Traditional Values, Social Organization
and Patterns of Modernization:
A Comparative Study of Japan and Thailand

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Modern history of Japan and Thailand offers an excellent opportunity to study the relationship between traditional value systems and social organization on the one hand and patterns of modernization on the other. Japan and Thailand were able to maintain political independence during the colonial period. Modernization got started at about the same time around the middle of the 19th century and in both cases, it was directed from above; both were similar insofar as their value systems were largely based on Buddhism and their economy, on rice growing. However, under these surface similarities many differences can be found in the socio-cultural and economic conditions existing before modernization, particularly in the traditional value system and social organization. It is these differences which explain why modernization has taken different courses and led to different results in these two countries.

This paper attempts to compare the traditional value systems and social organization of Japan and Thailand with a view to explaining their relationship to the patterns of modernization. Japan was not only favored by the initial conditions, e.g. high productivity of agriculture, relatively advanced market economy and economic infrastructure, ethnic and cultural homogeneity of the population, the high literacy rate and strong leadership at both the national and local level but also by the existence of many elements in the traditional value system and social organization which could be applied in support of modernization. Economic modernization of Japan has faced much fewer obstacles in terms of socio-cultural pre-conditions than that of Thailand; the former started with a strong foundation in its value systems and social organizations while the latter being handicapped in many ways by the persistence of certain traditional values and types of social organization antithetical to the requirements of modernization, which we shall discuss in detail later.

Western scholars with experiences in studying both Japan and Thailand were quite struck with the dissimilarities of the two societies. Ruth Benedict, with her background of a study of Thai culture, described Thais as fun-loving, easy-going, individualistic and not conceiving life as a round of duties and responsibilities, etc.[1] Therefore, she must be very impressed with Japanese culture which she studied three years later and found its main themes to be the emphasis on the sense of duties and obligations and self discipline.[2]

Another American anthropologist, John F. Embree, who had extensive experiences doing field research in Japan before world War II and came to work briefly in Thailand after the war as a cultural officer in the U.S. embassy, was also quite struck with the sharp contrasts in the patterns of behavior of the Thais and the Japanese. This impressionistic observation gave rise to his famous insight into Thai culture as a "loosely structured system" in which "considerable variation of individual behavior is sanctioned"[3] as opposed to the tightly woven cultures such as those found in Japan "Whose patterns are clearly marked and which emphasize the importance of observing reciprocal rights and duties in various situations to a greater than is to be found among the Thai".[4]

Embree's perspective has inspired much of the subsequent field research done in Thailand mostly by American scholars. However, some have questioned the usefulness and accuracy of using this concept to characterize Thai society. For instance, they pointed to the importance of hierarchy and power in Thai society and to strict controls exercised in certain areas of social life.[5] However, as Keyes has pointed out, "the fact remains that, in comparison with communities in, say, India or East Asia, in all Thai communities in the Kingdom, there is sanction for considerable variation in individual behavior".[6]

Despite its ambiguity and obvious over-simplification the concept of loose vs. tight structures is still useful in comparing Japanese and Thai societies and in offering us a good starting point to look into the differences pertaining to their traditional value systems and patterns of social organization.

I. Traditional Value System

(1) Values with regard to relations between the individual and the group

The most important difference between the Thai and Japanese value systems appears to be the Thai emphasis on individualistic life pursuit (individualism) and the Japanese emphasis on group control (groupism). All foreign observers pointed to the Thais' penchant for individualistic behavior. Thais are given to concerns with maintaining individual freedom and autonomy. To them it is important to be able to be oneself, to do things one's own way and to live free of outside controls as much as possible. There is a dislike of contracting outside obligations which would limit one's freedom of action and also a dislike of living a regimented life under strict authorities enforcing detailed and rigid rules. Concomitant to this is the unwillingness to impose one's will on the others or to coerce them to do things they do not want to do.

It should be noted that Thai-style individualism is different from Western individualism in the sense that it is not positive, aggressive or direct in asserting one's rights and demands and/or actively promoting or protecting one's interest against encroachment by the others, particularly the government. It is more negative or defensive in nature in the sense of avoiding or resisting controls by external powers whether they be the government or any group with a strict demand for conformity.

The Thais' love of individual freedom fits in well with the teaching of Theravada Buddhism which has been the dominant religion in Thailand. Theravada Buddhism teaches self reliance as a means to attain wisdom and as a result salvation. In princple, no external power, not even the Buddha, can help the individuals. They have only themselves to rely on and to contend with. To ordinary people salvation means rebirth into a higher status in their next life and this depends on the balance of their good deeds and bad deeds committed in their past lives as well as in this life.[7] There are many ethical precepts but in most cases Buddhism leaves it to the individuals to decide how much relevant they are to their situations and how much they canconform with. Self cultivation of the moral sense of what is right and wrong and the sense of shame at committing wrongful acts even unknown to the others is the primary means by which Buddhism hopes to control the behavior of its followers.

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Because of this "negative" individualism, groups in Thai society enforce weak authority over the individuals. As a matter of fact, in a typical village community in Thailand one can hardly find and corporate groups beyond the families. Even in the case of the families, their authority over members is weak. According to Mizuno:

The village families do not have such a concept as the

Japanese *ie*; they do not view the family group as a whole and

sacrifice the individual to this group, nor do they give devoted

service to the family. They cannot envisage a situation where

the individual is submerged in the group[8]

Generally speaking, Thais do not like to form or join groups except the ones loosely organized for accomplishing immediate tasks such as holding village festivals or for labor exchange purposes. When groups are formed for achieving long-term objectives problems arise from the unwillingness to comply with established rules, passive participation, reluctance to accept the authority of the leadersand personal and factional conflicts, etc. Klasusner, an American anthropologist and a long-term resident in Thailand, observed:

The Thais are generally cautious and wary of submitting

themselves to the strictures and constraints of co-operative, co-

ordinated, disciplined venture. Traditionally, farm cooperatives

have been unsuccessful in Thailand. For the most part, Thai are

not "joiners". Political parties quickly disintegrate as members break

away and form their own separate organizations.[9]

In Japan groups are basic units of the society. In theory the person does not exist as an individual but only as a member of a certain larger group : family, school, community, company and nation.[10] Japan is the world's exemplar of a group-oriented society.[11] The idea of family *ie* serves as a model for group formation.[12] The group exists as an entity separate from the individual. The latter is expected to be totally committed to it, to actively

further its interest, to be totally submerged under its control, to make sacrifice on its behalf, to maintain harmonious relations with others within it and to suppress his own feelings and preferences (honne) while outwardly conforming to its expectations (tatemae), etc. There is a strong sense of duties and obligations to the group which in turn provides strong psychological supports to its members. There is also a strong pride in being a member of the group. The emphasis on harmony and consensus in decision making contributes to the feeling of group solidarity and assures that minority opinions will be heard.

It is interesting to speculate on why groups are important in Japanese society. Ecology of rice growing in which cooperative labor was needed, particularly in building and maintaining irrigation facilities and in guarding the villages' resources against encroachment by outsiders may be one of the reasons.[13] Villages had strong identity and strong local self government. In Thailand cooperative labor was also needed in rice growing but not to the same extent as in Japan. Because of topography, in many parts of Thailand water control was impossible or was the affair of individual families, not the community. Even when strict cooperation at the community level was needed as was the case in the intermontane basins of north Thailand, this had to be supported by government authorities.[14] Anyway it did not extend to other areas of village life. Villages' boundaries are not clearly drawn. Groups are inclusive in nature. Outsiders including ethnic minorities can be easily absorbed. This is different from the case of Japan where groups are exclusive in nature and a distinction is clearly drawn between insiders and outsiders.

Another reason may be related to the intense rivalry for power among different feudal lords in the political history of pre-modern Japan particularly before the political dominance of the Tokugawa family the early 17th century. It was important for each domain lord to be sure of the active loyalty of his samurai retainers and to have them organized in a tightly knit group ready for self defense.[15] On the other hand, in patrimonial Thailand, there was only one center of power, i.e. the despotic king in the capital city. All people including government officials were his subjects, owed allegiance to him and in principle depended on him for protection. Groups were not important for self protection and from the king's point of view a well organized one not under his direct control may even pose a challenge to his absolute power.

On the importance of groups, it is interesting to note the different effects of Buddhism in Thailand and Japan. One of the basic tenets of Buddhism is the ultimate truth of "no self" or "non substantiality of self" and thus the futillity of attachment to it. This is known in Thai Buddhism as *anatta* (no self), equivalent to the idea of *sunyata* (nothingness) in Mahayana Buddhism, but to most Thais it remains only a distant ideal. The emphasis on the ego, the root of individualism in Thai culture, in fact goes against this teaching. In Japan, this teaching is central in the Zen sect and had a strong influence on the samurai and other subordinate classes which emulated them. It provided a metaphysical underpinning for the total submersion of individuals within groups. In this sense the group-oriented behavior of the Japanese can be said to truly reflect the ideal of Buddhism particularly that of Zen more so than the self-centered behavior of the Thais.

(2) Values with regard to authority and hierarchy

Thais and Japanese are similar in emphasizing hierarchy in social relations. People in lower status must show deference to those higher in status. There are many words for "I" and "you" depending on the relative status of the individuals. In Thailand people lower in status must use pronouns belittling themselves or indicating their humble status when speaking to or referring to people higher in status for whom there are many honorific pronouns used to enhance their status. Many supposedly good manners which today looked self humiliating such as crawling when in front of elders were devised for the same purpose. People are taught to know "the higher place, the lower place" and act accordingly. This cultural norm is still adhered to, albeit in a moderate from, even though the democratic values of equality and human dignity have spread because it is considered important to show respect to people higher than one in status.

Both Japan and Thailand are status conscious societies and the people are status conscious. However, the tight structure of Japanese society seems to require the individuals to be well aware of each other's relative status before interaction can go on while in the loose structure of Thai society people unaware of each other's status can be observed engaged in lively talks. The Japanese are certainly more concerned with relative ranking than the Thais.

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In Japan and Thailand there is the same Buddhist-originated idea of compassionate superiors doing favors or benevolent deeds to dependent subordinates and the reciprocal obligations of the latter to return these favors. In Japan this idea known as "on" and "ho-on" has become the basis of hierarchical relations and has been further strengthened by the teaching of neo-Confucianism on loyalty. One's superior is idealized as being boundless in his benevolent deeds in one's favor. It is thus one's absolute duties and long-term obligations to repay this "on". This must be executed with active performance of one's duties even at the sacrifice of one's life.[16]

In Thailand the same idea is known as one's superior's "bunkhun" (benevolent deeds) which incurs one's feeling of "katanyu" (gratitude) and one's obligations to "kataweti" (to repay the favors). This idea is emphasized in child training. A moral person is the one who appreciates and is always conscious of the "bunkhun" of others, particularly one's parents, teachers, superiors and patrons.[17]

However, in Thai society except in the case of one's parents, the idea of loyalty is not absolute.[18] It is conditional on the reciprocal behavior of one's superior. The severity of authority is also weakened by Buddhist teachings on the ideal characteristics of benevolent persons known as the "Four Sublime States of Consciousness", i.e. metta (loving kindness), karuna (compassion), mudita (sympathetic joy at others' succes) and ubekkha (equanimity in the sense of being objective and fair in the treatment of subordinates).[19] Superiors are expected to show these qualities in their relationship with subordinates.

Thais' attitude toward authority can be said to be ambivalent. On the one hand, They look submissive to authority. They are taught to show respect and obedience to people of high status whose power is traditionally believed to be legitimized by the accumulation of "merit" in their past lives.[20] On the other hand, there is a distrust of power. This has its root in the patrimonial system of government in the past when peasants were drafted to work for the government under supervision of princes and high ranking government officials who also acted as their master-patrons. Some of these master-patrons were abusive in their use of power. The drafted peasants had on choice but to show passive obedience in order to avoid their wrath and hide their resentment. From the outside, they looked submissive to authority but for many, this may be a pretension or at best only a passive obedience.[21] Active loyalty

cannot be expected unless their superiors also showed supportive attitudes and were flexible in their use of power.

Another difference in the idea of loyalty between Japan and Thailand is that in the case of the latter it is loyalty to a person while in the former, as Bellah pointed out, it is loyalty to a status rather than to a person, i.e. loyalty to the head of one's collectivity whoever that person may be.[22] Leaders in Japan have little problems in commanding loyalty and enforcing discipline while in Thailand only strong leaders can achieve this and not surprisingly only a few of them can be found in the face of the individualistic behavior of most people and Buddhist teachings on compassionate, tolerant and forgiving superiors.

It should also be noted that in Japan while in general hierarchy is important, in a group this is less important than the feeling of group solidarity. Thus there can be a feeling of closeness and good cooperation between members different in status. This is different from relations with in a group in Thailand where group members are always conscious of their status differences, thus hampering efforts at group cooperation. Enterprise unions in Japanese joint ventures in Thailand do not work well because it is difficult to get blue and white collar workers to work together.[23] Social distance is always maintained between persons of different statuses in the same organization.

(3) Values with regard to inter-personal relations

Thai and Japanese societies are similar in emphasizing harmony and avoidance of conflicts in inter-personal relations. In Thailand, Buddhism preaches non-violence, sincerity, sympathy, kindness and helpfulness to others while in Japan these values have been reinforced by the teaching of neo-Confucianism as well. An ideal society should be based on harmonious relations in which people recognize their reciprocal duties and obligations and have a positive attitude toward each other.

In Thailand, people are taught to have "namjai" (water of the heart) i.e. being concerned with others' well being and always ready to extend help and to "krengjai" (deferring to others' heart)' i.e. having consideration for and being sensitive to others' feeling, not to impose one's will on the others or requesting them to do things against their own will or acting in any way that might embarrass them or cause them inconvenience. "Krengjai" also

means one should not criticize others in public or say a direct "no" when requested by others to do something in their favor as this might cause them to lose "face" and lead to strained relations.[24]

To be aware of others' feeling, Thais are told to learn to place themselves in the role of the others as in the saying "place others' mind in one's mind". They should learn the indirect way of handling problems in inter-personal relations. The use of strong, blunt language should be avoided while one's temper and anger must not be shown. An ideal person is the one who has a "cool heart" and remains emotionally calm or unperturbed (choei) even when he finds himself involved in an embarrassing situation.[25]

In the group and consensus oriented society of Japan, the importance of harmony and avoidance of open conflicts is obvious and Japanese society seems to be at its best in devising mechanisms to make this possible. There are detailed rules, both written and unwritten, prescribing correct behavior and defining reciprocal duties and obligations in almost all kinds of social situations. People are taught to know their standing relative to each other and observe good manners. There is extreme politeness, modesty, humility and reciprocity in inter-personal relations. People are concerned about causing inconvenience to the others and being obliged to them as can be seen in the frequent use of "sumimasen" (please excuse me) "arigato gozaimasu" (thank you). Society is viewed as a network of social obligations. Universalistic norms of honesty and trust apply to relations with others both inside and outside of one's own group.

Thailand and Japan are different in the way they deal with minority opinions. In the former, the minority is voted down or simply disregarded by the majority while in the latter, as Lipset observed, both sides try to compromise by making concessions so that consensus can be reached without any side losing face.[26] Even though consciousness of group identity and the relative ranking of groups is high and there is strong competition between groups, the wonder of Japanese society is that they can cooperate when it is felt necessary. In the group there is no competition[27] but instead good cooperation between members even though in fact some of them may be rivals for promotion to higher positions.

In Thai society, the individualistic behavior of the people on many occasions causes harmony in inter-personal and inter-group relations to breakdown and brings conflicts into

the open. There are quite a few people who do not "krengjai" (being sensitive to others' feeling) and take advantage of those who are more burdened with "krengjai". Social relations are often strained because there are people who do not care about the consequences of their behavior on the others.

Accommodation and compromise are much more difficult to achieve in Thai society because people are too much concerned with losing face or feel too much self righteous. It is difficult for persons with strong personality to work together smoothly. There is bound to be rivalry and conflicts between them even though the issues involved seem to be petty. Groups in Thai society including village communities are often plagued with the problem of internal conflicts arising from rivalry between persons with strong personality, not to mention the conflicts between different groups when they are required to work together or coordinate their activities.

Thai and Japanese societies are similar in having the problem of hooligans who take advantage of ordinary people's abhorrence of violence and concerns with harmony and avoidance of conflicts to intimidate and extort money from them. In Thailand they are known as "nakleng to" (big hooligan) who are feared by the people because of their readiness to use violence to get what they want or to demand protection maney.[28] Unlike the yakuza who are organized in disciplined groups, the Thai *nakleng* to usually act alone or are attached to influential local leaders of the type known as "chao pho" (god fathers) who are engaged in illegal business such as operating brothels, gambling dens, drug trafficking, log poaching and smuggling, etc. and use them to intimidate the people and as hired guns to kill their opponents.

In harmony-conscious Japan the *yakuza* can take advantage of serving as intermediary when the parties involved want to avoid direct confrontation. They can exploit the concern of groups for harmony to extort money for themselves as in the case of the sokaiya who buy shares in companies just only to have the chance to disrupt shareholders' meetings.

In the case of bullying in schools, Thai and Japanese societies also exhibit different patterns. In the former it is mostly the case of one or a few violent-prone boys against weaker members of the class but sooner or later the case will be known and the school

authorities will intervene to stop it. In the latter, it is a group against weaker individuals. Again out of concern for harmony and with the ability to endure hardship in life the bullied students are reluctant to let others know of their problems until they lead to a tragic end.

In Thailand and Japan, some superiors are likely to have particularistic relations with subordinates but in the latter it does not lead to the problem of nepotism and inefficiency because active performance of subordinates can be expected. In the former this often becomes a problem. Superiors cannot take decisive action because the recalcitrant subordinates may be their own relatives or proteges or protected by people higher in status than theirs whom they cannot afford to antagonize.

In both Thai and Japanese societies, too much concern with harmony and status quite often makes open discussion with expression of frank, particularly different opinions difficult. There is reluctance to contradict one's superior, to discuss issues which might cause embarrassment or to take decisive actions to resolve conflicts once and for all . Problems may be covered up or passed on lightly and concrete decisions postponed in order to avoid a showdown and hopefully allow them to be forgotten or resolved by themselves. In the Thai government bureaucracy, committees proliferate. They are formally intended to coordinate activities of different agencies but in fact are devices to postpone decisive action or to kill controversial proposals.

In Thailand, there is another problem that when open discussion cannot be avoided, this is likely to lead to confrontation. Open exchange of views is not possible in the face of strong emotion and concerns with the loss of face. The traditional respect for people of higher stat is disregarded. In politics and labor relations this sometimes leads to violent conflicts as can be seen in the recent history of Thai democracy.

Another problem arising from the Thais' concern with establishing harmony and pleasing others is that in interpersonal and intergroup relations this may lead to superficial or ambiguous agreements or vague promises, It is understood from the beginning by all the parties concerned, except the naïve outsiders, that they are not meant to be taken seriously, particularly when they do not concern vital matters, nor need to be honored when circumstances change. Thai relativism or conditionalism is thus quite different from the Japanese emphasis on fulfilling obligations whatever their cost.

In Thailand, there is an attitude of "minding one's own business" in the sense of refraining from openly criticizing the others in order to preserve a façade of harmonious relations. One should not step out of one's sphere and get involved in the jobs assigned to others. Even a sympathetic suggestion may be interpreted by them as negative criticisms. This is one of the reasons why the idea of quality control circles does not work well in Thailand.[29]

(4) Values with regard to attitudes toward life and work

On the surface, Thais and Japanese look similar in being cheerful, pragmatic and inclining toward enjoyment of life but when it comes to work ethic it is well known that the Japanese are much more serious. Embree observed:

> The longer one resides in Thailand the more one is
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> struck by the almost determined lack of regularity, discipline,
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> and regimentation in Thai life. In contrast to Japan, Thailand
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> lacks neatness and displine.[30]

In Thai society, as Klausner observed, "the ability to enjoy, to have and be fun is highly valued. *Sanuk*, or fun, seems to pervade every aspect of life".[31] Thais can be seen always smiling and laughing with an open mind, an optimistic outlook and an easy-going attitude toward life.

Ruth Benedict related the fun-loving nature of the Thais to the influence of Buddhism and the permissive child training practice in Thai families in which there is no authoritarian father and discipline is lightly and inconsistently enforced throughout the childhood period.[32] In Japanese families on the other hand she found disciplining of the child follows a U curve pattern. During the early years the child is pampered and little discipline is enforced but this will change as the child grows up and more and more discipline is enforced. Permissive behavior is allowed again only when one reaches old age.[33]

In Japanese families, there is over-indulgence of children by their mothers in the early childhood. According to Doi, this leads to the behavioral syndrome called "amae" (i.e. the

need to depend and presume upon another's benevolence).[34]   The need to "amae" sometimes may, cause the individuals to lapse into childlike, hedonistic behavior temporarily free of social restraint that can be observed among some Japanese in certain social situations.

The experience of both permissive and strict child rearing practices may partly explain why the Japanese are capable of having fun and enjoy life while knowing the limit of what is permissible and capable of keeping themselves under controls.   There is an emphasis on disciplined life[35] which helps prevent the excess of hedonistic behavior.   In Thailand, on the contrary, for many people there seems to be too much emphasis on *sanuk* (enjoying life), *sabai* (feeling well) and *saduak* (provided with convenience).   They have low self defense against the temptation of worldly pleasure.   Many suffer from the problems of excessive drinking of alcohol, obsession with gambling and overindulgence in sex, etc. Combined with the penchant for individualistic behavior these people are likely to show lack of discipline and responsibility and have a negative attitude toward work.

From another point of view, however, the emphasis on enjoying life can also be viewed as having a positive effect on attitudes toward work because it is only through work that one can have the means to enjoy life. Ideally, enjoying life must be combine with paying attention to work.   Thai public morality chastises the indolent as worthless persons while giving high regards to the diligent persons.   In Thai Buddhism, there are many teachings on the virtue of work.   People are reminded to avoid the excess of hedonism, the ideal being "the middle path" between asceticism and worldly pleasure.

The problem with work ethic in Thai society is that in the past it was not considered a major problem.   With rich land and food resources and a subsistence economy with a small population, people did not have to work hard to make a living.   There was no incentive when there was little to buy and sell in the market.   They worked hard only when forcibly drafted as corvee laborers to work away from home in jobs requiring hard physical labor such as digging canals and serving in military units.   This gave them a bad attitude toward non-agricultural labor.

Now Thailand has changed a great deal since modern economic development began in the late 1950s.   The government itself has launched campaigns to make people

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aware of the importance of work ethic. Slogans such as "work is money, money is work, both bring happiness" are widely used. At schools values education and work education have been made part to the curriculum. Buddhism has been reinterpreted to emphasize the teaching on work ethic.[36] Most important, there has been more competition and more pressure on the people to pay more attention to work.

For the rural people there is no more new land for agriculture. The excess population have to seek urban employment which means harder work. The strong desire to have a higher income so that more amenities of life can be enjoyed and more money available for religious merit-making as well has served as a strong incentive for them to work long hours. Among the traditional values in Thai society it seems that the one related to work has undergone more change than the others. Of course compared with Japan, much more positive change still has to be made.

In Japan work has always been a virtue. The isolation policy adopted during the Tokugawa period caused the government to be concerned with producing enough food and goods for the people. The farmers particularly were under strong pressure to work hard, lived a frugal life and observed the moral injunctions prescribed by the government.[37] There were social movements such as the *Hotoku*[38] among the farmers and the *Shingaku*[39] among the merchants which emphasized among other things the importance of work ethic. Work is not good only in itself but an obligation to repay "on" as well as a demonstration of loyalty to one's group or as Bellah said, "an expression of selfless devotion to the collective goal".[40] In this sense it is even more positive than the famous Protestant ethic of the West.[41]

In Thailand even though the attitude toward work has changed, there are still many problems with work ethic including workers' sense of responsibility and commitment to their jobs, the companies and to self improvement. These problems have made it difficult to fully adopt the lifetime employment and automatic promotion systems[42] and speed up technology transfer in Japanese joint ventures.[43] At present Thai workers still need strong incentives in order for them to work actively. These include satisfactory relations with superiors, the opportunity to have fun or make friends while working and the opportunity to show their individuality.

II. Traditional Social Organization

(1) The government and social class system

In light of differences in the value systems it is not surprising to find also many differences in the traditional social organization of Japan and Thailand. On the whole the "centralized feudalism" of Japan was much more systematic and more effective in controlling the population and insuring social order than the "decentralized patrimonialism" of Thailand. Japan's feudalism allowed many urban centers to develop with regional leaders active in promoting local development but at the same time they were controlled by the central government under the system of "sankin kotai" which required them to reside in Edo, the capital city, every other year. This together with other measures had contributed to the consolidation of the power of the central government and to the unification or the country in terms of common culture and communication between the center and periphery.[44]

In patrimonial Thailand there was only one center of political power and urban development. In principle the king had absolute power but in reality his despotic rule was limited by the necessity to delegate power to members of the nobility whose active loyalty cannot always be expected. They occupied top positions in the officialdom but, except those in the frontier provinces, had no hereditary rights. Their appointment and promotion depended solely on the king's favor. They were regarded as "eyes and ears" or the king. Their status ethic was "to eliminate the suffering and promoting the happiness of the people".

There was no clear-cut division between the civilian and military branches of the officialdom because in war times all high ranking officials were expected to be leaders of troops drafted from peasants under their controls. The peasant population and the government system were organized on a semi-military basis because of the constant danger of warfare with neighboring countries. However, there was no standing army nor a military code of ethic such as Japan's *bushido*.

The traditional class structure of Thai society consisting of four status groups, i.e. the royalty, the officialdom, the commoners and the slaves may be similar in some respects to the one in Japan which divided members of society into the samurai, peasants, artisans and merchants but in other respects the two were much different. The Thai system is known as *sakdina* under which everyone from the highest ranking prince below the king to the beggars

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and slaves was given a status (sakdi) symbolically indicated in terms of the units (rai, one unit being equal to 0.16 hectare) of rice land (na). The higher the status and position of a person, the higher was the number of the units of rice land assigned as his *sakdina*. Government officials' *sakdina* were higher than that of ordinary people whose *sakdina* depended on their occupations.

Members of the officialdom were finely graded into many ranks with honorific titles indicating their position in the bureaucracy. They had no salaries but were entitled to part of the government revenue accruing in the execution of duties in their positions. This was supplemented by occasional royal grants of cash, land and other rights.

As a group the officialdom enjoyed high status in terms of prestige, power and wealth and had a distinct lifestyle compared with that of the commoners who were regarded as the country's manpower. However among them there was a big difference between those at the higher level and those at the lower level of the government. The former can be said to constitute as true nobility not only in terms of high status but in terms of royal favors in appointing the offspring of noble families to high position in the government.

The commoners called "phrai" were the country's manpower in agricultural production, defense and in serving personal needs of the royalty and nobility. The term "phrai" came to have a pejorative meaning denoting people of lowly status and rude, unrefined in behavior in contrast to the nobility. They were subject to corvee labor to work for the government as well as for the nobility. However their status was not fixed. It was possible for them to join the officialdom usually at the lower level relying on the support of high ranking officials who were their master-patrons. For the able ones, e.g. those who distinguished themselves in warfare, it was even possible for them to move to the high level in the government but actually this mobility was rare.

Because of the complete separation of the four status groups, the feudal class structure of Japan can be said to be more rigid than that of Thailand. In the former each status group was assigned specific roles and mobility across status lines was not allowed in principle. The good point about the system was that each group knew very well its roles including both duties and rights and accordingly adjust their aspirations and develop their expertise. The samurai with their high status and privileges became good administrators and

scholars. Farmers and artisans worked hard to produce foods and handicraft products while merchants, the lowest status group, regarded their profit-making business as a service to the society. It should be noted that in patrimonial Thailand the status of merchants was not recognized in the *sakdina* system. There was little need for them in a subsistence economy. Their role was mostly filled by immigrant Chinese who with the exception of the few wealthy ones who engaged in foreign trade on behalf of the Thai king enjoyed low status vis-à-vis government officials.

In terms of the control of and burden on farmers the government power and rigid class structure of premodern Thailand and Japan can be regarded as equally oppressive. In Japan farmers had to pay about half of their produce to the government as tax and had to live a frugal, humble life under strict regulations issued by government.[45] Villagers were tightly organized under the control of the few leading families who often were big landlords.[46] In Thailand tax burdens, mostly in kind, on farmers were light but there was a system of corvee labor according to which able-bodied male peasants were drafted to work without pay for the government under supervision of princes and high ranking officials who also acted as their master-patrons. They had to be away from their families every other month in every year until being discharged. Around the turn of the 19th century this was reduced to four and finally three months in a year.

The corvee peasants had to do all kinds to work requiring hard physical labor including growing rice on the government-owned land. The system gave rise to many abuses. Some master-patrons were arbitrary in their use of power and arrogant in their manners. They overworked peasants under their control, demanded bribes, used them for personal benefits or severely punished them, etc.

However, the corvee peasants had some ways open to them to lighten their burden, e.g. feigning passive obedience, duping or bribing their master-patrons to relax the rules or just running away to the jungles to escape the government authority and, for the violent-prone ones, to fight it as bandits loosely organized in small gangs. It was an individual protest, not a collective peasant uprising as in Japan. Some sought refuge in the monkhood which entitled them to exemption of corvee obligations. Many chose to become personal servants of important master-patrons or even sold themselves to become their debt slaves in

order to have their corvee obligations reduced. Foreign observers of Thailand on the eve of modernization around the middle of the 19th century estimated their number to be about one half of the total population of the kingdom.[47] This maybe an exaggeration but it was nevertheless true that in premodern Thailand many people preferred to live in a state of voluntary servitude under lenient masters rather than to live as freemen subject to corvee labor.[48]

Compared with the government's strict control over farmers in feudal Japan, the government authority in patrimonial Thailand was thus not as effective as it might seem. One negative consequence was, as mentioned earlier, the ambivalent attitude toward authority and government officials as well as toward non-agricultural labor. Some officials were corrupt and debauched in their lifestyles, thus tarnishing the ideal image of good officials and gave a bad example to the common people. This was different from the case of the Japanese samurai who in general presented an image of well-disciplined officials and who despite their power and privileges held the admiration of other social classes and became their role model.

(2) The system of social control

In Japan the individuals were under strict controls from outside as well as inside the communities. The government for its own interest was concerned with the moral character of the farmers while the village communities were concerned with maintaining social order, harmony and solidarity. For the farmers committed to work ethic more pressure from the government did not lead to a passive or fatalistic attitude but on the contrary to more exertion of efforts to increase production.

In Japan villages were important local self government units and were made responsible for the behavior of their members. There was good cooperation in running village affairs. Villages were usually free of crimes and vices while in Thai villages these were important problems particularly armed banditry, drinking of alcohol and gambling.

The Thai and Japanese idea of family is also different. There is no concept of family *ie* in Thailand. The emphasis on individual autonomy militates against the idea of family lineages or clans with a strong identity, common property and mutual obligations among

kinsmen. There is nothing in Thai society comparable to the *dozoku* type of family relations in Japan with its *honke* (head) and *bunde* (branch) families. Every related family is equal and is not bound by any specific obligations to the others.

Except in the few cases of noble families the idea of continuing the family line or having sons to succeed the family is not much emphasized. Inheritance is by means of equal division of property among children of both sexes in contrast to the custom of primogeniture in Japan. There is no uniform, widely practiced cult of ancestor worship even though ancestors' ashes may be kept at home at Buddhist altars and / or at temples and Buddhist memorial ceremonies are occasionally performed to transfer merit to them. As mentioned before home discipline is weak. Parents are usually reluctant to impose their will on children. Thai families thus have a weak control over the individuals compared to that in Japan.

Besides instilling in the individuals the moral values of self discipline and responsibility, Japanese society also relies on shame as a sanction against nonconformity.[49] It is effective in Japan where group pressure is strong and people are sensitive to the opinion of others. In Thailand it is also important but often not effective because of the emphasis on individualism and weak authority of the groups. Groups are often impotent in disciplining recalcitrant individuals who have neither shame nor guilt. To make matters worse, in many cases of misbehavior and insubordination group leaders or superiors are known to be reluctant to take strong actions against subordinates for fear for of being taken revenge of by the latter. Politicians and public figures can remain in their positions even though known for misdeeds and being criticized by the people. Only a conviction by a court decision can force them out of office.

In Thailand in the past and even at present in many parts of the rural areas there was a reliance on the unseen power of various kinds of deities and spirits, particularly those of the ancestors, to punish the individuals who violated moral norms of the communities. In general this was quite effective as a mechanism of social control because of the strong belief of the people in the supernatural power of the spirits or "phee". They dwelled every where and could bring misfortune to immoral individuals sooner or later unless they amended themselves. It was a pity for the communities to have to rely so much on "phee" to control

deviant behavior. With the declining of this belief and the still inefficient enforcement of law and order by government authorities it is not surprising why Thai society at present is facing the problem of a partial breakdown of social control.

(3) The relations between individuals and groups

As mentioned earlier group authority is weak in Thailand. The in dividuals are unwilling to submit themselves to controls by the groups. In the rural areas Thai agricultural cooperatives are well known for their failure to get active cooperation of their members. In politics a typical political party is nothing more than a collection of entourages[50] each headed by a prominent figure who acts as a patron to fellow politicians junior in status and dependent on him for financial supports and political and business connections. It looks similar to a *habatsu* (faction) in Japanese politics but a Thai entourageor *kloom* (group) is much more unstable in its composition and unpredictable in the behavior of its members. Politicians can easily change from one *kloom* or from one party to another at will and without incurring any ostracism from their supporters.

In Thailand there is also patron-client relationship based on the idea of paternalism and seniority similar to the oyabun-kobun and sempai-kohai relationship in Japan. The difference is that in Japan the relationship is likely to be much longer term and exclusive and mutual obligations are much more definite. In politics faction heads can thus be sure of the loyalty of the members. Different factions in the same parties can work together harmoniously under party leaders. This is hardly the case in Thai politics. It is difficult for party leaders to satisfy demands of different factions and for faction leaders to satisfy demands of individual members. Seniority counts little in the distribution of political spoils when it conflicts with one's interests. Sooner or later some to them will leave their faction or party to join another or even to form new ones. Cooperation between different factions in the same party is always a problem, not to mention that between different parties when they find it necessary to form a coalition government.[51]

The behavior of Thai politicians and government officials follows the custom of manipulating power in one's favor. Power struggles were harsh in Thai political history. Power holders including kings could lose their positions, power and even their life at any

time. When this happened, their close supporters were also likely to suffer the same fate. It was thus important for subordinates to adopt a strategy of survival by not committing themselves fully to any particular power holder, be alert to the changing balance of power and be ready to switch sides when circumstances changed or gravitate toward new master-patrons whose star was rising.

The weakness of Thai social organization in exerting controls over the individuals can be traced to the conflict between the Thai value on individual autonomy and the hierarchical principle of social relationship Klausner observed:

> Broadly speaking, we may view Thai culture as a
> battleground on which the forces of individualism on the
> one side and social place and hierarchy on the other wage
> continual internecine warfare. Individualism leads to
> Inconsistency, uncertainty and deviation in Thai behavior.....
> On the other side of the cultural coin, the pervasive
> Influence of hierarchy and social place assure a high degree
> of continuity, conformity, predictability and reliability in Thai
> Behavior.[52]

Thai society can be portraited as loosely structured insofar as the Thais have a penchant for individualistic behavior but the importance of hierarchy and power in social relations should also be recognized at the same time.[53] It is certainly a stereotyping to characterize Thais as inclining toward anarchistic individualism,[54] indolent, unreliable or having no sense of obligations. There exist mechanisms of social control, however weak they may be, and in public morality the virtues of diligence, honesty and self control, etc. are always emphasized even though for many persons they may remain only distant ideals. It should also be noted that unlike Japan with its strict social control and demand for conformity, in Thailand with the Buddhist emphasis on the individual cultivation of the sense of right and wrong, there is likely to be found a greater variation of personality types, e.g. from the most reliable, honest, serious, responsible, diligent and so on to the least. The

Thais themselves are aware of this as can be seen in many sayings reminding people to exercise prudence before entering into intimate relations with persons whose backgrounds they do not know.

It should also be noted that in the tight structure of Japanese society one can also find loose, or more aptly, flexible patterns. There is always sympathy and kindness in interpersonal relations.[55] Minority views are taken into account in the effort to reach consensus. Relationship is not based rigidly on contractual agreements but can be altered when warranted by changing circumstances.[56] While active performance is expected, the individual is given strong supports from his group and can expect its understanding in case he fails to meet its expectations and sincerely offers his apology. Even though competition is keen, it is restrained by common purposes to serve the higher goals of the society. This flexibility helps explain why Japanese society has been able to introduce changes when they are needed.

III. Patterns of modernization

Japan and Thailand started modernization at about the same time around the middle of the 19th century under the same condition arising from Western military threats. Japan agreed to end the policy of seclusion while Thailand agreed to end the traditional practice of royal monopoly of foreign trade. Both were forced to accept the principle of free trade and extra-territorial rights for Western residents in the countries. Their taxing power on imports and exports was also limited.

In the beginning, there was uncertainty, confusion and conflicts of ideas about how to deal with this Western challenge. In Japan, this led to the downfall of the Bakufu government and the restoration of the emperor in 1868.[57] Many reforms took place during the period called "Meiji Restoration" which last until 1912 under the leadership of a group of highly educated young samurai of different status levels and regions who called themselves "men of high purpose".[58] These reforms and changes were made in the name of the emperor. There were some protests, particularly from a few disgruntled samurai but on the whole they were accepted and taken seriously by all social classes.

In Thailand, a new king with a modern outlook, Rama V, popularly known as king Chulalongkorn, took power in 1868, the same year as that of the restoration of Emperor Meiji and began what is historically called "the Chakri Reformation" under the regime of the absolute monarchy. His predecessor, Rama IV, was a conservative who thought Thailand could accommodate to Western demands for free trade and accept Western science without making any basic change in its institutions. However, even Rama V had to pospone his important reforms because of opposition from conservative high ranking officials of his father's generation which died out only after the mid 1880s.[59] Under Rama V's reign which last until 1910 many reforms were undertaken which laid the foundation for the modern state of Thailand.

Japan and Thailand launched their modernization programs with much differences in their pre-existing conditions and under somewhat different international environments. These differences affected the goals conceived by the modernizing elites as well as their capacity to mobilize the masses to participate in national efforts. The goal of Japan was very ambitious from the beginning, i.e. to become a powerful state on a par with Western powers while in Thailand it was a modest one of reforming certain social institutions along the Western model in the name of progress and in the effort to maintain national independence in the face of Western military threats.

While modernization programs were launched, in both countries there was the same concern with strengthening cultural identity in the face of Western cultural influences. Modernization did not mean Westernization nor wholesale adoption of Western culture. It was only a selective adoption of certain Western ideas and practices and even these must be adapted to national requirements. Thus in Japan, "Japanese spirit" was to be maintained. Western values of individualism and liberalism were negatively viewed. In Thailand, the position of the modernizing elites was that while bad traditions were to be terminated, the good ones must be kept. This was rather a vague position because there was no attempt to define what was good and what was bad. However, in their view the West was perceived as being too materialistic, too liberal in the relations between the sexes and lacking in respect and the sense of obligations of children to parents. While being educated in Western science and ideas of progress, the younger generations were admonished to be

proud of their cultural traditions and Buddhism, to speak good Thai and observe Thai good manners, etc. There was a concern with limiting the negative influence of Western materialism which was eagerly accepted by the people because of their inclination toward enjoyment of living and pleasure seeking. This concern still continues until the present particularly among the Thai conservatives.

In Japan, the slogans of "fukoku kyohei" (enrich the nation, strengthen the military) was adopted as a national goal and that of "wakon yosai" (Japanese spirit, Western technology) as a means[60] to mobilize the participation of the masses in the national effort at industrialization and militarization while encouraging their pride in the country's cultural traditions and identity and limiting the impact of Western cultural influences. These slogans set a clear goal and means for the country and succeeded in creating a sort of national will and common purposes. As a result there was a sudden burst of national energy in which every one participated to work toward the attainment of national goals.

In Thailand, the modernizing elites were well aware of the country's extremely weak position vis-à-vis Western colonial powers which were encroaching on its territories from all sides. Japan was more fortunate than Thailand in being an island country and not the immediate target of Western colonization. The main concern of the Thai government at that time was to please France and Great Britain, the major colonial powers in Southeast Asia, by giving in to their demands for territorial concessions and by making domestic reforms along the modern lines in order to deny them a pretext to colonize Thailand.

As to the capacity to modernize Japan was in a much more favorable position than Thailand both in the pre-existing economic conditions and particularly in the traditional value system and social organization as pointed out earlier. Japan's feudal economy can be said to have been developed to the fullest extent possible under the traditional technology and system of government. It needed some range of rationalizations following the Western models of science, technology and capitalism to change it into a modern industrial economy. The Meiji leaders appeared to have had a clear vision of the future and understood very well the nature of their tasks. Their ambitious goals can be achieved only when the people energetically responded to the government's policies and actively participated in the national effort at all levels of the society. In this they could rely on the traditional attitude of the people

toward the government. In feudal Japan, the idea of "on" (blessings) had permeated the relationship between the people and the government. The latter was viewed as doing favors for the people for which they must repay by means of actively supporting its policies and programs of action. The people considered themselves and were proud to be part of the "kokutai" (national body) and felt it was their duty to cooperate with the government.[61]

In Japan, the old class structure with its restriction on social mobility was abolished. The farmers were now made to feel equal to the samurai while the latter, being deprived of their feudal privileges, were encouraged to enter the world of business, thus contributing to the enhancement of the status of the merchant class which was formerly the lowest.[62] In its modernizing effort Japan was blessed with having plenty of capable leaders in both the government and business realms. They could be found at all levels of society. Besides, they could be sure that government policies would get positive responses from the people most of whom were literate. The "ie" (family) and "mura" (village) functioned effectively as a means of receiving and diffusing political authority from the center to the local level in contrast to Thailand where there was as yet no effective means of political communication on the local level.[63]

Through the modern education system a new, nation-wide value system was created, based on government-promoted values selected from those formerly prescribed only for the samurai such as loyalty, the sense of duty and obligations, etc. The authority of the emperor was used to legitimize the change. Under his name many important government announcements such as the Charter Oath (1868), the Imperial Rescript to Soldiers (1882) and the Imperial Rescript on Education (1890) were made and the people's sacrifice was asked. With a clear vision, determined leaders and a responsive populace it was not surprising why industrialization and militarization proceeded at a spectacular pace and within less than one generation Japan became a power on a par with Western powers.

In Thailand, the immediate task of the modernizing elites was nation building to unify the country under one central government with a distinct national identity, common language and culture. Thailand in the premodern period was different from Japan in the heterogeneity of the population and the very underdeveloped state of the economy, transportation and education of the people and in the decentralized nature of political power which made the

provinces, particularly those in the frontier regions, relatively free from direct controls from the government in Bangkok. Effective controls from the center and inculcation in the people of self consciousness as members of the modern Thai state were considered by the modernizing elites to be the most immediate task in order to forestall Western powers' design to carve up Thailand. In this effort they can be said to be relatively quite successful. National integration was achieved and a new Thai identity has emerged.

Another immediate task of the Thai modernizing elites was to institute reforms in various spheres-governmental, administrative, legal, educational, religious, judicial and military, etc. – in order to lay the foundation for a modern state and to impress Western powers of Thailand's ability and willingness to initiate changes, thus preventing them from using Thailand's alleged backwardness as pretext to colonize it. Slavery as well as customs deemed humiliating to human dignity and social justice such as crawling with one's face down when in front of the king caning and court trials by ordeals were abolished. The oppressive system of corvee labor was replaced by a poll tax and Western style military conscription. Foreign advisers from various Western countries and also from Japan were employed in the government service and as in Japan many students were sent to study in Western countries. Rama V himself visited Europe twice with a big delegation.

It should be noted that industrialization was not in the least in the program of modernizatiion launched by the Thai elites under the absolute monarchy. As mentioned before, they had no vision of being on a par with Western powers by means of industrialization and militarization. Even if they were determined to do so, it would have been very unrealistic in view of the very small population of the country (about 5 millions) in relation to land resources and the farmers' dislike of regimented life as wage workers. When modernizatiion progressed, Thailand was in a great need for labor for non-agricultural work such as in the processing of agricultural produce for export and construction of railway lines. This was supplied by Chinese immigrants who came to Thailand in drove in the 19th and early 20th century.

As to the modernization of the economy the absolute monarchy hoped to rely on increasing production in agriculture, particularly rice which was the main export of the country. There were some investments in improving irrigation facilities but most investments

were made in building railway and telegraph lines and improving waterways as means to transport agricultural produce for export and to facilitate communication between Bangkok and the provinces. Because of the limit on its taxing power on imports and exports imposed by Western powers, the government was always short of funds to finance infrastructure projects. Let alone to build modern factories.

The pace of modernization was slowed down by the problem of lack of qualified personnel educated in modern ideas to man the expanding bureaucracy.[64] The older generation of government officials were educated in Buddhist studies and could not be relied on to understand the working of modern bureaucracy organized along functional lines and operating on the principle of the rule of law. In the economy trade was dominated by ethnic Chinese merchant-middlemen who were interested only in making quick profits and very old-fashioned in the way of running family business. They had no ability nor motivation to expand into manufacturing industry.

In political and educational reforms, the Chakri reformation led to a contradiction. On the one hand a modern nation state and small class of modern educated people mostly working in the government were created. On the other hand as a result of increasing efficiency and effectiveness of the reformed government, political power was more concentrated in the hand of the king and high ranking members of the royal family. Absolute monarchy now became real in fact compared with the decentralized patrimonialism of the past. This caused increasing alienation among the middle level members of the bureaucracy, both civilian and military, who found their upward mobility blocked and their aspiration for modern Thailand frustrated. They organized a coup d'etat on June 24, 1932 which brought an end to the absolute monarchy and replaced it with a constitutional one which has remained until the present.

The new modernizing elites continued modernization programs with more nationalistic fervor and appeal to the people for supports. However, the struggle for power within them led to political instability and incoherent policies. First, there was a rivalry between the military and civilian wings of the new elites, ending with the dominance of the former. Later on in the 1950s there were conflicts between different factions in the military. Only during the 1960s the military can be said to have a firm hand in running the country and

it was during this period that modern economic development based on industrialization was begun and brought about a rapid expansion of the middle class. What happened to the absolute monarchy in the early 1930s now happened to the military. The rising middle class increasingly resented the military-controlled government and challenged it in bloody protests first in October 1973 and later in May 1992 in which many pro-democracy demonstrators were killed. Now Thailand has a democratically elected government but, as will be discussed later, Thai democracy still suffers from many contradictions in the traditional value system and weak social orgainzation.

As to economic modernization the new elites first pursued the policy of economic nationalism which aimed at controlling the Chinese dominance of trade and industrializing the country by means of direct government investment in building modern factories. Interrupted during World War II this policy was resumed after the war and not surprisingly met with total failures due to inefficiency and corruption. Early in the 1960s a new policy was adopted to rely on the private sector for industrialization. Foreign investement, particularly from Japan, was welcome. There has been a change in the traditional attitude of the government toward private businessmen. In the past the government itself was an obstacle to economic development because of its distrust of merchants and demands of corrupt officials for protection money. Since the 1960s this has changed. There has been a good cooperation now between it and the private sector.[65]

Despite high economic growth rates in recent years economic modernization in Thailand still has a long way to go. Most businesses are either family owned or controlled, though professional managers are increasingly employed and university graduates now are more attracted to employment in the private sector than in the government. One of the more important problems concerns the widening income gap between the modern and traditional sectors of the economy. The latter still employ the majority of the labor forces engaged in agricultural production, particularly growing rice, and petty trades. Compared with Japan income gaps are very high between those with university degrees or occupying high positions in modern business and those with low education or doing unskilled labor.[66]

In Japan, as pointed out by Tominaga, economic modernization preceded political, social and cultural modernization. He labels it "lame, hobbling modernization" which leads to

social strains because social and cultural modernity has been out of place or extremely weak.[67] Instead of labeling it "a paradoxical development" as Tominaga does, Minai inclines to see it as "distorted rationalism" of the planning peculiar to late development.[68]

In their determination to push industrialization the Meiji oligarchies selectively emphasized certain social values previously internalized only by the samurai such as the values of giri (duty), chu (loyalty) and on (blessings) and propagated them among the masses. Liberalism saw only a brief life during the so-called "Taisho democracy" roughly from the late 1910s to the end of the 1920s.[69] As a consequence, "modern development in Japan proceeded in the economic sub-system and retarded in other sub-systems, i.e. democratization"[70]

While distorted rationalism may have been a problem in Japan, in Thailand modernization can be said to suffer from the problem of "stunted rationalism". It has been retarded in all sub-systems owing to difficulties encountered in changing the traditional value system and social organization to meet the requirements of modern industrial and democratic society. Norman Jacobs calls it "modernization without development". His argument was that the modernizing elites, rooted in the patrimonial tradition of government, were not willing to see changes that were likely to lead to their loss of power. They allowed only formal or superficial changes.[71] In the same vein, Fred Riggs describes Thailand as a "bureaucratic polity" in which the government bureaucracy was modern in from but inefficient in its functioning because of the influence of old cultural values and was still dominant in politics because of the absence of extra-bureaucratic institutions such as political parties and organized interest groups.[72] Anderson in his revisionist view of Thai modernization attributes to the Thai kings under absolute monarchy much more limited intentions than formerly thought. Being concerned with keeping their power, they were in his view more similar to the antive rulers in the indirectly ruled principalities under Western colonialism than to the Meiji oligarchies.[73]

These arguments are obviously oversimplified and thus are at best only partially true and in the case of Anderson patently biased or one-sided.[74] They do not look at modernization as a whole and thus fail to understand the various problems faced by the modernizing elites, particularly those in the traditional value system and social organization.

Some arguments are implicitly influenced by a functional view of society and thus fail to see the increasing contradictions in Thai society, particularly the increasing resentment of the expanding middle class against the military-dominated government even during the 1960s when the military was in full power and their field research was undertaken. Their arguments also suffer from the ethnocentric Western view which implicitly equates modernization with changes toward Western-style rational individualism, functional specificity and affective neutrality in social relations. This can hardly be the case in Asian countries with cultural and religious traditions different from those in the West. They thus failed to see significant changes, particularly the structural ones in the relations between different social classes and groups, taking place in Thai society when they conducted their research.

The emphasis on groupism and harmony certainly makes it difficult for the development of a full freedom of individual expression in Japan. Insofar as modernization means progress and, therefore, structural differentiation,[75] Japan's political modernization is also hampered by too much cozy relations between politicians, bureaucrats and big businessmen. Money politics open the way for the influence of vested interests in political decision making. The problem is worse in Thailand where vote buying is rampant and businessmen are politicians at the same time, the so-called businessman-cum-politicians who regard investment of money in politics as a kind of business with a likelihood of a high rate of return.[76] Thai democracy is also inherently unstable because of, as mentioned earlier, the self-centered, individualistic behavior of politicians many of whom are lacking in moral fineness. Despite the recognition of the need for unity, cooperation and more self discipline, politics in Thailand is still plagued with the problems of personal conflicts, sometimes on trivial matters.[77]

In conclusion, in both Japan and Thailand traditional value systems and social organization have had a strong influence on the goals and the patterns of modernization. In Japan the society was tightly organized. The modernizing elites were able to selectively use traditional social values in support of rapid industrialization, though at the expense of political modernization. In Thailand, the loosely structured system helped the country survive the crisis posed by Western colonialism and has enabled it to enjoy high rates of economic growth in recent years through the change in the attitude of the people toward work, in the

government's attitude toward business, in the social status of businessmen and through the adoption of pragmatic policies such as reliance on the market economy and welcoming of foreign investment, etc. In politics the value of individual freedom helps bring democracy but here, as well as in the economy, modernization is still retarded by the tenacious persistence of certain traditional values and weak social controls over the individuals.

Modern Japan and Thailand are similar in retaining the institution of monarchy in the modern period. The Japanese emperor and the Thai king are help in high esteem by the people in each country. They have played a very important role in legitimizing changes, particularly changes in power relations toward more democracy.[78] They represent the elements of continuity and stability which are important requirements for the success of peaceful, radical changes. In this respect modernization in Japan and Thailand has faced less obstacles and less social dislocations than that in other Asia countries without this basically conservative institution.

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[35] Arranged by the total number of stories taught in elementary schools in all grades in the courses on values education. "disciplined life" ranks second (21) after" sympathy and kindness" (22) as the most important values emphasized. See Mary Rees Nishio. "Software of the Spirit: Current Values Education in Japan", in *Journal of the Institute of International Sociology,* Kake International Center for Academic Exchange. No. 2, 1994, p.40.

[36] For the importance of the reinterpretation of Buddhist teachings, see Prasert Yamklinfung, "Buddhist Revival and Modernization in Thailand", Tsukuda University Journal of Area Studies. No.8, 1990, pp.101-124.

[37] H. Nishio, "Political Centralism and Economic Consequences: An Analysis of Early Japanese Modernization", in E.B. Harvery, ed. *Perspectives on Modernization* (Toronto: Univ, of Toronto Press. 1972), p.146.

[38] R. Bellah, op. cit., pp. 126-131.

[39] Ibid., pp.. 133-176.

[40] Ibid., p. 15.

[41] For Japanese work ethic, see Inagami Takeshi, "The Japanese Will to Work", in D.I. Okimoto and T.P. Rohlen, eds., *Inside the Japanese System,* op. cit., pp. 32-36.

[42] P.A. Kenevan, *Japanese Management Practices in Thailand,* op. cit., pp. 210-212.

[43] J.Takeuchi, *"Technology Transfer* and Japan-Thai Relations", in S.Yamashita, ed., *Transfer of Japanese Technology and Management to the ASEAN Countries* (Tokyo: Univ. of Tokyo Press, 1991), pp. 199-238.

[44] For consequences of Tokugawa political centralism, see H. Nishio, op. cit., pp. 147-159.

[45] Ibid., p. 155.

[46] T. Fukutake, *Japanese Rural Society,* op. cit., pp. 138-150.

[47] D.J. Steinberg, ed., *In Search of Southeast Asia: A Modern History,* rev. ed. (Honolulu: Univ. of Hawaii Press, 1985), p.116.

[48] On the traditional social organization of Thai society, see Akin Rabibhadana, *The Organization of Thai Society in the Early Bangkok Period,* 1782-1873 (Ithaca: Cornell Southeast Asia Program Data Paper No. 74, 1969) and Chai Ruengsilp, *Ancient Thai social History Before the 25th Buddhist Century* (in Thai), (Bangkok: Silpabannakan, 1980)

[49] Despite her description of Japan as a "shame culture", Ruth Benedict in fact did not give much emphasis on shame as a mechanism of social control. She referred to it as "a peripheral element, part of the much more complex code of ethics". See P. Kent, "Ruch Benedict's Original Wartime Study of the Japanese", *International Journal of Japanese Sociology,* No.3, Oct. 1994, p. 92.

[50] L.M. Hanks. "The Thai Social Order as Entourage and Circle", in G.W. Skinner and A.Th. Kirsch, eds., *Change and Persistence in Thai Society* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1975), pp. 197-218.

[51] Likhit Dhiravegin, "The one-And-A-Half Party System and the Halfway Democracy: A Comparative Petspeetive", in K. Yoshihara, ed., *Thai Perceptions of Japanese Modernization* (Kuala Lumpur: Falcon Press. 1989), pp. 68-90.

[52] W.J. Klausner, op. cit., p.325.

[53] The late Dr. Boonsanong insisted that social relations in Thai society are loosely structured at the inter-personal level because Thais do not submit to the authority of groups but not so at the institutional level because of the existence of normative control relying on the Thais' submissive attitude toward power. The Japanese, on the other hand, is "submissive to only his group and not necessarily to all that is powerful". See Boonsanong Punyodyana, *Thai Selective Social Change: A Study With Comparative Reference to Japan.* Ph. d. Dissertation, Cornell Univ., 1971, pp. 368-370.

[54] E.B. Ayal, op. cit., p.48.

[55] Mary Rees Nishio, op. cit., p.40.

[56] S.M. Lipset, op. cit., p. 54.

[57] Keiko Minai, "Fundamental Value Structure and Its Transformation: Values in Planned Development", in H. Mannari et. Al., eds., *Power Shifts and Value Changes in the Post Cold War World,* op. cit., p. 170.

[58] Ibid., p. 170.

[59] D.J. Steinberg, ed., op. cit., p.184.

[60] Keiko Minai, op. cit., p. 170.

[61] R. Bellah, op. cit., pp. 20-21.

[62] S.M. Lipset, op. cit., p.43.

[63] Toru Yano, "Political Structure of a Rice-Growing State", in Y. Ishii, ed., op. cit., p. 127.

[64] D.J. Steinberg, ed., op. cit., p. 186.

[65] On changing government business relations in Thailand, see Prasert Yamklinfung, "From Bureaucratic Polity to Unstable Democracy: Politics and Government-Business Relations in Thailand", *Journal of Kibi International University,* No. 4, 1994, pp.147-163.

[66] J. Takeuchi, "Technology Transfer and Japan-Thai Relation", op. cit., pp. 234-236.

[67] K. Tominaga, Nihon no Kindaika to Shakai Hendo (Modernization and Social Change in Japan), (Tokyo: kodansha, 1990); Book Review by H. K. Nishio

[68] Keiko Minai, op. cit., p. 167.

[69] Ibid., p.173.

[70] Ibid., p. 167.

[71] Norman Jacobs, *Modernization Without Development: Thailand as an Asian Case Study* (New York: Praeger, 1971).

[72] F.W.Riggs, *Thailand: The Modernization of a Bureaucratic Polity* (Honolulu: East-West Center, 1966).

[73] B.R. O'G. Anderson, "Studies of the Thai State: the State of Thai Studies", in E.B. Ayal, ed., *The Study of Thailand, op. cit.*, pp. 193-247.

[74] Eric Cohen, *Thai Society in Comparative Perspective* (Bangkok: White Lotus, 1991),p.56.

[75] Kayal Azumi, "An Overview: Issues in Cross-National Research in Sociology", in H. Mannari et. Al., eds., op. cit., p.9.

[76] Likhit Dhiravegin, op. cit., p.9

[77] For a more detailed discussion of modernization in Thailand, see Prasert Yamklinfung, "The Problem of Modernization of Thai Society", Tsukuba University Journal of Area Studies, No.9, 1991,pp.55-70.

[78] S.M. Lipset, op. cit., p.68.