

Zeitschrift: Asiatische Studien : Zeitschrift der Schweizerischen Asiengesellschaft = Études asiatiques : revue de la Société Suisse-Asie
Herausgeber: Schweizerische Asiengesellschaft
Band: 43 (1989)
Heft: 1

Artikel: Tokugawa Tsunayoshi (1646-1709) : a Weberian analysis
Autor: Bodart-Bailey, Beatrice M.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-146844>

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 13.07.2025

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

TOKUGAWA TSUNAYOSHI (1646-1709)
A WEBERIAN ANALYSIS*

Beatrice M. Bodart-Bailey

Historians of Japan find little in Max Weber's work to inspire them. Their colleagues working on China are more fortunate: Weber's essays on Taoism and Confucianism still provide material for international scholarly debate.¹ Weber mentions Japan over forty times in his major work *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, but the majority of these references are brief and his source of information – the 1891 work of his colleague Karl Rathgen – not altogether reliable. Dealing with the Far East was one of those rare occasions when Weber was unable to base himself on primary source material, and he himself is known to have described this work as “modest”, designed mainly to open new perspectives in the discussion of the traditionally accepted evidence.²

* This article is based on a paper given at the Annual Conference of the Canadian Asian Studies Association, 1984. My thanks go to colleagues in Toronto, Munich and Canberra for their suggestions and criticism, but especially to Dr J. Caiger of the Australian National University.

1 See W. Schluchter (ed.), *Max Webers Studie über Konfuzianismus und Taoismus* (Suhrkamp Taschenbuch Wissenschaft 402, Frankfurt, 1983), a volume featuring essays from twelve international contributors.

2 J. Winckelmann (ed.), *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* [henceforth cited as *WG*] (J.C.B. Mohr, Tübingen: 1972). Excepting one section of the final chapter, the work has been translated as G. Roth and C. Wittich, (eds), *Economy and Society* [henceforth cited as *ES*. As the paging is continuous from vol. 1 through 2, volume numbers will not be given] (University of California Press: 1978), 2 vols. Generally Weber does not acknowledge the source of his information. However, three times in the text he names his source as ‘Rathgen’ [*ES*: 1038, 1100, 1221], which the editor identified as Karl Rathgen's work *Japans Volkswirtschaft und Staatshaushalt*, (Duncker & Humblot, Leipzig, 1891) [*ES*: 1234-5]. Examples of incorrect statements are *ES*:1801: ‘The Japanese samurai too changed his lord at will’. *ES*. 1229: ‘... in Japan “self-administration” was a feature of the professional associations of the villages, but not of the cities’. (See Andrew Fraser, “Town-ward Administration in Eighteenth-century Edo”, *Papers on Far Eastern History*, Australian National University, No. 27, March 1983:131-141.) *ES*: 1094: ‘... in Japan ... feudalization was closely related to the slow progress, and often to the decline of the market economy’.

Weber's comment is reported in Marianne Weber, *Max Weber, ein Lebensbild*, Verlag von J.C.B. Mohr, Tübingen, 1926, p. 347. On this occasion the comment refers to his essays ‘Die Wirtschaftsethik der Weltreligionen’.

However, Weber's lack of material and consequent inability to correctly analyse historical conditions in Japan does not imply that his sociological framework is irrelevant for the interpretation of Japanese history. Weber might not have been well informed about Japan, but the patterns he abstracted from the flow of world history are still illuminating when used in conjunction with Japanese primary source material.

In the 1950's Robert Bellah demonstrated this fact when he applied Weber's theory of the "Protestant Ethic" to Tokugawa Japan. Just as Weber had defined protestant inner-worldly asceticism with its demands for economy and diligence as an important factor in the rise of capitalism, Bellah saw related religious values preparing Japan for modern industrial development. Some three decades later Minamoto Ryōen re-examined this issue. After showing in some detail where Weber — owing to lack of reliable data — was misled in his conclusions about the influence of Japanese religious practices upon economic development, Minamoto argued for agreement in general terms with Bellah's interpretation.³

Already prior to Bellah, in the 1940's, Maruyama Masao had employed Weber's analysis of feudal practices when dealing with the financial policies of the eighth shogun Yoshimune. More recently Thomas M. Huber used Weber's concept of the "propertyless intelligentsia" in re-appraising the forces underlying the Meiji restoration.⁴ However, even though the first mention of Weber in Japan appeared as early as 1905 and his writings have had considerable influence on a number of scholars concerned with historical, social and economic inquiry,⁵ his theories have, to my knowledge, so far not been used to systematically analyse a comprehensive stretch of Japanese political history.

In this paper I am using two of Weber's theories to interpret and evaluate the controversial government of the fifth Tokugawa shogun Tsunayoshi (1680-1709). Firstly, I see the abrupt change of political direction under Tsunayoshi as a turn from the feudal to the patrimonial paradigm as outlined by Weber. Secondly, I use Weber's schema of the centralization of authority in showing how all of Tsunayoshi's major poli-

3 Robert N. Bellah, *Tokugawa Religion* (Glencoe, 1957), pp. 194-196. Minamoto Ryōen, *Kinsei shoki jitsugaku shisō no kenkyū* (Tokyo, 1980), pp. 28-54.

4 Maruyama Masao, *Studies in the Intellectual History of Tokugawa Japan* (Princeton and Tokyo University Press, 1974), p. 243. T.M. Huber, *The Revolutionary Origins of Modern Japan* (Stanford University Press, 1981), pp. 226-230.

5 Uchida Yoshiaki, "Max Weber in den japanischen Sozialwissenschaften 1905-1978", translated and introduced by K. Kracht, *Bochumer Jahrbuch zur Ostasienforschung* 4, 1981, p. 80.

cies are based on an underlying common political direction and how the institutional changes initiated in the course of this process are akin to what Weber describes as the first stage in the development of the modern state.

The government of the fifth shogun has generally been dismissed as one of the worst in Japanese history. Yet the fact cannot be ignored that the Genroku period (1688-1704), the central years of this government, were the most prosperous in Japan's history prior to modern times.

Already in the twenties Kurita Mototsugu attempted to overcome this contradiction by suggesting that this was a period of transition from militarism (*budan shugi*) to civil administration (*bunji/bunchi shugi*), a transition which had already begun under Ietsuna's government. For him the essential features of this transition are the bakufu's rejection of hostility in favour of friendship and esteem, oppression in favour of enlightened education, military force in favour of rites and music and the rule of might in favour of the rule of right. In practice this change manifested itself in veneration of the imperial court, a lenient attitude towards daimyo, *rōnin* and foreign countries, education of the people, influence of Confucianism upon government as well as the importance attached to learning and the arts. Kurita rejects the traditional interpretation that these elements signalled a decline of bakufu administration and maintains that the change from militarism to civil administration was one of the most significant events of the Tokugawa period. While Kurita correctly highlights the important shift from military to civil administration, the weakness of his analysis lies in the fact that it does not account for Tsunayoshi's autocratic anti-daimyo policies, the hallmark of his government. By way of explanation Kurita returns to the traditional approach and ascribes these policies to the evil character of the shogun and his advisors.⁶

Writing roughly at the same time as Kurita, the scholar Tsuji Zen-nokuke re-appraised the much maligned grand chamberlain of the fifth shogun, Yanagisawa Yoshiyasu (1658-1714), who in 1912 had been accorded posthumous honours by the emperor for his restoration of the imperial tombs.⁷ In the 1960's Tsuji Tatsuya, his son, contributed greatly to the understanding of the period by pointing out the similarities and

6 Kurita Mototsugu, *Edo jidai shi*, 2 vols. (reprint of the 1926-1927 edition: Tokyo, 1976), I: 419-422.

7 Tsuji Zennosuke, "Yanagisawa Yoshiyasu no ichimen", *Shi rin*, 10:3, 1925.

continuity between Tsunayoshi's early policies and those of the Kyōhō reforms.⁸

Studying the rural economic development of the period in detail, the economic historian Ōishi Shinzaburō eventually was convinced that the traditional picture was not supported by the evidence. While in a 1967 publication he roundly condemned the chamberlain government of the fifth shogun, three years later he praised it as one of the most enlightened and progressive of the Tokugawa period.⁹

The work of these scholars contributed greatly to the understanding and appreciation of the majority of Tsunayoshi's policies. However, none of them could come to terms with the infamous laws for the protection of animals, the so-called Laws of Compassion. Even for Ōishi they remained "the worst laws in the history of world feudalism".¹⁰ Re-appraisal of the period made the question of why an otherwise enlightened government proclaimed such laws even more pertinent.

Donald Shively was the first Western scholar to examine the documents of Tsunayoshi's government in detail and on the basis of this research to re-appraise the shogun's personality. In agreement with Kurita he highlights the reforms of Tsunayoshi's government and contrasts them with those based on the shogun's eccentric nature.¹¹ Harold Bolitho continued this trend and, within the framework of his examination of the fudai, placed Tsunayoshi's government into the wider context of "centripetal-centrifugal tension" within the Tokugawa administration.¹² Rightly Bolitho sees Tsunayoshi as attempting to regain the authority lost under his predecessor.¹³

In this paper, however, I would like to go one step further and demonstrate that Tsunayoshi aimed at more than restoring the authority of

8 Tsuji Tatsuya, *Kyōhō kaikaku no kenkyū* (Tokyo, 1963), pp. 39-95.

9 *Nihon keizai shi ron* (Tokyo, 1967), pp. 76-77, 86 and *Genroku jidai* (Tokyo, 1970), e.g., pp. 139-140, 161, 186-187.

10 *Genroku jidai*, p. 20. *shōrui awaremi no rei* is a loose term employed by historians for those laws of Tsunayoshi's government that either include the words *shōrui awaremi* or deal with compassion. Popularly the term is often used to refer to the laws for the protection of dogs only. See my article, 'The Laws of Compassion' in *Monumenta Nipponica*, 40:2 (Summer 1985): pp. 163-189.

11 Donald H. Shively, "Tokugawa Tsunayoshi, The Genroku Shogun", in A.M. Craig and D.H. Shively (eds), *Personality in Japanese History* (Berkeley, 1970), pp. 86, 124.

12 Harold Bolitho, *Treasures among Men* (New Haven, 1974), p. 159; also "The Dog Shogun", in Wang Gungwu (ed.), *Self and Biography* (Sydney, 1975), pp. 123-139.

13 *Treasures*, pp. 175, 179.

his predecessors. He made it his goal to realize what Ieyasu could only uphold as a theoretical ideal: the patriarchal patrimonialism of the Confucian sage kings. Further, rather than separating Tsunayoshi's policies into those aimed at centralization of authority and those based on the shogun's "eccentricities",¹⁴ I argue that all policies are directed towards the same goal.

The findings of my research are supported by those of the scholar Tsukamoto Manabu, published in a number of articles over recent years.¹⁵ Contrary to his predecessors Tsukamoto takes the Laws of Compassion as his point of departure. Using the term in the wider sense he places emphasis on such laws as the control of firearms (*teppō aratame*), restrictions and eventual prohibition of hawking and the laws against abandonment of sick persons, orphans and animals. Tracing these laws back beyond Tsunayoshi's government he considers them a development necessitated by social change. At the same time, however, he sees the increase of such restrictions under Tsunayoshi as a significant factor and considers the unprecedented enforcement of these and similar laws beyond the borders of the Tokugawa domain as a clear indication of the government's autocratic tendencies. As theoretical framework Tsukamoto cites the two theories commonly used to explain Tokugawa dominance. The first considers the shogun as the emperor's representative, commissioned by the latter to rule the country. In this capacity the shogun is an autocratic ruler with a right to dominance over all domains including those of the *tozama* daimyo. The second theory upholds the view that the daimyo and the shogun have inherited their share in the government of the country on account of the superior martial and administrative abilities of their forefathers. The shogun's dominance over the daimyo is justified by the superiority of the founder of the Tokugawa regime. Tsukamoto sees the shift from the principles of the second theory to those of the first theory as the hallmark of Tsunayoshi's government. For him Tsunayoshi's policies are a reflection of the shogun's conviction that his responsibilities are not limited to his domain but extend to every individual of the country.¹⁶

14 *Ibid.*, p. 170, Shively, p. 85.

15 Tsukamoto Manabu, "Tsunayoshi Seiken no Rekishiteki Ichi o Megutte", *Nihon Rekishi Kenkyū*: 236 (April 1982), pp. 38-56; "Seikun to shite no Inu Kubō Tsunayoshi", *Rekishi to Jimbutsu*, July 1980, pp. 66-73; "Shōrui Awaremi no Seisaku to Saikabu-bon", *Jimbun Kagaku Ronshū*: 14 (1980), pp. 3-18; "Tsunayoshi Seiken no Teppō Aratame ni Tsuite", *Tokugawa Rinseishi Kenkyūjo Kenkyū Kiyō*, March 1973, pp. 194-209.

16 "Tsunayoshi Seiken", pp. 40, 43, 48-49.

In essence Tsukamoto's research, focusing on different aspects of Tsunayoshi's administration and thus relying on primary sources different from my own, has come to the same conclusion, namely that Tsunayoshi's government exemplifies a shift from the shogun's role of *primus inter pares* to that of benevolent autocrat. In other words: a change from the feudal to the patriarchal paradigm.

Before dealing with this paradigmatic change in detail I will outline Weber's theory of centralization, as this section of *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* has not been included in the most recent and accessible English translation of this work, *Economy and Society* (1978).

Weber saw the centralization of authority, accompanying the transition from feudal to autocratic statehood, as an essential process in the development of the modern state. The process begins with the feudal ruler's ambition to function no longer as *primus inter pares*, but to concentrate authority in his own person. To obtain this authority he has to recruit men who for socio-economic reasons are barred from obtaining authority or wealth on their own account and consequently are prepared to fight with unconditional loyalty for the ruler's self-aggrandizement. To replace feudal administration and local autonomy with a centrally directed government the development of a sophisticated administrative apparatus becomes essential. The increasingly complex technical knowledge required to guide it necessitates the "leading politician" to whom the ruler can safely delegate his authority. Essential also is the development of the specialized bureaucrat, a man pledged to unconditional obedience to the central authority and trained to deal with the technical difficulties of administration. This process finds its parallel in the centralisation of wealth. While the feudal retainer administers his own property, the bureaucrat administers wealth which does not belong to him and over which he has no, or very limited, control. Personal local rule is replaced by an impersonalized centrally directed administrative machinery operating according to a set of fixed, rational rules. In the final stage of the development of the modern state, the authority of the autocrat is transferred to an impersonal central power, namely the elected government of the people.¹⁷

For the purpose of this discussion the similarities and dissimilarities of the Western and Japanese feudal paradigm are of no consequence. Significant is that none of Tsunayoshi's predecessors had held autocratic

17 WG: 824-825. Weber sees this process as closely related to the development of capitalism.

powers, but had to accept the semi-autonomous domain, resulting, with the exception of the Tokugawa domain, in the sharing of administrative authority and decentralization of wealth in line with the Weberian pattern outlined above.

During the thirty-year government of Tsunayoshi's predecessor the pattern of decentralization had been reinforced. H. Bolitho has told of the way in which the sickly disposition of the fourth shogun Ietsuna resulted in a transfer of shogunal authority to the senior councillors (*rōjū*), who, as heads of large domains, had divided interests. A number of measures, such as the decreasing number of domain confiscations and the acceptance of individual domain currencies by the bakufu, signalled the decline in central authority and a trend towards increased "feudalization".¹⁸

Weber notes that the "solidarity of feudal society is based on a common education which inculcates knightly conventions, pride of status and a sense of honor".¹⁹

The solidarity of the Tokugawa upper military came under siege with the accession of Tsunayoshi, the first Tokugawa shogun with a totally non-military education. Moreover, the impact of this un-shogunal education was maximised by Tsunayoshi's bright, autocratic and determined temperament. Paradoxically it had been the display of these very qualities as a child which persuaded his father to have him trained as a scholar rather than a warrior, for fear that he might challenge the shogunal authority of his elder brothers.²⁰

Tokugawa records furnish virtually no information about the actual behaviour of the shogun. Only the report of the Dutch delegation on their visit to Edo in 1679 gives a rare glimpse of Tsunayoshi's personal conduct. While the Dutch were waiting in the corridors outside the shogunal chambers the attending courtiers suddenly fled their positions in apparent dismay. In stormed a young man "of pleasant countenance" who unabashedly examined the foreigners for some moments and then went his way. Only later did the delegation learn that the unceremonious visitor had been the younger brother of shogun.²¹ In spite of his high position

18 *Treasures*, pp. 166-169; Kitajima Masamoto, *Edo Bakufu no Kenryōku Kōzō* (Tokyo, 1964), p. 471.

19 *ES*: 1106.

20 Kokushi Kenkyū Kai (ed.), *Buya shokudan* in *Kokushi sōsho* (Tokyo, 1917), ser. 2, pp. 86-87. Also in Kuroita Katsumi (ed.), *Tokugawa Jikki* [henceforth cited as *TJ*] (Tokyo, 1976), 43:727.

21 Andreas Cleyer, *Tagebuch des Kontors zu Nagasaki auf der Insel Deshima*, ed. Eva Kraft (Bonn, 1985), p. 29.

Tsunayoshi ignored "knightly conventions". Neither did he display the expected "pride of status".

Of greater consequence than Tsunayoshi's untraditional behaviour was the fact that his training as a scholar had implanted in him ideals incompatible with those of his military educated contemporaries. His models were the sage kings Yao and Shun of the Confucian classics, benevolent autocrats.²² It was the ideal of the "'father of the people' (*Landesvater*)" characteristic of the patrimonial state and diametrically opposed to the feudal 'style of life'".

Weber notes: "Feudalism is always domination by the few who have military skills. Patriarchal patrimonialism is mass domination by one individual: as a rule it requires officials, whereas feudalism minimizes the demand for these. ... Against the dangerous aspirations of the privileged status groups, patriarchalism plays out the masses who everywhere have been its natural following. The 'good king', not the hero, was the ideal glorified by mass legend. Therefore, patriarchal patrimonialism must legitimate itself as guardian of the subjects' welfare in its own and in their eyes."²³

Only months after his accession Tsunayoshi started to enact policies characteristic of the change from feudal to patriarchal model.

The traditional system where the highest duties of state were shared by several men in monthly rotation was replaced by the appointment of one man to the most important of these duties: Tsunayoshi took the unprecedented step of making his favourite senior councillor (*rōjū*) Hotta Masatoshi (1634-1684) solely responsible for the administration of farmers and the collection of their taxes.²⁴ True to the patriarchal model this centralization of authority was justified by the fact that "the people" were suffering and Masatoshi's appointment was accompanied by the personal order of the shogun to govern the people with benevolence.²⁵ In terms of bureaucratic change it meant the creation and monopolization by one man of the position of minister of finance (*kattegakari*).

A prominent feature of Tsunayoshi's government are his constant attacks on "the dangerous aspirations of the privileged status groups."

22 Yao and Shun are frequently referred to, but especially in *Kembyō Jitsuroku* (manuscript, Kokuritsu Kokkai Toshokan, Tokyo) 30 (corrected in manuscript to vol. 34). Also cited in Tokutomi Ichirō, *Genroku Jidai, Kinsei Nihon Kokumin Shi*, vol. 10 (Meiji Shoten, 1936), p. 240.

23 *ES* 1106-7.

24 *TJ*: 42:368, 5D 8M Empō 8.

25 *Ibid*, 7D 8M Empō 8.

Already very early in his government he demonstrated this policy by such actions as re-opening the Echigo dispute, confiscating not only the domain in question but also those of two cadet branches,²⁶ demolishing the daimyo's leisure villas on the outskirts of Edo to return the land to the farmers, scrapping a famous pleasure boat (the Antaku maru), and imposing other restrictions of conduct and economy upon the daimyo.²⁷ Many of his more extreme measures have become legend, such as his alleged network of spies down to the pleasure quarters and the frequent domain confiscations and need not be discussed here in detail.²⁸

Tsunayoshi's offensive was not limited to the daimyo. Soon after his accession a lengthy order was issued to the intendants (*daikan*) of the shogunal domains which, again true to the patriarchal model, attempted to curb abuses by one "status group" for the benefit of the "masses". The opening line of this order, borrowed from Mencius, "The people are the foundations of the state" had already been used by Ieyasu.²⁹ But while Ieyasu had instructed his intendants to take care that the farmers retained barely enough rice for consumption and be charged with corvée to the extent that they retained just enough energy to produce good crops, Tsunayoshi continued: "All intendants must bear well in mind the hardships of the people and rule them so that they do not suffer from hunger and cold." He still exhorted frugality, but shifted the focus onto the officials. Lax administration was responsible for spendthrift habits of the people, official presumptuousness the source of the people's mistrust. "All intendants must always behave prudently, be frugal, be acquainted with the details of farming and be diligent to deal properly with such matters as tax collection. It is essential that they perform these matters themselves ..." he cautioned in this offensive against the high social standing his officials had assumed.³⁰ This order had greater consequences than the routine exhortations of past governments: during the next decades over half of all intendants were sentenced to death or suspended from office for mismanagement. The remainder was transferred to new districts. Since

26 Toda Mosui, *Gotōdaiki* in *Toda Mosui Zenshū* (Kokusho Kankōkai, 1915), p. 6. Ōishi, *Genroku Jidai*, pp. 129-133, Bolitho, *Treasures*, 175-176.

27 *Gotōdaiki*, p. 11, 1D 7M Tenna 2; Hotta Masatoshi, *Yōgenroku* (Zoku Zoku Gunsho Ruijū, 13), p. 34.

28 Shively, p. 119; Bolitho, *Treasures*, pp. 176-179; Tsuji, *Kyōhō kaikaku*, pp. 46-50.

29 Honda Masanobu, *Honsa Roku*, in vol. 3 of Takimoto Seiichi, *Nihon Keizai Taiten* (Tokyo, 1928), p. 21. Tsunayoshi refers to 'the people' as *tami*, Ieyasu as *hyakusho*.

30 *TJ*. 42:367. (All translations are my own unless otherwise cited.)

their appointment by Ieyasu the position had frequently become hereditary and many incumbents had assumed the prerogatives of petty feudal lords. Attempts had been made previously to prevent the intendants from using tax rice for their personal gain,³¹ but Tsunayoshi's measures went beyond the recovery of taxes. Alien to the area to which they were dispatched the intendants henceforth had to execute their duties as bureaucrats, depending solely on the authority the government vested in them.³²

Tsunayoshi's attack upon the "heroes" of the feudally oriented warrior society did not shy away from criticising the hallowed tradition of his forefathers. Publicly he stated:

The old practices of the warring states period became the way of the samurai and officials; brutality was regarded as valor, high spirits were considered good conduct, and there were many actions which were not benevolent and which violated the fundamental principles of humanity ...³³

Privately he instructed his high officials that they were not only to judge lawsuits and promulgate laws, but that it was their duty to govern in such a way that the moral fibre of the people was improved.³⁴

So abrupt was the change from the feudal to the patrichal paradigm that even Tsunayoshi's closest advisor, Hotta Masatoshi, found it difficult to comprehend the change. He considered the following episode significant enough to be included in his brief account of his service under Tsunayoshi. Hotta was reporting to the shogun how he had been moved by the abject poverty of two young street urchins and had felt a strong inner compulsion to help those children immediately. But he rejected the urge, as it was not his duty as the shogun's highest minister to attend to such trifling matter. The shogun replied:

Why should a truly benevolent man ask whether a matter is great or small? Even the smallest object is lit by the rays of the sun and the moon. Actually your mistake was in thinking that it was wrong to agonize over such a small thing.³⁵

31 Kitajima Masamoto, *Nihon Shi Gaisetsu*, 3 vols. (Tokyo, 1968), II:145.

32 Tsuji, *Kyōhō Kaikaku*, pp. 65-67; Kitajima, *Edo Bakufu no Kenryoku Kōzō*, pp. 350-351.

33 *Kembyō Jitsuroku* cited in Kurita, *Edo Jidai*, I:605, translated by Shively, p. 113.

34 *Yōgenroku*, p. 32.

35 *Ibid*, pp. 30-31.

Hotta had been accustomed to the feudal paradigm, where authority is delegated in a pyramidal pattern and the lowest on the social scale are the concern of the lowest official. Acting along the "*Landesvater*" ideal of patrimonialism, Tsunayoshi considered that Hotta as his representative was also responsible for the lowest street urchin.

The abrupt change of government policy under Tsunayoshi made conflict between the shogun and those who were being deprived of their privileges inevitable. But the latter were faced with a dilemma. Good conduct, frugality and benevolent government were traditional Confucian ideals which in theory were the very foundation of Tokugawa rule. Their enforcement was no justification for protest. When, however, Tsunayoshi extended his "*Landesvater*" ideal even to the welfare of animals, his opponents felt that they had a righteous cause for complaint.

Tsunayoshi's so-called Laws of Compassion which ordered the protection and forbade the killing of certain animals became the corner-stone of all protest. Historians labeled them the worst laws in Japanese history and greatly inflated their impact upon society. True to their samurai background, scholars gave little praise to the many laws which benefitted the lowest of society, but imposed additional duties upon the officialdom, like those for the protection of orphans, outcasts and other destitutes. The most severe criticism was reserved for the laws that ordered the registration and protection of dogs. Again, as samurai, writers neglected to mention that it was generally only members of their own class who had use for and could afford to keep dogs and consequently were responsible for the great number of abandoned, marauding dogs which prompted the laws in the first place. Nor did they refer to the fact that the dogs the shogun attempted to remove from the streets were no danger to armed samurai living in walled compounds, but a great menace to less fortunate commoners, or that the tax levied for Tsunayoshi's infamous dog kennels was calculated according to house frontage, costing the samurai most. Finally the numbers of those who were killed for offences against dogs was greatly inflated and the shogun's public announcement that men were punished for disobeying the Laws of Compassion "regardless whether they are of high or low birth" was never hailed as an early example of democratization.³⁶

The Laws of Compassion are an example *par excellence* of patrimonialism. Their purpose was to "civilize" the masses as the shogun, as the

36 These topics have been discussed in detail in my article "The Laws of Compassion" (fn. 10).

"*Landesvater*", considered it to be his duty. They totally ignored the traditional privileges of the warrior and were in complete contradiction to their ethos.³⁷ Weber notes: "The 'welfare state' is the legend of patrimonialism, deriving not from the free camaraderie of solemnly promised fealty, but from the authoritarian relationship of father and children."³⁸ 17th century Japan was far removed from to-day's concept of the welfare state. Yet Tsunayoshi's laws, affording an unprecedented degree of protection for the most vulnerable of society, can be seen as a step into this direction.

The Laws of Compassion are of importance not because of their impact upon daily life, but because they furnished officialdom with a legitimate reason publicly to oppose Tsunayoshi's drive for autocracy.

When in Jōkyō 4 (1687) the shogun ordered the registration of dogs, the senior councillors felt morally justified in altering the shogun's directive before passing it on for publication.³⁹ The shogun was not inclined to accept such interference and fought back by publicly criticizing the senior councillors for their disobedience and dismissing them temporarily. Their next scheduled ceremonial function, the visit to the grave of the predecessor, was delegated to the grand chamberlain (*sobayōnin*) Makino Narisada (1634-1712).⁴⁰

From this point on, the enforcement of the protection of animals turned into a struggle over authority. It resulted in the acceleration of a process which had begun earlier: namely the transfer of the functions and powers of the senior councillors to the shogun's grand chamberlains. The grand chamberlains, usurping the authority of the highest military to enforce the shogun's unpopular policies, became the focus of hostility. They were likened to the evil eunuchs of China: ambitious upstarts pandering to the shogun's vices. The degree of acrimony serves as a measure of the chamberlain's importance.

Weber saw such men of low status who, lacking their own power base, were serving in unconditional obedience and not striving to exercise

37 Tsukamoto makes the same point when discussing the control of firearms. He argues that depriving the samurai of the right to carry firearms and restricting them to licensed hunters stood in contradiction to the principle of the division between samurai and commoners. "Tsunayoshi Seiken no Teppō Aratame ni Tsuite", pp. 203-204.

38 *ES*: 1107.

39 Kinsei Shiryō Kenkyū Kai (ed.), *Shōhō Jiroku*, 3 vols. (Tokyo, 1964), I:254, order 715.

40 *TJ*: 42:595, 24D 2 M Jōkyō 4.

authority in their own right, as the ruler's "most important tool in his struggle for power and political expropriation."⁴¹ Consequently some attention must be paid to the office of chamberlain in Tsunayoshi's government.

The Chamberlains

Hotta Masatoshi's assassination in Jōkyō 4 (1687) opened the door to chamberlain dominance.⁴² There was no replacement for Masatoshi amongst the ranks of the senior councillors and the removal of their office away from the shogunal chambers, ostensibly for reasons of safety, forced them to rely on the grand chamberlains for communication with the shogun. A year after the event the scholar Toda Mosui attempted to define the functions of these men. He noted in his diary:

On the twenty-first, Matsudaira Iga no Kami entered the shogun's inner chambers having been commanded to observe and learn the duties of Makino [Narisada] Bingo no Kami. He is neither a junior councillor (*wakadoshiyori*) nor a chamberlain (*sobashū*). The three men Makino Bingo no Kami, Matsudaira Iga no Kami and Kitami Wakasa no Kami serve the shogun in a manner unheard of in previous reigns. They are below the senior councillors, but above the junior councillors. The authority of Makino Bingo no Kami, however, is greater than that of a senior councillor.⁴³

The observations of the foreigner, Engelbert Kaempfer, confirm this report, describing Narisada as "the most intimate advisor [of the shogun] and the only person in whom he places his trust." Moreover, like Weber's archetype, he was a man "reputed not to be harbouring ambitions."⁴⁴

41 WG: 827. '... sie waren deren wichtigstes Macht- und politisches Expropriations-instrument'.

42 Arai Hakuseki maintained that the first grand chamberlain was in fact Hotta Masamori (1608-1651) who had risen from page (*koshō*) to senior councillor under the third shogun. (*Oritaku Shiba no Ki, Nihon Koten Bungaku Taikei*, 102 vols., Tokyo 1964, 95:424-425.) Scholars such as Tsuji Tatsuya, however, refute this argument in detail and suggest that Hakuseki's theory was no more than an attempt to furnish the much criticised office of grand chamberlain with a respectable past. (*Kyōhō Kaikaku*, pp. 60-61, fn. 1.)

43 *Gotōdaiki*, p. 41, 21D 7M Jōkyō 2.

44 Engelbert Kaempfer, *Heutiges Japan*, unpublished manuscript, British Library, London, Sloane 3060, f. 353.

Tsunayoshi's chamberlains are traditionally seen as the shogun's homosexual partners, or at least his favourites, appointed and dismissed at whim. Homosexual relationships Tsunayoshi might have had, but investigation of the source material reveals the high qualifications of the appointees and the professionally exacting nature of the office.

The office of chamberlain (*sobashū*) of which Toda Mosui spoke with familiarity had been created some thirty years before under the fourth shogun. Tsunayoshi used this office, which apparently had not yet assumed the rigidity of other bakufu appointments, in two ways. Firstly he upgraded it. With widened duties and powers it gave rise to the office of grand chamberlain. Secondly it served as a sorting-ground for men in whom the shogun saw talent. Especially during the initial phase of Tsunayoshi's government, it was here that officials had to prove themselves before being considered for promotion to grand chamberlain.

Also under the fourth shogun successful performance as chamberlain had led to higher appointment. Of the first twelve appointees, four men resigned and one was put under house arrest. The remainder, however, all proceeded to relatively important positions, including one appointee as Kyoto deputy (*Kyōto shoshidai*) and three promotions to junior councillor.⁴⁵

What differed under Tsunayoshi was the background of those men appointed chamberlains. Under Ietsuna they had with one exception held positions in the shogunal entourage such as senior page (*koshō gumi gashira*) or performed various guard duties (*goshoin ban gashira*, *ōban gashira*). Under Tsunayoshi the majority of appointees came from a much wider background of professional offices outside the shogunal entourage, ranging from inspector general (*ōmetsuke*) to superintendent of finance (*kanjō bugyō*). This change of background is not compatible with the traditional assumption that the chamberlains had no other qualifications than the ability to amuse the shogun, but rather reflects the shogun's interest in the government of the country. The chamberlains were all men with specialized experience in various fields of bakufu administration, well qualified to put their technical know-how at the disposal of the shogun.

Another difference between the fourth and the fifth shogun was that criteria for promotion were much more rigorous under the latter. Under Ietsuna eighty-three per cent of all chamberlains were promoted, under

45 The information on the promotion and background of chamberlains and grand chamberlains has been taken from *Ryūei Bunin*, Tōkyō Daigaku Shiryō Hensanjo, (ed.), *Nihon Kinsei Shiryō*, 7 vols. (Tokyo, 1963), I:96-99 and I:22-24 respectively.

Tsunayoshi the percentage was forty-two. Of the nineteen men who had been appointed as chamberlain during the initial decade of Tsunayoshi's government, nine were either dismissed or resigned, two died and only four men were promoted to the post of grand chamberlain. Three others became junior councillors and one man was promoted to master of shogunal ceremony (*sōshaban*).

In Genroku 2 (1689) Tsunayoshi created a new office for the staff personally responsible to him: that of personal adviser (*okuzume*). Relatively little is known of this position, which was abolished at Tsunayoshi's death. Its functions are described as "answering the shogun's questions" and it appears that initially they largely overlapped with those of the chamberlains. *Ryūei Bunin* gives only sparse information on the termination of service and future career of occupants of this office, but the turnover of men seems to have been similar to that of the chamberlain.⁴⁶ At times sources such as *Tokugawa Jikki* and *Kansei Chōshū Shokafu* do not differentiate between the two offices, indicating the close connection that existed between them.

Having served on the personal staff of the shogun, men were frequently rotated to other high offices. Nearly half of all junior councillors (*wakadoshiyori*) appointed under Tsunayoshi had had experience either as chamberlain or personal advisor. The position, traditionally reserved for fudai daimyo, was opened up under Tsunayoshi to men of lower rank and even the sons of *tozama*.⁴⁷

Tsunayoshi's grand chamberlains had with one exception all received training as chamberlain, personal advisor or junior councillor. Yet in the majority of cases their careers were short-lived. The most frequent cause for resignation was ill-health. Omitting those cases where the reason for termination is unknown or where it was due to Tsunayoshi's death, six out of ten resigned for this reason. Traditionally ill health is a polite excuse for shedding uncomfortable duties. Not so under Tsunayoshi. Investigations soon revealed the true state of affairs and the culprits punished accordingly.⁴⁸ May one then conclude that the duties of grand chamberlain were so demanding that few people had the stamina to withstand the pace of work? The record of Yanagisawa Yoshiyasu, the only

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, I:65-68.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, I:26-27.

⁴⁸ *Gotōdaiki*, p. 52, 18D 5M Genroku 1 and p. 64, date not specified. *Gotōdaiki* records the appointments as *sobashū* while *TJ* (43:13, 18D 5M. Genroku 1) as *koshō*. See also Ōishi, *Genroku Jidai*, p. 19.

man who lived up to the demands of the office after Makino Narisada retired on account of ill health, certainly suggests that much.⁴⁹

Dominance by Knowledge

Whether one subscribes to this theory or not, the above material invalidates the traditional assumption that the shogun was surrounded by professional lightweights while those staffing the established offices were altogether different, hard-working and sober men, suffering under the shogun's hated policies. Lack of co-operation by the senior councillors was evident. But in other parts of the bureaucracy Tsunayoshi succeeded in injecting a new standard of professionalism. In unprecedented fashion he personally selected appointees for a wide number of offices ranging from Edo city magistrate (*Edo machi bugyō*) to inspector (*metsuke*) and inspector general (*ōmetsuke*).⁵⁰ The opening up of offices to talented men of lower rank did not stop with the junior councillors. For instance the position of *kanjō bugyō* (superintendent of finance), traditionally staffed by samurai of certain rank, who might not have had any experience in the field of finance, was now open to lower officials holding distinguished service records within the ministry. Another innovation was the establishment of a finance auditing board (*kanjō gimmi yaku*) which again could be staffed without regard to rank of the applicant.⁵¹ These measures increased professionalism within the ministry and permitted specialists of low rank to achieve prominent positions. With their technical knowledge and personal loyalty to the shogun, men of relatively low rank came to play a major part in the shogun's fight for authority. Weber described this process as domination through knowledge (*"Herrschaft kraft Wissen"*) and considered it a significant factor in the modern bureaucracy.⁵² An excellent example is the role the lower finance official, Ogiwara Shigehide (1658-1713), played in the debasement of the coinage.

By Genroku 8 (1695) bakufu finances had come to an all-time low. This is not the place to expand on the reasons. Suffice it to say that due to factors such as the destruction of reserves in the Meireki fire and the decreasing output of mines no bullion was available to mint new coins as

49 B.M. Bodart-Bailey, "Councillor Defended: Matsukage Nikki and Yanagisawa Yoshiyasu", *Monumenta Nipponica*, vol. 34:4, (1979), pp. 470, 472.

50 *TJ*: 42:366, 25D, 26D 7M Empō 8; Ōishi, *Genroku Jidai*, pp. 86-87.

51 Ōishi, *Genroku Jidai*, p. 119.

52 *WG*: 128-129; *ES*: 225.

had been the practice in the past in similar circumstances.⁵³ The senior councillors could offer no solution. Ogiwara Shigehide, at that time no more than comptroller of finance (*kanjō gimmiyaku*) suggested the debasement of the coinage. This policy would not only alleviate the government's financial plight, but also remedy the shortage of coinage in circulation. Unable to offer any counterproposals, the senior councillors were forced to accept a policy which they disliked on philosophical grounds (the sacrilege of destroying the coinage minted by Ieyasu) and which, moreover, was highly disadvantageous to their own financial position.⁵⁴ Here the senior councillors' lack of both financial expertise and their own skilled officials gave the shogun the advantage.

Not only on the policy level, but also at the administrative level Shigehide became the weapon of the shogun. Empowered to inspect the workings of the finance ministry he soon found fault with three superintendents of finance (*kanjō gashira*) and their assistant (*sashizoe/sashizoi*). The officials were dismissed and Shigehide promoted accordingly.⁵⁵

In his analysis of bakufu operation Conrad Totman pointed out the importance of the vertical clique, an interdependent group of officials from a wide range of positions and rank. Loss of position by the leader meant also loss of position for the lower members.⁵⁶ The change-over in personnel on Tsunayoshi's, Ietsuna's and Yoshimune's accessions are good examples. From the late 17th century on, however, one must note the appearance of specialists too valuable easily to be replaced for political reasons. Again the career of Ogiwara Shigehide makes the point in case. Shigehide's reputation suffered from the fact that he was opposed by the highly articulate Arai Hakuseki. But even Hakuseki was unable to remove Shigehide from office during the greater part of Ienobu's government; the sixth shogun considered him irreplaceable.⁵⁷

53 The Government had already prevented the outflow of precious metal by restricting foreign trade to a barter basis. E.S. Crawcour and Kozo Yamamura, "The Tokugawa Monetary System 1787-1868", *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, 18.4, Pt. 1 (1970), p. 491; Kurita, *Edo Jidai*, I:231-234; Muro Kyūsō, *Kensan Hisaku*, Takimoto Seiichi (ed.), *Nihon Keizai Taiten*, 54 vols. (Tokyo, 1928-1930), VI:246-249.

54 Sakata Morotoshi, *Kai Shōshō Ason Jikki* (unpublished, Shiryō Hensanjo, Tokyo), vol. 19, 11D 8M Genroku 8.

55 *TJ*, 42:610, 10D 9M Jōkyō 4 and *Gotōdaiki*, p. 58, same date. From Genroku onwards *kanjō gashira* were known as *kanjō bugyō*.

56 *Politics in the Tokugawa Bakufu, 1600-1843* (Cambridge, Mass.; 1967) chapter IX, pp. 179-203.

57 Only when the sixth shogun was on his deathbed, after several months of incapaci-

In spite of his knowledge and influence upon the financial affairs of the country, Shigehide never received more than the relatively low salary of three thousand seven hundred *koku*.⁵⁸ In this respect Shigehide can be regarded as a forerunner of the "service intelligentsia", highly trained men whose contributions to the running of the country (or domain) stood in no proportion to their status or remuneration.⁵⁹

"Financial Expropriation"

By "domination through knowledge" Tsunayoshi succeeded in what Weber terms "financial expropriation". Again, the debasement of the coinage is a good example.

The debasement of the coinage, that is to say the compulsory exchange at parity of old coins for the government's new coins containing less bullion, was equivalent to a tax on all cash assets. It was revolutionary because it asserted that the shogun could unilaterally draw on the wealth of not just the shogunal domains but the whole country. Taxing the daimyo's subjects without the intermediary of the daimyo, it was an attack on the financial autonomy of the domain.

The autocratic character of this measure becomes apparent when contrasted with the policy of the eighth shogun Yoshimune facing similar financial difficulties. Yoshimune adopted the traditional pattern, asking the daimyo for contributions. By stating that "This request is made regardless of shame", he implied that the shogunate like the daimyo ought to be able to defray its own expenses. Maruyama Masao commented on Yoshimune's action as follows:

"one of the major characteristics of a feudal society is the preservation of the ordered unity of the total structure by linking together in layers closed, self-contained spheres ... Politically, this takes the form of the principle of indirect control. The economic basis for the politics corresponding to this indirect control is distributed separately inside each

tating illness, did Hakuseki finally succeed in gaining permission to sack Shigehide and reverse the debasement of the coinage. The official order to repeal the reminting was drafted by Hakuseki more than a year after Ienobu's death and rumours had it that Hakuseki, rather than the shogun, was responsible for the change of policy. *Oritaku Shiba no Ki*. pp. 300, 305, 308, 319-320, 361; *TJ*: 44:245, 11D 9M Shōtoku 2, 44:378-379, 15D 5M Shōtoku 4.

58 *Kansei Chōshū Shokafu*, Hotta Masaatsu (ed.), 26 vols. (Tokyo, 1964-1967), X:143.

59 Huber, 211-213.

social layer. What we have here is a typical case of what Max Weber called a combination of *der personliche* (sic) *Verwaltungsstab* (personal administrative staff) and *das sachliche Verwaltungsmittel* (material administrative means).⁶⁰

Tsunayoshi, on the contrary, attempted to break through those layers of “closed, self-contained spheres”, striving for direct control on both the economic and political level.

The daimyo’s lack of expertise facilitated Tsunayoshi’s aim of systematically increasing his financial control over the domains. The issuance of paper money by the domains (*han satsu*) was abolished, reserving the benefit reaped from issuing coinage above the level of available bullion for the shogunate. Instead, the daimyo were forced to accept the new, devalued coinage. A further intrusion into domainal autonomy was an order forbidding regional preferences for trade in either gold or silver units. The government officially fixed the exchange rate between gold, silver and copper coins and even daimyo were no longer free to stipulate whether they wanted to be compensated in gold or silver units on sale of their tax rice. The domains’ submission to a centrally directed financial policy was underlined by orders stating that any difficulties encountered in enforcing the new policy were to be reported to Edo.⁶¹

After Tsunayoshi’s death Dazai Shundai in his “anonymous” *Sannō gaiki* attempted to caricature the late shogun’s much hated financial policies by attributing the following words to their architect Ogiwara Shigehide: “Producing currency is a matter for the state. It would not make the slightest difference if rubbish were substituted for currency.”⁶² To Shundai and his contemporaries these words were evil, for they implied the destruction of the existing institutional order. For the historian they are indicative of paradigmatic change.⁶³

60 *Intellectual History*, p. 243.

61 *Nihon Zaisei Keizai Shiryō*, Ōkurashō (ed.), 11 vols. (Tokyo, 1922-1923), II:574 12M Genroku 14, 573 11M Genroku 13, 581 urū 1M Hōei 5, 571 1M Genroku 11.

62 *Sannō Gaiki*, (handwritten copy, Australian National Library, Canberra; also published Tokyo, 1880), p. 11.

63 Tsukamoto uses the country-wide enforcement of laws such as the control of firearms, prohibition of hawking and protection of sick travellers, orphans and animals to demonstrate Tsunayoshi’s disregard of traditional domain autonomy. “Tsunayoshi Seiken”, p. 43.

Loyalty versus Centralization

The centralization of financial policy finds its parallel on the political level in the judgement of the Forty-seven *rōnin*. Here the shogun was confronted with the problem that the *rōnin*, in avenging their dead lord, had given an exemplary demonstration of samurai loyalty. Absolute loyalty to one's lord was fundamental to the very existence of the Tokugawa regime for, in the final stage of the feudal hierarchy, it guaranteed the daimyo's support of the shogun even when disagreeing with his policies. On the other hand, the *rōnin* had transgressed against the government's judgement which had stipulated that in the quarrel between Asano Naganori and Kira Yoshinaka the former should die and the latter should live. To fulfill their personal duty towards their lord they had violated the law of the central authority.

The dilemma Tsunayoshi was caught in reflected the fundamental problem of his drive for centralization: the desire to exercise autocratic authority when the source of this authority depended upon feudal sanctions. Was he to punish the *rōnin* for displaying the very virtue upon which his authority depended, or was he to concede that feudal loyalty was more important than the laws of the central government? The judgement spelt out Tsunayoshi's answer to this problem. The laws of the central government took precedence over even the most hallowed personal obligation: the *rōnin* were to die. The concession to feudal ideals was a small one: the loyal samurai were permitted to commit *seppuku* rather than die as common criminals.⁶⁴

Conclusion

Tsunayoshi's drive towards centralization of authority shows the hallmarks of the classical model posited by Weber. What was its impact?

Traditionally historians have contended that it ended in total failure with most of Tsunayoshi's policies being reversed after his death. Before considering which policies did survive, one must note that during his life time Tsunayoshi did enforce his controversial policies. The coinage was repeatedly debased, samurai were executed for offences against animals

64 For a comprehensive description of the event *TJ*: 43:492-494, 15D 12M Genroku 14. For a modern version, see Kuwata Tadachika, *Tokugawa Tsunayoshi to Genroku Jidai* (Tokyo, 1975), pp. 195-257.

and no daimyo attempted to break his oath of feudal loyalty even though the shogun had placed this virtue below the demands of the central government. Daimyo protested, but did take their orders from the grand chamberlains. Tsukamoto even contends that the works of Saikaku describe a progressively less violent society as the Laws of Compassion were taking effect.⁶⁵

After Tsunayoshi's death some of his more extreme measures were discontinued. The dog kennels were dismantled, but the Laws of Compassion were continued, even though the sixth shogun decreed that punishments should be less severe.⁶⁶ The senior councillors did not automatically regain their authority, but had to contend with the grand chamberlain Manabe Akifusa and the scholar Arai Hakuseki. The monetary reforms were reversed for a brief period when Arai Hakuseki was at the height of his power, but throughout the remaining Tokugawa period became standard practice to fill government coffers. The most important element, however, was the continuing bureaucratisation of the military. By the middle of the 19th century most of the samurai class were civil servants rather than warriors. The patriarchal colouring dominant under Tsunayoshi was giving way to more impersonal and "rational" forms of operation.

Nevertheless, Tsunayoshi's aim of centralizing authority in shogunal hands was never realized. Why did the authority of his successors decline after a period of relatively successful centralization? The reasons are manifold and complex.

One reason was certainly the personality of the shogun and his unusual education which prompted him to act against the interests of his class. The legacy of unpopular and eccentric policies and the loss of support from traditional administrators made it difficult and unattractive for his less forceful successors to emulate his style of government.

However, a factor of major importance was Japan's isolation. Unlike the rulers of Europe, upon which Max Weber built his model, the Japanese hegemon had no neighbouring princes who would either assist him directly in his drive for centralization by supporting him in alliance or indirectly bring about the submission of the feudatories by threatening the country. Without either assistance or threat from outside the problem of centralizing authority while drawing upon a feudal power base remained unresolved. Only when this threat materialized in the form of the Western pre-

65 Tsukamoto, "Shōrui Awaremi no Rei to Saikaku Bon".

66 Bodart-Bailey, "The Laws of Compassion", pp. 185-186.

sence could the final step towards central control come about in Japan.⁶⁷ In the meantime, however, the patterns promoted and established under the fifth shogun had matured to an extent that they provided a solid and "modern" base for the introduction of reforms.

The theory that the origins of the modern Japanese state lie beyond Meiji is not new. Already in 1956 Edwin O. Reischauer had suggested that the question of whether similarities in the feudal experience of Japan and the West had not pre-conditioned the former to the rapid adoption of Western institutions, was in need of investigation.⁶⁸ George Sansom had proposed even earlier (1950) that the paradigmatic changes of the second half of the last century must be seen not as a break with the past but as "a natural process of evolution which produced results similar to those which had arisen in the West out of similar circumstances."⁶⁹ Since then other scholars such as Craig, Hall, Najita, Silberman and Smith have all on occasion suggested that Japan's transformation had its roots in the Tokugawa period.⁷⁰ Most recently Thomas M. Huber argued that Meiji was the legacy of the "propertyless intelligentsia" which "had arisen as a consequence of the increasingly sophisticated institutional growth that characterized much of the long Tokugawa era."⁷¹ On the Japanese side one of the most eminent exponents of this theory, Tsuji Tatsuya, traces the

67 In the first instance the Western threat lead to decentralization. However, one may argue that in the 1850s the daimyo were not fully aware of the magnitude of Western military strength, otherwise the Western domain lords, supposedly more knowledgeable about the foreigners than their colleagues, would not have engaged them single-handedly. I would like to suggest that fuller knowledge of the Western military threat by the late 1860s was one of the factors persuading the daimyo of the necessity to surrender their domains to the central government.

68 Edwin O. Reischauer, "Japanese Feudalism" in R. Coulborn, *Feudalism in History* (Princeton, 1956), p. 48.

69 G.B. Sansom, *The Western World and Japan* (New York, 1950), pp. 314-5.

70 A. Craig, "The Central Government", chapter II of M.B. Jansen and G. Rozman (eds.), *Japan in Transition* (Princeton, 1986), pp. 38, 62, *Personality in Japanese History*, pp. 2-3. J.W. Hall, "New Look at Tokugawa History", in J.W. Hall and M.B. Jansen, (eds.), *Studies in the Institutional History of Early Modern Japan* (Princeton, 1968), p. 61. T. Najita, *Japan*, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1974), p. 13; Silberman, "Bureaucratization of the Meiji State", *Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 35, no. 3 (1976), p. 430; Thomas C. Smith, *Political Change and Industrial Development* (Stanford, 1955), p. 31 (Berkeley, 1971), p. 206.

71 Huber, p. 226.

origins of the modern Japanese state to the founding of the Tokugawa shogunate.⁷²

Relating the schemata of Weber to the political developments of Tokugawa Japan it becomes evident that the institutional growth essential for the development of the modern state was abruptly promoted and accelerated by the government of the fifth shogun. Thus while Japan did not pass through a sustained phase of autocratic government in preparation for the modern state, as posited by Weber, the fifth shogun's attempts at centralization over a period of thirty years set in motion a process resulting in changes akin to those of the Weberian model.

72 Tsuji Tatsuya, "Tokugawa Sanbyaku-nen no Isan", *Chūō Kōron*, September 64, p. 122-141 and *Edo Jidai o Kangaeru* (Tokyo, 1988), pp. 70-120.