



**A SHORT HISTORY OF
TRANSPORT IN JAPAN
FROM ANCIENT TIMES TO THE
PRESENT**

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2. Japanese Institutions and Organisations

...institutionalization is an articulation or integration of the actions of a plurality of actors in a specific type of action in which the various actors accept jointly a set of harmonious rules regarding goals and procedures (Mayhew, 1983: 116–117).

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to give an overview of the major developments in state formation, Japanese political institutions and commercial organisations in the archaic, ancient, medieval, early modern, modern and contemporary times. The lengthy conclusions to this chapter summarise the main points about institutional and organisational transitions or reforms.

The archaic period saw the importation of Yayoi culture from China and Korea via Kyūshū to co-exist with, and later supplant, the first wave of immigration from continental Asia—the Jōmon hunter gathers. Families formed larger units of clans ruled by chiefs until consolidations of territories through kinship ties and territorial conquest eventually forged the Yamato State that covered much of western Japan.

The ancient period saw the expansion of territory away from the Yamato heartland, primarily in the direction of the north-east of the island of Honshū. By the 7th century, codification of laws and the construction of large administrative capitals indicate the consolidation of a “state institution” with the Emperor at the pinnacle of power. But this early phenomenon of strong, politically active Emperors was short-lived: from the 9th through to the mid-19th centuries Emperors had little political influence. Other figures came to rule in the name of the

Emperor: first, aristocratic families linked to the Imperial Court in Kyōto and, then, military families with diverse social and political bases.

The medieval period in Japan was a feudal age that was not static but underwent successive dislocations of its institutions through civil warfare. As with the Marxian history (Jameson, 1974) that all hitherto existing societies are histories of class struggles (freeman and slave; patrician and plebian; lord and serf), feudal Japan can be summarily described as a long conflict involving the institution of Emperor and its nobles being usurped by warlords (*daimyō*) who gained territories through military conquest. Some warlords were politically and militarily adroit enough to establish two successive military governments (Kamakura and Muromachi). In a predominantly politically fragmented and decentralised country, where borders frequently shifted through civil wars, the *daimyō* were, in essence, the local government institutions of the day wielding power as landlords over their peasants in their domains.

Dislocations occurred because of the actions of individuals. In the early modern period, three warlords are associated with the unification of Japan in the late 16th century—Oda Nobunaga, Toyotomi Hideyoshi and Tokugawa Ieyasu (who created the third military government that lasted from 1603 until 1868). They also helped create a more prosperous economy by recognising monopoly organisations and delegating trade and transport to the merchant class that increasingly became more financially secure as time went by.

After the restoration of the Emperor in 1868, the modern era is characterised by attempts to catch up with major Western powers by borrowing ideas on law, political institutions and technology. Social institutions that are more familiar to us today were formed: an elected parliament, national, prefectural and local governments (and their executive agencies) and organisations, such as powerful industry conglomerates and lobby groups.

Another round of major reform followed in Japan with the occupation by the U.S.A. and its allies after the Pacific War. A new constitution was written by Americans based on the British model. By and large, in the contemporary period, the institutions and organisations established in the immediate post-war era continue to this day. The military and powerful pre-war industrial companies had been disbanded, allowing

skilled personnel to be transferred into government and industry research. The post-war economy boomed to the extent that by the 1980s Japan was one of the three largest economies in the world.

Archaic Tribal (Religious) State

Migrations and the Earliest Inhabitants

The societies that have evolved across the Japanese archipelago owe their origins entirely to *external* influences. Lineages of all humans can be traced to East Africa some 70 thousand years ago (Harari, 2011: 16, and Map 1, p. 16) before reaching East Asia (Harari, 2011: 23). During the last Ice Age, ending 15,000 years ago, Japan was connected to continental Asia through several land bridges. The relevant routes for the migration into Japan were as follows: the Ryūkyū Islands to Taiwan and Kyūshū; the link from Kyūshū to the Korean peninsula; and the connection of Hokkaidō to Sakhalin and the Siberian mainland. (The Philippines and Indonesia were also connected to the Asian mainland.) These links allowed migrations from China and Austronesia towards Japan about 35 thousand years ago. The Ainu (or *Emishi*) came from Siberia and settled in Hokkaidō and Honshū some 15,000 years ago, just before the water levels started rising again.

Autosomal DNA analyses and population expansion models (Ding *et al.*, 2011) indicate at least two waves of migration. The first wave—the Upper Paleolithic people of the Jōmon hunter-gatherer culture, represented by the Minatogawa Man in Okinawa—began around 50,000 B.C. and reached a peak at about 10,000 B.C. (Ding *et al.*, 2011: 19; Moiseyev, 2009). This culture was distributed widely on the Japanese archipelago from the southernmost Okinawa to the northernmost Hokkaidō (Hay, 2016).

The second wave of migration travelled to the Japanese Archipelago around 2,300 years B.C. These Mongoloid populations, called the Yayoi, differed from the Jōmon people in origin, and began to immigrate into Japan, specifically to Kyūshū and also along the coastline of the Sea of Japan (Yanshina, 2019: 9). Hudson suggests (2006: 421) that the Yayoi period saw the largest relative influx of immigrants from the

Chinese mainland and the Korean peninsula that heralded in innovative agricultural practices.

The first evidence of woven cloth in Japan is thought to have appeared in the early part of the Yayoi period (900 B.C.—A.D. 300) when spinning and weaving technologies were brought from Korea along with an agricultural package including the cultivation of rice and millet (Nelson *et al.*, 2020: 11, and Fig.3, p. 13). Archeological sites in Japan reveal Yayoi-period spindle whorls were made from clay, stone, wood or bone and antler.

Jōmon and Yayoi Institutions

The Jōmon period (about 10,000–300 B.C.) is divided into stages (Initial, Early, Middle, Late and Final) based on archeological evidence as the technology of the culture, unsurprisingly, developed at different rates across the Japanese archipelago (Kodansha, 1993: 691–694). This hunter-gather culture began with the emergence of pottery and ended with the introduction of rice paddy agriculture and long-distance trade (Yoshida and Ertl, 2016). “‘Primitive tribes’ cement their social order by believing in spirits’ (Harari, 2011: 31): “‘The tribe did not serve as a permanent political framework...there were no institutions.” (*ibid.*: 52).

The Jōmon lived in relatively small tribes, estimated about 24 individuals per human settlement. Shamanistic practices, possibly influenced by Daoist practices from China, have been identified that suggest some hierarchical structuring of society. In the Middle and Late Jōmon periods, archeological excavations point to fisherman inventing an array of tools and techniques for deep-sea fishing (Kodansha, 1993: 693) that implied the construction of small boats and, by implication, some hierarchical control in the organisation of hunter-gather labour for lake, river, coastal and sea-faring fishing.

The population sizes of each human settlement of the Yayoi communities were larger, at 57 individuals (Ding *et al.*, 2011:20). Crawford (1992) suggests the transition from hunter-gathers to agriculture in Japan was not a singular process but that there were at least four distinctive transitions.¹ The political system and style

1 The Jōmon-Yayoi transition is the most important problem for the study of ethnicity in Japanese archaeology (Hudson, 2006: 418).

of human settlements changed significantly. Community leaders increasingly associated the rice granary and control over storage to gain “centralized power” (Hosowa, 2014: 67). Yayoi communities, and their contemporaries on the Korean peninsula, were in constant contact.

A system of social ranking of elite and commoners existed, but among the elite, a formal hierarchy did not emerge until the end of the Yayoi Period when some segments of lineages became very powerful and were linked in a network. (Pearson, 2016: 21).

Based on cultural landscapes, fossil records and human remains (Uchiyama *et al.*, 2014), the Yayoi soon dominated the Japanese archipelago and completed their expansion around 300 A.D. but never fully replaced the Ainu tribes to the northeast.

Yayoi society was structured around agriculture with clan chiefs in command. The development of rice cultivation regions in Japan has been closely related to progress in the development of irrigation systems (Tabayashi, 1987). River irrigation systems for paddy fields extended across wide areas, especially in eastern Japan. The combination of these natural and man-made water courses formed the basis of rural infrastructure that also facilitated the movement of agricultural produce from the Yayoi period into the 20th century. The enduring feature of managing this Yayoi landscape was grass-roots organisations and cooperation and a decentralised administration.

Yamatai and Yamato States

From the Yayoi period (c. 300 B.C.) to the formation of Yamato State around 250 A.D., archaeological evidence suggests that the rise of social groupings, political control and small kingdoms were gradually incorporated into kingdom federations (Brown, 1993a: 4). The influx of Korean Bronze Age culture led to two distinctive religious and cultural spheres: one centred in northern Kyūshū; the other around Lake Biwa in the Kinai Region—the five “home” provinces of Yamato, Yamashiro, Kawachi, Izumi and Settsu. According to a Chinese Han (202 B.C.-220 A.D.) history, “Japan” (*Wa*) then had “over one hundred” separate countries (Ishii, 1980: 133). In the early days of state formation, “status and alliances were not based on place, for loyalties would shift with a family, not necessarily with territory” (Nelson, 2014: 89).

During the later Kōfun period (300–538 A.D.), Pearson (2016: 25), whilst acknowledging the debate around archaic political institutions, suggests that there was a complex political system in which social classes were controlled by elites who monopolised production and used military force to control or expand territory. Social prestige was derived from lineage, from tutelary deities and from ancestors linked to *uji* chiefs. Gradually, the clan of Yamato became paramount and interactions between far-flung tribes increased. Each *uji* earned extra prestige from the marriage of women in their clan with members of the Imperial *uji* (Culeddu, 2013: 62) underpinning the formation of Yamatai. (The confusion over the name of this embryonic country derives from different readings of ancient Chinese ideograms.)

These rulers based their beliefs on mystical Shintōism: they justified that they were a divine race whose ancestors came from Heaven, whilst those subdued were born on earth and therefore “ordained to subjection” (Griffis, 1915: 26). The chief god of Shintōism is *Amaterasu*, the Sun God—the direct ancestor of later Japanese Emperors and Empresses.² Barnes (2014) suggests that the mystical beliefs were derived from Chinese Daoism and the myth of *Xi Wang Mu* (The Queen of the West).

Towards the end of the 2nd century twenty-eight independent states pledged loyalty to Queen Himiko (c. 170–248) of the Yamatai state that was probably located in the Kinai Region—although that location is disputed by scholars (Harding, 2020: 10). Queen Himiko helped establish a single line of priestly and hereditary rulers in the Yamato region that gained control later over most of the Japanese islands, through inter-marriage and kinship ties (Barnes, 2014: 10), and parts of the Korean peninsula (Brown, 1993a: 1–2, 22). After becoming ruler of *Wa*, Queen Himiko confined herself to the inner recesses of the Court and the “mundane” affairs of state were left to others, possibly under the authority of her brother. The state was “tightly governed, and marked by a social hierarchy so vivid and entrenched...” (Harding, 2020: 17).

This established the precedent that the Emperor of Japan—whose authority was based on divinely-informed rule—does not personally run the government (Ishii, 1980:7), and this continues as Imperial

2 This belief is certainly a much later historical invention because Griffis (1915: 28) suggests Buddhist priests retrospectively invented many titles for the Yamato tribe, probably in the 6th century A.D.

policy. The state expanded through territorial conquest. King Yuryaku (reigned 418–479) sent a memorial to the Sung Court (420–479) that gave a brief description of how political unification was achieved in Japan after successive rulers had forcefully defeated other contenders for hegemony (Wang, 1994: 27).

These territories of land under the direct rule of the King/Queen (Emperor) required administration and this gave rise to the Court-appointed governors (*kuni no miyatsuko*), who sometimes were the local chieftains. Provinces (*kuni*) and districts (*agata*) served as the local government arms of centralised control by the Court. This hierarchical control of land and sea resources by clans and tribes (institutions of governance) reinforced the centralisation of political power. During their rise to power the Yamato lineage established no permanent capital until 313 A.D. when Emperor Nintōku (uncertain dates for his reign are 313 to 399) built Takatsu no Miya at Naniwa, situated at the inner recesses of the large Ōsaka Bay on a marshy delta of major rivers that made it of strategic importance for seaborne and inland waterway traffic. The importance of ideas imported from continental Asia were facilitated by maritime transport.

A “remarkable transformation” (Harding, 2020: 23) of the Yamato State, involving long and frequently bloody internal wars, took place in central Honshū in the 6th and 7th centuries that fashioned the archipelago’s first recognisable state (Toshiya, 1993). Mixing fact with fiction, the “Great Sovereigns” morphed into the “Heavenly Sovereigns” (or Emperors as rendered in English), as elaborated upon by Harding (2020: 24–28) with particular reference to the legendary Prince Shōtoku (573–621).

The influence of continental Chinese culture grew including the codification of state law and the construction of large administrative capitals (Heijo-kyō in 710; Heian-kyō in 794), with their substantial administrative components. The Yamato State issued eight official directives between 715 and 840 that encouraged the cultivation of crops other than rice (Hudson, 2019: Table 1, p. 32) to diversify the state revenue base. From the 890s onwards, the Chinese *Zhenguan Zhengyao* (The Essentials of Government in the Zhenguan era) was known to have been circulating in Japan and was a source of reference for the

Kamakura, Muromachi and Tokugawa military governments (Kornicki, 2016: 169–171).

The Institution of Emperor

The most enduring institution is that of the Emperor of Japan and its earlier manifestations—some of which are surrounded in myth (Ishii, 1980: 3; Kidder, 1993). Japan claims to have the world’s oldest unbroken line of rulers. Issued in 1889, the preamble to the constitution reads:

Having by virtue of the glories of Our Ancestors ascended the Throne of a lineal succession unbroken for ages eternal...The rights of sovereignty of the State We have inherited from our Ancestors, and We shall bequeath them to Our descendants (Griffis, 1915: 22).

In this preamble, there are seventeen articles that define the place of the Emperor as the “fountain of order, power and privilege”. In fact, as emphasised by Gordon (2003: 2–3), the early phenomenon of strong, politically active Emperors was short-lived: Emperors from the 9th through to the 19th centuries had little political influence and they predominantly played a ceremonial role as priests in the indigenous Shintō tradition. Other figures came to rule in the name of the Emperor: first aristocratic families linked to the Imperial Court and then military families with diverse social and political bases.

Ancient Period, 603–967

The ancient period was heralded in with a shift from court appointments based on hereditary titles (the *kabane* system) to one based on merit, despite the opposition of the *uji* chieftains. In 603, a new twelve-tier system of Court ranks was established with those ranks bestowed on recipients by the Emperor according to merit and ability. Reformers first moved to strengthen the government’s control (Mitsusada, 1993: 194), then Nakatomi no Kamakari (Fujiwara no Kamatari) and Prince Naka no Oe (later Emperor Tenji) finally broke the power of the *uji* chieftains (Kodansha, 1993: 1496–1497).

Emperor Kōtoku (597–654) called a meeting in 645 of new ministers and made them swear an oath of allegiance affirming the principle that it was the Emperor—and not the chieftains—who should rule the state.

The Taika Reform edict was proclaimed on the first day of first month of 646. It was a Four-Article Edict that abolished Imperial and local magnate service communities and lands (setting up a system of government stipends), set up a new Imperial Capital and established a system of local and village government (Kiley, 1999). This administration was directly concerned with managing the fundamental resource—land.

The edict ordered the compilation of registers for population, taxation and the state allocation of land, and it substituted a product tax (levied on households and paddy land) for a labour tax (*so*, *yō* and *chō*). In 649, eight ministries were responsible for various areas of the new government and 100 official posts were decreed (Ishii, 1980: 20). Also, as suggested by Mitsusada (1993: 197–199), and of lasting relevance to the history of military institutions, was that the Taika Reforms established the “position of *seii taishōgun* (征夷大將軍)”, or “generalissimo who conquers the barbarians”—the supreme military chief. The mandate was to quell frontier rebellions within Japan, especially in the northeast of Honshū where the indigenous tribes of the *Emishi* (Ainu) fought defiantly against intrusions into their traditional territories.

Institutional reforms in the ancient period were substantially influenced by external factors to Japan—although they took about half a century to resolve. First, in 663, a Chinese T’ang force defeated a naval expedition at the Battle of Hakusukinoe (off the southwest coast of the Korean peninsula): administrative reforms based on the Chinese model occurred. Secondly, the Sinophile Emperor Saga (786–842; reigned 809–823) strengthened the Japanese legal-bureaucratic state after the 810 “Kusuko Incident” when the former Emperor Heizei, who abdicated, staged a coup d’état.³

Thirdly, a social code of behaviour, with strong Confucian influences from China, became formalised. The Chinese-inspired *ritsuryō* codes were more than mere ideograms (words) on a page: they reflected a “legal cosmology” that rested on metaphysical assumptions about the nature of the universe and the place of people within it. The maintenance of social order was premised on vertical relations of hierarchy and subordination where every person had a specific role and specific duties

3 The abdicated Emperor Heizei (774–824; reigned 806–809) attempted to come out of retirement by staging a coup d’état against Emperor Saga with the help of his chief consort Fujiwara no Kusu.

(Celudda, 2010: 356): relations between ruler and subject; husband and wife; father and son; elder and young brother; and between friends.

This strengthening of the central government led to an expansion of its territories on the island of Honshū. It took almost half a century for the enactment of Taihō Code (702 A.D.) that was based on the adoption of the Chinese-style (T'ang Dynasty) law (Ishii, 1980: 30). A commission of aristocrats and Court officials, which included Prince Osakabe (died 705) and Fujiwara no Fuhito (659–720), compiled the code. It consisted of six volumes of penal law and 11 volumes of administrative law (revised in 718 as the *Yōrōryō* Code, as explained by Migliore and Manieri (2020)).

The Code finally broke down the clan-title system by making appointments to secular and priestly functions. As the entire country (which now included the provinces of Mutsu and Dewa, but not the island of Hokkaidō) was now placed under the direct control of the Emperor's government, a new system of land administration was introduced. The country was divided into three types of administrative units—*kuni*, *kori* and *sato* (fifty-household groups).

There were three T'ang-style taxes sanctioned by the government (Ishii, 1980: 27–28). *So* was a 3 per cent tax on the rice harvest but most of the rice was transported within the *kuni* for local government expenses. *Chō* was a tax imposed on local products other than rice and this included the expense and physical effort (transaction costs) of delivering the payment to the central government. *Yō* was a tax on labour at 10 days per year but could be substituted in lieu with local products. The latter two taxes were the responsibility of each household who were also obliged to transport the products to the capital—whether by water or by land.

The land law of 711 allowed aristocrats and local gentry to obtain permission from provincial governors to cultivate a piece of virgin land at their own expense—essentially, the formation of the manor system (*shōen*). Towards the close of the ancient period the reclamation of new lands through irrigation—largely by private individuals (influential families, temples and shrines)—was decreed to be private property, immune from confiscation by the state in perpetuity. This resulted in large-scale private agglomerations of land that were exempt from taxation and this had implications later with the rise of regional warlords.

Early Medieval Period, 967–1467

The early part of this period in Japanese history is characterised by a Chief Imperial Advisor (*kanpaku*) who was selected to take control over the administrative apparatus of government. Appointees to the role of Chief Imperial Advisor controlled politics only until 1185 when their influence was superseded by the political primacy of retired Emperors (*insei* system): “personal or individual relationships proved the main determinants of civil affairs” (Ishii, 1980: 34). The *insei* system (with the retirement of Emperor Go-shirakawa) gave way to joint political hegemony by the Court nobility (*kuge*) and by the leaders of the warrior houses (*buke*).

Kamakura Bakufu,⁴ 1192–1333

At the beginning of this era, the Heike family monopolised Court positions, and other posts, by virtue of their military power and financial wealth. When the warlord Minamoto no Yoritomo crushed the forces of the Heike the warrior families throughout the country pledged loyalty to him as their leader. After confiscating Heike estates in central and western Japan, he had the Imperial Court appoint stewards for the estates and constables for the provinces. The Imperial Court officially recognised Minamoto no Yoritomo’s position of the “chief of the warrior houses” (*buke no tōryō*). This paved the way for the warrior class to dominate the country under the Kamakura *bakufu* system (1192–1333) that was based on kinship ties and property inheritance (Gouge, 2017).

The leadership of the Kamakura government was drawn from descendants of former governors, holders of military commissions and managers of *shōen* estates. Headed by the *Shōgun*, and based in Kamakura, the new ‘central’ government was supported by the regional warlords (*buke*) and the *bushi*⁵ who were appointed to administer policies in each

4 Literally ‘tent government’.

5 *Bushi* (military gentry) were the warrior elite that emerged in the provinces of pre-modern Japan from the early 10th century (Kodansha, 1993: 1306). By the late 12th century they became the ruling class of the country (until 1868) and were more widely known as samurai (“One who Serves”).

provincial government institution (*shugo*) and in the *shōen* estates where local warriors (*jitō*⁶ or *gesu*) had seized administrative control.

The structure of the central institutions of government were well defined under the supreme governing body, the Council of State (Kodansha, 1993: 724). At the head of this hierarchy was the *Shōgun*, followed by the *Shōgunal* Regent (*shikken*). The Council of State was made up of the heads of the Documents Office, or Administrative Board from 1191 (financial affairs), the Board of Inquiry (legal matters), the Board of Retainers (dealing with general affairs) and the High Court.

The local institutions that were also represented on the Council of State were; the Kyōto Military Governor (*Kyōto shugo*); the Kyūshū Commissioner (*chinzei bugyō*); the General Commissioner of Oshu (*Oshu sobugyō*); the Military Governors (*shugo*); and the Land Stewards (*jitō*). *Bugyō* is a term from the Heian period (794–1185) meaning to carry out orders received from a superior. This reflected the hierarchical nature of Confucianism.

Confucianism and Neo-Confucianism (introduced to Japan in the 12th century) helped to legitimise the *bushi*'s authority and superiority over the other social classes. The warrior society was strictly ranked into three classes. At the top, with comparatively small numbers, were the *Shōgun*'s vassals on whom were bestowed letters of confirmation that recognised their proprietorship of land and the right to govern in that domain. The second tier in the hierarchy was composed of samurai. The third tier was made up of lightly armed foot soldiers.

Go seibai shiki moku (the Formulary of Adjudications) is the law code established by the Kamakura *Shōgunate* (1192–1333) to codify warrior house law. This specifies both the relationship of vassal to *Shōgun* and the administration of warrior domains that remained in place (together with the periodic promulgation of supplementary articles, *suika*) until the mid-19th century—all predicated on the Confucian ideology of loyalty.

Shugo were local officials appointed to each province as part of national public administration. From the 1190s the *bakufu* assigned *shugo* to identify, and to register, suitable warriors who deserved recognition as *go kenin*. Their formal duties were initially to organise palace guard

6 *Jitō*—Their historical importance is their role in the warrior class's struggle against absentee *shōen* proprietors (Kodansha, 1993: 687).

duties, but they soon expanded to having the jurisdiction to punish rebellions (formalised in 1232 under the “Three Regulations for Great Crimes” legislation).

The demise of the Kamakura *bakufu* was caused by a number of factors. The attempted Mongol invasion of Japan had been a drain on the economy, and new taxes had to be levied to maintain defensive preparations for the future. There was disaffection among those warriors who expected rewards for their participation in the conflicts. Additionally, inheritances had divided family properties, and landowners increasingly had to turn to moneylenders for support. Roving bands of *rōnin* (samurai without a lord or master) further threatened the stability of the *bakufu*.

To further weaken the Imperial Court, the *bakufu* decided to allow two contending Imperial lines (the Southern Court and the Northern Court) to alternate on the throne. In 1331, the *bakufu* attempted to exile Emperor Go-Daigo, but loyalist forces reacted, aided by Ashikaga Takauji (1305–1358), a constable who turned against Kamakura when dispatched to put down Go-Daigo’s rebellion. This period of reform, known as the Kemmu Restoration (1333–1336), aimed, unsuccessfully, at strengthening the position of the Emperor and reasserting the primacy of the Court nobles over the *bushi*. The long war between the Courts lasted from 1336 to 1392. Early in the conflict, the Northern Court contender was installed by Ashikaga Takauji, who became the new *Shōgun* in 1338.

Muromachi Shōgunate, 1338–1573

Japan’s second military regime was characterised by expanded authority over all military and political affairs that included responsibility for foreign diplomacy and trade. Two men are credited with giving shape to the machinery of government (Kodansha, 1993: 1020). The *Shōgun*’s younger brother, Ashikaga Tadayoshi, established the administrative organs of government by following the Kamakura model. The *Shōgun* was directly responsible for local administration. Through the *Shōgun*’s deputies in the Kantō region were the institutions of the Muromachi *Shōgunate*. In addition, reporting to the *Shōgun* were the deputies from Kyūshū, Ōshū (the ancient provinces of northeast Honshū) and Ushū (today, the prefectures of Akita and Yamagata). The remaining part of

local administration comprised of the military governors (*shugo*) and the military land stewards (*jitō*).

Miyagawa with Kiley (1990) explain the rise of the institution of *shugo* as “military governors” of provinces during the Muromachi period:

It is essential to bear in mind the importance of the institution of *kokujin* [provincial men] lordship within the total political system of the Muromachi period [...] *kokujin* lordship was the fundamental institution upon which that order rested. (Miyakawa with Kiley, 1990: 99).

Gradually, the *shugo* were given more extensive powers by the *bakufu*, including: the power to execute judgment in cases regarding land; to arrest and punish those accused of unlawful harvesting; and to administer *hanzei*—a system whereby half of the income from certain estates was expropriated for military purposes. Another power was the authority to collect *tansen*, which originally was an extraordinary levy measured in cash and imposed uniformly throughout each province on each *tan* (about one-third of an acre) of “public land”.

By the middle of the 15th century, in compensation for the burden of collecting these taxes, the *shugo* had asserted the right to levy *shugo tansen* and *shugo corvée*. This *bakufu-shugo* institutional arrangement structure was “the guarantor of *kokujin* lordship at the local level” (Miyagawa with Kiley, 1990) but the system of independent *kokujin* lordships on *shōen* estates began to decline in the latter half of the 15th century.

During the two and one-half centuries, stretching from the wars between the Northern and Southern Courts to the Sengoku period, the institutional arrangements shifted substantially. The *shōen* system of the “Imperial state” structure and its proprietors—court nobles and temples as proprietors—finally collapsed, and actual power in the provinces was exercised first by the *kokujin* and then by a new class of warrior lords, the *sengoku-daimyō*. For example, the Hosokawa family⁷—a branch of the Ashikaga family originally from Hosokawa village in Mikawa Province (now Aichi Prefecture)—illustrates this shift of power towards the warrior houses and its enduring nature over the following centuries.

⁷ The Hosokawa clan supported Tokugawa Ieyasu at the Battle of Sekigahara in 1600 and were rewarded with the position of *tōzama daimyō* (literally “outside vassals”) in the Tokugawa *bakufu* throughout the Edo period up to the Meiji Restoration of 1868 (Kodansha, 1993: 1618).

The head of the clan, Hosokawa Akiuji (d. 1352), assisted Ashikaga Takauji in his rise to form a government. In return, the family was made military governor (*shugo*) of seven provinces in central Honshū and Shikōkū, and traditionally held the post of *Shōgunal* deputy (Kodansha, 1993: 567). For example, Hosokawa Katsumoto (1430–1473) succeeded his father as *shugo* of Settsu that included the administration of the important port of Sakai with its trade links with China.

In the Muromachi era, the *sengoku-daimyō* had to deal with villagers (Nagahara with Yamamura, 1990: 108) and the status of merchants and tradesmen. These relationships led to an explosion of land and sea transport networks (Yamamura, 1993: 381–383) and the rise of “transport and trade” *organisations*. In particular, Ashikaga Yoshimitsu (1358–1408), the highest-ranking member of the Imperial Court, forged (after he had retired from public office) a tributary trade relationship with Ming China that lasted for about a century. This heralded both the assertion of a positive foreign policy on the part of the *bakufu* and the *bakufu*'s usurpation from the Imperial Court of the right to deal with foreign heads of state. By this act, the Muromachi *bakufu* set the precedent for the particular balance of authority between Emperor and *Shōgun* for the next four hundred and fifty years.

Early Modern Period, 1467–1858

By the 16th century the provinces were firmly in the hands of the *sengoku-daimyō*. This undermined the power of the Muromachi *Shōgunate*. The military and political changes, and the development of warfare in *sengoku* Japan, were driven by deep structural changes in rulership, administration, social structures and conflicts (Morillo, 1995: 100). The collapse of national political systems of legitimacy unleashed competition at a lower level amongst the *daimyō*. The *daimyō* discovered that such competition was most effectively carried out through the conquest and effective governance of compact territorial bases.

They developed administrative, financial and human resources, and built more effective local states. One example was the powerful warlord, Oda Nobunaga (1534–1582), who ousted Ashikaga Yoshiaki (resigned as *Shōgun* in 1588) from Kyōto in 1573. Oda Nobunaga's way of consolidating territories included a war against the Pure Land

Buddhist sectarians based in Honganji (Ōsaka) who had land and lucrative trading networks.

The Rise of Guild Organisations and Trade in the Muromachi Era

Under the *shōen* system of self-sufficiency all non-agricultural activities—the manufacture of luxury and special products, the construction and service trades, the exchange of goods—were controlled by the *shōen* proprietor. Village blacksmiths, roof thatchers and carpenters met the needs of the farming community, and artisans produced the luxury goods necessary for the aristocratic class. Such goods were not freely produced for a general market, nor were they freely traded for commercial profit. A dual peasant system emerged where the small, weak peasants subordinated themselves to more powerful peasants (*myōshu* class⁸).

It became common in villages to manufacture products, such as noodles, rice vinegar, lamp oil and blinds crafted from bamboo, for sale in the towns that were beginning to emerge around castles. The peasants who made such products formed themselves under the protection of a powerful noble family, a warlord or a religious patron into *za*—the counterpart to the European medieval guild—that emerged in the late 11th century, and flourished especially in Kyōto from the Muromachi period onwards (Nagahara, 1990: 330–331). Only in the Muromachi period did the *za* monopolise the production, transport and sale of commodities—an embryonic *organisation* in Japan's history.

The almost ceaseless civil warfare during the *Ōnin no Ran* (1467–1477) might give the impression of a dark picture of destruction across the region around Kyōto, but those warlords holding land increased yields and, in fact, promoted industry through the *za* system. Their merchandise (especially salt, sake, malt, vegetable oils and paper) was exempt from tolls, from duties imposed in transit and from market taxes. Recognition of these privileges took the form of paying 'fees' to their

8 *Myōshu* were commoners given privileges by *shōen* owners as local landholders from the 10th–16th centuries (Kodansha, 1993: 1026–1027). They were responsible for collecting taxes and labour services from their families and sub-ordinate families. As the *shōen* system declined some were given samurai equivalent status and became armed vassals of provincial barons (*kokujin*) who, in turn, had allegiances to the military governor (*shugo*).

patrons, who were predominantly the noble families, the local warlords, Shintō shrines and Buddhist temples.

Guilds were officially abolished nationally around 1590 by the actions of Oda Nobunaga and Toyotomi Hideyoshi. Old feudal barriers were broken down by Oda Nobunaga, whose policy of the incorporation of large conquered territories eliminated many barriers to trade. Oda Nobunaga fashioned political institutions that his successors used to good effect in establishing and sustaining the Tokugawa peace from 1603 to 1868 (Gordon, 2003: 10). Merchants rose in importance to facilitate the extensive trade networks of the religious and secular organisations.

Oda Nobunaga allowed relatively autonomous village organisations to thrive as long as they paid him taxes. He developed a bureaucratic program of tax collection, where specialised tax collectors dealt directly with villages and returned the revenue to Oda Nobunaga and his vassals. In this, Oda Nobunaga took ‘proprietorship’ from these petty landowners, and, in exchange, he guaranteed them an income reflecting the size and output of their land. He also established the right to reassign a subordinate lord to another domain.

Oda Nobunaga, and, later, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, eliminated the *za* with their policy of free markets and guilds (*rakuichi-rakuza*) but in doing so created new guilds under their protection. Merchants opposed guilds as being monopolistic and restrictive of trade and found ways to circumvent policies: some merchants located in small seaports dealt with the administrators of the *buke* estates and arranged for the movement of their agricultural surpluses by sea.

Piracy as an Organisation

‘Piracy’ represents a good example of the blurring between *institutions* and *organisations*. Piracy in medieval Japan might be best thought of as an economic partnership between *de facto* local government (warlords) and private enterprise. Japan’s land-based warlords accepted the autonomy of “pirates” and, in fact, competed to sponsor these multi-functional “sea-lord brigands” who could administer coastal estates, fight sea battles, protect shipping and carry out trade as well as seizing cargoes from foreign ships (Petrucci, 2010).

According to Shapinsky (2010, 2014), the “pirates” thought of themselves as sea lords. Over the course of time, “pirates” became

maritime magnates who wielded increasing amounts of political and economic power by developing autonomous maritime domains that operated outside the auspices of state authority. With opportunities to make great profits it was natural that unlicensed trade grew in volume, especially through the hands of an *organisation* of “pirates” (Sanson, 1961: 265–270).

The chaotic world of *sengoku* Japan has been characterised by Clulow (2009: 25) as a “failed state” with endemic conflict fuelled by a proliferation of weapons and competing warrior groups. Since the collapse of the Ashikaga shogunate in 1467 and the onset of Japan’s warring states (*sengoku*) period (1467–1568), no central authority had been able to exert real power over the archipelago’s maritime fringes. Piracy underpinned these local coastal economies of Japan (Tamaki, 2014: 257), providing a reliable source of income to local warlords and creating employment for coastal communities.

In addition, during the 16th century, *daimyō* on the outlying western islands began to appropriate the title of *nihonkokuō shi* (Japan’s official overseas diplomatic emissaries). Lacking the military power to prevent fraudulent use of that title, the Muromachi *bakufu* was helpless to prevent regional rulers from pursuing foreign trade and diplomatic relations (Murdoch with Yamagata, 1903). Far from taking steps to prevent their domains from becoming bases for illegal trade or piracy, the lords of Japan’s westernmost provinces (including the Sō of Tsushima, the Ōuchi near the western tip Honshū, and the Ōtomo, Matsuura, and Shimazu of Kyūshū) were eager to pocket a share of the profits from such trade (Murai, n.d.).

The Eradication of Piracy and State Incorporation

Following in the path of Oda Nobunaga, Toyotomi Hideyoshi built up powerful coalition of domains with an objective of unifying all Japanese provinces. Under the tutelage of Oda Nobunaga his wealth expanded rapidly in an environment of rampant extra-legal, extra-national economic activity of maritime smuggling. He began to trade by way of *shuin sen* (ships used for foreign trade) with the formal permission of the Muromachi *bakufu* (Tamaki, 2014: 259). As his military power expanded, Toyotomi Hideyoshi incorporated some of the pirate clans into his war machine to gain more territory.

As for those remaining pirates, Toyotomi Hideyoshi initiated a campaign consisting of three steps: identification; disarmament; and enforcement. The key moment was on 29 August 1588, when he issued two decrees that, combined, aimed to eradicate pirate organisations: the “sword-hunt” edict; and an anti-piracy regulation. The anti-piracy edict specifically targeted coastal communities by ordering that “the sea captains and the fishermen of the provinces and the seashores, all those who go in ships to the sea, shall immediately be investigated” (de Bray *et al.*, 2002: 459). Once they were identified, these sea peoples were compelled to sign oaths declaring that they would no longer engage in piracy.

The edict extended central government control over the maritime fringes of the Japanese archipelago for the first time, effectively moving the “marginal men”, who were so central to piracy, out of the margins and into the legal structures (Clulow, 2009) of *institutions*. Japanese sea power became a centralising political force during the late 16th century, as demonstrated by the two maritime invasions of the Korean peninsula during the Imjin Wars of 1592–1598 (Hawley, 2005; Turnbull, 2002).

Isolated pirate attacks continued to be recorded well into the 17th century, but Toyotomi Hideyoshi’s efforts transformed piracy from an *organisation* that could be conducted with virtual impunity into a far more sporadic and marginal business that entailed great risks where smaller pirate *organisations* remained outside the pale of a centralised government. Details on how the smuggling of valuable goods from overseas countries into Japan continued during the later Edō period by organised networks is described by Knoest (2016).

Edō Period—Bakuhan System of Government

The Edō period (Deal, 2005: 12) heralded the unification of the country under the Tokugawa military government. The Battle of Sekigahara (1600) confirmed the hegemony of Tokugawa Ieyasu, who was appointed by the Emperor as *Shōgun* in 1603. He set about building a castle and reconstructing the city that became Edō (Naito, 2003; Kodansha, 1993: 314). The Edō period saw the immediate transfer of political and economic power away from the Kansai region to the Kantō region.

Roughly three-quarters of Japan was governed by *daimyō* (han provincial government), about 15 per cent by the Tokugawa *bakufu*, and an additional 10 per cent by vassals loyal to the Tokugawa. Approximately 2 per cent of the land was in the hands of the Imperial Family, temples and shrines. The Tokugawa *Shōgunate* is best described as a fiscal-military state (Tamaki, 2011) where the overriding policy was to ensure the successful succession of the House of Tokugawa.⁹

The *bakufu* had absolute central political power over the fate of the *daimyō* and could even remove them from a domain. The iron fist of a national government reached its zenith once the country of powerful independent fiefdoms of some 250 domains had been finally unified in the very early 17th century. *Han* allocation reached its maturity under the third Tokugawa *Shōgun*. Tokugawa Iemitsu (1604–1651), established the right to confiscate *daimyō* lands and give them to other *daimyō* he considered more reliable to ensure the hegemony of the Tokugawa clan and its allies in other domains.¹⁰ He also exercised power by ordering some *daimyō* to trade domains, which weakened them considerably. He confiscated portions of many domains and gave them to lieutenants under his direct command.

Tokugawa Iemitsu effectively controlled over about five million *koku*, or about one-fifth of Japan's cultivated land (Gordon, 2003: 13). He was especially tough on the *daimyō* who had opposed his grandfather in the Battle of Sekigahara. He took the land of former opponents of the regime and granted them to his most loyal *daimyō* allies—the *fudai daimyō*. He protected his power base by building a concentric pattern of Tokugawa

9 This is best illustrated by consulting the Tokugawa family genealogy (Kodansha, 1993: 1577) with its fifteen Tokugawa *Shōguns* who were supported by the *gosanke* (Three Successor Houses)—*daimyō* families from the domains of Mito, Ōwari and Kii—who were expected to supply the *Shōgun* with military forces against any *daimyō* challengers and to enable successors in the event a *Shōgun* who died without a male issue.

10 Tokugawa *Shōgunate* power in first fifty years was to control the provinces with the active allocation and withdrawal of domains. 172 new *daimyōs* were created and 206 were given fief increases for notable service; there were 281 occasions that *daimyōs* were transferred from one domain to another with the quality of the new fief in proportion to service rendered; and 213 *daimyōs* lost all or part of their estates in punishment (Kodansha, 1993: 1580). The principal officials of the Tokugawa *Shōgunate* were held by the *fudai* (hereditary vassal) *daimyōs* with other lesser offices held by the *hatamoto* and *gokenin* (liege vassals) such that governance was in the hands of the most powerful warlords. This *bakuhau* system of governance is the name given by modern Japanese scholars to the political structure established by the Tokugawa house in the early part of the 17th century.

house lands close to Edō, surrounded by lands of allied *fudai daimyō* and Tokugawa relatives called *shinpan*. He placed the former opponents—the *tozama daimyō*—in lands at the farthest reaches of the three main islands of Honshū, Kyūshū and Shikōkū.

Governance under the Tokugawa functioned in a complex way through a system of layered hierarchical spheres of authority, each of which retained autonomy. Each *daimyō*—the *Shōgunate*'s direct vassal—ruled his own domain (*han*). Buddhist temples, Shintō shrines and other organisations, such as merchant guilds and certain other associations, were similarly self-governing. All of these *interlocking institutional and organisational spheres* enjoyed a large degree of autonomy so long as they fulfilled their obligations to the relevant authorities directly above them in the hierarchy.

The Office of *Shōgun* nominally headed the *bakufu* and this office was invested in 15 successive heads of the Tokugawa family in an unbroken line that eventually came to an end in 1867 with the resignation of Tokugawa Yoshinobu. Directly supporting the Office of *Shōgun* were the junior councillors: Chiefs of the Pages and Attendants; Inspectors; Captains of the Bodyguards and Inner Guards; and Magistrates, Accountants, Tax Collectors and Policemen (Kodansha, 1993: 1580). This structure would allow the House of Tokugawa to retain supreme power throughout the land, especially with police powers to spy on operations in the *han* domains.

To reinforce absolute *Shōgun* power were seven senior officials reporting directly to the *Shōgun*. These positions were held by loyal, hereditary vassals (*fudai*): the Great Elder (*tairo*)—a position rarely occupied; Senior Councillors (*roju*); Master of *Shōgunal* Ceremonies (*soshaban*); Commissioner of Temples and Shrines (*jisha bugyō*); Kyōto Deputy (*Kyōto shoshidai*); Keeper of Ōsaka Castle (*Ōsaka jodai*); and the Grand Chamberlain (*sobayonin*). Civil and judicial administration was rationalised during the Tokugawa *Shōgunate* when the *bugyōs* became of much lesser importance as administrators were confined to holding middle ranks with well-defined duties.

Military and security governance were of paramount importance dealing with the Emperor's Court in Kyōto and maintaining Tokugawa hegemony. Responsible to the Senior Councillors were 10 official positions: Edō City Commissioners; Commissioners of Finance (*kanjo bugyō*); Comptrollers (*kanjo gimiyaku*); Inspectors General (*ometsuke*); Commissioners of Distant Provinces (*ongaku bugyō*); Captains of the

Great Guard (*obangashira*); Keepers of Edō Castle (*rusui*); Envoys to the Court (*kinrizuki*); Masters of Court Ceremony (*koke*); and Chamberlains (*sobashu*).

Finer (1997a: 15–16) has identified the link in all countries between the emergence of the civil bureaucracy and the raising and maintenance of military forces. He explains the structure of the Tokugawa *bakufu* in light of an organisation chart (Finer, 1997b: Figure 4.1.1, p. 1103). The pertinent thing he noted was Japan's huge and intricate civil bureaucracy: it was a highly effective police state that was "despotic, harsh, unequal and bureaucratic" (Finer, 1997b: 1103).

Provincial governments (*han*) were responsible for the implementation of national edicts. An important concept for instilling correct behaviour in provincial local officials was that of *bokumin* texts imported from China that influenced the administrative ethos and practice within the *bakuhan* system of government (Brown, 2009: 291–292). The Confucian scholar Yamaga Sokō (1622–1685) revised the *bokumin* ideal to suit the ruling warrior class. Over time and combined with "Records of Wise Rulers" (*meikunroku*), a Confucian-style "people as the base" ideology was created, whereby local magistrates would function as "benevolent" officials looking out for the welfare of the people and promoting the stability of the *bakufu* and the *han*.

The Tokugawa *bakufu* actively utilised foreign policy and trade as a means of consolidating its legitimacy in ruling Japan. Instead of dealing directly with foreign trade, the *bakufu* transferred the authority to conduct trade to the *daimyō* of Satsuma and Tsushima. Satsuma conducted trade with China via Ryūkyū, and Tsushima traded with Korea. This avoided the sovereign-vassal relationship with China (Colaccino, 2014: 33). Instead of kowtowing to China as a vassal or tribute state, Tokugawa Ieyasu initiated his own vermilion seal (*shuin*, 朱印), thereby declaring Japan as a country independent of China.

Paradoxically, this stance not only restricted, but greatly encouraged and enforced mutual exchange with China (Schottenhammer, 2008: 333–334). For example, the 1631 Tokugawa regulations specified that trading activities with Chinese ships outside of Nagasaki were prohibited, that a non-negotiable price for silk imports was set, and that mobility of any Chinese living in Nagasaki became restricted. In 1688, the *bakufu* issued a regulation, drafted by Arai Hakuseki (1657–1725), restricting the annual number of ships being allowed to enter Nagasaki

harbour (Schottenhammer, 2008: 337, footnote 37). Both sides (for a Chinese perspective see Schottenhammer, 2013) were dissatisfied with the regulations and so smuggling continued to be prevalent.

As time went by, the successive *Shōguns'* attempts to gain better control over foreign trade involved policy changes and the formation of a large administrative bureaucracy. For example, the *Shōgunate* administrator (*bugyō*) of Kyūshū in 1681 employed 1,041 officials—a figure that almost doubled by 1724 (Schottenhammer, 2008: 335). By adapting Western ideas (from the Dutch and Portuguese), especially in the maritime field, Tokugawa Ieyasu and his successors developed a sufficiently powerful modern naval fleet. By the 1630s, the *bakufu* could back-up the *sakoku* edicts (“seclusion”) with Japanese sea power that could control movements into and out of its coastal waters.

However, maritime borders were not impregnable to the circulation of Chinese administrative and strategic military ideas: through news and reports delivered by ships, the *bakufu* kept abreast of overseas conflicts such as the transition from the Ming to the Qing dynasty (1618–1683) and the port concessions yielded by China from 1842 to 1844 to the British, American and French Governments. China’s government and its administration was of general interest to the Japanese rulers (Schottenhammer, 2008: 355). For example, *Shōgun* Tokugawa Yoshimune ordered Fukami Kudayū (a third-generation Japanese of Chinese origin) to translate into Japanese the *Collected Statutes of the Great Qing Dynasty (Da Qing Huidian)*.

Local Government by Merchants

For over 250 years Itami was governed by the *sengoku-daimyō*, as was typical of most of Japan. The relevant governance of Japan in this era was provided by the local *daimyō*. After a series of unusual events in the late 17th century, the merchants of Itami County (about 16 km north-northwest of the present-day Ōsaka Railway Station) were assigned the task of local administration. The temporal dynamics of this unusual example of governance by merchants are summarised in Table 2 that gives the timeline, the key events and the unusual sequence of institutional/organisational structures governing Itami County in Settsu.

The Itami clan constructed a castle in the early Muromachi period and its domain covered Itami County. During the Warring period in

1574, forces of Oda Nobunaga captured the castle and his General in Settsu, Araki Murashige, was put in charge, and vastly expanded the castle. A few years later, Araki was accused of siding with enemies of Oda Nobunaga. Forces of Toyotomi Hideyoshi loyal to Oda Nobunaga captured the castle in 1579 and subsequently dismantled it. Following Oda Nobunaga's death in 1582, Itami was placed under the direct control of the Imperial Court and, in essence, became a de-militarised protectorate (Brecher, 2010: 22–25).

Table 2. Institutional Shifts in the Administration of Itami, Settsu Province, from the Mid-14th century to the Mid-19th century.

Source: Based on Kodansha, 1993, and Brecher, 2010.

Time Period	Major Event	Dominant Institution
Mid-14th century	Itami clan constructs a castle	<i>Sengoku-daimyō</i>
1574	Itami castle attacked by forces of Oda Nobunaga then castle was substantially enlarged by Araki Murashige—a general in Settsu for Oda Nobunaga	<i>Sengoku-daimyō</i>
1579	Successful siege and dismantling of castle by Toyotomi Hideyoshi following accusation that Araki conspired with the Mori Clan—enemies of Oda Nobunaga	<i>Sengoku-daimyō</i>
1582	After Nobunaga's death Itami placed under direct control of Imperial Court and declared <i>musoku-chō</i> (land outside warrior jurisdiction)	Imperial Court
June 1615	Re-appropriated by the Tokugawa <i>bakufu</i> during Ieyasu successful siege of Ōsaka Castle against Toyotomi Hideyoshi clan	Tokugawa <i>Bakufu</i>
1661	<i>Bakufu</i> swap land at Uji (for the establishment of temple for Ōbaku sect of Zen Buddhism) owned by the Konoe clan for land in Itami County	Konoe—Senior of Five Houses (Go-sekke) of Fujiwara Clan and high court officials eligible for post of Regent

Time Period	Major Event	Dominant Institution
1697	The Konoe clan formalised previous arrangements by placing administrative and judicial affairs in the hands of an appointed merchant council	Merchant Council of 24 Members from Sake Brewing Houses (<i>sōshukurō</i>)
1871	Konoe clan return land to Meiji government	National and Prefectural Government

The Tokugawa *bakufu* regained control of Itami after Tokugawa Ieyasu's successful siege of Ōsaka Castle in 1615, when the Toyotomi clan was finally crushed. In 1661, the *bakufu* reassigned land in Itami County to the Konoe clan—one of the Five Great Houses from the Fujiwara Clan—who swapped their land holding at Gokanoshō in Uji (southern outskirts of Kyōto) because the *bakufu* had been searching for a suitable site on which to construct Manpukuji—a head temple for the Ōbaku sect of Zen Buddhism that had recently arrived from China.

During the Edō period, Itami's independence from *bakufu* and *daimyō* control resulted in the Konoe clan's responsibilities being similar to those born by the *bakufu* and *daimyō* but this form of governance proved advantageous from a taxation point of view. The annual tax burden divided amongst the estimated number of households would have constituted "no more than a trifle" compared with tax rates imposed by the *daimyōs*, which varied widely, but, generally, amounted to 30–40 per cent of a village's assessed land productivity (Brechard, 2010: 25).

Furthermore, a Konoe representative did not staff Itami's town office: it was allowed to function as a semi-independent civil government. In 1697, the Konoe formally placed administration and judicial affairs in the hands of an appointed council of twenty-four elders (*sōshukurō*). Council members were formalised with a "pseudo-aristocratic status" that entitled them more prestige and authority than village headmen. The council dispatched to Kyōto monthly reports of the town's political, administrative and judicial affairs and was responsible for collecting and remitting taxes to Kyōto. This institution of local governance continued to operate until the Meiji Restoration when the Konoe family returned its land to the national government.

Merchant Organisations in the Edō Period

Merchants were denied the means of achieving any degree of political power (unlike European merchants in medieval times). They were the lowest class in Neo-Confucian Japan because they were tainted for handling money and called “odious toads”. A close correlation can be found between the increase in production and the rapid development of commerce (Sheldon, 1958: 3). Initially, the main commodity traded by merchants was tax rice (*kuramai*) but there were other important traded commodities such as sugar, paper and indigo. Trading activities were conducted in the *daimyō* residence.

Later, office locations shifted, and domain officials supervised the activities of the merchants who were forced into new types of *organisations* (monopolies) that prevented competition and gave protection (Sheldon, 1958: 39–40). Government policy opposed monopolistic guilds¹¹ because of potential collusion with domain officials that would raise prices. Against official hostility, trade associates or guilds (*nakama*), and their divisions (*kumi*), developed as monopolistic organisations. The wholesaling functions were organised as family enterprises in a similar way to *nakama* and called *ton'ya*. As storage and shipping agents in rural areas began to compete against those located in the more major cities, merchant shippers turned away from the urban *ton'ya* to rely more heavily on those wholesalers in smaller towns who charged lower fees.

Merchants ingratiated themselves with central and local government authorities with gifts and bribes in order to receive protection and special privileges in the early Tokugawa era. These protected merchants managed the huge construction projects across the country: construction of castles; *daimyō* residences and samurai quarters; temples; and warehouses. In the middle- to late-Tokugawa period, large family enterprises, with a main house and branch families, were created through a family constitution. Morck and Nakamura (2005: 371–373)

11 Guilds, abolished under Oda Nobunaga, were reinstated over the course of the Edō period, with merchants paying a small fee for membership in organisations that enjoyed monopoly privileges at the marketplaces. The *bakufu* did permit certain monopolistic organisations: for policing and control; foreign trade at Nagasaki; pawnshops (Edō and Ōsaka); second-hand dealers (Edō and Ōsaka); public bathhouses (in Edō); and peddlers and hairdressers (Edō). Entrance fees to government and a small annual membership fee were levied.

sketch out the early history of two of these family enterprises (Mitsui and Sumitomo).

The financial influence of merchants in trade was on the ascendency. By the late 18th century, merchant houses worth more than 200,000 *ryō* numbered more than two hundred. With one *ryō* being ostensibly equal in value to one *koku* of rice, this made the wealth of these merchant houses equivalent to that of some of the wealthiest of *daimyō*. The financial status of the latter was on the decline with the imposition of the costs associated with the alternate year residency in the capital imposed by the *Shōgun*.

The *bakufu* was not very capable of (nor interested in) imposing any consistent economic policies because the semi-official orthodoxy of political economy was *shushigaku* or Neo-Confucianism¹² (Najita, 1998). Each *han* could decide its tax rates, and other economic regulations, or encourage certain industries (so long as it was not explicitly prohibited by the *bakufu*). Rice tax was levied by the *daimyō* on villages (not individual farmers), and village representatives allocated the rice tax burden amongst all villagers. Tax rice was stored in granaries on *daimyō* or *Shōgunal* lands and was dispensed to their retainers as stipends. Tax rice was also sent to the various domain offices (*kurayashiki*) in the major towns, such as Ōsaka, where it was sold on the commercial market.

The business responses to government policies by the Ōsaka merchants were to build the town's infrastructure and its port, and to ensure that Ōsaka enjoyed a central function in the national economy through the rice trade at Dōjima (see Chapter 3). The Ōsaka merchants developed an increasingly monopolistic grasp on the rice trade, determining prices not only within Ōsaka, but also in the entire Kinai (Home Provinces) area, that, indirectly, had a considerable impact on prices in Edō. Trade at the Ōsaka market was made through rice bills (*kome kitte*). The claim over rice in kind represented by the rice bill was protected by the *bakufu* and enforced by law. It was a means to reduce the transaction costs of trading large volumes of rice.

According to McClain and Wakita (1999), rice merchants propelled Japan into a more modern era of economic development. Since

12 The 397-volume *dai nihon shi* condemns the old aristocratic institutions as decadent whilst extolling the moral virtues of military governance (Kodansha, 1993: 544). See Najita (1998) and Culeddu (2009: 198–200) for more details on the Neo-Confucian philosophy.

samurai, including the *daimyō* were paid in rice, the rice brokers and moneychangers (両替商, *ryōgaeshō*) played a crucial role in the emerging early modern economy of Japan. Over the course of the Edō period, the entire economy would not only shift from rice to coin, but would also see the introduction, and spread, of paper money initiated and facilitated by the Dōjima organisations. In 1720, the *bakufu* authorised the concept of trading in futures (延べ米 or *nobemai*) as described by Moss and Kintgen (2009).

Institutions and *organisations* dealing in rice were both complex and their relative positions changed over time. The Dōjima Rice Exchange (堂島米市場, *Dōjima kome ichiba*, 堂島米会所) developed independently and privately as a wholesale market west of Ōsaka Castle on a slender island between the Shijima and Dōjima rivers. The Rice Exchange was established in 1697 when the Yodoya merchant house received a license from the *bakufu* and became the most dominant enterprise. Enabling this sophisticated trading mechanism was a national distribution network and a judicial system established by the *Shōgunate*. The Tokugawa *Shōgunate* chartered the Rice Exchange in 1730.¹³ After being dissolved because of claims that merchants were hoarding rice during times of shortages it later became officially sanctioned, sponsored and organised again by the *bakufu* in 1773. The Rice Exchange was reorganised in 1868 under the Meiji Restoration, before being dissolved entirely in 1939 when it was absorbed into the National Government Rice Agency (日本米穀株式会社).

The Tokugawa government recognised it was unable to abolish the *nakama* and reversed its policy to create the regulatory framework under which commerce was to develop until 1843 (Sheldon, 1958: 110–130). As the *bakufu*'s financial position deteriorated in the late 18th century, and amidst widespread famines and rioting, forced loans were levied on

13 In the first years of the 1730s, as the result of poor harvests and trade issues, the price of rice plummeted. Speculators and various conspiracies within the brokers' community played games with the system, keeping vast stores of rice in the warehouses, which ensured low prices. The samurai, whose stipends were paid in rice, panicked over the exchange rate into coin. The *bakufu* set a price floor in 1735. Over the fifteen years or so, until roughly 1750, the government stepped in on a number of occasions to attempt to stabilise or to control the economy. Eventually, the Rice Exchange was reintroduced in 1773, under *bakufu* sponsorship, regulation, and organisation because the government finally understood the economic power of the Rice Exchange in supporting the national economy, determining exchange rates, and even creating paper money.

wealthy merchants. This emergency measure was used 16 times by the central government (Sheldon, 1958: 119). Eventually, the Tempō Reform (1841–1843) of Mizuno Tadakuni (1794–1851) gave orders to dissolve the *ton'ya* and *nakama*, thereby effectively destroying this specific organisation of commerce. With the interference of transport trading networks, Tadakuni resigned in 1843 and the monopolistic bodies were reinstated in 1851.

The failure of this reform “showed that the Tokugawa Bakufu had lost its right to exist. The history of the Meiji Restoration had already begun” (Sheldon, 1958:129). The failure of reforms merely demonstrated an incapable and out-of-date government: it simply attempted to control the people with varying methods of austerity (Robinson-Yamaguchi, 2015: 55–56). Corruption in government and society was becoming relatively commonplace and the scholarly social critic, Rai Sanyō (1780–1832) wrote *Nihon Gaishi* (*Unofficial History of Japan*) and presented it in 1827 to Matsudaira Sadanobu (1759–1829), a senior councillor in the Tokugawa *bakufu*, that made the case for governmental reform.

Saito and Settsu (2006) explain in detail how capital was mobilised for rural-centred growth in production and commerce, and how the quasi-capital markets worked in both the Ōsaka economy and in the countryside. One thing that separated the Tokugawa financial systems from the those of the early-Meiji is that the late-Tokugawa local economies were never integrated into one national market. Links between the local domain economies were weak, and the Ōsaka-centred system of credit chain was virtually cut off from those of the growing rural economies (Saito and Settsu, 2006: 13).

Pressure for political reform came also from organisations such as the Mito School of Thought, derived from Shintōism and Confucianism, and founded by Tokugawa Mitsukuni, *daimyō* of Mito province (now part of Ibaraki Prefecture). The School was established to compile the 1720 edition of *Dai Nihon Shi* (*History of Great Japan*) but from 1841 under Tokugawa Nariaki (1800–1860) the School fostered Western learning and “*Sonnō Jōi*” (“Revere the Emperor, Expel the Barbarians”). This movement believed “the Emperor was the son of Heaven and thus the rightful ruler of Japan” and that “the foreign ‘barbarians’ had no right being in Japan, which to them was a ‘Divine Realm’” (Robinson-Yamaguchi, 2015: 50).

Kurofune and International Influences on Reform

“*Kurofune*” is the Japanese term used to refer to all Western ships that legally visited Japan from the 16th century to the late 19th century through the designated port of entry at Nagasaki (the island of Dejima). These ships were painted black as their hulls were caulked with pitch and their wooden superstructures were tarred—unlike the colour of ships from China and Southeast Asia. In 1615, Tokugawa Ieyasu had issued a regulation that effectively stripped the Court of all but its ritual functions (Finer, 1997b: 1101) so the *bakufu* had never sought Imperial sanction for any of its political decisions—that is until Commodore Perry of the United States appeared in Japanese waters with his black ships and a letter to the Emperor politely requesting that Japan enter into international trade relations and open up selective ports to American ships for refuelling and taking on provisions.

In June 1853, the U.S. East India Fleet, commanded by Commodore Matthew C. Perry (1794–1858), entered Uraga Harbour near Yokohama, where his four, well built, black ships left a deep impression on the Japanese people. He presented to the *Shōgun* his credentials and a letter from the President of the United States of America that proposed open maritime trade. All political forces in Japan had unanimously reinforced an isolationist policy but the uneasy presence of American gunboats left the *bakufu* with no alternative but to sign a treaty of friendship with the United States of America.

In March 1854, acceding to Commodore Perry’s demands that were backed by threats of armed force, the government of Japan signed a “Treaty of Peace and Amity between the Emperor of Japan and the United States of America.” In 1858, the *bakufu* was obliged to sign another treaty of amity and commerce with Townsend Harris, the Consul-General of the United States of America. The *bakufu* were apprehensive about the views of the Imperial Court on the signing of these treaties and sought Imperial sanction for the treaty of amity and commerce (Ishii, 1980: 94). The Court denied permission through an Imperial edict and this dealt a humiliating blow to enlist cooperation and advice from other *daimyō* who ultimately challenged the *bakufu*’s legitimacy to monopolise political power.

The “Treaty of Amity and Commerce” was followed by similar treaties signed with Holland, Russia, the United Kingdom and France (McOmie, 2006; Natalizia, 2014). They were unequal treaties in the sense that Japan had no jurisdiction over foreigners in their country, there was no Tokugawa government control over trade and no control over the money exchange rate. This resulted in a large outflow of Japanese gold (Sano, 2013: 8). The opening-up of a few Japanese ports to foreign trade (Sadler, 1937: 239–245) caused dissent amongst some of the *daimyō* of the western provinces that eventually led to a coup (Sadler, 1937: 246–257).

Antecedents to the Meiji Restoration

After 1858 some *daimyō* from the western provinces established direct contact with the Court and the Court itself began to re-engage in political activities. One of the most powerful of the *tozama* domains, Chōshū, led those who called for an overthrow of the *bakufu*, whilst another *tozama* domain, Satsuma, wanted a power-sharing relationship with the *bakufu*, the Court and other prominent *tozama* domains. Japanese historians point to 1858 as the starting point of “the modern period”.

At this point, it is worth interjecting a note on the role played by a Scottish-born entrepreneur, Thomas Glover (1838–1911), who moved from Shanghai to Nagasaki in 1859 to manage the newly established Nagasaki office of Jardine, Matheson & Company, initially exporting green tea. The *daimyō* of Satsuma commissioned Glover to build six saw factories and three sugar factories that provided the industrial might to finance the Imperialist military stockpile. In addition, he smuggled out of Japan, through the port of Yokohama, Itō Hirobumi and Inoue Kaoru, two of the “Chōshū Five”, to attend lectures in the Chemistry Department at University College London. They returned full of enthusiasm for Western technology and British products.

In the autumn of 1865, Glover had facilitated an illegal arms trade through Satsuma to Chōshū. In February of the following year, he sold Satsuma sixteen steamers—all aimed to destroy the *bakufu*. This trade allowed Chōshū to arm 11,000 frontline forces with Minié rifles that had an effective range of 550 metres against the 46 metres of the *bakufu*’s antiquated muskets. This gave Chōshū the technological edge necessary to defeat the *bakufu* in a military campaign in July 1866. Other

British citizens also meddled in Japanese affairs on the back of various incidents.¹⁴

Kawashima (2020: 89) explains that the “intricate subtleties of the Meiji Restoration” cannot be reduced to a simple polarity of conservatives versus reformists as it took place against the backdrop of “the cross-pollination” of varying ideologies. The details of a complex series of events may be found in Beasley (1972) and in Kodansha (1993: 948–953). In essence, internal dissention in Japan over foreign relations and the refusal of Emperor Kōmei (reigned 1846–1867) to sign the foreign treaties were important factors in the overthrow of the Tokugawa *Shōgunate* in 1868. In addition to the opening of more ports to international trade (Hakodate, Nagasaki, Yokohama, Hyōgo, Ōsaka and Niigata), a more punitive measure in 1866 was the reduction of duties to a uniform rate of 5 per cent *ad valorem*.

This political situation forced Emperor Kōmei to assume a more active role in state affairs than any of his predecessors. As the U.S.A. and European powers were demanding that Japan be opened to trade, the Emperor insisted that Japan should remain “closed” and the “Western Barbarians” be expelled. The Emperor wanted a closer unity of the Court and the Tokugawa *Shōgunate* to repel external pressures on Japan’s sovereignty (Todd, 1991: 203), although this alliance never eventuated.

Within Japan, it had become increasingly obvious that the old social order of *shinōkōshō* (hierarchy of samurai at the top, followed by farmers and artisans, with merchants being at the bottom) no longer reflected the reality of life. Intellectuals, such as Motōri Norinaga (1730–1801) and Aizawa Seishisai (1781–1863), influenced the *sonnō jōi* (尊皇攘夷) movement and this ultimately contributed to the weakening of the Tokugawa regime (Pickl-Kolaczka, 2017: 202–203).

14 British businessmen, in trying to promote trade, helped drain the *bakufu*’s finances. On 22 October 1864 a convention was signed in compensation for Chōshū’s blockade of shipping in the Shimonoseki Straits. The British Government demanded that the *bakufu* either pay an indemnity of U.S. \$300,000 (U.S. \$4.95 million in 2020 prices), or, as the British Government preferred that Japan open another “treaty port”. After the Imperial ratification by the Emperor, Sir Ernest Satow (1843–1929), a British Diplomat (Brailey, 1992), recounts that rather than risk the unpopularity of opening another port, the *bakufu* agreed to pay, but only in instalments. This proposal illustrates the tremendous burden that these indemnities placed on *bakufu* finances estimated to be about the equivalent of one-third of annual revenue.

Emperor Kōmei was to be the symbol of a new era for Japan with the protagonists behind the Meiji Restoration aiming to create a strong and positive image of the Emperor amongst the population, including his elevated position in this world and his divine status as a direct descendant of Amaterasu. At the core of this restoration of the institution of Emperor stood a system of ancestral worship that befitted the Imperial Family. While such a system had existed between the 7th and 9th century, it was all but forgotten during the Edō era.

The renewal of this systematic ancestral worship during the Bunkyū era (1861–1864) included the restoration of decayed Imperial tombs (Pickl-Kolaczia, 2017: 203). The main protagonist behind the Bunkyū Restoration was Toda Tadayuki (1809–1883) from Utsunomiya who successfully petitioned the *bakufu* to allocate a budget that allowed 58 tombs and places of cremation to be restored or completely recreated between 1862 and 1865 (Pickl-Kolaczia, 2017: 212).

Following clashes in 1864 and 1866 between the Tokugawa government and Chōshū forces, both *tozama* domains, with support from several influential Court nobles, agreed to work jointly to restore Imperial rule. On 9 November 1867, Chōshū and Satsuma obtained Imperial permission to attack *bakufu* forces: the *Shōgun*, Tokugawa Keiki, the 15th and last *Shōgun*, was declared an Enemy of the Court and all *bakufu* domains were confiscated.

Modern Monarchy

Meiji Era

The years from 1868 to 1912, when Emperor Mutsuhito died, are referred to as the Meiji era. Emperor Mutsuhito succeeded to the position of “chief of the warriors” with the rights of the *daimyō* remaining intact. The Meiji Restoration represented not only internal reform (Allinson and Anievas, 2010)—an example of institutional persistence (Ogata, 2015)—but a signal to the international community that “Japan had embarked upon the path of ‘modernization’” (Kawashima, 2020: 89). On 6 April 1868, Emperor Meiji issued the Charter Oath, which promised that assemblies would be established to deal with all matters through public discussion and that “evil feudalistic customs of the past” would be abolished. The

han lands and their subjects were returned to the Emperor in 1869, but it was not until 1871 when the *han* system was finally abolished (Ishii, 1980: 96). The former feudal lords were required to return their lands to the Emperor in 1870.

The Meiji government from 1868 to 1881 was greatly influenced by European legal theory, especially the French liberal doctrine of popular rights (Sims, 1998). In the government's restoration of the ancient system of Imperial rule, it also resurrected the *ritsuryō* antecedents and the Sinified legal system. Renewal was generated through "the 'revival of antiquity'" (Kawashima, 2020: 89). Ramaioli (2021) explains how *kokutai* (国体)—the spiritual notion of the essence of the Japanese polity—interacts with the constitutional model Japan has adopted since the Meiji Restoration.

On 6 April 1868, the Emperor issued a five-article Charter Oath outlining the principles to be followed by his government (Ishii, 1980: 98). On 3 January 1868, a formal declaration was issued of the restoration of the Emperor along with a new administrative structure that conformed to the ancient style of direct Imperial control over political affairs. Three new posts were established directly under the Emperor: prime minister; senior councillors; and junior councillors.

In June, the new government adopted a new fundamental law (*seitaishō*) that contained a mixture of ancient Japanese and American concepts of public administration: the tripartite division of governmental powers—legislative assembly (*giseikan*) with its upper and lower chambers; judiciary (*keihōkan*); and executive administration (*gyōseikan*).

These sweeping reforms transformed Japan from a feudal society to a modern industrial state, and that led to the administrative restructuring of the country into prefectures that exist today. The men responsible for this implementation of centralised and prefectural systems were Kidō Koin and Okubo Toshimichi—samurai from Chōshū and Satsuma respectively (Taylor, 2007: 3). Samurai reinvented themselves as bureaucrats in central and local administration (Paşca, 2016: 125), and became "the brains" in Japan's push to modernise, "but the merchants were the muscle, as they carried the whole financial burden of such an enterprise" (Paşca, 2016: 122).

An Imperial edict of 1881 stated that a parliament would open in 1890 with preparatory work studying the constitutions of other countries. A

parliament that opened in November 1890—the First Imperial *Diet*—was convened and Japan became a constitutional monarchy along with the implementation of a new constitution (Ishii, 1980: 114–116). The new regime placed heavy emphasis on the importance of the Emperor in ruling Japan. The *Diet* (Parliament) was established, with the Emperor placed as the sovereign of state hierarchically at the head of the army, navy, executive and legislative powers.

Following more than a millennium of precedent, the ruling elder statesmen (*genrō*) held the actual power to run the state. The Meiji Constitution was finally promulgated in 1889, investing the Emperor with full sovereignty and declaring him “sacred and inviolable” (Kodansha, 1998: 950). The system of national government (the Imperial Household Agency; *Diet* as the Lower House), provincial government and local government were created, and all institutions were modernised along Western lines.

The basis for Japan’s current style of government was founded in this period by emulating the, then, “superior” Western powers. Japan sent various delegations to major Western societies in order to study and emulate their parliaments and bureaucracies. From this international scanning, specific institutions were seen as leading examples of dominant models. Some traditional modes of thought continued: the ideal of *bokumin* was reproduced as part of the administrative ideology of the new Home Ministry, going on to inform the elitist ethos of that institution until its dissolution in 1947 (Brown, 2006: 293).

As the government’s program of regional integration gained pace a new structure of central administration was required. Seven ministries were created: civil affairs; finance; foreign affairs; Imperial Household; industrial affairs; justice; and military affairs. As the *han* system was abolished—to be replaced by prefecture governments—further adjustments were made to the central administration (Ishii, 1980: 102–112). Communications was added to the above ministries as authority was transferred to a cabinet in 1885 based again along European lines. Ports, harbours, railways, roads and other types of economic infrastructure were established at this time. The Meiji-era creation of a professional bureaucracy, and the efforts of non-party political elites in the late Taishō and early Shōwa periods, were to counter the expansion of party power.

The Meiji era commenced with no private entrepreneurs who had the capital or confidence to modernise the economy. In the first fifteen years of the Meiji period, the government transformed the economy from an agrarian one to an industrialised state by investing in public works such as railways, shipping, communication, ports, and lighthouses. The Meiji government enacted the 1894 Anglo-Japanese Treaty of Commerce and Navigation, a long-awaited event that put an end to half a century of national humiliation by eliminating foreign rights of extraterritoriality and largely restoring tariff autonomy (Phipps, 2015: 1). The Meiji government also invested a high percentage of national revenue in importing Western technology and expertise.

The Japanese searched the world for the best institutions of capitalism and changed their institutions more radically and more often than in any other major industrial economy (Morck and Nakamura, 2005: 367). In the late 19th century, the government capitalised and subsidised numerous state-owned enterprises, but failures triggered a fiscal crisis. To restore public finances, Japan implemented a policy of mass privatisation (Morck and Nakamura, 2007: 4). Wealthy family merchant houses of the Edō period (Mitsui, Sumitomo), and other entrepreneurs, assembled former state-owned enterprises into *zaibatsu*.

At the apex of a *zaibatsu* pyramid was a family partnership (later a family corporation), which controlled several public corporations, each of which controlled other public corporations, each of which controlled yet other public companies, and so on. The families organised a new firm to float equity for each new venture and organised them into pyramidal groups. Corporate governance in Japan was characterised by the *zaibatsu* until they were dismantled by American occupying forces in 1945.

Decline of Constitutional Monarchy, 1931–1945

The decline of a constitutional monarchy in Japan from 1931 to 1945 can be attributed to the rise of military influences—not entirely unrelated to the expansion of Japan’s overseas territories. Taiwan (Formosa) and the Pescadores were ceded by China as a result of the Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895), the southern half of Sakhalin Island (southward from latitude 50 degrees) became Japanese territory following the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905), Korea was annexed in 1910 and, after the

First World War (when Japan was a Western ally), those South Sea islands north of the equator that were former German colonial territories were placed under Japanese mandate.

A neo-colonial expansionist philosophy emerged along with the administration of new territories. Ignoring government policy of the non-proliferation of warfare, military forces took over Manchuria in March 1932 and installed Puyi as Head of State and, in 1934, as the puppet Chinese Emperor of Manchukuo. In May 1932, a group of naval officers and non-commissioned officers assassinated the Japanese Prime Minister and the Japanese President that brought an end to political party government with the introduction of “National Unity” cabinets (Ishii, 1980: 122). The National General Mobilization Act of 1938 deprived the *Diet* of the right to deliberate on state affairs. The military government policy was promulgated by invoking the Emperor’s authority.

During the Pacific War, government institutions replaced corporate organisations. Japan nationalised many major corporations, subordinating them to central planning. The Temporary Funds Adjustments Law of 1937 created the *Kikakuin* (Planning Agency) to direct economic planning and administration following Soviet models of the 1930s (Morck and Nakamura, 2005: 368–369). Corporate boards had to obtain government approval to make any important decisions, such as changing their articles of incorporation or issuing equity and debt. In 1939, further government decrees abolished boards’ rights to set dividends. In 1943, another decree abolished boards’ rights to appoint managers and reassigned this power to the *Kikakuin*.

Modern Democratic State, 1945–2022

What happened to institutions and organisations in the contemporary period is only sketched in outline because there is an abundance of available documentation for the reader to pursue this topic in more detail (for example, Burks, 1966). What is essential to note here is there was a new definition of the Emperor as “a non-divine symbol of the Japanese nation (as he was declared to be in an Imperial rescript on January 1, 1946)” (Ishii, 1980: 130). Within two weeks of Japan’s surrender in the Pacific War, Allied occupying forces began landing on Honshū. The main administrative body for the Occupation was technically the Far Eastern Commission, headquartered in Washington and made up of

representatives of the thirteen nations who had fought Japan. In Tōkyō, the Allied Council (representing the U.S.A., U.S.S.R., Britain and China) was to oversee policy implementation.

However, real power rested with the U.S.A., especially the Supreme Allied Commander of the Pacific, General Douglas MacArthur, who was given the responsibility of supervising the dismantling of the Japanese war machine and its socioeconomic underpinnings (Andressen, 2002: 118). On 2 October 1945, in Tōkyō, the General Headquarters of the Allied Powers was formally established under the direction of General MacArthur, Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP). A draft of a new constitution originated in the General Headquarters of the Allied Powers and underwent very minor modifications by the Japanese Government before receiving Imperial sanction. Six months later on 3 November 1946 the new constitution came into effect. It stated that sovereignty is vested in the people while the Emperor is regarded simply as a symbol of state (Ishii, 1980: 130).

The constitution, written by U.S. occupation staff and imposed upon a reluctant Japanese government after Japanese authorities failed to make satisfactory progress in the view of occupation leaders, still serves as the foundation of Japanese democracy (Andressen, 2002: 113). The new American-designed constitution, written in under a week, was based on the British model, which was closer to Japan's pre-war system than America's (Andressen, 2002: 120).

In dismantling Japan's war industries, the big four *zaibatsu* (Mitsui, Mitsubishi, Yasuda and Sumitomo) were special targets: 83 of their holding companies were broken up. Approximately 3,000 senior businessmen were removed from their jobs. The smaller subsidiary companies were separated from the core businesses, and their ability to work together was limited by tax reform and laws against collusion (such as the *Anti-Monopoly Law* of 1947). In 1948, with a relaxation of the policy of purging the *zaibatsu*, a modified form of the *zaibatsu*, called the *keiretsu kigyō* ('aligned companies') emerged. They were similar in structure to their predecessors though more loosely linked and no longer family owned. They did, however, retain their original appellations, so, once again, the names Mitsui, Mitsubishi, Yasuda and Sumitomo became commonplace in Japan (Andressen, 2002: 124).

Under the 1946 Constitution a bicameral *Diet* was established as the highest organ of authority, with the House of Representatives and

a House of Councillors (both popularly elected) as a Lower House. Executive power is vested in the Cabinet—responsible to the *Diet*. The Japanese Constitution importantly gave encouragement to local self-government and to administrative decentralisation. Until 1994, the House of Representatives consisted of 512 members elected from 130 districts, with each electoral district having anywhere from two to six *Diet* seats. In 1994, the lower-house system was significantly modified to 300 single-member districts throughout Japan, where local voters choose lower house members and 200 seats in eleven national blocks that are awarded based on proportional representation (Ellington, 2002: 116).

In the post-war period, the Japanese economy recovered: Japan was given foreign aid to build up its infrastructure and industrial base (the 1947 American aid budget for the country was approximately U.S. \$400 million (Andressen, 2002: 124). The historical development of policies and institutions related to the manufacturing industry post-1949 are summarised by the World Bank (2020, Table 2.1, pp. 29–31). With the end of the Allied Occupation in 1952 the machinery of government was formally returned to Japanese control. Following the end of the U.S. occupation, Japanese firms began pre-empting takeovers by acquiring *white squire* positions in each other (Morck and Nakamura, 2005: 369). A *white squire* is a friendly firm that buys a block of stock in a target firm to protect it from a raider. If the friendly firm takes the target over entirely, it is called a *white knight*. Major banks were often engaged in arranging these inter-corporate equity placements. These holdings, the *keiretsu* system of the 1950s, expanded in the 1960s, and are characteristic of Japanese big business today.

The conservative Liberal and Democratic parties dominated. The first Prime Minister of note was Yoshida Shigeru (1878–1967), a pre-war diplomat who was appointed Prime Minister in 1946 with the goal to restore the fundamental characteristics of Japanese society, “while maintaining the values of the Meiji restoration—a strong government and a regulated society” (Andressen, 2002: 122). The event that dramatically changed the structure of Japan’s economy was the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950.

The American military, which became part of a larger U.N. force, had to secure a massive supply of war items very quickly to stop the sudden invasion of South Korea by the North. The result was U.S. \$4 billion (U.S.

\$43 billion in 2020 prices) in orders for Japanese companies for “special procurements” (*tokuju*), consisting primarily of motor vehicles, textiles and communications equipment—the subsequent development of these industries propelled Japan as a global manufacturing giant (Andressen, 2002: 125).

The Japanese often refer to the 1960s as the ‘Golden Years’. It was a time when Japanese society came together to rebuild the country and the result was astounding economic success. Ikeda Hayato (1899–1965; Prime Minister from 1960–1964) announced in 1960 that Japanese per capita incomes would double by 1970 (they did so by 1967), to U.S. \$2,800 (in 2020 prices). Economic growth gave citizens a clear, common goal (“GNP nationalism”) around which they could organise their social institutions (Andressen, 2002: 137). In 1964, Japan joined the group of industrialised nations—the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)—and became the third largest economy in the world (behind the U.S.A. and West Germany) by the end of the decade. GNP had increased approximately six-fold between 1970 and 1990 (Andressen, 2002: 176).

However, the end of the ‘bubble economy’ caused widespread damage and loss of confidence—both in the economy and in the government during the 1990s with stagnation that was exacerbated by an ageing population. From 1992 onwards various stimulus packages were produced, including massive injections of money (U.S. \$84 billion in 1992, U.S. \$119 billion in 1993, U.S. \$150 billion in 1994, U.S. \$75 billion in 1995, U.S. \$123 billion in 1998 and U.S. \$137 billion in 1999) as well as tax cuts, and financial aid to banks and smaller businesses.

Bank bailouts were a particular focus with the establishment of a ‘bridge bank’ in 1998 to take over some U.S. \$540 billion in bank debt, thereby isolating the problem and eliminating widespread bankruptcies in this sector. Bank mergers were also organised (Sumitomo and Sakura Banks, and Asahi and Tokai Banks) to strengthen the banking sector, but this also led to substantial job losses. These measures failed to revive the economy, partly because much of the money was spent on infrastructure projects (U.S. \$183 billion since 1998 alone). All that infrastructure spending achieved was to reinforce the ‘cozy relationship’ between the Japanese government (especially the Ministry of Construction) and construction companies.

Fundamental political reform did not seem to be forthcoming (Andressen, 2002: 185). This demonstrates the considerable inertia in a conservative government system. National government bureaucrats were the academic elite who were recruited from the top of the classes of the very best Japanese universities (Ellington, 2002: 119). Bureaucratic style was reinforced by informal personal connections—usually begun at university. Andressen (2002: 9) suggests that politicians have little time to gain expertise within a portfolio and therefore tend to formulate new laws based on the lobbying from business and their electorates.

The implication is that “over time the bureaucracy has come to be a centre of power, often seemingly independent of politicians”. However, competition between bureaucrats and their departments “tends to ...inhibit change” (Andressen, 2002: 9). The conservative nature of Japanese politics reflects the ongoing tension between different sources of power in Japan. The question ‘Who runs Japan?’ was considered in the mid 1990s by the journalist, Karl van Wolferen, who published *The Enigma of Japanese Power* (van Wolferen, 1989). This was followed by Chalmers Johnson’s *Japan: Who Governs?* Conventional wisdom has it that there exists an “iron triangle” of power in the Japan: big business; bureaucrats; and politicians (Andressen 2002: 148–149). From a survey of 1,600 civic society organisations, they think they have no influence on government policy making (Tsujiinaka and Pekkanen, 2007).

Along with these economic problems came political ones. Some argue that with the passing of Emperor Hirohito in early 1989 there was some concern (especially amongst the older Japanese) over cultural continuity because the institution of Emperor has long been the cultural core of Japanese society. There were concerns that a younger, more outward-looking Emperor might undermine the 63 years of stability that saw the country through the worst period in its history. However, the pomp and circumstance of the November 1990 accession ceremonies of the new Emperor (Akihito) reinforced, rather than undermined, the country’s cultural traditions.

Conclusions

Table 3 summarises who were the dominant institutions at the national government level in Japanese society from ancient times to Japan

in 2022. The stability (or collapse) of a political community must be distinguished from the collapse of a regime—synonymous with the form of rule or the form of polity (Finer, 1997a: 14). Regimes may change but perhaps not so rapidly as political communities do. Similarly, the people at the top of the hierarchy of these legitimate regimes are simply those who hold the authority roles at any one point in time. As decision-making authorities their turnover may be very rapid without in any way altering the essential characteristics of the regime itself.

Table 3. Dominant Japanese Institutions from Ancient Times to 2022.
Source: Author.

Time Period	Western Calendar	Dominant Institution
Archaic	250 B.C.–603 A.D.	Independent clan chiefs; Unification of territories—Yamato State; Emperor
Ancient	603–967	Emperor and Court Nobility
Medieval	967–1467	Marginalisation of Emperor; Rise of Warrior Houses; Kamakura & Muromachi <i>Shōgunates</i>
Early Modern	1467–1858	Civil War; Unification; Tokugawa <i>Shōgunate</i> ; <i>bakuhau</i> n government
Modern	1858–1945	Restoration of Divine Emperor; System of democratic government: Military dominating government
Contemporary	1945–2022	Defeat in War; Non-divine Emperor; New Constitution

What were the main factors, and the key events, that help explain the institutional change in governance summarised in the above table? In summary, Table 4 identifies the key historical events in the six broad time periods that brought about the transitions of national institutions of governance in Japan. The transitions cover the archaic, ancient, medieval, early modern, modern and contemporary periods.

Table 4. Major Factors Explaining Institutional Change in Japan.
 Source: Author.

Time Period	Major Events
Archaic	Jōmon hunter-gathers replaced by Yayoi migration from continental Asia and establishment of clans (<i>uji</i> chiefs); Kingdom federations—territory expansion through war, marriage and kinship ties; consolidation of Yamato State; Royalty evoked a divine race whose ancestors came from Heaven (based on Esoteric Daoism or mystical Shintōism) creation of institution of Emperor; Court-appointed governors administer the country; Territorial expansion at expense of indigenous <i>Emishi</i> (Ainu)
Ancient	Imperial House controls Japan; Consolidation of power Emperor's administration supplants that of the independent chieftains; Taika Reform (646) creates military position of <i>seii taishōgun</i> ; Taihō Code (702) adopts Chinese-style law and Chinese-inspired <i>ritsuryō</i> codes and Confucian social order
Medieval	Estate administration by court nobles delegated to land stewards leading the rise of the military class; Warrior Houses; Marginalisation of Emperor; Government by military Kamakura and Muromachi <i>Shōgunates</i>
Early Modern	Civil War; Unification of Japan; Military government by Tokugawa <i>shogunate</i> with 250 years of peace; <i>Bakuhan</i> system of government; Increasing influence of foreign nations; Weakening of Tokugawa <i>bakufu</i> and victory to Chōshū and Satsuma <i>daimyōs</i>
Modern	Restoration of Divine Emperor; System of Western democratic government; Modernisation of bureaucracy; Rise of military
Contemporary	Defeat in Second World War; Non-divine Emperor; Modern democratic nation; Hosting Summer Olympics in 1964 & 2021

Who were the individuals behind some of these changes in the evolutionary paths of national institutions? As Griffis (1915: 54–55) points out that the origins of two modern Japanese parties can be traced to the era 1575 to 1604. The idea of the “Federalist” is traced to Toyotomi Hideyoshi whereas the Imperialists are traced back to the *daimyōs* of

Satsuma and Chōshū in their influential role leading to the restoration of the Emperor to power. The elder statesmen of the Meiji period (1868–1912) were Ōkubo Toshimichi (1830–1878) and Itō Hirobumi (1841–1909). Table 5 puts a name against the institutional changes identified in Tables 3 and 4 despite the inherent problem of over-simplification and selectivity.

Table 5. Selected Key Players in National Institutional Change in Japan from Archaic Times to the Present Day.
Source: Author.

Transformative Event and Date	Instigator
Yamatai State created from coalition of chiefdoms (c. 200)	Queen Himiko
Imperial House gains control of Western Japan (645)	Fujiwara no Kamatari; Prince Naka no Oe
Oath of allegiance: principle that Emperor should rule the state not the chieftains (645); Taika Reform edict (646)	Emperor Kotoku
Taihō Code—Compilation and adoption of the Chinese-style law penal administrative law (702)	Prince Osakabe; Fujiwara no Fuhito
Imperial Court officially recognise Kamakura <i>Shōgunate</i> when warrior families throughout Japan pledge loyalty the “chief of the warrior houses” (<i>buke no tōryō</i>) (1193)	Minamoto no Yoritomo
Formation of Muromachi <i>Shōgunate</i> (1338)	Ashikaga Takauji
Muromachi <i>Shōgunate</i> ousted from Kyōto (1573); Ashikaga Yoshiaki resigned as <i>Shōgun</i> (1588)	Oda Nobunaga
Eradication and state incorporation of “piracy” organisations—issue of two decrees (the ‘sword-hunt’ edict; and an anti-piracy regulation (1588)	Toyotomi Hideyoshi
Battle of Sekigahara confirmed the hegemony of Tokugawa Ieyasu (1600); Tokugawa <i>Shōgunate</i> (1603) that governed for two-and-a-half centuries	Tokugawa Ieyasu
Foreign demands—the U.S. East India Fleet enters Uraga Harbour; international treaties and a selective open port policy (1853)	Commodore Matthew Perry
Chōshū and Satsuma obtain Imperial permission to attack <i>bakufu</i> forces (1867) and the Meiji Restoration	<i>Daimyōs</i> of Chōshū and Satsuma

Transformative Event and Date	Instigator
Japan modernises and a colonial power; Defeated in Second World War; Occupation forces write new constitution and a bicameral <i>Diet</i> (1946)	General Douglas MacArthur
Modern, democratic state welcomed by the international community by hosting Tōkyō Olympics in 1964 and 2021	Government of Japan

The limited and restrictive policies of the Tokugawa military regime during the Edō period largely ignored economic development in a predominantly agrarian society. When an appraisal of those government services is made (Finer, 1997b: 1114–1123) there is clearly no direct involvement that relates to transport—except in the area of taxation policy with its implications on the physical movement of rice. The expansion of commerce was in the hands of the merchant class.

The new institutional economics suggests that dependency paths do get reversed. The case of the Dōjima Rice Exchange demonstrates that over its three-century history it variously served private interests before becoming an arm of the Japanese national government. The merchants originally set the detailed rules for trade in the rice market, including the tradition of tipping a bucket of water to indicate the suspension of daily trading that determined the price of rice. Following the collapse of the Tokugawa government, a new rice marketing system, the *Ōsaka Dōjima Komesho Kaisho*, was established then renamed in 1893 as the *Ōsaka Dōjima Beikoku Torihikisho* (Ōsaka Dōjima Rice Market Place). The government-sponsored *Nihon Beikoku Kabushiki Kaisha* (Japan Rice Company Limited) absorbed this in 1939 to control rice distribution and its price during a period of scarcity. From 1968 onwards the government has been taking measures to cope with a rice surplus (Hayami and Godo, 1997; Kodansha, 1998: 1263).

Another example of reversing path dependency is that the Tokugawa government recognised it was unable to abolish merchant guilds and reversed its policy to create the regulatory framework under which commerce was to develop until 1843. As the *bakufu's* financial position deteriorated in the late 18th century, and amidst widespread famines and rioting, forced loans were levied on wealthy merchants—and this

emergency measure was used 16 times by the central government. Eventually, the Tempō Reform (1841–1843) dissolved the *ton'ya* and *nakama*, thereby effectively destroying this specific organisation of commerce. However, with the disruption to trading networks monopolistic bodies were reinstated in 1851.

From around 1,100 guilds (*za*) sprang up under the protection of regional warlords but it was not until the Muromachi period that they monopolised the production, transport and sale of commodities. Peasants who made such products also formed themselves under the protection of a powerful noble family or a religious patron into guilds. During the *Ōnin no Ran*, warlords holding land increased yields, and, in fact, promoted and recognised commerce through the *za* system. Merchants opposed guilds as being monopolistic and restrictive of trade. Guilds were officially abolished nationally around 1590 by the feudal lords Oda Nobunaga and Toyotomi Hideyoshi to encourage free markets but then encouraged new guilds under their protection.

At first, the merchant trading activities were conducted in the *daimyō* residence, but, later, office locations shifted elsewhere where domain officials supervised the activities. Merchants were forced into new types of *organisations* that were protective in nature: organisations that prevented competition (monopolies); merchant-class solidarity; and protection. Government policy opposed monopolistic guilds because of potential collusion with officials that would raise prices. Samurai and peasant classes alike supported this policy. Against official hostility, trade associates or guilds developed.

Institutions and *organisations* dealing in rice were both complex and their relative positions changed over time. The Dōjima Rice Exchange developed in Ōsaka in 1697 independently and privately as a wholesale market through a license from the Tokugawa *Shōgunate*. Enabling this sophisticated trading mechanism was a national distribution network and a judicial system established by the *Shōgunate*. The Rice Exchange was chartered in 1730 but was then dissolved because of claims that merchants were hoarding rice during times of shortages. In 1773, it became officially sanctioned, sponsored and organised again by the *bakufu*. The Rice Exchange was reorganised in 1868 under the Meiji Restoration, before being dissolved entirely in 1939 when it was absorbed into the National Government Rice Agency.

During the Tokugawa *Shōgunate*, the jurisdictional governance of land in Japan was predominantly the *bakuhau* system although counter-intuitive examples of local government by the merchant class can be found. For example, in the late 17th century, a merchant council of 24 members from sake brewing houses in Itami County were assigned the task of local administration (see Table 3). The merchant administration lasted until 1871 when the *daimyō* land was returned to the Meiji government.

The Meiji government introduced the institution of capitalism (Allinson and Anievas, 2010). During its crash modernisation, Japan adopted a legal system largely based on German civil law. Thus, Japanese law was subjected to a variety of old and new (external) influences (Ishii, 1980: 91–92). Public bond trading began in the 1870s, and in 1878 the Tōkyō and Ōsaka Stock Exchanges were formed and subjected to regulation under the Stock Exchange Ordinance. Leading merchant families issued stock to finance industrialisation, and the great pyramidal *zaibatsu* groups were formed and came to dominate the Japanese economy. They were dismantled during the Allied Occupation of Japan when a new form of corporate governance emerged in the 1950s—the *keiretsu* formed as a defence mechanism against corporate takeovers (Morck and Nakamura, 2005: 434).

In the contemporary politics of the Western World, and of Japan, it is the transport bureaucracies, in one form or another, that have been permanent features of governments for over a century or more. Modern transport bureaucracies are relatively permanent and unchanging in the short- to medium-term and can be thought of as a fixture of the regime. The story as to how transport was organised and administered from archaic times to the present unfolds in the subsequent chapters.

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