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CONFUCIAN CONCEPT OF STATE IN TOKUGAWA JAPAN

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I. The Role of Confucianism in the Modernization of Japan

With the Meiji Restoration as a turning point, Japan traced rapidly the path of modernization. The modernization, in this case, was actually "Westernization" whereby Japan could build up a modern state that would have equal power and be standing on the same footing with Western countries. These efforts were amply rewarded; and when one studies the cause of such success from the spiritual aspect, he will find out that it owed much to the diffusion of Confucianism in the Tokugawa Period. Then, what role was played by Confucianism in the modernization of Japan?

1) It served to cultivate academic brains.

Among the three schools of Confucianism prevailing in the Tokugawa Period, the most cogent was the *Chu Hsi* School that was advocated by the Bakufu as the official learning. The philosophy of this school was extremely logical, i. e., starting with "Ri" (理) or *Logos*¹⁾ (the ultimate cause of the creation and change in the universe), it explained elaborately the structure and order of the whole world, dealt with the human morals and duties, and taught, as the most important way to reach the truth of humanity, to achieve wisdom through the observation of nature. Thus, the logical thinking of this school helped to a large extent bringing up many academic brains.

However, this was not necessarily the exclusive teaching of the *Chu Hsi* School. The *Wang Yang-Ming* School, which became dissatisfied with *Chu Hsi* School's interpretation of the "observation of nature" as being absorbed in reading Chinese classics, considered it a waste to explore the truth in external things. It also played the same role as the *Chu Hsi* School by positively expounding the doctrine of the identity of knowledge and practice. Besides, the Classical School that respected the practical application of philosophy as well as the knowledge of history, in contrast with the above two schools which placed so much importance upon theory, had also greatly contributed to the study of Japanese classics as well as facilitated

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1) *Logos*=the rational principle that governs and develops the universe.

the introduction of Western technological knowledge.

Accordingly, it is almost impossible to say to which school the credit should be given. However, it can safely be said that without the wide diffusion of Confucianism among the Japanese people, a large number of academic brains could not have possibly been brought up.

2) Acceptance of Western Learning.

Western sciences were first introduced into Japan through Nagasaki under the name of "Dutch learning" which embraced medical botany and medicine, astronomy, geodesy, solar calendar, and so forth. Those who studied these sciences were mostly interpreters at Nagasaki, low grade *samurai*, and commoners. Since medical botany and medicine were the sciences having much to do with daily life, it was most likely that they were the first to be introduced into Japan. It should also be noted that to become a medical doctor in those days meant to achieve a shortcut in climbing up the social ladder. The same was true with being specialized in astronomy, geodesy, etc.

Toward the end of the Tempō Era (1830-1843) when the news came that China of the Ching Dynasty was defeated by Britain in the Opium War, military science was paid great attention. This science, different from the above mentioned ones, was directly concerned with the destiny of the country, and was learned, as a matter of course, by thoughtful *samurai*. It was for this reason that the Bakufu as well as influential *han* encouraged the "Dutch learning." It should be mentioned here that the study of military science, without confining itself within its narrow bounds, led to the development of the related technologies like gunnery, navigation, ship-building, and so forth, and of such basic sciences like physics, chemistry, mathematics, and others. The coming of Commodore Perry intensified the necessity to learn Western sciences, and at the same time opened widely the road for further introduction of knowledge and sciences from the United States, Britain, France, and other countries. The sciences and technological knowledge thus introduced were collectively called "Western learning". One thing to be noted here was that the Bakufu and some influential *han* realized the way to strengthen, by transplanting Western techniques of production, their economic structure upon which the manufacture and maintenance of arms could be performed. The most conspicuous example of this was the establishment of a cotton spinning mill of modern type by the Satsuma *han* in 1866.

Biographies of so-called "Western learning" scholars indicated that all of them, without exception, had studied Confucianism in their youth, and that Western sciences were only added to their fundamental academic (or

intellectual) culture gained by the study of Confucianism. In short, it was greatly owing to the dissemination of Confucianism that the Japanese people were able to gain access without much difficulty to Western sciences.

3) Nationalism in Confucianism.

Their approach to the Western sciences was nationalistic in the sense that they attached primary importance to the national interests; and this is what was systematically and logically advocated by Confucianism. It may be true that the Japanese people are nationalistic by nature, but it was through Confucianism that such nationalistic thought was developed into a systematic ideology. I will explain in chapter II about nationalism in Confucianism, but I want to present here some examples of scholars who advocated Western learning from the view-point of the national interests.

Honda Toshiaki (本多利明, 1774-1821), a famous economist, being alarmed by the tension caused by the approach of Russian influence to Hokkaido, directed his efforts to the study of Dutch books. Based upon the knowledge thus acquired, he wrote in 1798 a book entitled "*Saiiki Monogatari*" (西域物語) in which he introduced in detail the economic prosperity and high living standard in the Western countries. Furthermore, in "*Keisei Hisaku*" (経世秘策) and his other works, he expressed his opinion about the emergency policies which Japan should pursue. According to him, the most important policy was to promote overseas trade (in this aspect he is looked upon as one of the first advocates of the open-door policy). As to the question of who should engage in the foreign trade business, he raised here and there some objections to the trade by merchants, and contended that it should be undertaken by the Shogun and *daimyo*; he wrote: "Since foreign trade and overseas transportation are the calling of the lords, it should not be trusted to the commercial people" (*Keisei Hisaku*); he further added: "Kings of European countries think that their highest duty is to make the people free from hunger and cold by taking upon themselves the overseas trading." (Ibid.) He also maintained that the lack of proper understanding of the difference between the business of the merchant and the vocation of the lord as to their approach to the foreign trade was the major reason why foreign trade had not prospered in Japan.

His argument was based upon his wrong interpretation that the monopoly of the Dutch East India Company in the Orient was the monopoly trade by the King of Holland. Anyhow, his intention was to make Japan wealthy and strong. This idea of "Rick and Strong" was not borrowed from the West but derived from Confucianism, when he said: "...Despite the distinction of social strata, the people are also human beings like the the lords; therefore, the latter should treat the former with appreciation";

he further added: "Aren't the people children of Heaven, the rule over whom is entrusted by Heaven to the lord?" (Ibid.) He also compared the Shogun and *daimyo* to the parents of the people, admitted the class distinction of *samurai*, farmer, artisan, and merchant, and stood fundamentally on the national principle based upon agriculture. After all, he put emphasis, from the standpoint of Confucian nationalism, on the achievement of national wealth and strength through the foreign trade of Western type.

Kanda Kohei (神田孝平, 1828-1898), who had learned Confucianism in his youth, became an ardent student of Dutch learning, motivated by the visit of Perry to Japan. In 1862, he accepted the offer of the Bakufu to be an instructor at the Bansho Shirabesho (Institute for the Study of Western Books). At the time of the Meiji Restoration, he readily responded to the call of the new government. Among his writings, the most important to be illustrated here was the "*No-Sho Ben*" (農商弁, 1861) which begins with the following words: "When a country depends on commerce, it always enjoys economic prosperity; whereas, when a country relies upon agriculture, it always suffers poverty. Hence, Oriental countries are persistently poor because they depend on agriculture, while Occidental countries are at all times wealthy because they rely on commerce." As to the advantages of establishing a country on the basis of commerce, he raised first the value accruing from manufacturing, second that from trade; the third advantage, according to him, would be that as commerce and industry were developed, the share of tax burden levied on agriculture could be lightened, thus farmers were enabled to invest more on land, and consequently agricultural production would be increased.

A noticeable difference of Kanda's idea from that of Honda is found in that the former advocated, admitting private interest of the people, the freedom of economic activities. In other words, Kanda believed that, for the realization of a benevolent administration, the Western way of thinking which approves private interest was superior to the Oriental way of thinking which put emphasis upon the rule by virtue. He wrote: "In Japan and China, based upon the principle of benevolent rule, tax is reduced or exempted in years of poor crop, while in Western countries, tax is not heavily imposed, taking the interest of the people into consideration. Benevolence and private interest cannot be compared with each other on the same level. However, the benefits that farmers enjoy are by far greater in the case of the latter than in the case of the former. Although in Japan and China, we claim that there is benevolence, it is just nominal; and if we scrutinize it from the depth of truth, the substantial benevolence is rather found in

the Western way of administration based upon commerce. Unless otherwise, this is how the Western nations unite the mind of their people and set about dominating other countries in the world. I would positively say that the benevolent administration on yearly basis could not be compared to the perpetual benevolent rule, and that the ideas of Japanese and Chinese sages of olden times are no better than those of modern Western merchants. However, the ancient sages had a deep wisdom. Accordingly, should they be born to-day, they would certainly come to work out the administration to realize maximum benevolence to match the current situations, and they would have surely given up the nominal benevolence on agricultural basis and have adopted the substantial benevolence on commercial basis." He concluded his book with the following passage: "It is by all means necessary to alter the traditional way of administration, to reduce gradually the tax on agriculture, to promote commerce and industry, and to expand foreign trade in every direction of the world. Then, the natural resources of Japan would naturally be developed, the people willingly support the government, fiscal revenue of the government would be increased, the country would be better armed, all social classes would be richer, and the national power as a whole would be invigorated." In these words, his nationalistic thought based upon Confucianism was evident.

It is almost needless to elaborate upon the thought of Fukuzawa Yukichi (福沢諭吉, 1834-1901), an outstanding scholar of Western studies from the end of the Tokugawa Period to the early Meiji Era. However, it should be pointed out that his approach to the Western studies was also nationalistic. For instance, in the postscript to his book "*Tōjin Ōrai*" (唐人往来, about 1862), which advocated the foreign trade without restriction, he wrote: "The only purpose of our scholars of Western learning is, by understanding the facts in the Western countries, to accelerate the change in the way of thinking of the Japanese people and thus to enable them to enter as soon as possible the threshold of civilization." It seems therefore that he took the Western civilization as a means for the independence and prosperity of Japan. In fact, in his famous book "*Bunmeiron no Gairyaku*" (文明論之概略, 1875), he contended that the only means to keep national independence was to be civilized, by saying: "The national independence is the ultimate objective and the civilization is the means to reach it." However, the main current of economic thoughts in Europe in those days was liberalism and the thought of "wealthy and strong" nation had no longer been openly advocated. Thus, we are led to believe that Fukuzawa's nationalism was nurtured by Confucianism in his boyhood.

4) Consciousness of National Crisis.

Confucianism in the Tokugawa Period was not merely a learning among the scholars. Not to speak of *samurai* who, with the advent of peace, thought it was their mission to be a cultured class, even the commoners who had the love for learning had studied Confucianism. Of course, in general, Confucianism was taught and learned together with Buddhism and Shintoism to found the basis for national moral. However, its chief support was Confucianism; in particular, the theory of the state depended mainly upon Confucianism. The consciousness of national crisis cultivated by the Confucian theory of state was gradually enhanced on every occasion.

The first occurrence was seen when the Bakufu and especially *daimyo* began to feel their financial difficulties. It was in the Kyoho Era (1716-1735) that the *daimyo* started to encourage indigenous production in their respective domains and to monopolize the sale of certain principal products in their efforts to cope with the financial hardships. Those policies, especially the monopoly policy, were vigorously carried out by many *han* in the eras of Bunka (1804-1817) and Bunsei (1818-1829); the philosophy underlying those policies was to give priority to the interest the *han*. The second occurrence set in when the international relations became dangerously strained. At the beginning, measures calculated to enrich and strengthen the country in terms of respective *han* were tried to be carried out; but there soon arose in Japan as a whole a sentiment of national crisis. With such crisis consciousness, intolerant people went to the extremity of anti-alienism, while those who had far-sighted view advocated "to be civilized." Thus, for the latter, not only Western sciences and technologies but also the entire civilization of the West were considered to be the measures to make Japan rich and strong.

From the end of the Tokugawa Period to the early part of Meiji Era, there appeared successively a number of persons who were so-called "men of Japanese spirit combined with Western knowledge" in various fields of society. This was one of the most important reasons why Japan could rapidly trace the path of modernization.

II. Theory of State in Confucianism

Confucian scholars in the Tokugawa Period, in affirming then-existing feudalistic political structure, followed a kind of organic theory of state, in which lords, retainers, and commoners were to fulfil political and social functions and duties according to their respective ranks. The objective of the state, according to the theory, was to establish a wealthy and strong country.

1) Theory of Eeudal State.

Yamagata Bantō (山片蟠桃, 1746–1821), a merchant scholar of Osaka who studied “Dutch learning” with his Confucian cultural background, admired the feudalistic administrative system by saying: “Feudalism is the righteous way to rule over “*Tenka*” (the country), while the central administration based on the prefectural system is the private way of rule for the ruler’s own sake, which has been started by Shin Huang Ti, the first emperor of Chin.” (“*Yume no Shiro*,” 夢の代)

The scholar who supported the feudalistic political structure of the time was Yamaga Sokō (山鹿素行, 1622–1685), one of the founder of the Classical School of Confucianism in Japan. After summarising Japanese political history from the first Emperor, Jimmu, down to his days, and explained the merits and demerits of feudal system as well as prefectural one, he wrote: “In the current system of administration, feudal lords (*daimyo*) are rightly chosen and they are granted the right of autonomous rule over their respective domains, the remaining land of the country being ruled by Bakufu officials who are also selected rightly from among Shogun’s retainers. Under such system of administration, if the criminals try to cause in certain area, the concerned feudal lords can immediately take counter-action; if a lord becomes treacherous, the Shogun’s officials in the neighbouring prefecture (Shogun’s domain) will be responsible to take corrective measures. With the advantages of combining both feudal system and prefectural system,²⁾ the Shogun can easily maintain social order all over Japan” (“*Takkyo Dōmon*” 謫居童問). The political structure of Japan in his days, where centralization and feudalism had been ingeniously combined, reflected in his eyes as an ideal system of administration.

2) A Kind of Sovereign Rights Theory.

The one who reigned a state, be it Shogun or *daimyo*, was contended to be a gracious and righteous lord, whose personality was near to that of a sage. When the system of rule by *daimyo* over their respective territorial states started in the latter part of medieval ages, *daimyo* felt it necessary to get support of religious ethics in order to justify their political position and power. Some *daimyo* took advantage of the *Tendō* (Providence), others made use of Christianity, especially the thought of *Deus* (The Lord). Since Confucianism was adopted in their place as an official learning by the Tokugawa Shogun, its primary task was, as a matter of course, to consolidate the position and

2) The feudal system was composed of a large number of feudal lords’ domains (*han*). The rest of the land was the Shogun’s domain which was divided into prefectures headed by appointed *daikan* (代官) whose duties were to administer the land and politically control the feudal lords.

mission of Shogun and *daimyo*.

Confucianists in those days customarily called Japan as a whole *Tenka* (天下, the world under heaven), and each *han*, *kokka* (国家, state). The ruler over *Tenka* was to be the Emperor and those who reigned *kokka* were to be *kokkun* (国君, a lord of a state, i. e., *daimyo*); but since Shogun had already been the sovereign of *Tenka*, he was called by scholars *Taikun* (大君, great lord) in contrast with *kokkun*. The relation between *Taikun* and *kokkun* was compared to that between the entirety and the part or that between the upper and the lower, as was explained in "*Honsa Roku*" (本佐録): "That the lords are entrusted with territorial states is the same with that the Emperor is entrusted by Heaven with *Tenka*. Hence, the lords should, for the sake of *Tenka*, be loyal to their heavenly duties to preserve the peaceful life of their people." Though there was a difference of hierarchical order between Shogun and *daimyo*, these two kinds of rulers were the same in that both rulers were believed to have been trusted by Heaven, the super-natural ruler of the universe, with the right to rule over their respective domains. Therefore, such a philosophy may be called a kind of sovereign rights theory. The argument was clarified by Yamaga Soko who wrote:

"There had first arisen three kinds of people—farmers, artisans, and merchants. Since they were slaves of avarice and ignoramuses of morals and justice,—i. e., farmers would tend to cultivate land only for their own living, and to suppress the weaker and scorn at the smaller; artisans would tend to degradate their products in order to get more profits at high price; and merchants would tend to exploit others by fraudulent means;—the world would be full of burglary and quarrel if they were allowed to have their own way. Therefore, Heaven has sent to the world a *Jinkun* (a sovereign), whose duty is to receive the order of Heaven and deliver it to the people, and to be the authoritative of public cultures and morals. Accordingly, the ruler is made to stand at the height, not for the sake of his personal interest, but for the benefit of the people." ("*Yamaga Gorui*," 山鹿語類)

The word *Jinkun* in the above citation is meant both *Taikun* and *kokkun*. As stated, *Jinkun* (to put it in the concrete, Shogun and *daimyo*) were heavenly ordained, and therefore, they were believed to be different in origin and status from their retainers and their people. Thus, their mission was to reign their people with benevolence, as Kumazawa Banzan stated in his "*Daigaku Wakumon* (大學或問)," that "*Jinkun* should extend parental love to the people, and it is their duty to perform a benevolent rule over the people." In fact, a *Jinkun* (人君), a lord, had to be *Jinkun* (仁君), benevolent lords. This was the reason why the government of those days was not "constitutional", but was based on "virtue." However, no lords, no matter

how outstandingly capable they might be, could govern the people single-handedly. They had necessarily to be helped by persons who were assigned various administrative posts. These persons were called by scholars *shin* (臣) or *kerai* (家来) (retainers); to put it in a more concrete term, *samurai*, whose calling was to help the lords execute the "rule by virtue." In this sense, the *samurai* class had been commissioned to be a cultured class. Thus, *samurai* had come to be well established as an important social class in Tokugawa Japan, and this fact showed a noticeable difference of social structure of feudal Japan from that of China, the mother country of Confucianism, it might be said.

3) Organic Theory of State.

Below the ruling class of lords and retainers, there were three kinds of people—farmers, artisans, and merchants—who were called *tami* (民) or *shomin* (庶民) (commoners). Their vocations were to produce the necessities of life and to serve to each other's wants. Then, what was the relation between the lords and the commoners? The answer was concisely given by Yamaga Sokō as follows: "Lord cannot nourish and maintain himself without depending upon commoners, while commoners cannot carry out their lives to the full measure if they had no lord over them. It is as if the mind is kept alive by the functions of the body and the latter fulfils its functions by the guidance of the former. Although the lord and the commoners have different social statuses, both of them have come out of the same origin and are therefore inseparable." ("Yamaga Gorui")

This is a kind of organic theory, metaphorically assuming lord as soul and commoners as body. Such a way of thinking was common to all Confucian scholars in those days. Since the organic entirety was, according to them, either *Tenka* or *kokka*, their way of looking at the state may be called a kind of organic theory of state, in which every social class, from Shogun down to commoners, was expected to serve the integral whole (the state) through their respective calling.

The calling was believed to have been granted not to each individual but to each family as a family business. Although the thought that puts importance upon the family prior to the individual member might have been traditional among the Japanese people since ancient times, it was owing to Confucian scholars that this thought was theorized and combined skillfully with the idea of family business. To show a few examples, Dazai Shundai (太宰春台, 1680-1747) wrote: "By *kōsan* (恒産 stable assets),³⁾ it is meant that each social class—*samurai*, farmers, artisans, and merchants,—must have

3) *Kosan*: the property which is constantly maintained, or, constant means of living.

its respective family occupation" ("Keizairoku" 經濟錄), and Kaibara Ekken (貝原益軒, 1630-1714) also wrote: "Samurai as well as commoners, whether they are rich or poor, should endeavor to support their family members and maintain their family line by spending a thrifty living within the limit of their income" ("Kadō-kun," 家道訓).

There is an old saying that: "when each individual person were morally trained, the family would be put in order; if every family were in good order the country would be well governed; and every country were well governed, Tenka would be in peace." It might be seen from this that each individual person was thought to be the constituent unit of a state or a society. But, the true meaning of the saying was that the smaller unit of a society should always serve, as a part of the larger unit, the integral whole. Therefore, from the above stated view-point of the family business, not the individual person but the family should be the basic unit of a country. In other words, individual persons were expected to serve the country through their diligent engagement in their respective family businesses. This was another aspect of the organic theory of state.

4) Theory of "National Wealth and Strength."

In view of the original idea of Confucianism, the final objective of a state must be to establish a moral state on earth; but, according to the scholars of Tokugawa Japan, it was to establish a rich and strong country. For example, Dazai Shundai said that the four basic virtues, viz., politeness, justice, honesty, and honor, were indispensable for the maintenance of a country; he explained: "Those four virtues can be preserved only when the people are well-fed and all classes from the highest to the lowest are engaging in their respective occupation, through which they will not suffer from the shortage of the means of living. One who has no stable job cannot lead his life well. It is therefore a great disgrace for a samurai, to say nothing of a lord who govern a large territory, to suffer from poverty and to plunge their family and retainers into a miserable life. Thus, Kuan Chung, the premier of Chi State in ancient China, placed primary importance upon enriching the country for the success of a government. When a country becomes wealthy, it would be easy to reinforce its arms. Therefore, this is acknowledged to be the right path for a ruler to govern his country. To take this as a justified way for a usurper-ruler to come into power is an entirely erroneous idea of pedants of later times. Up from the time of Yao and Shun down to Confucius, there had been no other way than this to make a country rich and strong. Between the two elements, wealth and strength, the former is to come first, because the military strength can be brought about when the former is achieved. Therefore, one who governs a

country should always bear in mind of the national economy in order to enable the retainers and the people live well, to uphold the four virtues, and to meet the political and military requirements." (" *Keizai Roku* ")

Of course, not all Confucianists openly advocated the establishment of a rich and strong state. According to Yamaga Soko, for example, the sole purpose of administration was to attain common wealth and welfare of the people, through relaxing tax burden, lightening penalty, and encouraging education, so that they might be able to live a better life. However, when he said, "from ancient times, there has been no righteous and clever administration which was able to impose tax not too heavily as well as not too lightly," (" *Yamaga Gorui* ") or "the basic principle of taxation should be to make the public prosper and thus enable the people to pay tax sufficient for the government's needs." (*Ibid.*). It will be well understood that the ultimate objective of the government, according to him, was not to bring material welfare to the people but to enrich the treasury of the ruler, on the presumption that the welfare of the people, which were considered as the "capital assets" of the country, were not injured. It seemed also to him that no benevolent rule was made possible unless the ruler was wealthy.

After the middle part of the Tokugawa Period, when most of the *daimyo* became hard-pressed for living due to their financial difficulties, they intentionally encouraged indigenous production and even undertook the monopolistic trade of certain products. Regarding the latter policy, Dazai Shundai commented: "to pursue commercial profits is not necessarily a clever way of governing a country, but it may be an unavoidable measure to curtail the present hardship," (" *Keizairoku Shui* " 經濟録拾遺), and he added that such a measure should be practiced properly. Hayashi Shihei (林子平, 1738-1793) positively advocated the monopoly policy on the ground that "merchants only usurp the stipends of *samurai* and are good-for-nothings. They are indeed useless mouths" (" *Jōsho*," 上書). Sato Shin'en (佐藤信淵, 1769-1850) went so far as to say that it was quite harmful to a country to let the merchants retain the privileges in commercial activities; he said: "we should deprive them of the right of engaging in commerce and take it back to the hands of the lords, and employ them as the low-ranking officials of the government" (" *Keizai Teiyo*," 經濟提要).

Honda Toshiaki, a scholar of Dutch learning, referred to before, took the same standing with Hayashi and Sato, and contended that the foreign trade should be monopolized by the sovereign.

If the aforementioned organic theory of state and the concept of vocational system according to social classes were to be self-consistent, trading business should entirely be entrusted to the merchants, and Shogun as well

as *daimyo* should strictly refrain from it. In fact, there were many other scholars who raised objection to the monopoly policy by the *han*. However, facing the fact that the benevolent rule could not be practiced under the difficult conditions of public finance, it was no wonder that there arose such an opinion as to advocate the monopoly policy. And this opinion might not be regarded as a deviation from original philosophy of Confucianism.

The opinions on the monopoly policy were divided thus into two, the pros and the cons. Nevertheless, they were not different from each other in that both opinions stood on the same principle of agriculturism and looked upon the policy only from the view-point of political ethics. Anyway, it should be noted here that both opinions were identical in advocating the enrichment of the country.

Another thing which attracts our attention is that the word "*kokka*" that originally meant *han*, came to represent Japan as a whole toward the end of the Tokugawa Period. It was because many people became concerned more with the wealth and strength of Japan as a whole than with those of its regional parts, the *han*, that Japan was able to be free from getting into the uncontrollable disruption of public opinion, and, on the contrary, to be able to lead the nation to unity.

III. Conclusion

It is said that one of the largest obstacles to the modernization of the present developing countries is that they are suffering from the dearth of competent leaders in the fields of politics, economics, education, and so forth, and that the national level of education is generally not high. Compared with this, it was fortunate for Japan that when she started toward modernization, i. e., around the time of the Meiji Restoration, education had been fairly well disseminated among the people and there appeared not a small number of leaders in various fields. It certainly owed greatly to the development of Japanese classics and Dutch learning, but fundamentally, to the dissemination of Confucianism.

Confucianism, without specific reference to the *Chu Hsi* School, that was the official learning, the *Wan Yang-Ming* School or the Classical School, was a conservative learning in the sense that it had been affirmative of the existing feudalistic political and social structure. Even contemporary scholars of progressive thoughts considered it conservative and turned away from it to the study of Western learning.

Then, did Confucianism play only a conservative role? In my opinion, it did not. As it was stated before, the cultural basis upon which Western

learning was accepted without much difficulty had been founded by the study of Confucianism. Moreover, even those scholars of Western learning could not get rid of the influence of the state theory advocated by Confucian scholars; on the contrary, they went to the study of Western sciences and technologies from the view-point of national interests, the way of thinking being quite Confucianistic. Among the new ideas they accepted, there was the thought of liberalism. But, this thought was interpreted by them as to make Japan rich and strong through the emancipation of the people from the bondage of feudal social status and the liberalization of economic activities of all the people.

In short, Confucianism, not only produced leaders in various fields, but it went beyond the bounds of learning to the state of national consciousness and worked out the leader-follower relationship. The national unity was thus brought about in Japan. One of the significant keys as to why Japan could so rapidly proceed toward modernization can be found therein.