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## GERMAN MODEL IN THE MODERNIZATION OF JAPAN

—BERND MARTIN (Hg.), *JAPANS WEG IN DIE MODERNE.*  
*EIN SONDERWEG NACH DEUTSCHEN VORBILD ?—*

*Campus Verlag: Frankfurt a.M., 1987, 195 S.\**

By Kiichiro YAGI\*\*

### I

Although it is now obsolete, Japanese used to classify academicians and their works in such terms as “English School (EIGAKU)”, “French School (FUTSUGAKU)”, or “German School (DOITSUGAKU)”. Since Japan introduced Western learning due to its own will, not forced by a monopolized power such was the case in many colonized countries, the diversified views on the best way how to learn Western sciences, amalgamated with the spectrum of political orientation, supported the rivalry among of these “Schools” named after their model countries<sup>1)</sup>.

Among these “Schools” the “German School” enjoyed a privileged position at least until 1945. It is because the Japanese government after the Split of 1881 found its favorite model for the consolidation of the state administration in Prussian Germany and encouraged German School in many respects. Hirobumi ITO and his advisor Kowashi INOUE made most of the “German Model” to recover the once lost initiative in establishing constitutional law from the opposition to the government. It is worth mentioning the coincidence that the “Association for German Studies” was formed in the same year of this Split and the “Society for State Sciences (Verein für Staatswissenschaften)” at the Imperial University, in 1887, two years before the promulgation of the Meiji Constitution. Before

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\* This book is composed of the following: Bernd Martin, Japan's Path of Modernization and the German Model; Karl Kroeschell, Modern Japan and German Law; Werner Wenz/Arnold Vogt, Influence of German Medicine on the Emergence of Western Medicine in Japan; Theodor Dams, The Industrialization of Japan; Walther Manshard, Urbanization, Development of Transportation, and Environmental Problems of Japan; Takashi Oshio, On the Reception of German Literature in Japan; Nelly Naumann, Looking for the Identity—Modern Japan's Mental Problem. Except for Oshio's they were originally a series of lectures held in the Winter Term 1985/86 at Freiburg University.

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1) In his *HOSEI KANRYO NO JIDAI* (The Age of Legislative Bureaucrats) (Tokyo, 1984) Sinichi YAMAMURA described the rivalry of these “Schools” in two decades between the Restoration (ISHIN) and the Meiji Constitution as a drama of intellectuals who endeavored to find the best frame of reference in the modernization of Japan. The hero of the drama is Kowashi INOUE, who himself changed his favorite from France to Germany.

those years, it had been such countries as Great Britain or France that Japanese intellectuals had been most likely to follow. But the democratic principle, which was implied in the constitution of those countries, terrified the government.

However, with the exception of the decade before 1945<sup>2)</sup> Germany was to Japan neither a crucially important trade partner nor a persistent neighbor in the geographical constellation. The essential part of Germany-Japan relation remained in an intellectual domain in which a rather one-sided "teacher-pupil relation" prevailed on the ground of "German Model" of modernization.

It is not surprising that this "teacher-pupil" relation should appear in the front scene of the series of lectures on the modernization of Japan by German professors in Freiburg, descendants of "teachers". Actually, several lecturers spent a considerable amount of effort to describe results of this relations in their own disciplines, taking the word "teacher-pupil" literally. However, Bernd Martin, editor of this joint work, extends this relationship to the general vision of the modernization process of Japan. Without Martin's global sketch of the common fate (and differences of today) of the two "late-starters" which via the authoritarian path tried to surpass the forerunners, this project could not have gained such a wide response that supported publication of those lectures. But I am afraid that this catchword "Modernization after German Model?" might cause a misunderstanding, if the question mark were to be overlooked. I think this mark signifies two important points: 1) Japanese followed the German Model only where they thought it useful; and 2) The influence of such a foreign "Model" in the domain of intellectuals should not be overlapped with the real power which determined the historical process of modernization.

## II

The way that Martin used the German Model to explain the modernization process of Japan has a strange appearance: Japan today has kept the continuity that reminds today's Germans of their Prussian past. In other words, Japan, the ex-pupil, is more loyal to his model than the teacher! But Martin tries to explain the "continuity" of Japan not from the effectiveness of the German Model but from the supposed stability of social structure of Japan. Karl Kroeschell, who lectured on the reception of German Law in Japan, also seems to share the static view of Japanese society.

Mentioning Prime Minister KISHI's recommendation of the Japanese Path to modernization in his South East Asian tour of 1957, Martin writes; "A Chancellor of Federal Republic would scarcely defend Germany's Special Path (Sonderweg) or would never praise it" (p. 19). Martin explains this continuity of Japan, saying; though the Court and the Military were crushed by the defeat, the third element of the power structure of Imperial Japan, namely, party leaders supported by the business, survived and seized power

2) Though the Japanese resented the German Intervention on the China Policy of 1895 and military forces of both countries came to a confrontation in 1914, it is difficult to assume a vital national interest of Germany behind the Wilhelm II's frivolous Far Eastern Policy.

in the coalition with bureaucrats and industrial managers (p. 36). I agree with Martin that the finding of the "continuity" provides an important key for the understanding of postwar Japanese politics (and postwar Japanese economy, too). However, I differ from him when he seems to attach too much importance to the continuity of persons and also to explain this continuity from the stability of social structure. In my view, the continuity of the "State" is more fundamental than that of persons and the continuity of the "State" does not necessarily mean the stability of society.

I wrote this review in the first half of 1989. Meanwhile, Emperor (TENNO)<sup>3)</sup> Hirohito died after his 'reign' for over sixty years and Akihito succeeded him. Does it mean Japanese are so conservative as to stick to its traditional way of life descending from ancient period? Of course, not. In the continuity of 'Emperor Hirohito' or of the 'Emperor System (Tenno-sei)' one can discern two principles which have been connected to each other on the surface. One is the postulate of the survival as an ancient lineage which has continued service for its ancestors. The postulate of the continuity as an integrated part of the 'State' is another. The latter comes from the fact that the Imperial Court occupied the center of the ritual administration system which was originally an imitation of that of the Tang Dynasty in China. This role of Imperial Court survived the Samurai (Warrior)'s rule over six hundred years, because the Samurai need an imaginary ranking system beside their substantial administration system. It is this imaginery system that provided the intellectual setting in the turbulent years of the Tokugawa Period leading to the Meiji Restoration.

The view of Emperor as an integrated part of the State was described in a modernized style in the so-called "Organ Theory" of the Emperor by Tatsukichi MINOBE, Professor of Constitutional Law, which seems not to have differed much from Hirohito's self-understanding. In this respect, Kroeschell's view of the Meiji Constitution as a constitutional monarchy model, not an absolutist model is very suggestive. But then, why was MINOBE's theory attacked and at last banned from teaching? Further, why could Hirohito remain as Emperor after the surrender of Japan, in spite of the basic change in the constitutional principles? Facing with these questions, must we retreat to the former, rather mystic continuity postulate?

One of my speculations for explaining this paradox is to consider the State of Modern Japan as a 'Passive Revolutionary State' which could not have been fully controlled by the written Constitution. I disagree with both Martin and Kroeschell from the point that they tend to think the changes of Meiji as confined within the aristocratic groups. Seen from a wider historical perspective, it is impossible to regard the change which threw out a half million Samurai families from their privileged position and liberated people totally from the constraints of the Clan (HAN) system as a mere shift within the existing social structure, or to apply the term "reform from above". But since the igniting impact had come

3) In most cases, Tenno is translated as "Emperor" in English. But it is illogical to think of "Emperor" without Empire as in the current 1947 Constitution. The continuity of this translation "Emperor" itself suggests the continuation of the Meiji State despite the change in the Constitution.

from outside and that the change itself was a process of the trial-and-error without a clear vision, the adjective, "passive" should be added in calling it a "revolution". The "Restoration" of 1868 itself is only an intermediate result of the nationwide mobilization process which had begun under the impact of Western Powers. Outside of Japan, this process took the form of the aggressive expansionism which legitimized power politics by the conviction of coercive modernization flavored with several sorts of Anti-Western tennets.

The essence of the "State" in such mobilization process should be seen rather as 'movement' than as 'institution'. Once Japan decided to surpass Western Powers by way of modernization, Japanese must be ready for every sort of change in future without losing its identity. Then comes the most deliberate device of Meiji leaders (Toshimichi OKUBO, Hirobumi ITO) that locates the loyalty to Emperor at the center of the 'State'. They expected from the continuity of the ancient imperial lineage a psychological compensation of the people for the mobilization and the further change.

I hit upon the idea of the "Revolutionary State" or "State in Movement" from the apparent continuity of the State beyond the replacement of Constitutions as is often seen in the history of revolutions. According to the plan of the Meiji leaders, it was the Emperor that was to visualize this supposed continuity of the nation. Paradoxically enough, this compensation function of Emperor seems to be revived after Japan's military defeat when Hirohito started travelling all over Japan in normal suits. In the famous Hirohito's Declaration of 1946, he combined the principle of democracy with his grandfather (Emperor of Meiji)'s Five Oaths of 1868. At that time and still now, this is called the "Declaration of Humanity" from the passage that denied the divinity of the Emperor. But to Hirohito, it was the manifesto to resume his grandfather's unaccomplished task to be the symbol of national identity in the rapid-changing process. This time however under the more direct control of the United States.

I think we stand now at the end of a long wave of revolution or mobilization process of Japan. After forty years of postwar economic growth, the country which had to beg for the aid to support its population has become the largest capital-exporting country of the world. Instead of looking for a model overseas, the Japanese began to pay more attention to the Tokugawa Period in which the evolution inside had been very dynamic despite the stiff social organization as mentioned in Dams' paper (p. 97). The half year of Hirohito's struggle in his deathbed abruptly hit the Japanese and forced them to notice the tension between the continuity of the Emperor System and the democratic principle which is inherent to the postwar Japanese politics. However, even this tension seems to be, at the moment, mitigated by the pledge of the new Emperor, Akihito, to observe the 1947 Constitution "together with the people"<sup>4)</sup>.

4) According to the first clause of the 1947 Constitution, Tenno is stated as the "symbol of the State and the unity of the people", not as the sovereign, and this status "is derived solely by the will of the people". This is one of the main points in the appealed 'independent amendment' of the Constitution which is still not abandoned by the ruling Liberal Democrat Party.

## III

Instead of discussing the 'Model' in the industrialization process of Japan, Dams tries to summarize the significant information without prejudicing numerous literature. His honesty is well shown by the fact that his effort covers not only economic history but also such studies as the demographic estimation of the Tokugawa Period and discussions about the source of the work ethics of the Japanese. In this respect, this lecture can be regarded as a sound base for the whole of this series of lectures.

Dams impressively focuses his attention on the effort of individuals, though he will not deny that its scene is made of a "general context of culture and society". According to him, there is no "patent prescription" for the underdevelopment or for the technological gap; what is needed is the firm will of individuals to learn from others and challenge difficulties. The reviewer fully agrees with him, when he emphasizes this plain truth by his invitation of the younger generation to join the mutual learning and joint problem-solving process.

However, since Dams introduces a Japanese engineer in Metallurgy, Kageyosi NORO, as the most exemplary figure, it might be of some interest to try to bridge Dams' point with the discussion of the "Model" of Western learning. One of the interesting facts in the history of higher education in Japan is the significant position of Engineering Science. As Dams attributes NORO the role of the 'Catalyst' in the launching of the modern steel industry in Japan, the activity of engineers in the modernization of Japan was not confined in the narrow sense of engineering. Even in the recruitment of government officials, graduates of Engineering Science had formed the main stream at first, until they were surpassed by those of Law. In this respect and in his emphasis on the education of the qualified engineers as well, NORO must have been encouraged by the development of higher education in technology which he had experienced by himself in England and Germany.

If allowed to extend this bridge further to the turn of the century, we can mention the move to the higher education in Commerce which was stimulated by the advance of the same in European countries. It was only after the First World War that the Commercial College of Tokyo and Osaka acquired the long aspired University status. But the revision of the Edict of University (1918) which denied the Imperial University's monopoly opened also private Universities the way to equal status. It is worth mentioning that several of them were descendents of the oppositions in Meiji or of the private law schools managed by the "English School" or "French School" alienated by the dominance of the "German School". Furthermore, the separation of the Faculty of Economics from that of Law in both Imperial Universities of Tokyo and Kyoto (1919), which is often regarded as the sign of the independence of Economics from the 'State Science' (Staatswissenschaft), could not have been realized so soon without the move of the commercial colleges<sup>5)</sup>.

5) As for the reception of Political Economy in Japan, see, Hiroshi MIZUTA and Chuhei SUGIYAMA eds., *Enlightenment and Beyond. Political Economy Comes to Japan*, University of Tokyo Press (1988).

It is true that in both cases of the Engineering Science and Economics (Commerce) Germany gave the strongest stimulus to Japanese with its Model of "Technische Hochschule" and "Handelshochschule". I do not know whether Martin would give engineers and businessmen the appropriate position in his 'German Model'. But as it is reasonable to doubt the concept of one single 'German Model', the widening of the scope would surely provide a more pluralistic view of the Japanese society than might be expected by fixing focus on the top of the State apparatus.

#### IV

As for the remaining four lectures, I have to confine myself to present brief impressionistic comments, though each of them reveals very interesting aspects of the modernization of Japan. Prof. Manshard begins his lecture with the urbanization process in Japan, but the main part of the lecture is directed at giving well chosen information about the current policy orientations. The pollution problem, which has been seriously felt since late sixties and the changes of the environmental policy, are also traced. Those who have been to Japan will find their impression of the tremendous agglomeration affirmed by the geographer who lived in Tokyo as the Vice-president of the United Nations University in 1977-1980. Those Germans who might worry about the fame of "German Science" to hear that the dominance of "German School" in Japan was an intended result of the authoritarian Meiji State will feel relieved by Wenz and Vogt's lecture. Because in Medicine, Germans acquired their dominant position rather naturally from the development of Science. However, as stated by Wenz and Vogt, the influence of German Medicine can be traced back as far as the Tokugawa Period when German Medicine was taught as "Dutch Medicine".

Prof. Nelly Nauman concentrates on the question of "What are Japanese?" While the uniqueness of Japanese culture is often loudly maintained, this question has annoyed so many generations of Japanese intellectuals since the beginning. Her summary of the major lines of the self understanding of the Japanese provides indispensable knowledge for the understanding of the intellectual world of Japan<sup>6)</sup>. The mythologic aspect of the 'Emperor System' is also discussed here.

The last one is the only contribution by a Japanese Professor, Takashi OSHIO. He begins it with the recollection of his German teacher who sang the "Mai Lied (Song of May)" in the lecture hall with students and ends it with the analysis of Goethe's "Wanderers Nachtlied (Traveller's Night Song)". As a whole, this is a nicely written homage dedicated to German Literature. The true popularity of German Literature (and German Idealist Philosophy) began in the Taisho Period when the democratic principle seemed to overcome the authoritarian state structure. Since then, German Literature has become an organic element of the intellectual assets of the Japanese. Reading OSHIO, I

6) One of the merits of Nauman's lecture is her mention of Kunio YANAGITA's work. But in my view, she still misses the aspect of a conscious social scientist in him.

realize that I, myself, stand in this tradition, as one belonging to the last generation, I'm afraid.

I have to apologize that I used this chance not to present a fair and objective review of the eight contributions of the book but rather to fix my view of the modernization of Japan and the meaning of Western learning in it. This is the reason why so much space is spent on giving a critical evaluation of the "German Model".