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Was Early Modern Japan Culturally Integrated?

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Orientations: Four Questions

In an earlier draft of his essay, Professor Lieberman quoted, with some bemusement, a remark by Edwin O. Reischauer that has flown from the text but stuck in memory. Japan during the Tokugawa era, observed E.O.R., achieved ‘a greater degree of cultural, intellectual, and ideological conformity . . . than any other country in the world . . . before the nineteenth century.’¹ The claim is remarkable—no less for its tone than for its unlikelihood (were we even remotely able to test it). Still, the claim is tantalizing, and versions of it, more hesitant, continue to resonate in the survey literature.

The quotation surely appealed to Professor Lieberman because he, too, argues, if guardedly, that Japan saw an extensive ‘standardization of culture’ in the early modern period. Indeed, this standardization appears more vigorous in Japan than in the other rimlands under discussion. Lieberman’s rhetoric mutates on occasion. He sometimes refers to cultural ‘consolidation,’ even ‘homogenization,’ and to a growing ‘uniformity . . . of cultural symbols.’ Yet throughout his pursuit of culture, Lieberman is concerned with the unprecedented formation in early modernity of common ‘customs, attitudes, and practices’ within national or proto-national units. And this is the subject, in the Japanese case, that I take on as well. Warily.

Lieberman himself is cautious. Skeptical of the very macro-historical comparison he pursues, he tempers big claims with small qualifications, switching vertiginously from telescope to microscope. But my own wariness has less to do with focus than with the unspoken assumptions framing the project. Let me begin, then, by examining Lieberman’s conceptual armature.

¹ Reischauer, in Edwin O. Reischauer and Albert M. Craig, *Japan: Tradition and Transformation* (Sydney, 1979), p. 86.

I. Is Cultural Convergence Any More Pronounced Than Cultural Divergence in the Early Modern Period?

(Or, Thoughts on the Twin Movements of Consolidation and Fragmentation)

A military personnel register, published in 1681, groups the officials directly in service to the Tokugawa shogunate under 230 titles.²

A Japanese agricultural manual, completed in 1697, includes separate chapters on each of 19 varieties of grain, 57 vegetables, 11 grasses, 36 trees, and 22 herbs.³

A directory to the city of Edo, published in 1687, lists prominent craftspeople, merchants, and providers of services in 97 categories.⁴

A Kyoto publisher's catalog, issued in 1659, lists 1,600 titles in 22 categories. An Edo publisher's catalog, issued in 1696, includes 7,800 titles.⁵

These statements tell two stories—one of convergence, another of divergence. On the one hand, the integrating structures important to Professor Lieberman are everywhere implicit: a centralized polity has generated a capacious, hierarchical officialdom; regional and even national markets have generated both a specialized, commercial agriculture and a specialized, vertically organized workforce. Additional integral forces—reliable transport, urbanization, schooling—lurk behind the statements as well. Indeed, the very tallies and sources I cite are themselves a sign of integration; for classification and quantification were part of a contemporary sociology that presumed pattern and coherence in worldly affairs.

² *Tenna gannen koshō-kei Edo kagami*, in Hashimoto Hiroshi (ed.), (*Kaitei zōhō*) *Dai bukan*, 3 vols (Tokyo, 1965), vol. 1, pp. 156–82.

³ Thomas C. Smith makes this tally in *The Agrarian Origins of Modern Japan* (Stanford, 1959), p. 89. The manual is the *Nōgyō zensho*, by Miyazaki Antei, in Hirose Hideo et al. (eds), *Kinsei kagaku shisō* (Tokyo, 1971), vol. 62, pp. 67–165.

⁴ *Edo sōganoko meisho taizen*, pt 6, in Edo Sōsho Hangyō-kai, *Edo Sōsho* (Tokyo, 1916), vols 3–4.

⁵ For the 1659 catalog, Shidō Bunko (ed.), (*Edo jidai*) *Shorin shuppan shoseki moku-roku shūsei* (Tokyo, 1962–64), 4 vols. For discussion, Donald H. Shively, 'Popular Culture,' in John W. Hall (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Japan* (Cambridge, 1991), vol. 4, p. 731.

On the other hand, the disintegrating power of change is no less apparent in the tallies. The figures all speak to the multiplication of differences. These are not only the base differences of class and status, wealth, religion, gender, race. They are the relentlessly elaborated differences inherent to the centralizing process itself. Accompanying political and economic integration was ever-finer discrimination (and distance) between the daimyo and his surveyor of roads, the rice broker and the porter, the embroiderer and the reeler of thread, the tobacco grower and the breeder of silkworms. And differences in skill and station were marked further, of course—not just by training and income, but by the distinctive tools and sites and costumes and vocabularies of distinctive work.

In short, the integration of systems tends to accelerate the separation of people. Here is the paradox of modernity itself, and perhaps the surest link between the early modern experience and our own. Consolidation requires differentiation. Rationalization heightens complexity. New unions invite new fractures. The convergence traced by Max Weber brings the divergence explored by Emile Durkheim.

From a distance, and with the help of abstract models, analysts of politics and markets can (more or less) clarify the principles that unite multiplying parts to systemic wholes. (These principles may be less lively to the actors who are variously ensnared and estranged by systems.) But even dauntless analysts must pause before the challenge of culture; for it is there that the multiplying differences in polity and economy are both expressed and dispersed. The internal logic that may govern markets is elusive at best when we confront the dizziness of cultural activity in early modern societies.

We find in Japan, for example, increasing diversity in diet, architecture, textiles. Entertainment crossed a widening spectrum of dramas and spectacles, tourist travel and shopping, commercial sex and cossetting. Painting, poetry, potting, music—all took multiple directions within multiple organizations of professionals and amateurs alike. Burgeoning schools taught burgeoning curricula.⁶ And so forth.

We can detect structural causes and principles of order in such diversity. Variety in culture responded, surely, to greater urbanization as well as to the expansion and redistribution of wealth within a proto-bourgeoisie. And this variety can be organized into sectors

⁶ Shively, 1991; Susan B. Hanley, 'Tokugawa Society: Material Culture, Standard of Living, and Life-styles,' in Hall (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Japan* (Cambridge, 1991), vol. 4, pp. 660–705; and Richard Rubinger, *Private Academies of Tokugawa Japan* (Princeton, 1982).

with their own coherence. Nonetheless, cultural practice is ultimately disorderly; for it is Protean in dimension and influenced by incalculable variables. In early modernity, the new and crucial variable was commercialization: culture could be purchased and thus loosed from any tight relationship with class. Almost everything—food and drink, education and books, paintings and ornamental shrubs, theater and music—was on the market. In effect, culture became increasingly a matter of choice and hence susceptible to myriad combinations that correlated imperfectly with income and station. Across income and station boundaries, moreover, culture was loosed from mundane social rhythms to become a matter of private recreation and conscious cultivation. The publishing information I cited in my opening statements may be evidence of macro-social integration through literacy and print networks. Yet the thousands of titles in expanding categories intimate a kaleidoscope of writers and readers ever rearranged (and shaken apart) by ambition, imagination, value, and taste.

Because cultural practices (and economic and political practices as well) resist synoptic treatment, the search for integration in the early modern world entails problems. These are partly, as Lieberman notes, problems of exclusion and emphasis. Concentrating on large patterns of consolidation that anticipate national formation, he elides both the many actors who were not party to various changes (such as subsistence farmers, the almost totally illiterate population of women) and the many competing movements that did not survive modernization (such as a militantly anti-market agrarianism). Lieberman's followers must be lumpers rather than splitters who risk confusing dominance with universality.

But the greater problem, within the context of Lieberman's argument itself, is a temptation toward flatness and away from depth of field. Once we acknowledge that the very process of consolidation involved a twin process of fragmentation, we need a stereoscopic version of change. If we foreground integrating developments, we must do so in a fashion that keeps in view a background of multiplying differences. How we are to do this is the challenge of Lieberman's project.

Let me note, incidentally, that attention to the remorseless complexity of early modern culture precludes any simple contrast with the medieval past. However attractive, a contrast between medieval fracture and early modern cohesion in cultural practice cannot be

convincing. Too many new forms of cultural fracture, no less than many persisting ones, spread across the early modern divide.

II. Can We Actually Detect Cultural Convergence?

(Or, Thoughts on Elusive Evidence and Arbitrary Perspectives)

Although his approach is wide, Professor Lieberman looks for cultural convergence primarily in cultural behavior—such as language and religious practice. This approach and these subjects are as important as they are ridden with difficulty.

The most obvious difficulty is an often intractable one in macro-historical discussion—proof. We may grant that language is a critical bond and that confluence probably increased in early modernity. But we have no good way of measuring either linguistic divergence before 1400 or convergence by 1800. The problem is complicated by the premodern separation in Japan of written and spoken languages, and our consequent reliance on piecemeal evidence (such as folk songs and novelistic dialogs) to recover the oral vernaculars. The presumption of convergence must be undercut, in any case, by the roiling debates over language that opened in the late nineteenth century—debates over whether and how to unite the many written forms of Japanese with the many spoken dialects, debates over who was to control the textbooks and the media and thus impose a national standard on still highly diverse usages.⁷

But even if we could demonstrate the convergence of language in early modernity, we would be left with the problem of perspective. Professor Lieberman's vantage on culture is high and external. He works, as broadly comparative historians must, at a gross level of generalization and with an outsider's attention to long trends. Turning to the religious sphere, then, Lieberman might see in Japan a penetration of Confucian values and a rationalization of Buddhist belief. Insiders might see only the proliferating schools and sects whose fine and finer distinctions in faith and practice marked wide and wider divisions in identity among adherents. So, too, in the sphere of language. Seemingly minor differences in semantics or accent can hew chasms in social filiation. And the point must repeat itself endlessly as we posit commonalities in any sphere of cultural

⁷ Mizuhara Akito, *Edogo, Tōkyōgo, hyōjungo* (Tokyo, 1994).

conduct—from marriage ritual to calligraphic style. Whatever standardization we choose to stress may bear lightly on lived experience; for small variations may form the greatest divides. Can we know what really unites and divides peoples?

As Liberman notes, we tend to glimpse cultural solidarity—and thus what seemingly unites a group—in moments of crisis, particularly foreign crisis. Yet as he also notes, such glimpses are distorted; for crisis invites an uncommon concealment of differences. Just as important, the face of solidarity is usually the face projected by holders of power. Is chauvinistic rallying a test of common culture?

If there are profound bonds of culture, then, the historian's search for them is troubled. Evidence is variously elusive or deceptive. Apparent convergence may mask the fine divergences that matter more. And, in the end, even full conformity in cultural practice tells us little about cultural consciousness: a sameness in behavior is hardly equivalent to a shared mentality—to a *sense* of common culture.

I raise these concerns not to disable inquiry, but to recommend alternative directions and modest goals. Because behavior is hard to track in the aggregate and harder to evaluate as binding or dividing, I would shift the emphasis to thought, and thus search the sources for common mental habits—and orientations—that might underlie differences in experience. Because written sources are partial in reach and myriad in meaning, I would resign any quest for inclusive representations of society or active demonstrations of consciousness. Although cultural 'standardization' seems to me beyond historical proof, we can usefully explore novel ways of thinking that may have gradually, unconsciously connected people.

III. Does the Early Modern Experience Really Matter? (Or, Thoughts About Continuity and Rupture in Culture)

Professor Lieberman trains his gaze on early modernity because he finds in that period a movement away from medieval fragmentation and toward an integration that anticipates modern statehood. In effect, he emphasizes a break between the medieval and early modern experiences and a continuity between the early modern and modern experiences. We might easily reverse the emphases. I linger over the point since our attention to early modernity requires some groundwork—some comparison with preceding and succeeding eras.

If we retain a high and external perspective, pre-Lieberman Japan (or Japan before 1400) might look reasonably well integrated. The ocean, which acted more as a barrier than a connective artery, formed outer boundaries that were assailed regularly by piracy but rarely by invasion. (The Mongol incursions of the late thirteenth century drew Japan into foreign war for the first time in at least six centuries.) Immigration was not substantial after the early classical period; diplomatic contact remained intermittent; and a distinctive vernacular language, however various its dialects, separated Japan from neighbors.⁸ The commonalities resulting from such isolating factors were amplified by material culture. Housing was overwhelmingly detached and single-story wooden construction (because of the threat of earthquake); the diet was dominated by sea products and grains (because limitations on arable land precluded the pasturage of animal herds); the penetration of wet rice agriculture promoted sedentary and interdependent communal formation, discouraged the growth of slavery, and disseminated a common agrarian technology across the three main islands.⁹

In politics, moreover, the centralizing disciplines of the classical state (c. 710–1185), though much altered by episodic civil war and the maturation of shogunal rule, exerted an influence throughout the medieval period (1185–1467). An ancient monarchy continued as the font of legitimate authority; rank and title derived from courtly practice; space was ordered by the classical system of provinces, districts, and highways; taxation remained focused on grain and labor; classical legal traditions and habits of litigation persisted.

Across classes, genealogy defined status and inheritance conveyed property as well as profession. Blood was identity. A stem family system organized kindred more insistently than extended or clan systems.¹⁰

Buddhism, supported by the state and prevalent among the aristocracy from the eighth century, had spread widely by the late medieval period. Although always a manifold phenomenon (for there are many Buddhisms and many interweavings of Shinto and other

⁸ Roy Andrew Miller, *The Japanese Language* (Chicago, 1967); and Nakamoto Masachie, *Nihon rettō gengoshi no kenkyū* (Tokyo, 1990).

⁹ The best study in English of the early rice regime is William Wayne Farris, *Population, Disease, and Land in Early Japan, 645–900* (Cambridge, MA, 1985).

¹⁰ Jeffrey P. Mass, *Lordship and Inheritance in Medieval Japan* (Stanford, 1989); Murakami Yasusuke, 'Ie Society as a Pattern of Civilization,' in *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 10, 2: 279–363.

traditions), the Buddhist presence quickly affected the national landscape, where temples became the major monuments, as well as the conduct of death, for cremation became the normal manner of interment. Buddhism also legitimated the life of the road.

Perhaps the most significant social movement in pre-Lieberman Japan was the penetration of the country by medieval itinerants. They came in many forms: they were preachers and healers, entertainers and prostitutes, pilgrims and monks soliciting donations to temples. Yet virtually all who left a trace in the record shared a Buddhist identity conveyed by tonsures or robes or names or professed affiliations. These many men and women, all outside society but accorded licence by the Buddhist markings, were the vehicles of cultural integration at the time. They proselytized a vernacular Buddhism, transmitted a popular literature focused on tales of the Genpei war (1180–85), established a repertoire of miracle stories, helped routinize the rituals of death, and carried news across borders.¹¹

The experience in pre-Lieberman Japan of foreign encounter (and hence of an alterity that may have shaped national consciousness) was a paradoxical one. In one sense, China saturated Japan: its written language, polity, religions, material and high culture inflected all aspects of the classical Japanese state and retained an influence in the medieval era. A China-consciousness is intense in all scholarly writing (much of it written in Chinese), and conspicuous in much of the tale literature that circulated orally.

Nonetheless, the Chinese presence was tempered by two considerations. First, Chinese forms tended to be altered in Japan and thus to assume putatively native shape. (Even the Chinese language used in Japan for formal writing took on numerous native variants.) Second, the physical—rather than the intellectual—presence of China and the Chinese was rare. From neither side of the Japan Sea was there any unflagging impetus toward diplomacy, settlement, combat, or commerce (with the exception of the piracy that influenced China and Korea more gravely than Japan). Sixteen diplomatic missions went from Japan to China between 607 and 838, for example, but were then discontinued until 1404.

¹¹ Janet Goodwin, *Alms and Vagabonds: Buddhist Temples and Popular Patronage in Medieval Japan* (Honolulu, 1994); Barbara Ruch, 'The Other Side of Culture,' in Kozo Yamamura (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Japan* (Cambridge, 1990), vol. 3, pp. 500–43.

The simultaneous presence and absence of China created a clear international order even as it permitted the translation of 'the foreign' into a remote other, into an idea and source of ideas that might be managed at will. Whether the Mongol invasions of 1274 and 1281 broke this relationship more than temporarily I do not know. They may have heightened a generally inchoate sense of alien and native while deepening the inclination toward controlled contact.¹²

This brisk survey of pre-Lieberman Japan, though everywhere vulnerable to challenge, suggests that some integration occurred early—at least if we use such gross and lumpish measures as outer boundaries, stable ethnicities, a common parent language, dominant religious and agrarian systems, an ethos of hereditary power, generally durable polities with a single source of legitimacy, and established patterns in foreign relations. Since Professor Lieberman invites us to gauge the acceleration of integrating developments after 1400, this prehistory offers a baseline of comparison.

Post-Lieberman Japan deserves remark as well. Despite the integration I have just imputed to the period before 1400, and despite the gains I shall eventually claim for early modernity, the evidence for the Meiji era (1868–1912) indicates that the new state regarded the work of integration as barely begun. To an extent never before seen in Japan, political disciplines—largely responsive to perceived foreign threats—became the medium of cultural refashioning. Meiji leaders focused on the creation and projection of a national government that had been, if not exactly weak, at least concealed in the Tokugawa period (1600–1868). And much of this labor was necessarily cultural in emphasis: the display of the monarch on train platforms across the country; the invention of anthems and flags and state rituals; the establishment of telegraphs, newspapers, and radio networks to carry information and propaganda; the design of a public school system to nourish good subjects, pliable conscripts, and willing industrial workers; the formation of a state Shinto cult to instil reverence for emperor and nation. The work of nationalism, and the creation of its essentially new symbols, was the work of Meiji.¹³

¹² Studies in English of early Japanese foreign contacts are few. See Robert Borgen, *Sugawara no Michizane and the Early Heian Court* (Cambridge, MA, 1986); and David Pollack, *The Fracture of Meaning: Japan's Synthesis of China from the 8th through the 18th Centuries* (Princeton, 1986).

¹³ See, for example, Carol Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths: Ideology in the Late Meiji Period* (Princeton, 1985); and Takashi Fujitani, 'Japan's Modern National Ceremonies: A Historical Ethnography,' Ph.D. dissertation, University of California,

I need not run through the litany of modernization moves here. But I would like to suggest two points relevant to our discussion of the earlier world.

First, the distance between early modernity and modernity, at least in Japan, really was vast. Much of the scholarship on the Tokugawa period has been concerned with how the gap was apparently closed rather quickly as the result of foundations laid, and preparations made, before 1850.¹⁴ Similar concerns inform the Lieberman project as well. But while it is foolish to deny the importance of foundations, it is overly sanguine (and a-historical) to exaggerate their magnitude and thus miscalculate the Meiji undertaking. If the male literacy rate in the Tokugawa period was 40% and the female literacy rate 10%,¹⁵ do those figures predict or explain a rapid doubling of the literate population during the Meiji years? Similar questions must surround the quantum increases in urban population and agricultural productivity. Certainly we are not dealing with clear cases of historical causation (as, invariably, the China scholars remind us). Nor does the Tokugawa experience speak at all directly to the profound surprises of the Meiji era: the ability to conscript a popular army and win foreign wars after 250 years of peace and civilian disarmament; the ability to contain foreign diplomatic and commercial incursions after 250 years of relative inexperience with state-to-state relations. Just how significant, we might well ask, *was* the Tokugawa experience to modernization?

Second, given the presumption that *some* premodern experiences must have been *reasonably* significant, the isolation of those experiences remains a tough and probably impressionistic job. I have noted already that a certain commonality in language did not preclude convulsions over a standard dialect. We might wonder whether any earlier developments could have prepared for the sundering of a state Shinto cult from Buddhism, or whether the popular adoption of samurai styles was not reproached by the modern injunctions to cut hair, store swords, and learn to waltz.

These are cautionary observations. In entering the world of Lieberman proper, I am wary of discovering a cultural convergence that we

Berkeley, 1986. For discussion of the transition, see Marius Jansen and Gilbert Rozman, *Japan in Transition: From Tokugawa to Meiji* (Princeton, 1986).

¹⁴ The modernization school in Tokugawa studies is best represented in English by Robert Bellah, *Tokugawa Religion* (Glencoe, 1957); Ronald Dore, *Education in Tokugawa Japan* (Berkeley, 1965); and Thomas C. Smith, 1959.

¹⁵ Dore, 1965.

might impute to pre-Lieberman Japan. I am also wary of portraying culture as a cumulative project when, after all, it is an odd creature that may move incrementally or suddenly change skins.

IV. What Are We Looking For?

(Or, Thoughts on the Lieberman Agenda)

Macro-historical comparison tends to focus on fairly well-defined outcomes, which organize the inquiry into origins. Theda Skocpol, for example, examines the conditions of social revolution; Perry Anderson examines the sources of political absolutism.¹⁶ The Lieberman enterprise is more subtle and elusive, and hence more unnerving to contributors.

At the simplest level, Lieberman appears interested in comparison for comparison's sake—which is no mean thing. Without concentrating on outcomes, or on originary principles, he surveys six different countries with open eyes. The resulting detection of parallel forms of integration in these rimlands is an act of intellectual virtuosity of a high order.

At another level, comparison leads Lieberman to (at least) three statements about the trajectories of his rimlands: parallel forms of national integration occurred during a (very roughly) synchronized period that we might call early modernity; such integration seems to have resulted from some similar causes that, though partly internal, were substantially external as well; and, finally, such historical commonalities militate against any binary formulations of separate eastern and western development. But, however cogent at a magisterial level of generality, each of these claims poses problems that Lieberman is the first to acknowledge. For starters, the time-frame of analysis, which exceeds four centuries, is exceptionally elastic. The causal elements are also numerous and dependent: neither an independent variable nor a stable mix of prime factors accounts persistently for the commonalities Lieberman discovers. Thus, the prolonged peace and relative isolation of early modern Japan seem to have achieved results comparable to the periodic wars and international exposure of early modern France. Another difficulty is the loose standard of comparison among the six sample countries: the

¹⁶ Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions* (Cambridge, 1979); Perry Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State* (London, 1974).

increasing 'integration' claimed for each of the rimlands had locally disparate manifestations and even more disparate limits. If the Burmese and Russian polities assumed such different shapes, have we gained more than a superficial insight by noting their shared concern with centralization?

To overcome caution in the face of such difficulties, and hence join the macro-historical enterprise, we need a clear purpose. Here Professor Lieberman wavers. Sometimes he asks us to look for 'Eurasian interdependence'—to gaze beyond borders at a Eurasia that formed an 'evolving, loosely integrated system' or an 'interactive, loosely synchronized ecumene.' But this project is compromised by Lieberman's attention to discrete local histories, and to their powerful interior as well as exterior imperatives. Eurasia finally looms less large than six countries that were variously embarked on the transition to modern nationhood. In effect, Lieberman's enterprise does seem a 'neo-modernization project'—a quest for the common origins, in Asia as well as Europe, of durable nation states.

We are closer, then, but not close enough, to a well-defined outcome. Like the term 'integration,' 'nation state' is the loosest of common standards of analysis. Even if we grant this denomination to the gang of six, their modern histories diverge wherever we look—whether at political form or philosophy, legal structure, economic organization, military power, colonial experience. . . . So one possible promise of the Lieberman project—that a roughly common course of development might produce states of a certain kind—seems thwarted. Just how, then, are the rimlands comparable? And what are we seeking in their early modern experiences that might account for that comparability?

I think Professor Lieberman reveals his answers in a discussion of the differences between archipelagic and mainland Southeast Asia.

[I]t seems to me . . . that in today's Burma, Thailand, and Vietnam state authority rests on the loyalty of a paramount ethnic group in a fashion very different from anything found in Indonesia—and that this has major implications for anti-colonial legacies. . . . In large part, this discrepancy reflects the fact that lowland peoples on the mainland had a long-standing relation to stable state traditions which the Europeans were obliged to respect in their tripartite division of the mainland—but which had no counterpart in the archipelago. . . .¹⁷

Lieberman's concern here is nationalism. Unlike the arbitrarily (or colonially) formed countries of the archipelago, the mainland coun-

¹⁷ Lieberman, this volume.

tries were able to connect modern state authority to some sense of peoplehood (or ethnicity) through the medium of loyalty. This is nationalism: a demonstrable relationship between centralized territorial governance and collective identity. Although governance and identity need be neither congruent nor harmonious, they must correspond sufficiently to permit semi-voluntary mobilizations in response to state needs.

The difference of the mainland is, for Lieberman, a difference of history. There the lowland 'peoples' (with an at least latent awareness of peoplehood) had known a 'long-standing relation' (with an at least rudimentary presumption of attachment) to 'stable state traditions.' In sum, modern nationalism was anticipated by what we might call the proto-national consciousness of early modernity.

However multi-valent, Professor Lieberman's work seems to me ultimately concerned with these ties between nationalisms and their antecedents. The search for 'integration' in disparate early modern countries has little to do, in the end, with the exact chronologies or details of political centralization, market penetration, and cultural standardization. Lieberman readily concedes staggering variety in these matters. The search for 'integration' also slights Eurasian interdependence to emphasize the sense of 'alterity'—and hence the sense of local distinction—produced by foreign encounter. So what remains apparently common to the early modern experience of 'integration' in the rimlands (though not solely there) is an intersection between statist power and collective identity.

Summary and Subject

Professor Lieberman invites me, I conclude, to explore the development in early modern Japan of a proto-nationalism, or, more loosely, of the antecedents of a national identity. Was there some construction of peoplehood (or some experience of cultural integration) that was yoked to a stable polity?

My task is complicated by the scruples apparent in my introductory questions. Because I find cleavage inherent to early modernity, it seems misguided to find integration in either the transcendence of differences (through a common parent language or grain regime, for example) or the erosion of differences (through the dissemination of literacy or the samurai style, for example). Although persuasive in general terms, both approaches are forms of denial: they

presume the superiority of centripetal over centrifugal forces in human affairs. They also have limited explanatory power. Transcendence invokes commonalities too lofty for routine application. Erosion tends to blur one boundary only to clarify another.

Hence, I duck the search for a cultural integration that occurs when similarity surpasses difference. I am concerned, rather, with how difference gets managed. My subject is the integrative principles that can connect necessarily different units in society—the ideas or mental habits that permit fragmented units to situate themselves in a whole. The effect of such integration will not be cultural unity or alikeness. It can only be the crafting of workable relationships.

The integrative principles at work in early Japan seem to me best revealed in an extraordinary body of printed material that I call ‘public information.’ This material was part of a publishing explosion that began, by the 1640s, in the three great cities (Kyoto, Edo, Osaka) and then spread to commercial concerns across the country.¹⁸ The Edo publishers’ list for 1696, with its 7,800 titles, intimates the dimensions of the enterprise. Religion, philosophy, history, and fiction commanded large places in the industry, but informative and instructional works assumed an increasingly strong position. They ranged from sheet maps and atlases to encyclopedias, word dictionaries, biographical dictionaries, personnel registers, rural gazetteers, urban directories, travel guides, agrarian manuals, surveys of any manner of specialties (from gardening to sericulture), evaluations of professional services (from prostitution to Confucian teaching), and a vast assortment of texts for the education of the young.

This explosion in information was new. It was linked to printing but not to technological discovery. Virtually all commercial printers continued to use the ancient art of woodblock, which was employed in Japan continuously from the seventh century for small editions of Buddhist works. Although movable type fascinated publishers in the early seventeenth century, the aesthetics and economies of woodblock prevailed.¹⁹ Rather than technology, then, printing responded

¹⁸ Discussions in English of Tokugawa period publishing include Shively, 1991; Henry D. Smith II, ‘The History of the Book in Edo and Paris,’ in James L. McClain *et al.* (eds), *Edo and Paris: Urban Life and the State in the Early Modern Era* (Ithaca, 1994); David Chibbett, *The History of Japanese Printing and Book Illustration* (Tokyo, 1977); Katsuhisa Moriya, ‘Urban Networks and Information Networks,’ in Chie Nakane and Shinzaburo Oishi (eds), *Tokugawa Japan* (Tokyo, 1990), pp. 97–123; and Peter Kornicki, ‘The Publisher’s Go-Between: *Kashihon’ya* in the Meiji Period,’ *Modern Asian Studies* 14, 2: 331–44.

¹⁹ Shively, 1991, pp. 726–7.

to a variety of social imperatives in the early modern world, including a literate market and the ambitions of new, often professional writers. And, in turn, the market and the writers responded to the burgeoning of print.

A similar push-pull effect operated in the area of literacy. The printing industry presumed the healthy readership provided by multiple large cities, even as books stimulated the growth of ever larger readerships. The larger publishers opened provincial branches and significantly expanded their networks through loans: book stores also operated as lending libraries; itinerant lenders with books strapped to their backs worked the village market.

Within the expansive world of early modern print, my emphasis falls on the texts of public information for several reasons. First, they probably reached the reading majority as well as large circles of listeners and recipients of second- and third-hand intelligence. In so far as written materials moved beyond a literate minority to approach anything like common circulation, the information sources provide our surest link between textual and popular cultures. Indeed, they were produced in astonishing volume. Tens of thousands of domestic maps from the Tokugawa period survive today, for example, suggesting that in both productivity and variety Japan was one of the most active mappers among all early modern countries. (Historians count over 1,200 separate extant editions of maps of Edo city alone.)²⁰

Further, I concentrate on the texts of public information because their content engaged and organized mundane experience. I focus in this essay on three particular genres in the information category: cartography, travel guides, and urban directories. In each case, the sources resonate with broad social movements and political disciplines to suggest some consonance between their printed messages and practical modes of knowledge. They may point to a culture that was not monopolized by readers alone.

Before I turn to the texts, their context must concern us. It is there that the conditions of change come clearer. And it is there that we discover the integral structures of polity and economy, crucial to the Lieberman project, that shaped cultural exchange.

²⁰ Iida Ryūichi and Tawara Motoaki, *Edo-zu no rekishi* (Tokyo, 1988), 2 vols. Among the larger and more accessible holders of Tokugawa period maps are the National Diet Library, the Kobe City Museum, the Tenri Library, and the Tokugawa Institute for the History of Forestry (Tokyo).

Contexts: Japan c. 1460–1800*Internal Perspectives*

The formative experience of early modern Japan was civil war, which raged from 1467 until 1590 (or 1615, if we include two final battles over succession). Although local combat had not been uncommon after 1000, sustained and country-wide upheaval was rare. The upheaval after 1467 rose from dense troubles—from conflicts between urban usurers and rural borrowers, from predatory forms of absentee proprietorship, from the exhaustion of a manorial landholding system without margins for continued extraction and expansion. The upheaval took the form of political rebellion—of breakaway movements for local autonomy that encompassed the martial elite, then minor magnates, and eventually village and sectarian communities.²¹

As cleavages in the medieval polity spread, two alternative patterns of rule began, haltingly, to emerge: the consolidation of small territorial units (previously a patchwork of manorial jurisdictions) into integral domains that were governed—through force and administrative innovation—by daimyo lords; and the denial of all overlordship by self-governing leagues of farmers and village soldiers, religious sectarians, and urban commoners.

Fired by economic and political competition, war became the engine of economic growth. The replacement of atomized holdings by consolidated domains, *and* the reliance of daimyo upon local resources for success in battle, led to coordinated developments. These included the stimulation of agriculture (through large-scale irrigation works and reclamation programs); the encouragement of commerce (through relaxed market laws, the expansion and integration of market circuits); the exploitation of mines (through continental techniques of tunneling and smelting); the improvement of highways and waterways. Population began a climb that would be sustained into the eighteenth century.²²

²¹ John W. Hall, Nagahara Keiji, and Kozo Yamamura (eds), *Japan Before Tokugawa: Political Consolidation and Economic Growth, 1500–1650* (Princeton, 1981); and Mary Elizabeth Berry, *The Culture of Civil War in Kyoto* (Berkeley, 1994).

²² Kozo Yamamura, 'Returns on Unification: Economic Growth in Japan 1550–1650,' in Hall, 1981, pp. 327–72; Nagahara Keiji and Kozo Yamamura, 'Shaping the Process of Unification: Technological Progress in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Japan,' *Journal of Japanese Studies* 14, 1: 77–109; Susan B. Hanley and Kozo Yamamura, *Economic and Demographic Change in Preindustrial Japan* (Princeton, 1977).

This economic change in the domains was accompanied by political initiatives. The most ambitious daimyo registered and systematically taxed agrarian properties. They imposed domain-wide codes of law; they integrated both monasteries and towns into their jurisdictions. The process was jagged. It was also volatile. Daimyo rose and fell in a constantly changing mudscape. The domain model of rule, nonetheless, proved tenacious, crushing brutally the defiant leagues.

I call civil war the formative experience of early modernity for (at least) two reasons. First, it shaped the domains that became the basic governing units in a national federation established around 1590 by Toyotomi Hideyoshi and led by the Tokugawa house from 1600 to 1868. Hideyoshi's settlement brought roughly 200 semi-autonomous domains into a federal form of union. (The number would increase to over 250 under Tokugawa rule.) Second, the length and gravity of wartime upheaval inspired a polity fixated on peace-keeping.

The Toyotomi and the early Tokugawa used central authority with singular audacity but precise target to cut the roots of turmoil. They disarmed farmers, monks, and townspeople; they leveled fortifications. They removed most samurai from villages to the castle towns of their daimyo, where they became underemployed peacetime stipendiaries. They forbade changes in class and station, monitored physical movement, disciplined belligerent monastic establishments. By 1640, moreover, they had heavily constrained foreign contact.²³

Let me emphasize the audacity of these measures. The emphasis would hardly seem necessary except that fifteen generations of Tokugawa rule saw few substantial advances on these central powers and, indeed, several retreats. This situation moves Professor Lieberman to remark upon the limits of political integration in early modern Japan, and many scholars to regard shogunal governance as weak.²⁴ Without rejecting such observations, it seems well to offer modifications. First, the shogun (and, more important, the deputies to whom power devolved by administrative design) maintained for 250 years the most far-reaching polity Japan had known. They protected a

²³ Mary Elizabeth Berry, *Hideyoshi* (Cambridge, MA, 1982); Asao Naohiro, 'The Sixteenth-century Unification,' in Hall (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Japan* (Cambridge, 1991), vol. 4, pp. 40–95.

²⁴ Mark Ravina reviews the arguments over this matter and includes a good bibliography in 'State-Building and Political Economy in Early Modern Japan,' *Journal of Asian Studies* 54, 4: 997–1022.

federal contract that vested domainal rule in local daimyo and reserved for the center jurisdiction over pacification, daimyo discipline, and the public province (major cities, mines, currency, and so forth). Maintenance of a system is different from weakness.

Second, the shogun and daimyo alike were apparently willing to exchange public order for a certain restraint in rule—particularly in the matter of taxation, which ebbed as a percentage of the agrarian product over time and was never applied doggedly to commerce.²⁵ The longevity and stability of the Tokugawa peace (although uprisings mounted from the late eighteenth century) is impossible to explain without administrative temperance. And this temperance is poorly explained as simple weakness or fecklessness.

Finally, the audacious structure of pacification imposed around 1600 continued to frame the lives of all residents of early modern Japan. The dynamic and integrative effects that Professor Lieberman associates with war-making, and which we see clearly enough in the formation of Japan's wartime domains, can equally be associated with peace-keeping. If the Tokugawa shogun became largely invisible, the unfolding consequences of their original polity remained everywhere conspicuous: in the urban networks generated first by the removal of samurai (roughly 7% of the population) from villages and then by the requirement that all daimyo reside periodically in Edo; in the commercial agriculture geared to the supply of vast samurai cities; in the patterns of urban investment and alliance with rural capitalists that were pursued by merchants forbidden to buy village land; in the complex social roles that were invented by samurai left with stipends but without military employment (and who variously turned to scholarship, medicine, professional writing, political commentary, and freelance instruction).²⁶ In short, it is impos-

²⁵ The classic statement on agrarian taxation in English remains Thomas C. Smith, 'The Land Tax in the Tokugawa Period,' in John W. Hall and Marius B. Jansen (eds), *Studies in the Institutional History of Early Modern Japan* (Princeton, 1968), pp. 283–99. Commerce is explored in William B. Hauser, *Economic Institutional Change in Tokugawa Japan* (Cambridge, 1974); and John W. Hall, *Tanuma Okitsugu* (Cambridge, 1955). Also, see Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *A History of Japanese Economic Thought* (London, 1989).

²⁶ I know of no extended modern study of the multiple roles of Tokugawa period samurai and the consequences of maintaining a large elite that was over-educated, under-employed, and poorly paid. For portraits of individual samurai thinkers, see Kate Wildman Nakai, *Shogunal Politics: Arai Hakuseki and the Premises of Tokugawa Rule* (Cambridge, MA, 1988); and Olof Lidin, *Ogyu Sorai's Distinguishing the Way* (Tokyo, 1970).

sible to separate polity and economy, polity and society, in Tokugawa Japan.

I have accorded primacy to internal—often political—forces in the genesis of civil war, and in the formation of the alliances that ended combat and the control system that held the peace. The internal issues seem to me crucial. The extent of the slaughter between 1560 and 1590, the scale of campaigns that brought hundreds of thousands of troops to battle, and the phenomenal destruction of great daimyo houses in those campaigns—all disposed former enemies to seek accord for their very survival. And continuing fear of daimyo neighbors and local insurrection disposed them to enforce the strategies of pacification that defined the early modern experience.

The Meanings of Foreign Contact

But if internal factors were central to war-making and peace-keeping in early modern Japan, international factors were, nonetheless, weighty. The question is, how weighty? Was Japan linked ‘interdependently’ to a Eurasia that formed an ‘interactive episteme’ and influenced substantially the conduct of war and peace?

Japan’s overseas encounters during the Lieberman era crossed several sub-periods that suggest a highly variable attitude toward foreign connection. From 1404 until 1549, an old model of nominally managed contact with China prevailed, although relations were in mounting disarray from the late fifteenth century. In theory, envoys of the Ming court and the Ashikaga shogunate supervised both a trade and a diplomacy with strong tributary dimensions. Formal relations with Korea also occurred through the Sō family of Tsushima (and goods from Southeast Asia entered Kyushu from the Ryukyus).²⁷ From 1549 until 1640, overseas contacts exploded. Even as Japanese traders and adventurers moved across East and Southeast Asia with unprecedented enterprise (and a freedom sanctioned by domestic turmoil), so foreign bottoms arrived in Japan not only from Asia but from Europe (first from Portugal and Spain, later and briefly from England, finally from the Netherlands). Largely unregulated before 1590, contact was increasingly controlled by the

²⁷ Wang Yi-T’ung, *Official Relations Between China and Japan, 1368–1549* (Cambridge, MA, 1953); Kawazoe Shoji, ‘Japan and East Asia,’ in Yamamura (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Japan* (Cambridge, 1990), vol. 3, pp. 396–446.

Toyotomi and the Tokugawa as political unification proceeded.²⁸ From 1640 until 1853, a policy of strictly managed exchange was resumed. Japanese maritime activity officially ceased (smuggling continued); foreign entry through Nagasaki was confined to Chinese and Dutch vessels. (Relations through Satsuma with the Ryukyus, and through Tsushima with Korea, continued.) Despite this constrained contact, trade volumes grew well into the seventeenth century before flattening and then ebbing around 1700.²⁹

In judging the importance of foreign contact to Japan across these periods, the value of trade itself has served as one too obvious—and misleading—a measure. In wartime as in peacetime, trade centered on the exchange of Chinese silks (thread, floss, raw and finished fabrics) for Japanese metals (first copper ore, then, overwhelmingly, silver). When China relations were broken for a time after 1550, disparate Asian and European merchants carried the continental silks to Japan. But while this trade was certainly heavier than any earlier exchange, efforts to calculate its annual value in the fat years of the seventeenth century have reached modest verdicts: Conrad Totman concludes that imports may have had ‘a value equivalent to less than 1.5 percent of domestic agricultural production.’³⁰ Seemingly limited in value, the trade was also suicidal. It depleted metal resources virtually to the break point, when domestic clamor forced curtailment of silver exports. A silver flow of immense importance to Eurasia as a whole was damaging to Japan.³¹

We might better gauge foreign impact, however, by considering the general circulation of both goods and ideas and their rippling consequences. The above account is heedless, for example, of the multiplying effects in Japan of major imports and exports: Chinese silks organized the luxury textile market, as silver demand organized a huge mining industry, until the late seventeenth century. The account is also heedless of the disproportionate importance of commerce to its main parties: trade income loomed large, for example, to the early shogun who licenced Japanese mariners, created a silk

²⁸ Ronald P. Toby, *State and Diplomacy in Early Modern Japan: Asia in the Development of the Tokugawa Bakufu* (Stanford, 1984); Charles R. Boxer, *The Christian Century in Japan* (Berkeley, 1951); Jurgis Elisonas, ‘The Inseparable Trinity: Japan’s Relations with China and Korea,’ in Hall (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Japan* (Cambridge, 1991), vol. 4, pp. 235–300.

²⁹ Toby, 1984; Robert LeRoy Innes, ‘The Door Ajar: Japan’s Foreign Trade in the Seventeenth Century,’ Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1980.

³⁰ Conrad Totman, *Early Modern Japan* (Berkeley, 1993), p. 148.

³¹ Innes, 1980; Totman, 1993, pp. 140–8.

thread monopoly, and controlled the mines.³² More critical, though, is attention to the many items, and the even greater knowledge, that bore lightly on trade accounts but heavily on social change.

In wartime, European arms (copied in Japan by the 1550s but fired with imported saltpeter) profoundly altered combat and mercilessly increased casualties, thus hastening the peace. Chinese mining technologies accelerated recovery of the mineral resources indispensable to war's victors. And Chinese coins fed monetization of the market (even as they deferred intensive domestic minting).³³ In peacetime, a range of introduced products became agrarian staples—the sweet potato above all, as well as South Asian cotton and new world tobacco, for example. The books and objects funneled through Nagasaki were conduits of cartographic and optical science, medical and botanical knowledge, painting and pottery styles, philosophical and historical ferment.³⁴

This catalog, though perfunctory, begins to suggest the intricate and incalculable effects of overseas connection. None of these effects was definitive of war or peace, nor were they collectively greater in force than the Chinese impact on classical and medieval Japan. But such comparisons lead in futile directions. Consider the hypothetical Japanese farmer of early modernity who grew cotton, raised her children on Confucian primers, and wore spectacles to refill her pipe. Here 'foreign' elements have become part of a normal domestic order virtually unimaginable without them. This form of encounter had very old traditions in a Japan never sealed from influence. Again, a Eurasian 'interdependency' is hard to claim. A great permeability, and a steady adaptation of culture, is patently clear.

Was this flow of goods and ideas conducive to domestic integration? I am doubtful but not sure. Christian proselytism—the most dramatic foreign arrival—was divisive during the fifty years it was

³² These are the principal subjects of Innes, 1980.

³³ The seventeenth-century military historian Yamaga Sokō reconstructs the major battles, with notes on muskets and casualties, in *Buke jiki* (Tokyo, 1965), pp. 749–1189. For coinage, Kozo Yamamura and Tetsuo Kamiki, 'Silver Mines and Sung Coins,' in J. F. Richards (ed.), *Precious Metals in the Later Medieval and Early Modern Worlds* (Durham, 1983), pp. 329–62. For mining and smelting, Kobata Atsushi, *Kingin bōeki-shi no kenkyū* (Tokyo, 1976).

³⁴ Research on such exchange is eloquently called for, and pursued by, Karen Wigen. See 'Mapping Early Modernity: Geographical Meditations on a Comparative Concept,' *Early Modern Japan* 5, 2: 1–13; *The Making of a Japanese Periphery, 1750–1920* (Berkeley, 1995); 'The Geographic Imagination in Early Modern Japanese History,' *Journal of Asian Studies* 51, 1: 3–29.

permitted; Christian persecution may have been fortifying to statist power but ineffective in guaranteeing cultural orthodoxy. The anti-Christian policies enforced a degree of religious conformity and fostered habits of compliance to statist demands, even as they taught believers and sympathizers alike the lessons of secrecy. Indeed, foreign learning taught the lessons of intellectual struggle. Tokugawa scholars would split regularly on questions of eastern and western science, Chinese and native philosophy.³⁵

The shogunate's attention to ideology raises a larger subject, and the one most germane to the Lieberman project: the relationship between foreign affairs and state formation. At the simplest level, the control of contact—through licences, laws, monopolies, and force—served a legitimating function important to military leaders since the thirteenth century. Although state-to-state relations were secured only with Korea (after 1636), foreign consent to Japanese policy identified the hegemons as protectors of the realm.³⁶ This role was not new, but both its Eurasian scope and its superior tone were. As Professor Lieberman notes, a once deferential posture toward China gave way to a chauvinism that would inflect historical writing and philosophy as well.³⁷ The international order was now wide, and Japan's position in it was unbowed.

For a while, Japan's position was also bellicose. After threatening to invade both Taiwan and the Philippines, Toyotomi Hideyoshi twice sent invading armies to Korea in the 1590s with the ultimate intention of 'entering China, spreading the customs of our country to the four hundred and more provinces of that country, and establishing there the government of our own imperial city unto all the ages.'³⁸ Ruinous to Korea, the invasions failed—but without closing the possibility of resumed Japanese aggression in Asia. The Tokugawa shogun contemplated war with the Manchus on the Korean peninsula in the 1620s, and war with the Spaniards in Manila during the 1630s.³⁹ They were already waging the equivalent of war on Christians in Japan. Some 3,000 local converts and foreign mission-

³⁵ George Elison, *Deus Destroyed* (Cambridge, MA, 1973); Peter Nosco (ed.), *Confucianism and Tokugawa Culture* (Princeton, 1984).

³⁶ Elisonas, 1991; Toby, 1984.

³⁷ Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi, *Anti-Foreignism and Western Learning in Early Modern Japan* (Cambridge, MA, 1986).

³⁸ Berry, 1982, p. 208.

³⁹ Totman, 1993, pp. 113–14.

aries would be killed by 1660 for defiance of a xenophobic regime.⁴⁰ Although complex in circumstance, these episodes shared an exceptional background: Japanese leaders commanded immense and domestically triumphant armies of up to 300,000 men;⁴¹ and they operated within a changed world of Manchu conquest, European expansion, and pan-Asian piracy. Japan might have remained within this international arena as one more dangerous player.

Instead, the early modern Japanese state was defined for two centuries by withdrawal. Why? A long history of managed contact with non-intrusive powers was doubtless important. More critical, I think, was a paramount concern with order. Megalomania and a desire to amplify his daimyo's holdings probably led Hideyoshi into Korea. But temptations toward international violence were ultimately resisted by a shogunate more wary than welcoming of trouble. The internal imperatives shaped by lacerating civil war led the unifiers to uncommon policies of domestic pacification. As foreign disturbance swelled—from militant evangelism at home to confrontation among mariners abroad—a secure peace seemed to require uncommon international controls as well.

Thus, Japan's place in the 'interactive ecumene' fell at the isolationist extreme, which was one position on a spectrum of choices posed by the maritime age. But there can be no doubt that an isolationist polity formed the Tokugawa state as decisively as foreign engagement formed other rimlands. The 'great peace' and the absence of foreign menace underwrote authority. The anti-Christian policies inspired the statist disciplines of annual registration and interrogation of the population. An agrarian ideology, unchallenged by mercantilism or an export-driven emphasis on industry, remained dominant. Such systemic consequences of seclusion could be multiplied many times. And the mundane consequences—for everything from dress styles to vocabulary—could be entertained endlessly.

* * *

Japan's place on the isolationist extreme prompts two final questions, which I raise but can barely address here. First, how could Japan

⁴⁰ Boxer, 1951, p. 448; Jurgis Elisonas, 'Christianity and the Daimyo,' in Hall (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Japan* (Cambridge, 1991), vol. 4, p. 370.

⁴¹ Among the clearest figures are those available for Hideyoshi's first Korean campaign. See Berry, 1982, p. 209.

successfully maintain that place? There are salient if not fully convincing answers on the domestic side—including the disadvantageous trade in metals, the continued access through Nagasaki to foreign learning, the power of internal propaganda, and the adaptability of the political economy to constraint. But the answers on the international side seem to me elusive and deserving of attention. Surely they include Japan's geographical remoteness and limited resource base. Are such answers sufficient if we posit a genuinely interdependent Eurasia?

The second question was raised by Professor Lieberman in personal correspondence. 'Given its relative insularity, why didn't Japan follow an internal trajectory entirely different from [the other rimlands]?' Put differently, if continuing international contact was not a primary impetus to integration of the polity, economy, and culture, what *did* drive the integrative process in Japan? And can we generalize the importance of such factors? Schematically, and without making rules, I would draw attention to four internal factors that guided Japan's early modern development.

Crucial was the centripetal force of three monster cities (Edo with a population in the eighteenth century of one million, Kyoto and Osaka with populations approaching 400,000) that required production and marketing organization across the country. Production and distribution were encouraged, moreover, by a taxation system that stopped short of confiscating the agrarian surplus and mercantile wealth. (Indeed, the Tokugawa period is remarkable for a certain income leveling that narrowed the gap between samurai—whose stipends were reduced through inflation and unimproved by tax gains—and the more prosperous commoners.)⁴² Further, economic gains were protected by the contraction of population growth from the early eighteenth century.⁴³ Finally, and fundamentally, those gains were made possible by the agrarian revolution chronicled by Thomas C. Smith. The revolution was sustained not by mechanical change or government planning, but by incremental improvements in method, a transition to very small farms worked by disciplined family units, and the dissemination of knowledge by independent agronomists and cultivators themselves.⁴⁴

⁴² Gilbert Rozman, 'Edo's Importance in the Changing Tokugawa Society,' *Journal of Japanese Studies* 1, 1: 91–112; *Urban Networks in Ch'ing China and Tokugawa Japan* (Princeton, 1974). Also, see n. 24.

⁴³ Thomas C. Smith, *Nakahara* (Stanford, 1977); Hanley and Yamamura, 1977.

⁴⁴ Smith, 1959.

These remarks move us from the international to the domestic arena, and from state policy to social change. The Tokugawa experience was structured by remarkable statist initiatives: federation, seclusion, class laws, the transfer of samurai to cities, the requirement that daimyo reside periodically in Edo. But the Tokugawa experience was also redefined daily by both the unforeseen effects of these initiatives and the dynamic responses of many actors.

Cultural Integration

My survey of the early modern context in Japan has emphasized integrity in structure. Yet as I begin the discussion of culture, let me return to my opening theme. Tokugawa governance was predicated on differences—on making them and enforcing them. Distinctions of class were primary—ordained in laws covering everything from residence and land ownership to dress and drink. Differences were also elaborated officially among religious organizations, schools and academies, even theatrical troupes and highway lodgings.⁴⁵ And differences were amplified not only by such deep structures as gender and geography but also by economic specialization and cultural choice.

As I suggested earlier, integration in a society of difference could not occur primarily through the erosion or transcendence of boundaries. Rather, integration required workable principles of relationship between disparate social units. Some such principles appear in the texts of public information generated by the publishing explosion. I turn to them now to explore culture as an expression of social connection. Distinctly early modern sources, the texts belong to the sphere of entrepreneurship. If Meiji leaders were obsessed with the mission of nationalist indoctrination, the Tokugawa authorities were a distant party to the work of cultural integration.

Cartography and the Taxonomic Imagination

Before 1600, mapmaking in Japan was an uncommon enterprise, limited in subject and function. The roughly 200 examples of early

⁴⁵ See, for example, the laws cited by David John Lu, *Sources of Japanese History* (New York, 1974), vol. 1, pp. 199–232; Tetsuo Najita, *Visions of Virtue in Tokugawa Japan* (Chicago, 1987), pp. 60–98.

cartography that survive today describe a practice focused on discrete manorial holdings and the internal disputes—principally boundary quarrels—within them.⁴⁶ By the latter part of the seventeenth century, however, mapping in Japan flourished on all fronts. Cartographic energy flowed, originally, from the state. The shogunate conducted four national surveys in the seventeenth century alone, gradually spreading the cartographic habit to each of its administrative units: urban magistrates, jurists, local daimyo, and village heads became prolific mappers of everything from fire lanes to procession routes, from forest resources to irrigation works. Private patrons acquired the taste as well. They commissioned the scrolls and screens and finely painted sheets that constituted the luxury end of the cartographic trade, with subjects that tended to mansions and gardens, coastal and highway scenes, historical battle sites, and the great lost cities of the past. It was commercial printers, however, who flooded the public market with maps. Maps of the nation, of the major cities and highway routes, predominated. Maps of famous places and scenic sites, of elite residences and brothel quarters, of mountain trails and pilgrimage routes, of burial grounds, spas, individual neighborhoods, and religious complexes were ubiquitous.⁴⁷

The most obvious effect of the cartographic revolution was the creation, and circulation, of synoptic statements about physical and social geography. The basic statement is the most important: space and place are knowable and known, not mysterious, and capturable in a total graphic representation. The statements about particular spaces then unfold. In the many variants of national maps, for example, a 'Great Japan' comprising the principal islands is framed by water, and set against Korea and China (typically indicated by coastlines and labels) as well as more remote countries (typically named in long verbal indices with notations about travel distances).⁴⁸

⁴⁶ For a census of premodern maps, Nishioka Toranosuke, *Nihon shōen ezu shūsei*, 2 vols (Tokyo, 1976–77). For further analysis, Kokuritsu Rekishi Minzoku Haku-butsukan (ed.), *Shōen ezu to sono sekai* (Tokyo, 1993).

⁴⁷ Basic surveys with extensive illustrations include Namba Matsutarō *et al.* (eds), *Nihon no kochizu* (Tokyo, 1969); Akioka Takejirō (ed.), *Nihon kochizu shūsei* (Tokyo, 1971); Unno Kazutaka *et al.* (eds), *Nihon kochizu taisei* (Tokyo, 1972). Also, see Hugh Cortazzi, *Isles of Gold* (Tokyo, 1983); J. B. Harley and David Woodward (eds), *History of Cartography*, vol. 2, pt 2: *East Asia* (Chicago, 1994).

⁴⁸ See, for example, illustration 31 in Unno, 1972. National names (including Honchō, Yamato) tend to appear on the coverings of the maps, rather than on their faces. Ezo, or Hokkaido, rarely appears in national maps before the eighteenth century. The indices list both Asian and European countries, sometimes in Chinese characters, sometimes in a phonetic syllabary.

The domestic space of these maps is defined less by natural topography than by the overlapping systems of integration that are the cartographic subject. The sixty-six provinces first plotted by the classical state and still units of local identity order the background (sometimes in contrasting colors, otherwise with boundary signs and labels). Dispersed on this provincial base are standardized markers of the Tokugawa polity: symbols and labels for castle towns (accompanied by the names and titles of their daimyo as well as numerical totals for annual domainal productivity); exaggerated symbols and labels for the main cities held directly by the Tokugawa. And connecting all parts, however far-flung, are the arteries: highways and roadways punctuated by official post stations (with distance markers and notes on portage fees); rivers and sea lanes served by ports and ferry crossings (with similar markers and notes).⁴⁹

Although we might catalog at length the further messages of national and small area maps alike, the point is clear enough. Maps served up to the Tokugawa public highly patterned visions of itself. Indeed, maps helped create the very possibility of a Tokugawa public by converting the infinitely discrete details of local experience into uniform categories embracing a total population.

Here, of course, is the deeper significance of the cartographic revolution. Apart from their individual statements, maps represent an epistemological conversion—a movement from the immediate to the categorical apprehension of phenomena, and from esoteric to analogical learning. Maps emerge from the twin processes of inventorying and classifying worldly phenomena. And they operate through generic codes of signs and labels that insist upon the subordination of the particular to the general. The codes create essentialized, and therefore reductive, modes of definition to impose structure on the landscape. So experience is not, the code declares, unfathomably myriad but governable by *genera* and fixed variables.⁵⁰

The conversion to a routine cartography began with the unifiers of the early modern state. Cartographic learning itself was certainly not new. The impetus and will to use maps prolifically in the reinvention of power was. A desultory medieval cartography gave way to the intense and prescriptive surveying of hegemony who saw in carto-

⁴⁹ These conventions derive from the shogunal surveys. The most important is the identification of daimyo power with an urban headquarters and a productivity figure, rather than with a bounded territory.

⁵⁰ I rely on Denis Wood, *The Power of Maps* (New York, 1992); and David Turnbull, *Maps are Territories: Science is an Atlas* (Deakin, Australia, 1989).

graphic codes a means to order knowledge and define a still nascent authority. Maps anticipated, and helped impose, a polity in formation. Their immediate audience was not a 'public' but the contentious body of daimyo and ranking military retainers. Official cartography, nonetheless, formed the basis of the commercial mapping that drove—and was driven by—public desire.⁵¹

This desire is the most interesting aspect of the map revolution. It came, I suspect, from the same source that provoked the mapping impulse among the unifiers—from the need for orientation in a world torn apart and under reconstruction. The ordeal of war and pacification required mass mobilizations and demobilizations, forced relocations and status changes, and attendant shifts of pervasive character. Such crises eroded customary frameworks of attachment and identity, creating large populations of strangers bound by the very broad associations (such as class, occupation, tax status) that emerged from the early modern settlement. Paradoxically, perhaps, maps confirmed their readers as strangers; for the map is an impersonal tool needed by outsiders who learn from symbols what they do not know from experience. But, at the same time, maps initiated their readers into a holistic mode of knowledge that implied access to—and participation in—worlds larger than themselves. If maps locate their users in physical space, they more emphatically locate them in systems of political and social meaning.

Maps also responded to, and fed, curiosity, the trustiest agent of connection. Tokugawa maps were loaded with information. Maps of Kyoto, for example, identified all the residences of the courtly and military elites (with names and incomes), the locations of theaters and brothels, the sites of religious institutions (with notes on income, history, icons). Indices offered lists of special products and manufactures, guides to the festival calendar, all the measurements of Hideyoshi's Great Buddha (length of ear-lobes, nose . . .).⁵² However useful to the stranger in need of orientation, such maps surpassed practical needs to transform secrets into popular currency. The voyeur could possess expansive social knowledge. And social knowledge could become social membership.

⁵¹ Ōshikōchi's Dōin's surveys of Edo for the shogunate were printed commercially in the 1670s, and atlas versions of the shogunal surveys of the nation were printed by the 1660s. Some official urban surveys, particularly of castle fortifications, remained sensitive and did not circulate. Protection of cartographic secrets (such as Inō Tadataka's coastal surveys) was most pronounced in the nineteenth century.

⁵² See, for example, illustrations 83 and 84 in Unno, 1972.

Here, certainly, is the reason why officials failed to censor commercial maps, and even cooperated in their creation. Maps are so seldom subversive, and so effective as propaganda, because they naturalize artificial systems of power. Mixing, blurring physical and social geography, they make a castle town or a palace seem as natural and inevitable as a mountain. A jurisdictional boundary appears as real as a river; a label like 'Lord Shimazu' is as just as a label like 'Mount Fuji.'

For the Tokugawa public, then, maps taught the lessons of authority—the lessons of political integration and encompassing social codes. They discriminated relentlessly: between villages and great towns, major daimyo and minor officials, the neighborhoods of commoners and the compounds of princes. But the classification of parts illumined the structure of a whole. And the habit of classification—the essential taxonomic imagination of cartography—could be brought to new structures. Although Meiji maps of power would replace Tokugawa maps of power, they addressed readers well schooled in cartographic relationships.

Travel Guides and the Accessible Landscape

'Famous places' (*meisho*) were almost always marked on large-area maps of Tokugawa Japan and quite copiously laid out in a cartographic genre of their own. They were central to the prodigious literature of local geography (from travel guides to gazetteers) and indispensable to the imagery of poetry, drama, and fiction.⁵³ The famous place was all but unavoidable.

Originally a trope in classical literature and painting, the *meisho* was a place with a name made somehow remarkable by a poet's notice, an historical poignance, an uncommon beauty. These places increased in number and variety over time, only to proliferate in the early modern era. Growth was driven in part by expectation and competition. Once the category of 'famous place' became conventional in local maps, ethnographies, school primers, and such, pride dictated profusion.⁵⁴ Once travel guides became a publishing staple,

⁵³ Baba Akiko *et al.* (eds), *Meisho: Hare kukan no kōzō (Shizen to bunka 27)* (Tokyo, 1990).

⁵⁴ In the various village reports (*meisai-chō, fūzoku-chō*) that daimyo periodically required from villagers themselves, *meisho* was one of many standard categories of local description. See Shōji Kichinosuke (ed.), *Aizu fūdoki, fūzokuchō*, 3 vols (Tokyo, 1979–80).

authors took pains to invent for a new Edo a roster of sites not incommensurate with those of an ancient Kyoto. Growth was driven, too, by a culture of movement—for pilgrimage, seasonal employment, the transport of goods—and by a culture of commerce. Temples displayed treasures to paying visitors, publishers generated ever fresh series of landscape prints. The *meisho* was commodity, entertainment, education, source of prestige.

Travel guides served as catalogs of famous places and most bore the term *meisho* in their titles. By far the most numerous of their notable sites were temples, but ‘fame’ was lavished, too, on shrines, battlegrounds, burials, ruins, sensational or scenic spots (or individual trees, rocks, waterfalls). Amply bestowed, fame was also, of course, relative. Some places were very famous. They claimed the longest entries in guides, appeared at the top of the ‘self-guided tours’ recommended in appendices to guides and maps alike, and dominated the souvenir trade. They included the major pilgrimage sites (for example, Ise shrine, the temples of Mount Kōya), the big religious attractions in important cities (the Great Buddha and Kiyomizu temple in Kyoto), imperial and shogunal monuments (the palace, the Tokugawa memorials at Nikkō), and natural sites (Mount Fuji, Yoshino, the Nachi Falls).⁵⁵

Famous places worked variously as binding agents in Tokugawa society. The most popular sites (Ise above all, where millions of visitors congregated in special pilgrimage years) linked through experience the people of every station and locale who actually traveled to them.⁵⁶ Such sites bound people vicariously as well; for villagers sponsored lotteries to send representative delegations, and home-bound pilgrims visited nearby simulacra (most notably artificial versions of Fuji and scaled-down counterparts to the circuit of thirty-three Kannon temples of Shikoku).⁵⁷ And the elaboration of locally important places joined most communities to the continuum of fame (everybody had *some* claim to eminence), just as local excursions joined modest to heroic travelers in the business of discovery.

Actual discovery may not have been essential to the social role of *meisho*, however. Indeed, many sites could be viewed (if at all) only from a distance and through a barrier of walls. It was the presentation of famous places in guides and maps, as well as the dissemina-

⁵⁵ The most helpful survey of the guide literature is Wada Mankichi (*Shintei zōhō Kohan chishi kaidai* (Tokyo, 1968).

⁵⁶ Shinjō Tsunezo, *Shaji sankei no shakai keizai-shi teki kenkyū* (Tokyo, 1964).

⁵⁷ Hirano Eiji, *Fuji Asama shinkō* (Tokyo, 1987); Shinjō, 1964.

tion of the *meisho* image, that probably bound society more emphatically than travel itself.

Consider the treatment of the shogunal castle in Asai Ryōi's 1662 *Guide to the Famous Places of Edo*. One of eighty entries that cover seven volumes and a riotous spectrum of high and low life, the castle entry opens with the 1440s, during the time of the Retired Emperor Go Hanazono, when 'the influence of the Kanrei Uesugi Ukyōnosuke Noritada spread over the ten eastern provinces.' Noritada's son built the first ancestor of Edo castle. A dense chronology and genealogy of change—replete with era names, challenging proper nouns and official titles—leads the reader to the defeat by the Tokugawa of Hōjō Ujinao, at the battle of Odawara, on the sixth day of the seventh month of the eighteenth year of Tenshō (1590). There follows a paean to the Tokugawa shogun, the peace they brought to the country and the prosperity they brought to the city, and, finally, an overview of the current castle itself. Although Ryōi lingers a bit over the main gate, the rise of maples between the main and western circles of the castle, and the bustle of upright samurai always entering and leaving the scene, physical detail surrenders to mood.⁵⁸

This entry is emblematic of the guide material in general. It describes a place, whether open or closed to actual public entry (the castle was closed), that opens to the public imagination. The reader is meant to know of the place, to want and deserve mental access to it, to share rightful information rightfully provided. And that information is historical. The reader, either literate or educable in a high historical terminology (sometimes glossed phonetically), watches the procession of imperial and military players *as if* it is perfectly natural to do so. What we might consider an elite history (and most *meisho* were steeped only in elite history), appears in the guides as a common history—not the peculiar possession of the Uesugi or Hōjō or Tokugawa, but something available, even necessary, to the consumer of the public place. So, too, the imperial palace or the great burial ground of Kōya is made of dates, personalities, and dramas that belong to any casual visitor or compulsive savant.

The approach carries over to religious establishments. Although sectarian affiliation is mentioned (and sometimes serves as a principle of organization in the guides), temples are lifted out of exclusive associations with worship or belief. Their icons and miracle stories are historicized, their founders located in a pantheon of public

⁵⁸ Asai Ryōi, *Edo meisho-ki* (Edo Sōsho Hangyō-kai, 1916), vol. 1, pp. 3–5.

figures, their major rituals converted into part of a public calendar of events. The readers of guides and maps are even counseled to plan travel to coincide with religious festivals, which might as well be secular spectacles.

We might speculate usefully, though inconclusively, about the transforming power of the famous place. Perhaps a dispersed geiety, attached both to local and national monuments, came to unite a people and a landscape. Perhaps a historical consciousness, inclusive of disparate actors over many centuries, came to unite a people and a shared past. The disclosures of the guidebooks focus, however, not on feeling but on access and choice. The many *meisho* and their thick histories are available, and available in the same terms to anyone who wants them for any reason. Ise is available to the pious prince or curious merchant or pleasure-seeking farmer. No transformation in soul or identity is required.

The relations described in Tokugawa cartography were structural, integral, and largely vertical: generic parts of greater and lesser importance were located in a whole. The relations described in Tokugawa guidebooks were elective, diffuse, and largely horizontal: myriad places with multiple associations were opened to all claimants.

Urban Directories and the Complex Society

Urban directories, particularly for the cities of Kyoto and Edo, began to appear in regularly revised editions from the latter part of the seventeenth century. These were exhaustive, multi-volume works that cataloged urban phenomena in manifold ways, primarily for the use of local residents themselves.⁵⁹

For example, the *Dappled Fabric of Edo* (1687) includes a list in 22 categories of 292 physical features (important rocks, streams, bridges, embankments); the annual festival calendars of both the military houses and the commoners; a list of 360 art objects in 22 categories held by private collectors; a list in 11 categories of major Buddhist and Shinto icons (statues of Yakushi, Inari, Fudō); a description of over sixty shrines, with historical notes; a description

⁵⁹ The most copious and regularly revised directories were versions of the *Kyoto Brocade* (*Kyō habutae*) and the *Dappled Cloth of Edo* (*Edo ganoko*). See Shinshū Kyōto Shōsho Hangyō-kai (ed.), *Shinshū Kyōto sōsho* (Kyoto, 1968), vol. 2; and Edo Sōsho Hangyō-kai, 1916, vols 3–4.

of over 100 temples, organized by sect, with historical notes; a street-by-street survey of the city, with inventories of residents, employments, and frontages; a list of famous vistas; a list of over 300 prominent artists, teachers, and providers of services in 43 categories (doctors of various specialties, poets of different schools, masseurs, removers of ear wax), all with addresses; a list of over 200 prominent craftspeople and merchants in 32 categories (the gold and silver guildsmen, textile specialists, incense blenders, handlers of Buddhist goods, tea merchants), all with addresses; and a list of 22 trade associations. Other editions of this work include lists of all military and civilian office holders in the city.⁶⁰

The scope and detail of this directory are impressive in themselves. But of central concern to me here is the disaggregation of the urban world into many constituent parts. In addition to physical features, urbanity embraces distinctive streets and neighborhoods as well as distinctive work and workers. It embraces disparate religious communities and several festival lives. It embraces an orderly officialdom and bodies of affluent connoisseurs. It embraces numerous outlets for consumption and entertainment.

These constituent parts are also overlapping. As a reader, I might find myself many times in the directory's lists. Perhaps I am a resident of a particular block where my civic and ritual life centers, a vertical flute master listed first among several colleagues, an adherent of a particular temple, a subject of a well-defined military administration, a client of some art fancier, an occupant of a uniquely configured topography, a buyer of silk and a fancier of the twelve views of Zōjōji and a frequenter of the theater quarter. Like the dappled Edo itself, I am a creature of many colors and intersections.

Thus, one message of the directories concerns the differentiation I have seen as inherent to early modernity. Jurisdictions and domains of action are bounded. Divisions among and within status groups are clarified (as addresses, titles, specialties convey distinctions in wealth, training, culture). The sources of, and forces behind, urban diversity become conspicuous.

Yet another message of the directories concerns patterns of connection. My hypothetical flute master has plural identities and plural attachments—which are variously determined and voluntary, vertical and horizontal, institutional and commercial, long and short in

⁶⁰ *Edo sōganoko meisho taizen*, literally 'The Dappled Cloth of Edo: Encyclopedia of Famous Places,' from *Jōkyō* 4, in *Edo Sōsho Hangyō-kai*, 1916, vols. 3–4.

duration, close and distant in intensity. Hence, early modernity sees not just multiplying difference but multiplying relationships. These relations, many of them ambivalent, do not constitute some organic social union. The directories break down totalizing conceptions of community to replace them with a pluralist and dynamic sociology. But precisely because of this pluralism and dynamism, individuals can construct the diverse ties that make societies resilient.

Concluding Thoughts

Resilience was one of the primary characteristics of Japan's transition from the Tokugawa to the Meiji periods. The polity broke while society did not. Civil wars over the locus and exercise of power led neither to anarchy nor to a pathological immobility.

The resources for survival are impossible to calculate well. The vitality of a 'proto-national consciousness' may be as apt a summary as any of the psychological resources that were surely indispensable. But I am reluctant to assign any particular content to that consciousness, and even more reluctant to cast it in universal or salutary terms. So I have searched the archive of public information less for belief systems than for durable mental habits that might have encouraged notions of relationship, and thus cohesion, in society.

In cartography, I found a structural imagination that required the classification and integration of parts. The map constructs a bounded and labeled physical world (The Great Japan, for example); transforms discrete experience into generic categories (political roles, class identities, economic sectors, communications arteries); and then assembles all parts into a unified system of natural and social geography. Although they may indoctrinate readers with particular cultural visions, maps also teach habits of orientation—of generic analysis and holistic conception—that are adaptable to changing geographies. In the guide literature to 'famous places,' I found the appropriation of a putatively common history and shared landscape. The guides take countless monuments—humble and heroic, closed and open to view—and make them mentally accessible to a 'public' assumed to want, and deserve, such access. Although they may celebrate particular iconic sites, guides also teach habits of popular cultural proprietorship. And in urban directories, I found a pluralist sociology that reflected both intense social differentiation and multiple social connections. The directories expose the plural identities

and attachments—of politics, neighborhood, work, belief, patronage, clientage, and culture—that link otherwise atomized individuals in versatile ways. Although they may describe a particular scene, the directories also teach habits of complex perspective on societies too permeable to have a single, simple configuration.

In a polity predicated upon differences and discriminations, these and similar sources insisted on social relationship. Did they forge a sense of ‘peoplehood’ yoked to a statist administration? Certainly a stable government loomed forever in the shadows of the texts—in the political structure of the maps, the histories of the famous places (many of them military monuments), the lists of officials (and official clients) in the directories. And perhaps a people is implicit in a public, in a network of flexible ties. But to exaggerate these concepts is to miss an essential distinction between modern nationalism and its presumptive antecedents.

Nationalism is the product of hard and manipulative work by determined governments and their servants. It presumes the active identification between rulers and ruled that involves appeals to a common destiny, and the consequent implication of subjects in the rhetoric and conduct of power. It requires, in short, the projection of the state to a people consciously taught peoplehood and the intertwining of the two. The Meiji success in this work doubtless drew on the early modern experience. But that experience was different in kind. The sources I cite were not driven by a state, nor did they serve a people implicated in rule and imagined as a national community.

The principal story of the sources is one of complex social cohesion, which perhaps comes close enough to Professor Lieberman’s cultural integration. We find in the texts a Tokugawa public with an extraordinary amount of well-crafted information about itself. If that public did not share a common culture, it was relentlessly scrutinized—and held up for display—by commercial writers looking for patterns, classifications, and connections. Interaction, interrelationship was as much their subject as Professor Lieberman’s, though in a domestic setting at the far edge of the Eurasian ecumene.