

# 1 War and State Building in Medieval Japan

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## Introduction

The Ninja—the lightly armed warrior who operates by stealth and amazing physical prowess to attack powerfully equipped enemies—is a familiar comic book image and heroic action figure. It is generally known that the ninja existed sometime in the mists of Japanese history. Less well understood is that the ninja was but one manifestation of fierce and extensive resistance to encroaching armies in the dying years of medieval Japan. Local farming communities, particularly those in mountain valleys, armed themselves with simple weapons and guerrilla techniques to forestall the trend toward territorial consolidation and centralized taxation.<sup>1</sup> The transformation of “ninja” (the “for-bearing ones” or *shinobi mono*) into warriors with virtually supernatural powers is a recent invention that glorifies the struggle of humble mountain villages for local autonomy in the late sixteenth century.

The world is more familiar with similar events in Europe. The legend of William Tell is of a simple mountain man who inspired Swiss alpine farmers in 1307 to resist domination by the Habsburg Empire. Tell, it is said, was forced to shoot an apple on his son’s head in exchange for freedom after he failed to bow to the Austrian governor’s hat placed in the village square.<sup>2</sup> In the Battle of Morgarten in 1315, Swiss farmers armed with rocks, logs, and pikes are said to have crushed the magnificent cavalry of Duke Leopold I of Austria in an ambush at Morgarten Pass, pushing countless horses and their riders off a steep mountainside, spearing other unfortunates through with pikes, and causing the rest to flee in terror.

Swiss pikers from mountain villages managed to protect their land from foreign invaders, thereby assuring Swiss autonomy. Feared and admired the

world over for their ferocity in battle, Swiss fighters were recruited into mercenary armies throughout Europe. The Roman Catholic pope chose them for his own guards, a role they continue to serve, at least symbolically, to this day.

Unlike the Renaissance Italians or the seventeenth-century English, the Swiss did not elaborate an indigenous theory of limited government, though their practices of cantonal government with local referenda have endured.<sup>3</sup> The Swiss mountain warriors were uneducated farmers and woodsmen scabbling out a living in alpine valleys and were unfamiliar with the classical Greek and Roman texts that inspired Italian and English antimonarchical theorizing.<sup>4</sup> What distinguishes the Swiss in the forest cantons from farmers elsewhere—as well as from Swiss farmers in the rolling hills in the north—was not so much a belief in the right to their land, but the formidable terrain that made it possible for them to think they had a chance to preserve their independence. There is little wonder that the great plains of Europe, which sometimes doubled as highways for marauding armies, were populated with seemingly weak-kneed farmers who chose instead to exchange their labor for military protection.<sup>5</sup> Japanese mountain dwellers and Swiss alpine farmers took naturally to fighting for their freedom, not because they were braver than their lowland counterparts, but because their craggy fortresses gave them the possibility of resisting domination.

Three other groups in Japan successfully resisted political incorporation for centuries. For seafaring pirates (*wako*), water provided the functional equivalent of mountain defense. Their ships navigated deftly through the coastal waters, which they knew better than those who commanded the commercial ships on which they preyed or the government's ships that pursued them. As Japan's earliest historical records testify, pirates plagued coastal commerce around the Japanese archipelago from time immemorial.<sup>6</sup>

The political arm of Buddhism constituted a second group in medieval Japanese society that managed for centuries to repel the government's encroaching territorial and jurisdictional authority. Buddhist temples, monasteries, and farming communities, often heavily armed but also often allied with members of the imperial family, avoided government taxation and regulation until Oda Nobunag, one of the unifiers of Japan, finally brought them to heel in the 1580s.<sup>7</sup> Priests protected the tax-free status of temple lands by promising blessings to their patrons, but they would resort to armed defense when necessary.<sup>8</sup> In the case of the spectacularly expansive Ishiyama Honganji branch of Jodo shinshu (Pure Land) Buddhism (discussed in detail in Carol Tsang's

chapter in this book), thousands of believers were members of a vast Buddhist movement in the province of Kaga. They enjoyed de facto autonomy from Kyoto or local warlords until they were vanquished in 1584.

Less romantic but more successful was the opposition to centralized rule by the territorial domains in the far-flung islands of Kyushu and Shikoku or the outer reaches of eastern Honshu, which had consolidated locally around a powerful warlord (*daimyō*).<sup>9</sup> It was not until the Battle of Sekigahara in 1600 that these great outlying domains were vanquished. This battle occurred some 15 years after the defeat of mountain villages and religious communities, and only when one of the lords switched sides in the end game to gain spoils from the others. The secret to the local domains' longevity was their attainment of considerable economies of territorial scale through the exchange of security for taxation with which to fund large armies. This early set of successful Hobbesian bargains at the local level would influence Japan's constitutional structure for centuries to come, in the form of Tokugawa's de facto federal system, which was built on semiautonomous domains.<sup>10</sup>

All of Japan, some parts of which were more affected than others, succumbed to Tokugawa rule for three centuries before a new government would take tentative steps toward constitutional monarchy in 1868. Although the Meiji oligarchs only cracked open the door to electoral competition, the energetic expressions of free speech and support for democracy by incipient political parties were testament to a latent yearning for self-governance. This is not to say that Japan's freedom-fighting past was a continuing legacy that kept alive the potential for resistance. Resistance or acquiescence in Japan's early history followed a pattern of opportunity or necessity. The Japanese accommodation to military rule in the 1930s and 1940s, which was followed by an enthusiastic embrace of democracy from 1945 onward, is better explained by changes in constraints than by long-standing mental frames.<sup>11</sup>

This book relates the tumultuous events of Japan's medieval and early modern history—roughly 1185 to 1600—to theorizing about war and politics elsewhere. Japanese resisters and Swiss alpine warriors are exceptions to the general rule that people tend to populate fertile plains where livelihood is the easiest to secure. The plains areas were also the favored pathways of invading armies and were used to destroy the food supplies of enemy troops as well as to amass large armies on a battlefield. While Japanese and Swiss holdouts provide a fascinating sideshow, the main story of the emergence of the modern territorial state is a Hobbesian one of distraught peasants exchanging financial

and labor resources for military protection.<sup>12</sup> We do not intend to paint a picture of happy peasants bargaining and contracting for a better life. Rather, we seek to underscore the severe circumstances in which the Japanese, along with many of the earth's population, found themselves. As the weak have always known, when life is "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short," subservience to a protective power may be a lesser evil, even if it is a deeply resented one. Japanese and Swiss fighters offer a romantic picture of rustic self-governance of the sort that Rousseau contemplated in his discourse on equality. But Rousseau's world was out of reach for most people. In the embattled lowlands of France, for example, the protection that comes with strong centralized government gave Bodin's<sup>13</sup> work widespread credibility.<sup>14</sup> Opposition to absolutism was stiffer, and theorizing about limited government was more prolific in Italy and England, whose indeterminate topography left open a range of political outcomes.<sup>15</sup>

War, though miserable for those who fight and for those whose homes and fields are destroyed in the path of battle, can sometimes function as a political leveler. History provides some dramatic examples of political rights that have issued from war mobilization, starting with classical Athens and republican Rome. Mobilizing for war can shift the balance of bargaining power away from rulers in favor of those whose resources are required for battle. But much depends on several factors that affect how much and to whom rulers need to make concessions in exchange for resources, including whether the people supplying resources for war value the protection of a powerful ruler. If communities are confident of their ability to protect themselves, they will be willing to fight for others only in exchange for something of value such as political freedoms or, if they are already free, for pay.

Japanese mountain villagers needed relatively little protection from overlords because their topography made it possible for them to protect themselves. By contrast, agricultural communities that were located in the crossroads of competing territorial claims were more likely to supply increasingly large revenues in exchange for protection. Their fear of violence and instability was greater even than their desire for freedom from domination. Their willingness to supply resources for large armies lies at the root of Japan's political unification in the sixteenth century. The same logic accounts for the rise of Europe's large territorial monarchies.<sup>16</sup>

## The Rise and Fall of Decentralized Military Rule in Medieval Japan

The debates among social and economic historians over the repressive nature of Japanese feudalism have largely played themselves out as accumulating evidence suggests that farmers retained some leverage in dealing with overlords. We will therefore avoid using the term *feudalism* altogether.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, farmers' leverage varied considerably over time and place. Still underdeveloped, however, is theoretical analysis explaining this variation in leverage both within Japan and between Japan and elsewhere. The contributors to this volume establish that, holding all else constant, farmers' bargaining leverage was inversely related to their vulnerability to military attack and hence to their willingness to pay for protection.

All else is not constant, of course, because there were also more purely economic sources of farmers' bargaining power, such as labor scarcity during the early period of land abundance. Japan was settled in the Paleolithic period, tens of thousands of years ago, by hunter-gatherers from the Asian mainland (to which Japan was physically attached by land bridges during the ice age) and fisher folk from Polynesia who enjoyed land abundance and relatively egalitarian social structures. Then, in about 300 B.C., waves of immigrants from Korea invaded Japan and pushed the earlier inhabitants into the mountains and outlying islands.<sup>18</sup> The new ruling elite organized into political units (*uji*) that jostled among themselves for preeminence.<sup>19</sup> By the eighth century, the *uji* had imported ideas along with material culture from China and took to calling their leader an "emperor" on the Chinese model. Imperial succession, though sometimes spectacularly contested, was usually managed peacefully through negotiations among a coalition of leading clans. Unlike many powerful monarchical dynasties in China or Europe, imperial succession rules were loose, allowing for a large number of potential heirs. A significant part of the ruling class derived benefit from the imperial institution, giving it the structure of an oligarchy rather than an autocracy.

The scions of some court families emigrated to the provinces beginning in the late ninth century. They did well for themselves by exploiting their connections to powerful court figures and institutions, and by obtaining sinecures as government officials or managers of private estates. The court, in turn, cultivated its connection to these emerging military families to help extend the reach of the court into the hinterlands and to protect the court from both internal and external threats.<sup>20</sup>

Access to abundant frontier land, followed by the scramble to clear new arable land out of forests and swamps, afforded a modicum of bargaining leverage to farmers who were willing to do this work. Noble families, whose land was exempt from some kinds of taxation, bid up the price of agricultural labor in their efforts to claim new land for themselves.<sup>21</sup> Farmers often chose to work as tenants on this tax-privileged land rather than to till taxable lands allotted to them by the central government.<sup>22</sup> Meanwhile, provincial nobles and other elites increasingly commended their lands to military leaders, who could defend the land from predation by bandits and opportunistic neighbors. In the centuries that followed until the sixteenth century, the imperial court became overshadowed by military order provided by one group of warriors or another. Periods of stability were punctuated dramatically by violent rivalries, until all of Japan—save a few mountain redoubts—became engaged in civil war from 1467.

The romantic image of the valiant and honorable medieval samurai keeping the peace is a myth.<sup>23</sup> Among warriors, loyalty to their lord was least common when it was the most valued. Warriors fought alongside their lords when they thought they could win, but they often switched sides to join the victors rather than have their land confiscated and reallocated among the winners. Among the farmers whose land was ravaged and lives were destroyed, war was hell.<sup>24</sup>

### Territorial Consolidation

Farmers were inevitably drawn into wars among provincial warriors in one way or another. But by the mid-fifteenth century, when territorial control of Japan was divided into scores of local domains, two of the most innovative warlords, Oda Nobunaga (1534–1582) and his general Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536–1598) who succeeded him, sharpened the division of labor between farmers and warriors (*heimo bunri*) that had already begun to emerge under domainal rule. Farmers were to remain on their land to produce food and pay taxes, while only warriors (many who had previously been farmers, *jizamurai*) would fight in battles. Although taxes increased, so did agricultural productivity and economic growth.<sup>25</sup>

Making good on the promise to protect farmers gave these leaders an enormous advantage over their opponents. Leaving farmers on the farm, Oda Nobunaga and Toyotomi Hideyoshi created disciplined and skilled armies. Histories of modern warfare herald Maurice of Nassau (1567–1625) and Gustav Adolf of Sweden (1594–1632) for building regimented and skilled armies, but Oda

Nobunaga and Toyotomi Hideyoshi were achieving similar success on the other side of the globe.<sup>26</sup> Hideyoshi also carried out extensive land surveys to clarify available assets for taxation, and he dealt gently with former enemies to win their compliance.<sup>27</sup> In the space of less than two decades, Hideyoshi and Nobunaga reversed the centrifugal movement toward smaller political units and created significant economies of scale. By the 1580s, they had managed to consolidate about half of Japan's land mass under unitary rule.<sup>28</sup> Although it remained for Tokugawa to build a coalition big enough to finish the job, Nobunaga and Hideyoshi had broken the back of resistance to central military control.<sup>29</sup>

Warrior-farmers in mountain hideaways and armed monks in monasteries in Kyoto, Kanagawa, and elsewhere held out with remarkable tenacity. For these fortress communities, some by virtue of geography and others by virtue of religiously motivated militarism, the protection that Oda Nobunaga and Toyotomi Hideyoshi afforded came at a dear price: their autonomy. The result was a series of ferocious, village-raiding battles in which the trained armies of samurai won. It was not a technologically foregone conclusion, however, for guns were available to both sides.<sup>30</sup> The organizational and numerical superiority of the conquering army was made possible by the taxes of millions of war-weary farmers.

## War and State Building in Japan and Europe

Following the fall of the imperial court in the late twelfth century, Japan came to be dotted with castles of noble warriors in much the same way as was then happening in Europe. Farmers in the surrounding countryside provided labor, crops, or both in exchange for protection from invaders provided by the nobility's cavalry. Common to both Japan and Europe was the rather small territorial size of feudal domains after the breakup of empires, given the difficulty of protecting large tracts of open terrain with small bands of warriors on horseback. It was not until war once again became endemic, and farmers were willing to pay larger sums for their protection, that military leaders raised armies large enough to command expansive territorial control.

Changes in economies of territorial scale are, of course, also affected by factors such as modes of economic production and military technology. But economics and technology, whether alone or together, leave unexplained substantial parts of the variation in scale economies. Economic theory might suggest, for example, that Eastern Europe was dominated by larger fiefs and more persistent

serfdom because economies of scale in grain production there are greater than for the crops cultivated in the hillier terrain of Western Europe. The fixed costs of maintaining teams of oxen and other farm equipment would be too great for small landholders, making large manors more economically productive. There is no obvious reason, however, why farmers might not have worked out some cooperative arrangement to share expensive livestock and tools.

Another influential economic model of serfdom (and slavery) turns standard bargaining logic on its head. Precisely because abundant land-to-labor ratios favored peasants in Eastern Europe compared to Western Europe, political regimes had to be more oppressive in order to extract economic surplus from peasants.<sup>31</sup> Regimes that mustered coercive power displaced their more timid counterparts because they were able to extract greater effort and productivity from peasants. But this model does not explain the origins of coercive power.

Military technology is another possible explanation for changes in economies to territorial size. The introduction of stirrups to Europe from somewhere in Asia in the late seventh century gave the cavalry an edge over amassed foot soldiers, ushering in an era of feudalism in which only nobles could afford the required horses and armor.<sup>32</sup> Castles were easy to defend and hard to destroy, creating diseconomies of scale until the invention of heavy artillery in the mid-fifteenth century. With the development of cannon in 1449–1450, Charles VII of France regained much of Normandy by knocking down 60 fortifications—each of which took the English a year to build—at a clip of more than one a week.<sup>33</sup> The Turks destroyed Constantinople in 1453 with comparable dispatch. Well-regimented armies, equipped with heavy artillery, were now a match for the castles and cavalry of the nobility.

Changes in technology may indeed have shifted the relative productivity between capital- and labor-intensive modes of warfare, with potential consequences for the bargaining leverage of those with capital or labor. While rich nobles thrived in the age of the cavalry, farmers stood to gain from the military value of foot soldiers before the stirrup and after the cannon.<sup>34</sup> But the exposure of farmland to plundering armies meant that farmers were always exploited, even when they were mobilizationally useful. They were too vulnerable to make use of their relative scarcity as bargaining leverage.

Early modern Poland is instructive here because the inability of Polish peasants to assert their natural bargaining advantage conferred by the abundance of labor relative to land has always been something of a mystery to economists. The dominance of the Polish landed nobility makes more sense when one re-



members the serial invasions by Magyar and other horseback invaders, against whom the Polish cavalry was quite successful.<sup>35</sup> The Polish cavalry's battle record was so glorious that Poland neglected military innovation and was destroyed by Russian and Prussian armies of foot soldiers in 1794 and 1797.

For farmers the emergence of larger territorial units was a double-edged sword. Although the larger government unit was able to raise more powerful armies and provide greater security, it also meant that farmers lost the benefit of exit options among multiple political units. This was particularly true in Eastern Europe where there were fewer cities to provide absconding peasants with anonymity and alternative employment.<sup>36</sup>

Consolidating territorial size is a function of raising enough revenue to pay for the inputs of war, a problem the economic and technology accounts fail to address. The remaining puzzle is identifying the source of this money.<sup>37</sup> The medieval Japanese experience, like the European one, revolved around an implicit peasant demand for protection. Lords competed for the loyalty of lesser lords, but ultimately the whole edifice rested on resources, which were wrested from the land in some fashion. Lords had an incentive to extract from their own base and compete for the loyalty of neighboring farmers. Only where warfare was infrequent or where locals were confident of their ability to defend themselves did peasants resist taxes and territorial consolidation.<sup>38</sup>

Territorial consolidation began in those flat areas that were most vulnerable to military invasion and spread as the armies of those areas gained pre-eminence. In France, monarchical control began in the Ile de France and Normandy but was resisted longer in Langue d'Oc and Brittany, and only gained widespread acceptance in the wake of harrowing religious violence in the sixteenth century. Elsewhere in Europe, taxes were higher and armies were larger in the great flatlands of Prussia and Russia, in the pathway of steppeland hordes. Big armies can often conduct an effective defense, but there is the question of paying to feed, train, and equip them. Widespread fear of violence and the demand for protection gave birth to the modern nation-state with territorial control, first in the form of the absolutist state.

This recognition of the importance of peasant demand for protection differs from the Marxist suggestion that the landed nobility needed an absolutist state to fix their status against the onslaught of the proto-industrial bourgeoisie.<sup>39</sup> Nor were undefended "church lands" available for confiscation in Japan because monasteries tended to be armed to the hilt. In Japan, the unifiers robbed their competitors of their lands militarily, whereupon they divided the

lands among their men.<sup>40</sup> In any case, the practice of rewarding loyal warriors with land taken from the vanquished had occurred so many times during Japan's medieval period that by the mid-fifteenth century most of the elite were of shallow vintage. Not that this situation was unique to Japan; the Romans did the same thing following Sulla's reforms and after Octavius's victories. The "proscriptions"<sup>41</sup> are remembered mostly for legal murders,<sup>42</sup> but note that they also served to take lands away from rich opponents and confer them on allies.

In overwhelmingly rural Eastern Europe, Russian and Prussian "absolutism" seems hardly to have been a response to a threatening rise of the middle class. Peasant fear of violence from marauders is a more consistent theme that runs through all of these cases. This is not to deny that peasants were often miserable, on the verge of starvation, and hardly able to pay heavier taxes for larger armies. But in their desperation, they chose among the available poisons. Their choices had significant consequences for the kinds of states that would subsequently emerge.

## Conclusions

Widespread territorial vulnerability and fear of violence created the territorial state. This book tells that story as it unfolded in medieval and early modern Japan, but it follows a general logic that holds in Europe and elsewhere.

There is some irony to the way vulnerability paved the way for strong, hierarchical governments with extensive coercive powers over the subject population. At least in the short run, mobilization for war could have increased the bargaining leverage of the populace whose resources were needed for war. When foot soldiers are militarily valuable, peasants may profitably refuse to fight unless the leader is willing to offer better terms of exchange. History gives us a number of examples of political concessions to peasant fighters, including fifth century B.C. Athens when Cleisthenes granted the masses full participatory rights in exchange for their help in ousting the Spartan-installed oligarchy.<sup>43</sup> In Republican Rome, fighting wars for Rome was the ticket to citizenship, first for local residents and then for men of conquered lands as well.<sup>44</sup> During the protracted Dutch Revolt against the Habsburg Empire (1568–1648), ordinary citizens gained the right to participate in politics, even if the rights were substantially retracted after the war was won.<sup>45</sup> In modern times, World War I ushered in female suffrage in most rich democracies, World War II launched the civil rights movement, and 18-year-olds gained the right to vote during the Vietnam War.<sup>46</sup> Why does war bring political rights in one setting and an abdication to absolutist government in another?

Japanese history provides a number of clues. As the example of the ninja shows, mountain villagers had little use for an absolutist ruler when they could live out their lives without a strong protector. In the lowlands, the bidding among nobles for peasant support did in fact raise many farmers through the ranks of warrior status to become lords in their own right. But armies consisted of small bands of cavalry, and competing nobles typically could not afford to put entire villages in arms. Compared to classical Greece, which was invaded by the ferocious Persian army, violence in Japan escalated only slowly. We can only speculate whether, had the Mongols landed in full force, the Japanese people might also have won political concessions in exchange for emergency mobilization.

The piecemeal intensification of violence in Japan worked against broader mobilizational concessions. Once widespread destruction reached an intolerable threshold, ordinary people were willing to pay for large armies and a leader strong enough to lead them. Territorial consolidation ended competition among aspiring generals, without which peasant bargaining was attenuated.

In the chapters that follow, historical experts sift through archival materials to provide a close look at the choices made by lords and peasants throughout the medieval period and across different parts of Japan. In Chapter 2, Karl Friday reminds us that the samurai came into being from within the imperial system and served the system obediently for over 300 years. Although warriors possessed a monopoly over the instruments of armed force, and indeed functioned as the court's protectors and administrators in the provinces, the warrior families were too divided among themselves, even under the Kamakura shogunate, to be a viable alternative to court-based rule and legitimacy. When the court collapsed into civil war between the Northern and Southern Courts in 1333–1335, the Ashikaga shogunate stepped into the breach. But the power of the Ashikaga shogunate rested on the acquiescence of local military lords who claimed growing powers for themselves at the expense of centralized rule, setting the stage for eventual civil war.

Chapter 3 by Susumu Ike describes the range of relationships between lord and retainer during the decentralized years of medieval Japan, after the decline of the imperial authority and before unification under Oda Nobunaga. Competition among military leaders may have increased the bargaining leverage of peasants who were needed to feed the soldiers or to join armies as soldiers. But navigating relationships among competing nobles was treacherous business because backing a loser could mean the loss of land and death. The civil war that broke out in 1437 among lords competing for territory forced local villagers to

make painful choices, sometimes in favor of retainers against their masters (*gekokujo*), when the retainer was thought to be better able to lead armies to victory.

In Chapter 4, Tsuguharu Inaba describes the misery of peasant life in wartime and explains the relief with which peasants greeted Oda Nobunaga's policy of dividing labor between farmers and warriors. Rather than being distressed to have their swords confiscated, many farmers greeted with relief the new leader's ambition to curb the fighting clans. Throughout these years, Inaba emphasizes, farmers retained their local village councils in which they made their collective decisions to support the emerging centralized regime.

Chapter 5 by Carol Tsang recounts the tenacity with which some religious organizations, such as the Honganji Temple in Osaka, resisted Oda Nobunaga's pell-mell push toward territorial consolidation. The Honganji Temple's thousands of followers in villages across a sizable area in today's Ishikawa prefecture created a structure of local self-rule and political order to match that provided by local military leaders. The villagers who joined in this religious league had little need for the protection offered by secular lords because they were well armed and well disciplined. Their belief that fidelity to their cause would be awarded in the afterlife empowered them to fight fearlessly. But in the end, this league and others like it throughout central Japan were steamrolled by Nobunaga's and Hideyoshi's even more powerful military machines. Lacking the economies of scale that the centralizers had developed, the most passionately independent local resistance movements were swept aside.

In Chapter 6, Pierre Souyri writes of the farmer-warriors from the mountain valleys of Iga and Koga near Kyoto who tenaciously resisted Oda Nobunaga's ambition for territorial consolidation. Had these valleys been clustered more closely together rather than spread out along the spine of Honshu, one wonders whether a ninja league might not have prevailed as their counterparts did in Switzerland, with vastly different consequences for Japanese political history. An alternative route to domestic tranquility, apart from the militarily imposed peace of an absolutist ruler, might have entailed the sorts of treaties that the Swiss Alpine regions concluded with the lowland cantons.

In Chapter 7, Thomas Conlan addresses the question of how the more successful military lords managed to consolidate territory. Conlan documents the organizational prowess of military leaders of regional domains. Among the many military governors or *shugo*, the most successful became domain lords or daimyō. For their spectacular success in achieving territorial consoli-

dation, Conlon credits these generals' methodical approach to gaining public acceptance, raising revenues, and building armies, rather than the guns with which they equipped their men.

In Japan, as in modern Europe, state building emerged out of the mayhem of warfare. But societal need for order is, by itself, no explanation for how a state capable of providing security materialized in either place. The variation within Japan over time and place suggests a mechanism for its emergence that was at work in Europe as well. Farmers in the pathway of armies became desperate for protection, even at the cost of their money and freedom. Although less vulnerable populations in hills or islands resisted territorial incorporation that would burden them with taxes to pay for the security of others, farmers on the fertile plains generated enough money and military might to break the resistance of these natural fortresses. In Japan, the entire archipelago became as one.

## Notes

1. "Ninja" is a term of modern origin used to describe rustic fighters in ages past shrouded in myth and mystery. Following forcible political unification in 1600, these resistance fighters were among the crack forces the government employed to do their dirty work, including vanquishing the Shimabara Rebellion of 1637 with a ruthless show of force. See, for example, Adachi 1967.

2. According to legend, which first appears in texts dating to the sixteenth century, Tell shot the apple cleanly, sparing his son's life and limb. When the Austrian magistrate asked what the second arrow in his quiver was for, Tell replied that he would have shot the Austrian magistrate in the event that his aim had faltered and he shot his son. In the heroic sequence that followed, Tell was thereupon arrested but escaped and then did shoot the magistrate after all. All of this is said to have inspired the Swiss mountain villages to rise in full revolt.

3. Machiavelli's *Discourses* built on a tradition of Italian Renaissance theorizing on liberty during a time when liberty—from both foreign and domestic domination—was under threat (Wootton 2007). The English carried on the tradition in their resistance to monarchs who overstepped traditional boundaries. An authoritative source is Pocock 1975. The famous Swiss champion of self-governance, Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778), wrote much later, having the full advantage of earlier Italian and English theorizing.

4. Petrarch (1304–1374) is said to have revived the study of Roman thought, making him one of the fathers of the Italian Renaissance.

5. North and Thomas 1971.

6. Murai 1993. We are grateful to an anonymous reviewer for this parallel.

7. Adolphson 2001; Adolphson and Ramseyer 2009.

8. Adolphson 2001; Adolphson and Ramseyer 2009.
9. We are indebted to an anonymous reviewer for this point.
10. In *The Leviathan* (1660), written after a brutal civil war in England, Thomas Hobbes urged citizens to invest their governments with strong powers. In Hobbes's view, exchanging freedom for security was a good choice because life in the state of nature was in any case "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short."
11. It may be reasonable to consider that Japan's communitarian culture had the effect of hastening a switch to a new equilibrium in response to new circumstances. But which equilibrium was never a foregone conclusion.
12. Hobbes, *Leviathan*. Historians will object that farmers are rarely if ever observed to consciously make these sorts of deals. We are employing a social science methodology that attributes motivation based on observable patterns of evidence, and assumes only that people were limited in their choices, not that they chose freely or were even aware of alternative courses of action.
13. Jean Bodin, like Hobbes writing against the backdrop of civil strife, favored strong government capable of defending its citizens. *Six Books of the Republic* (*Les Six livres de la République*, 1576).
14. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the French experienced the ravages of English armies, which were ordered to plunder the countryside and show no mercy to enemy and noncombatant alike. This brutal tactic, known as *chevauche*, had the dual advantage to the English of relieving the costs of feeding their own troops and depriving the French of supplying theirs (Sumption 2001: 272). The sixteenth century witnessed the vicious religious wars, in which Huguenots and Catholics fought without mercy for doctrinal control. In the seventeenth century, the Thirty Years' War brought plundering armies into villages over large swaths of Germany and France.
15. Montesquieu, in eighteenth-century France, mused that England's relative isolation may have given it some advantage in developing a theory and practice of limited government (*The Spirit of the Laws*).
16. Sometimes the term *absolutism* is used to describe the large territorial state, but the implication of absolute control, as many historians have pointed out, is misleading (see Henshall 1992; Hoffman and Rosenthal 1997).
17. Japanese economic history in the 1920s and 1930s centered on a debate between two Marxist variants: the *koza-ha* (associated with the Communist Party), who thought Japan had failed to achieve a bourgeois revolution by the twentieth century and required forced industrialization by the state; and the *rono-ha* (associated with the socialists), who thought that industrialization was proceeding on its own and that a socialist society could emerge without a communist revolution. After World War II, leftist intellectuals dominated Japanese universities because they escaped Occupation purges of the conservative right. Medieval Japanese history was more theoretical than empirical and focused, as a matter of belief, on the landed elites' ability to extract eco-

conomic surplus from unfree labor. Tom Scott (1998) documents peasant choices and resourcefulness in the European context. See also Brown 1974.

18. Genetic tests show that modern Japanese inhabitants of the northernmost island of Hokkaido and the southernmost island of Okinawa share more DNA with each other than with Japanese living on the central islands of Kyushu, Shikoku, and Honshu (see Imamura 1996).

19. Kiley 1999.

20. Piggott 1997.

21. The Japanese “estate” was “a group of plots, often scattered, that were bound together under a common proprietor. The proprietor, who might be the head of a powerful local family, a member of the aristocracy or the imperial family, or a religious institution, inherited the immunities created by the establishment of the estate and held most of the key powers over the land” (from Duus 1993: 31).

22. Asakawa called these “exempt manors” or “exempt *shoen*.” See Kambayashi and Hamada 2007; Duus 1993; Yamamura 1974.

23. Hurst 1990; Friday 1994. Berry (2005: 842) points out that Yamamoto Tsunetomo, the author of the samurai classic, *Hagakure*, invented a code of abject loyalty during the Tokugawa peace when this loyalty would never be tested. “To speak of loyalty in these circumstances is deceptive silliness.”

24. Berry 1994.

25. Totman 1993: 59; Farris 2006: 223. Farris points out that the warring states’ daimyō led the way in clearing land, fixing riverbanks, and irrigating new fields.

26. Roberts 1956; Parker 1988; Lynn 2003; Rogers 1995.

27. Duus 1993: 76–77.

28. Conlan, this volume, establishes the insufficiency of the technology argument.

29. Hideyoshi *did* finish the job of unifying all daimyō under himself, but he failed to establish a mechanism that would allow him to pass his hegemony on to his heirs. Ieyasu was the first to accomplish that. Berry (1986: 242) points out that the unifiers did not establish a strong, interventionist state beyond what was necessary to carry out their mandate of imposing peace and security.

30. The movie *Kagemusha* depicts the Battle of Nagashino of 1575 as a tragic charge by Takeda Shingen’s cavalry into Nobunaga’s army of musketeers. Historians have recently shown that the Takeda side had as many guns as the Oda forces did. The real lesson of Nagashino is that a large force ensconced behind field fortifications can defeat a small force attacking it. It was an advantage of defense over attack, given those technologies and strategic ideas. That is not to say that that a blitzkrieg could not have worked with the same technology.

31. Domar (1970: 13) credits Kliuchevsky (1937) for the argument that, when Russian nobles competed for scarce labor in the sixteenth century, the government restricted the peasants’ freedom. When labor is scarce, it has higher marginal value than

land, and landlords have an incentive to control labor in order to expropriate the full value of labor's marginal product. This has become the standard explanation for establishing oppressive colonial regimes in Latin America. See Martins 1982; Acemoglu and Robinson 2006.

32. White 1962; Rogowski and MacRae 2004.

33. Bean 1973: 207.

34. The stirrup and cannon are meant here as shorthand for a host of reasons why mass armies may or may not be effective. In island territories such as Greece, heavily armored hoplites were no match for light foot soldiers in skillfully maneuvered boats. See, for example, Strauss 2004. In mountainous terrain, horses are never a match for local fighters who know how to use terrain in their favor.

35. Frost 2000.

36. Eastern European nobles, on whom the Holy Roman Emperor depended for protection from the Magyars and others, secured tax concessions for manufacturing operations such as breweries undertaken on their lands. In Poland, once thriving towns along the trade routes and rivers feeding the Baltic Sea fell into decline with the collapse of the Polish-Lithuanian monarchy in the sixteenth century.

37. Richard Bean (1973) notes the importance of what he calls the "administrative technique" of raising taxes, but this only asks the question in another form.

38. Sam Cohn (1999) found that mountain villages in areas surrounding Florence successfully negotiated lower taxes than lowland villages. This was thanks to the natural fortification provided by terrain rather than on account of being in a borderland area where the villages could pit competing overlords in a bidding war with each other. Note that lowland borderlands, such as those between France and Holland or France and Germany, paid higher taxes than areas at some distance from military thoroughfares. See Henneman 1976.

39. Anderson 1974.

40. As in Europe, "there was a persistent moral threat insisting that the lord *should* grant fiefs and that his men have the right to look elsewhere if he disappoints them." See Bartlett 1993: 46.

41. To eliminate his enemies and to restore funds to the depleted Roman treasury, Sulla in 82 B.C. posted the names of men he declared to be "enemies of the state." Bounty hunters received a reward for murder, and the state got the confiscated property. The Triumvirate repeated these state-sanctioned murders in 43 B.C.

42. Cicero was killed in A.D. 43 in a proscription run by the triumvirate of Octavius, Mark Antony, and Lepidus.

43. Samons 1998.

44. Lintott 1999; Cornell 1995.

45. Israel 1995.

46. Keyssar 2001.



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