassy of the Myng dynasty complained of it,<sup>60</sup> and as late as 1605 John Davis, who gave his name to the Strait between Greenland

<sup>53</sup> *System der Soziologie*, IV, p. 920.

<sup>54</sup> Hara, *op. cit.*, p. 196 ff.

<sup>55</sup> Hara, *op. cit.*, p. 222.

<sup>56</sup> *System der Soziologie*, II.

<sup>57</sup> Nachod, *op. cit.*, p. 180.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 376.

<sup>59</sup> Clement, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

<sup>60</sup> Hara, *op. cit.*, p. 185.

and the continent of America, was killed in a battle against Japanese pirates.<sup>61</sup>

We have to ask, therefore, why, in Japan, in contrast to the Mediterranean, the Baltic, and the Malay archipelago, cities did not originate from such pirate lairs?

Two explanations offer themselves at once. The first is that the invaders found relatively large and fertile plains. This, however, favors everywhere the formation of Land-States into more highly developed Land-States. On the Mediterranean there is generally only a narrow coastal plain beyond which the mountains rise in steep ascent. Where, however, larger fruitful plains formed the hinterland of a harbor, there arose instead of genuine Sea-States, like Tyros or Athens, Land-States like Carthage or Rome. In Southern Italy or "Great-Greece," conquered by Hellenic Vikings, both types existed side by side: Sybaris, the town of the Junkers whose trade was performed for them by Milesians and Etruscans—and Tarent, the city of merchant adventurers.<sup>62</sup>

The second reason is obviously that the long war against the Ainu demanded the whole power of the Japanese warrior-class just at the time it had resigned navigation and piracy. In these battles the warlike mind found satisfaction, glory, and large property in land, and everywhere in the world that means nobility.

The decisive factor of Japan's geopolitical situation is, however, her relationship to China.

Western Europe, England not excluded, was overrun in the course of history by one wave of conquerors after the other who very frequently erected their own States on the ruins of the conquered regimes. Japan, however, remained free of invasion through almost two millennia. The only attempt at conquest foundered: the expedition of Kublai Khan, the heir of Dschinghis Khan, in whose court Marco Polo was living.

It is well known with what force the invasions of the Celts, Germans, Huns, Avars, Normans, Saracens, etc., influenced the history of European States. Japan remained untouched and undisturbed from abroad. The first favorable consequence is that she remained through about two millennia under the rulership of the same dynasty. One knows well how bitterly the German empire had to suffer because her dynasties, one after the other, died out after durations of about only a century: the Carolingians, Saxons, Franks, Hohenstaufens—and how fortunate, on the contrary, was France because the same family under different names as Capet,

<sup>61</sup> Gowen, *op. cit.*, p. 237.

<sup>62</sup> Mommsen, *Römische Geschichte*, I, p. 356.

Valois, Bourbon, held the throne through a full millennium. Thanks to this good fortune France escaped the worst of all possible happenings—that of an elective regime, which destroyed Germany.<sup>63</sup>

The continuity of the dynasty means, however, more than merely this independence of external disturbance. It is of still greater importance for the internal life of the people as the sign of the continuity of tradition in general. Wilhelm Schmidt<sup>64</sup> was well conscious of the weight of this fact, when he wrote: "This means an extraordinary interweaving of people and dynasty in Japan which assuredly has greatly contributed to the internal solidity of the nation's character, to the ever and ever reviving continuity of her own culture, and to the consistency of her political behavior."

To the duration of her dynasty Japan further owes her escape from conflict which was of the greatest influence, favorable as well as unfavorable, on the European nations—the conflict between *State and Church*. The emperor is to the national consciousness the immediate descendent of the Sun-Goddess, himself the almost-divine supreme priest of the aboriginal Shinto religion, who remained the spiritual head of the nation even in those times when he was robbed of his temporal power<sup>65</sup> by the mayors of the palace. Therefore not even the most powerful of the Shoguns has ever dreamt of usurping the imperial dignity, as, for example, Pippin did by dispossessing the last of the Merovingians. Even if the religion of China, the tolerant Buddhism, had been as intolerant as Christianity and Moham-medanism; even if there had existed in China an omnipotent pope instead of the innumerable heads of sects; even in this case no foreign religious dignity would have been able to exercise deciding influence on Japan's history. It was just as impossible that a spiritual power should arise in the country itself, capable of opposing as such, as *spiritual power*, the emperor-pope, although both the churches developed into *temporal*, feudal, powers.

Japan has all this to thank for her military security, and all of it she owes to the neighborhood of China.

As long as a strong government existed in China it was fully occupied with securing the border against the barbarians of the desert, and there was no cause for China to wage war against the small island-sovereignty in its east, as long as it did not provoke retaliation. Whenever, on the other hand, a new onslaught of the nomads of central Asia had overrun the Central Empire, its force was exhausted in the conquest and organization of the huge territory. There was enough to conquer, to secure and to plunder; there was no need to grasp still further beyond the sea.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. *System der Soziologie*, II, p. 525-6; IV, p. 551.

<sup>64</sup> Schmidt, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

<sup>65</sup> Clement, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

"Neighborhood," says Lacombe, "is a thing of chance unrelated to the genius or the performance of a people. Neither Chinese nor Greeks are responsible for having been in contact, the first with peoples of lower, the latter with peoples of higher culture: good chance here, bad chance there."<sup>66</sup>

Now, China's bad was Japan's good chance. The latter owes to the neighbor the most fruitful stimuli in all the fields of culture, policy, administration, economy, technics, art, and science, just as Western Europe owes all that to the Romans, and as the Slavs are indebted to the Byzantines.

This, it is true, is valid only for the beginnings of the empire. Later Japan suffers by the fact that China is her only neighbor of real importance. Sansom expresses this most clearly:

An astonishing variety of ingredients went to the formation of Western Learning, from Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Hebrew, and Arabian to elements out of all the national categories of modern Europe. . . . In striking contrast was the position of the Japanese so placed that they could draw direct inspiration only from the almost static and uniform culture of China. Even the religion and the art which they acquired of other parts of Asia were not handed on to them until they had received a Chinese imprint.<sup>67</sup>

#### IV

THE LAST BIG CONTRAST we have to study concerns the *climatic conditions* of both the great cultural spheres. They are just as diametrically different. Western Europe is favored by the most moderate climate. The mountain ridges go all of them from west to east, protecting the southern parts against the polar winds, and the Gulf-Stream brings warmth to the northern parts. Japan, however, stands under most extreme conditions. Situated on the rim of the "Pacific Fault," the *crevasse* splitting the planet, she is shaken by earthquakes; she lies on the path of the typhoons; she is plagued by floods and droughts. No transversal mountains protect her from the icy winds of the polar zones. Therefore she has Arctic winters and nearly tropic summers. Her soil produces tea, taro, rice and wheat in summer.

Tatsura Watsuji, obviously under the strong influence of Buckle's famous book,<sup>68</sup> attempts to deduce from these facts the Japanese character. Scheidl reports his opinion as follows:

Man here is compelled to fight ceaselessly against Nature and dare even her sudden malicious whims. Thus he becomes patient and docile because he

<sup>66</sup> *L'Histoire considérée comme science*, Paris, 1894, p. 244.

<sup>67</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 446.

<sup>68</sup> *Cf. System der Soziologie*, I, p. 661.

must get up ever again after each new defeat, but they communicate to him also unsteadiness and whimsicality.<sup>69</sup>

## V

WE HAVE EXHAUSTED all possibilities of explaining the phenomenon which interests us, the striking similarity of Japanese and European social development, with one single exception: The *sociological* interpretation of history. This is closely related to the "materialistic" in regarding certain economic relationships as the independent variable, the substructure, to the revolutions of which the superstructure must conform. But it is not production it holds responsible, and certainly not technics, but *distribution*. And especially what is called the "*primal distribution of the factors (or agents) of production*" or, in other words, *of wealth and fortune*.

This distribution occurred by warlike violence in the period of Migration and Conquest. The historical State was created in order to exploit the subjugated group as much and as lastingly as possible. To that end the means of production of those primitive times, consisting almost wholly in the soil, were acquired by the victors together with the laborers needed to cultivate it. This is the primal distribution: property, freedom and honor to the victorious; serfdom (or slavery), poverty and dishonor to the conquered group. Therewith the great enigma of the distribution of the social product is solved in the most simple and obvious fashion: he who has the fortune has naturally the income it yields; he who has the soil has the rent; he who owns the slave owns his product.

This primal distribution is the *raison d'être* of each newly founded State of world-history; this relationship of the orders or classes is ordained in its *constitution*, is guaranteed by its *law* and realized by its *administration*, which, naturally, the ruling class reserves for its own members, and is sanctioned by its *official religion*.

Therefore, because they are constructed on the same politico-economical foundations, all States of world-history have to run the same course or gauntlet, torn by the same class-struggles, shaken by the same passions, through the same stages of development following the same inexorable laws of social psychology.

One of these States is Japan.

<sup>69</sup> *Die geographischen Grundlagen des japanischen Wesens*, Tokyo, 1937, p. 13.

(Continued)