Ronald Dore's 'Japan'

The works of Ronald Dore (1925-2018) have inspired generations of Japanese studies and social science scholars. His classic works are still on required reading lists, and may well be for decades to come. Their longevity is a testimony to the quality of the underlying research, its empirical detail, and its lucid, nuanced presentation. The range of subject matter they cover is truly remarkable, but few people realise the full scope of his work beyond their own areas of expertise.

The first task of this essay is thus to survey that scope, although for reasons of space, this will be limited to his major English language books. The second and more challenging task is to show how that scope came about, and in doing so, to interpret the underlying threads or concepts which link his publications, and to show how they evolved. For this, some biographical information is necessary, although this essay is not a biography *per se*.[1] The third task is to show how his relationship with 'Japan' changed over time, and how this is reflected in his scholarship.

The essay is divided into four sections, which are broadly chronological, as well as a concluding assessment. The first covers the period up until the late 1960s. It begins with a very brief sketch of Dore's encounter with 'Japan' prior to actually going there in 1950, before describing his 'discovery' of Japan through which his intellectual foundations were laid, notably in *City Life in Japan* (1958), *Land Reform in Japan* (1959) and *Education in Tokugawa Japan* (1963).[2] Section two looks at his subsequent comparative work, focusing on the interplay of late development and culture, notably in *British Factory-Japanese Factory*

(1973) and *The Diploma Disease* (1976).[3] In the 1980s Japan became a source of inspiration for his policy-oriented publications, as seen for example in *Flexible Rigidities* (1986) and *Taking Japan Seriously* (1987), which we consider in section three.[4] Section 4 looks at Dore's work from the 1990s onwards. Britain and the US increasingly sought neoliberal solutions to their economic problems contrary to his proposals, and he began to write of a clash of capitalisms, culminating in *Stock Market Capitalism: Welfare Capitalism* (2000).[5]

Dore became increasingly concerned that Japan was losing this 'Darwinian contest,' and that the interlocking institutions and 'motivational congruence' of its distinctive political economy were being pulled apart by a combination of external (US) pressure and seduction, and internal changes. These included the decline of the labour movement, and growing social stratification. Although his academic writing was equivocal about the extent of actual change in key battlegrounds such as corporate governance, he saw ideological resistance crumbling. Overall he became more polemical, particularly when writing for Japanese audience, through a series of books he wrote in Japanese, and his column in the *Tokyo shinbun*. The aptly titled *Cantankerous Essays* (2015), his last book, reflects the interplay of personal change, changing Japan and a changing world (dis)order.[6]

A single essay such as this can hardly do justice to Dore's prolific intellectual life and influence, which extends well beyond Japanese studies. It does, however, offer an opportunity to reflect on Japan's own postwar trajectory, together with that of an empathetic and astute observer, fluent in Japanese, who was able to challenge Western-centric modernization and economic theories by drawing on Japan's experience. Table 1 offers a summary, tracing his affiliations, academic focus areas, representative publications, and evolving relationship with 'Japan.' The rest of the essay unpacks the table.

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Discovering Japan

When SOAS celebrated its centenary, and the centenary of Japanese studies in February 2016, Ronald Dore was the last surviving 'Dulwich boy.' Plucked out of Poole Grammar School to study an enemy language at the (then) School of Oriental Studies in 1942, his preference was to study Turkish, but he was assigned to Japanese, which he studied for the next eighteen months. A leg injury prevented him from being sent to India with his classmates, and he stayed on to teach Japanese, while taking an external London University degree in Japanese language and literature. Demobilized in 1947, he was given an award for further study, but unable to secure a visa to go to Japan with its travel grant, he spent the next summer in the Cambridge University library cataloguing the Satow and Aston collections. There he came across Arai Hakuseki's autobiography, Oritaku shiba no ki. He became fascinated by the scope and depth of education in Tokugawa Japan, and chose 'Japanese Confucianism' as his Ph.D topic at SOAS.[7]

> It made a good, traditionally Orientalist subject, but reading not just about schools, but also the moralistic writings about education of the Confucianists, taught me a lot, as you can see from my frequent references back to Confucian ideas, contrasted with those of 'individualistic' Christianity.[8]

Before finally being able to go to Japan in 1950, he secured a lectureship at SOAS in 'Japanese institutions,' which was kept open for him, and in anticipation, he took some introductory classes in sociology and psychology at LSE. He travelled to Japan as 'honorary

secretary to the Cultural Advisor to the United Kingdom Liaison Mission to the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers.' After commuting to the Tokyo University library from the Cultural Advisor's home for six months, his fascination with what he saw going on around him proved too strong, and he moved to the bustling alleys of Hanazono chō, which, inspired in part by Lynd and Lynd's classic 'Middletown' work, he proceeded to study in great detail.[9]

City Life in Japan (1958)

This was eventually published as City Life in Japan, which is remarkable both for its rich empirical detail, and because it contains the buds of several key aspects of Dore's subsequent scholarship.[10] To understand these, some background information is needed. On his return to London in 1951 Dore continued to attend sociology seminars at LSE, including the Thursday evening seminar organized by graduate students, who included Ralf Dahrendorf and David Lockwood. There Talcott Parsons was hotly debated. While eschewing Parsons' grand theory and verbiage, Dore was drawn to Parsons' recasting of traditional-modern societal transformation studies as 'pattern variables,' especially those of ascription-achievement, and collectivity-self or individual orientation. Ascription and collectivity were held to be dominant in traditional societies, and achievement and self or individual orientation in modern, industrial societies.[11] Dore later argued that late Tokugawa society was already to a considerable extent achievement oriented, without abandoning elements of ascription or status. In the conclusion of City Life in Japan, he argued – somewhat tentatively – that Japan had in fact skipped an evolutionary transition into individual-orientation, and moved into a new form of collectivism.

Here he was drawing on another strand of evolutionary writing which was emerging in the US, about the passing of the age of individualism, and the increasing domination of economic and social life by large organizations. In particular, he drew on Riesman, Glaser and Denney's depiction of tradition-directed, inner-directed and outer-directed man, and the rise of outer-directed organization man from the 1940s.[12] Japan had missed the transition from tradition- to inner-directed man. For Dore this was overall good, because new forms of social collectivity or solidarity were helping rather than hindering Japan's economic development. It was not entirely good, however, as Dore shared some of Riesman *et.al.'s* reservations about organization man. In part Dore's highly nuanced evolutionary conceptualization derives from his fusion of these two strands of literature – Parsons' pattern variables, and the increasing prominence of large-scale organizations – and his reshaping of them as flexible constructs rather than unilinear evolutionary trends as he tried to make sense of transformations going on in Japan.

While rejecting unilinear views of social evolution, Dore also rejected cultural particularism, also by reworking a rigid dichotomy flexibly, as well as by placing social evolution and culture in tension with each other. One could not study Japanese society in the 1950s without confronting The Chrysanthemum and the Sword and its dichotomy of Japanese shame culture and Western guilt culture; indeed Dore's first seminar at LSE, in 1952, was on this book.[13] He criticized the book's assumption of unchanging Japanese culture, and its treatment of the Japanese as alien others, using moral concepts from the West. Empathizing with the residents of Hanazono chō, he pointed to situations of guilt-induced behavior, and others in which it was shame-induced.[14] Both guilt and shame were in fact multidimensional constructs, and the mix both within and between them differed in different parts of Japan, such as cities and the countryside, and over time as well. Different combinations applied in

different contexts. Japan might be distinctive in terms of modal behavioural dispositions, but certainly not as a dichotomous, alien 'other.'

In brief, the twin rejection of universalism or unilinear evolution and dichotomous cultural particularism and their reworking into more flexible constructs were built into his maiden monograph. So was his orientation towards theory guided by meticulous empirical observation, as well as a strong empathy for the subjects of that observation. Finally, he insisted on distinguishing between social change caused by changes in economic organization, change from foreign emulation, and attitudinal changes deriving from both. The intellectual framework he established in this first book was thus nuanced, complex and fertile.

Land Reform in Japan (1959)

Eager to return to Japan, Dore got his chance in 1955 when the Royal Institute of International Affairs (RIIA) commissioned a study on Japan's land reforms. General MacArthur had hailed them as the greatest success since the Roman Gracchus brothers in the second century BC; while the RIIA associates doubted that the 'leopard could change its spots.' Japanese scholars, and in particular *kōza* school Marxists believed the reforms were transient, and that the landlords would make a comeback. Dore supported none of these views. His year-long study of three different villages convinced him that the Occupation had unblocked indigenous forces for social change rather than causing it, that a return to the 1930s was unlikely, and that agricultural productivity and village living standards were improving tangibly. He disagreed with his mentor and friend Fukutake Tadashi that progress and democracy required a breakdown of community constraints on the individual (or Westernization), positing instead that community cohesion had shifted from vertical, landlord

domination to horizontal owner-farmer cooperation, and that in the process, community cohesion had strengthened, which was a good thing for democracy.

In this assessment Dore was both elaborating and to some extent contradicting the findings of his City Life in Japan study. He was laying new foundations for future work. And critically, his Land Reform in Japan study brought him into contact with scholars outside Japanese studies, especially in the new and rapidly expanding field of development studies. Although many were keen to learn the lessons of Japan's success, Dore believed that the sources of change (indigenous evolution versus imported institutions, just noted) were difficult to separate, and that Japan's experience was unlikely to be repeated because of its idiosyncratic features. He began to untangle these, and after spending time at the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in 1965, advanced a 'reactionary thesis.'[15]

He distinguished between two types of landlord – those who control territory by conquest or infeudation, and those who become landlords by economic means within an existing order – and hence two types of land reform. In Japan, the source of inspiration for this thesis, Type 1 land reform had been achieved by the Meiji Restoration, and Type 2 land reform after World War II. He further argued that Type 2 landlords had played an important role in improving productivity in rural Japan through their higher levels of education, access to new knowledge and technologies, and their ability to raise capital, and that until 1920, rural villages had benefited from their presence. Japan would have been severely disadvantaged if both had been carried out in 1868, and he argued that reforms in other countries should differentiate between the two.

Education in Tokugawa Japan (1963)

Dore resigned his post at SOAS in 1956 to spend another six months in Yamanashi writing up his findings. From there he moved to the University of British Columbia, where he helped to launch Japanese Studies, and he returned to his Tokugawa education and Confucianism notes. By now his focus had shifted, in line with development studies' growing interest in the 'preconditions' of 'modernization.' Japan was, again, of considerable interest. Some attributed Japan's remarkable prewar growth and postwar recovery to functional equivalents of factors deemed important in the West, such as Max Weber's Protestant ethic.[16] Characteristically, Dore took a different tack. He deployed Parsons' pattern variables to show how ascription and achievement co-existed in Tokugawa Japan, with the weight shifting decisively towards achievement in schools and bureaucracies by the end of the Tokugawa era. And his estimates put literacy rates in the 1870s on a par with, if not higher than, many Western countries at the time, Britain included.

This was significant because Japan was at the beginning of its industrialization, while Britain was a century into it. The earlier relative timing made a crucial difference, not just because it facilitated Japan's mastery of imported technologies, but because formal schooling became the vehicle for social selection and pathway for advancement in industrializing Japan in a way that it did not for Britain, at a time moreover when technologies and organizations were becoming more complex, conferring an advantage on formal learning. These observations marked a significant advancement of Dore's late development thesis, published just one year after that of Gerschenkron (1962):[17]

> Education seems to have become the major mechanism of social selection at an earlier stage of industrialization in Japan than in Western countries. Learning was the royal road not only to the professions, but also to business success as well – as the very high proportion of university graduates among Japanese business-men suggests. Undoubtedly one explanation of this fact is that Japan was a

> late developer, catching up by learning, and hence having more practical use for already systematized knowledge (Dore, 1963: 293).

A further insight from this study, however, which we shall return to below, was that not all late developers are the same. Starting points matter, and Japan was well served by Tokugawa education and its Confucian base.

The final chapter of *Education in Tokugawa Japan* was presented at the first of the Hakone conferences on Modern Japan, papers from which were published in a series by Princeton University Press.[18] The conferences and publications were controversial, as they sought to create a new narrative about Japan's recent history.[19] The 'modernization' narrative was strongly critical of Marxist historiography, while left-leaning scholars saw it as part of the 'Reischauer Offensive,' serving US Cold War strategy in Asia. Dore was reluctant to commit to either side. His 'balance sheet account' was equivocal:

> While it is true that the economic growth of Japan in widely regarded as a success story, there are equally, in the social and political sphere, a good many phases of Japan's modern development which most people would agree are much less worthy of admiration. And the Tokugawa schools probably contributed about equally to each side of the balance sheet' (Dore, 1963: 314).

The good and bad sides were 'inextricably intermixed;' the same legacy promoted both economic growth and militaristic expansionism, and it is doubtful that Japan could have had the one without the other' (p.315).

Japan as comparative reference point

In the 1960s Dore was mostly based in London, first as a Reader at the LSE, and subsequently as a joint LSE-SOAS Professor, with a year at the FAO in between, which brought him into contact with development studies focused on Africa, Latin America and south and east Asia. He taught a comparative course on the sociology of development with Tom Bottomore and Ernest Gellner at LSE, and his research became more explicitly comparative, with Japan as the reference point for those comparisons.

British Factory – Japanese Factory (1973)

Dore was drawn to industrial relations which, according to James Abegglen and others, were quite different in Japan than in the West, and moreso in the modern, large firm sector than in the traditional small firm sector, suggesting that the differences were not simply a product of Japan's pre-industrial past or 'backwardness.'[20] And as there seemed to be differences *within* Japan, cultural explanations by themselves were insufficient.

He took part in a comparative comparative UK-Japan project in which pairs of researchers focused on different industries. Dore and his Japanese counterpart Hazama Hiroshi studied the electric machine industry, and they chose to compare two Hitachi factories in Japan – the heavy electric Hitachi Works and the consumer electric Taga Works – with two similar factories of what was then English Electric in Britain. It was a meticulous study which yielded rich empirically grounded insights based on survey, interview and observation.

If the method was compelling and the insights rich, however, the interpretation of that material was controversial. In chapter 8 of British Factory-Japanese Factory ("The Enterprise as Community") Dore depicted Hitachi's 'welfare corporatism' and its diffuse employee-

company relations, in contrast to the specific, associational employee-company relations at English Electric. He attributed many features of the former to Japan's late development. Moreover, he argued, these were more suited to an age of capital-intensive, large scale factory production, in which cooperative industrial relations conferred a productive advantage. Expensive machines were kept busy, and less time was lost bickering over pay and conditions with zero-sum attitudes held over from the Victorian age of small factories engaged in atomistic competition with externalized labour markets for obstreperous craftsmen. Britain, he predicted, would move more towards Japan than Japan would move towards Britain. This 'reverse convergence' thesis, as some dubbed it, provoked considerable scepticism inside Japan, and indignation outside it, especially in Britain.

Interestingly, based on the same observations and also employing Parsons' pattern variables, Hazama similarly characterized employment relations in Hitachi as community-like, and those in English Electric as associational, but, he added, when it came to union-member relations, this was reversed.[21] And while both researchers held that prewar employer paternalism in Japan had been transformed, with welfare provision now an institutionalized employee right set by collective bargaining and joint consultation, Hazama was more sceptical about the 'enterprise as community' as it had supplanted the 'workplace as community.'[22] His conclusion adopted a reflexive Japanese stance, namely what Japan might learn from Britain, the need for greater individualism and a new, democratic type of workplace.

A further debate hinged on just how much of Hitachi's industrial relations were the product of late development versus Japan's culture or indeed historical contingencies. In addition, Robert Cole perceptively questioned the underlying presumption of capitalism becoming

ever-more bureaucratic, suggesting that rapid environmental change might bring a reversal of that trend, and hence of Japan's advantage.[23] This was to become an even more critical issue when it came to Dore's next explicitly comparative project, in which he returned to education. One can detect in both *British Factory-Japanese Factory* and *The Diploma Disease*, a shifting of weight in Dore's comparative stance. Japan had become his essential point of reference, and this was based on the belief that its institutions were well suited to technological and managerial evolutionary trends – in essence a Weberian bureaucratization stance.

The Diploma Disease (1976)

When Dore returned to the UK after spending a year at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton in 1969 writing up British Factory-Japanese Factory, he moved to the recently established Institute of Development Studies, where he joined an interdisciplinary faculty. He also returned to the topic of education, and again employed explicit comparisons, mainly of developing countries. Having gone to Japan to prepare a report for the OECD on Japanese education in 1970, he visited schools in Sri Lanka the following year as a member of an ILO mission sent to study large scale youth unemployment. There he observed schools producing more graduates than could be absorbed by the modern industrial sector, resulting in qualification inflation as well as youth unemployment.

He was struck by how teachers and students alike responded to his questions. Their responses reflected a view of education, not as 'learning for its own sake,' or 'learning to do a job,' but rather as learning to obtain a qualification, or certificate – a ticket which was necessary (but no longer sufficient) for access to a modern sector job, made all the more attractive by the sharpness of the modern-traditional sector divide in terms of pay, job

security, status and all their associated benefits. The pupils and teachers were behaving quite rationally as individuals, but the societal outcome was disastrous, since it led to a decline in 'real' learning, and ultimately declining capabilities in all sectors, the modern sector not least.

Thus while late developers made greater use of formal education to allocate human resources to the modern sector, and in Japan's case this had served it well, enabling it to absorb Western technologies and modern management methods in large organizations quickly, they were prone to the 'diploma disease,' a societal rather than an individual scourge. And while selection based on merit benefited late developers in principle, there was a downside to meritocracy as well. As Michael Young showed in his dystopian The Rise of the Meritocracy, the beneficiaries were prone to locking in their advantages, if not for themselves, then for their offspring.[24]

How, then, had Japan as a late developer avoided the scourge of the 'diploma disease'? Partly because it was not as late a developer as Sri Lanka.[25] Early late developer Japan's institutional framework had been established before pre-career qualifications had become formalized; only in 1890 did a degree from the Law Faculty at Tokyo University become the passport to the bureaucracy. Moreover, primary education was well established before routes to higher levels were expanded. But Tokugawa education traditions also played a part. Tokugawa society was stratified, and education did not serve to take people out of their hereditarily ascribed roles, but to perform them better. Teaching may have been ritualistic, but it was not instrumental. Learning was a means of self development, but not of social mobility. 'It made it possible to establish schools in the villages which gave every farmer's children the opportunity for general education, without making them too proud to get their feet wet and their hands dirty.'[26]

Here Dore was expanding the scope of his late development thesis, and generalizing it – 'the later the development, the more…' – at the same time as acknowledging the importance of culture, tradition, and contingency. The evolutionary vision underpinning his late development thesis was still that of bureaucratization, as he later reflected:

> 'My assumption about the direction of social evolution was very much coloured by my experience of Japan where the sort of bureaucratic career with seniority-constrained promotion, publicly known salary scales and lifetime security – which in Europe is characteristic only of public sector organizations like the civil service, the policy, the army and the universities – is the common norm also in private sector corporations. I assumed that this would be more and more the case in Europe too. One could point to the management organizations of the larger firms – ICI, Unilever, Siemens, Thompson, Olivetti, Shell, BP – as front runners of the trend. But then, along came Mrs Thatcher, Ronald Reagan and the neoliberal marketist individualist in the Anglo-Saxon world. What she does is the exact opposite – to make the public sector like the private sector by introducing the short-term contractual market principle there too.'[27]

This was with the benefit of hindsight; in the 1980s he viewed Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan as political aberrants rather than architects of a durable trend, and their policies as misinformed, and socially regressive. Japan, on the other hand, had 'seen the shape of the future and made it work.'[28] It was riding high, and many were keen to learn its lessons.

Japan as a source of policy inspiration

By the late 1970s development studies was in a state of flux, gripped by internal debates. Dore himself had reservations about the field and his role in it, and came to the think that the

most legitimate way to help developing countries was to explore how developed countries like the UK might transition out of industries which competed with, and impeded imports from, developing countries. Textiles was one such industry. Dore initiated a study comparing textile industry adjustment in Britain, France and Japan, parts of which were published, but not the planned book. Parts found their way into *Flexible Rigidities* (1986), which followed an ILO project on structural adjustment.

Dore had moved from the Institute of Development Studies in 1981 to become assistant director of the newly-created Technical Change Centre, which had a double brief to promote technological innovation, and mitigate any adverse consequences from this. It was a very different environment from that of the IDS, whose outputs were directed towards managers and industry policy makers in addition to academics. Japan, now the world's second biggest economy, took on a very different role in Dore's work in this context. In brief, while he was careful to refute the idea that Japan was a 'model,' given its different cultural and institutional base, it was without doubt his source of policy inspiration. In the context of the Thatcher government's attempts to cast off institutional 'rigidities' of the past, especially those related to industrial relations, and to let the winds of market forces – or gales of creative destruction – blow, Dore set his sails in the opposite direction. In contrast to the (short term) allocative efficiency promoted by the Thatcher reforms, he argued that Japan had risen to prominence by making its institutional rigidities flexible.

His framing of the issue was both provocative and clever. All developed countries had been challenged by rising oil prices, inflation and the need for structural adjustment – shifting resources from declining industries into rising ones. Using a ladder metaphor, he argued that Japan had climbed the structural upgrading ladder after World War II by promoting a

succession of new industries to rapidly bring the country to the technological frontier. It, too, had been challenged by rising oil prices, but had adapted, and conquered inflation much more rapidly than other countries. It was responding to trade friction through structural adjustment. And whereas textiles and apparel from developing countries were making significant inroads in Britain and France, despite their multi-fiber agreement import quotas, in Japan the impact was limited, even without the quotas. How had Japan achieved all this, despite its obvious institutional rigidities? And should not countries like Britain change tack and learn from Japan?

Answering his own questions was a challenge. Maintaining postwar institutions such as lifetime employment and the community firm, long-term contracting and patient capital, rather than scrapping them, had enabled Japan to reap the benefits of 'x-efficiency,'[29] including goodwill, diligence, and caring about the quality of work, as well as a shared sense of fairness and greater equality. If people are less worried about losing their jobs, or their subcontracting orders, and confident that benefits and pain will be shared, they are more likely to engage in transformative innovation and resource shifting than if they are threatened. The textile case showed how the industry had moved from labour-intense cost competitiveness to higher value adding through a combination of innovation, high investment rates, product quality and cost reduction, as well as Japan-specific factors such as the structure of domestic production and consumption markets, which were all more important than government protection. Thus there were alternatives to the market forces route which potentially offered better outcomes in terms of both efficiency and fairness. Governments were not impediments; they had important roles to play in terms of setting direction, creating incentives and promoting new developments. They did this through two-way interaction with business associations and organizations.[30]

Debates in the 1980s about how to counter economic stagnation and renew growth to which people had become accustomed from the postwar 'golden era' became highly polarized. On one side were the free marketeers – neoliberals, and most mainstream economists by virtue of their theoretical assumptions. On the other side were a diverse group of 'statists,' heterodox economists and neocorporatists, who believed (with different emphases) in government, business and union concertation, and extra-market coordination. Dore was aligned with the latter camp, which was skeptical of economic salvation through the market. Japan was of particular interest to this camp, and Dore was one of its most articulate interpreters.

Dore refined his thinking on what could be learned from Japan in his next book, *Taking Japan Seriously*, published just one year after *Flexible Rigidities*, and again framed it in the context of technological innovation, and changing work. Japan had much to teach as a result of its fortune of being a late developer (as well as a cautionary tale about meritocracy). But there were two fundamental problems, apart from the willingness of others to learn. First, ideas or institutions couldn't just be taken from Japan piecemeal; the Japanese 'system' was a cohesive combination of interlocking institutions and 'motivational congruence,' and it was effective – efficient and relatively equitable – *because* it was a system. He called it the 'community (firm) model,' and contrasted it with the Anglo-Saxon 'company law model.' Second, the philosophical (religious even) roots of the models were different. This claim was signaled by the book's 'Confucian perspective' subtitle. In brief, as set out in the opening page of the book:

> Start from the assumptions of original sin, as did some of the Confucianists' opponents in ancient China, and as did the Christian divines of the eighteenth century societies in which our western economic doctrines evolved, and you get one set of answers. It is the set of answers which Mrs Thatcher and Mr

> Reagan have recently reasserted with force and clarity. People work for self-interest. If you want a peaceful and prosperous society, just set up institutions in such a way that people's self interest is mobilized and let the invisible hand of the market do the rest. Reduce everything to the bottom line.
>
> If, by contrast, you start, as at least the followers of Mencius among the Confucianists did, from the assumption of original virtue, then something else follows. You assume the bonds of friendship and fellow-feeling are also important, and a sense of loyalty and belonging – to one's community, one's firm, one's nation – and the sense of responsibility which goes with it. And you would be likely to assume that economic institutions which bring out the best in people, rather than the worst, make for a more pleasant and peaceful, and probably in the end more generally prosperous, society (Dore, 1987: vii).

In other words, pessimistic versus optimistic views of human nature were deeply institutionalized; what works in Japan will not work in Britain, or America.[31]

From the clash of capitalisms to cantankerous essays

The end of the Cold War, Francis Fukuyama boldly proclaimed, had put paid to any alternative to (American) liberal capitalism; it marked the 'end of history.'[32] Others saw it differently, as the beginning of a new era marked by competition between different types of capitalism.[33] For Michel Albert this meant a contest between continental 'Rhine capitalism' and Anglo-American capitalism.[34] He believed Rhine capitalism was giving ground to Anglo-American capitalism, despite being more efficient and equitable, because it was losing the 'ideological beauty contest,' such that 'even the good grey burghers of Zurich and Frankfurt are beginning to wonder what it feels like to win the jackpot with one spin of the roulette wheel.'[35]

Dore had similar concerns about Japanese capitalism. US trade negotiators had been putting pressure on Japan to reduce its massive trade surpluses. 'Voluntary' export restraints and a massive yen currency appreciation engineered by the Plaza Accord in 1985 had not solved the problem. Japan, the negotiators decided, was playing by different rules, with a different kind of capitalism. In the late 1980s they set about tackling Japan's 'structural impediments' to create a 'level playing field.' At virtually the same time the Japanese economy faltered when its asset bubbles burst, while the US economy gradually began to recover momentum. How would this 'Darwinian contest,' as Dore described it, unfold?[36]

It was not simply a matter of external pressure. What was not changed from without might be changed from within. Dore had for some time been concerned about the 'depleting moral legacy of capitalism' – the reliance of capitalism on pre-capitalist moral constraints, which it progressively erodes.[37] A decade earlier this concern was directed towards the UK; now it was directed towards Japan. The postwar leftist causes and union movement were now in decline, their leadership sapped by growing social stratification. And whereas the first postwar generation had experienced hardship and rebuilt Japan in solidarity, now a second generation of the middle class (*chūryū nisei*), raised in relative urban prosperity, segregated from the working class in private schools, some educated abroad, were advocating 'reform' of the Japanese system in the direction of 'global standards,' which neoliberalism now presented itself as. Their case was buoyed by growing mistrust of Japan's bureaucracy, now cast as footdraggers opposed to reform to protect their own interests, rather than serving the nation.[38] A predictable outcome was growing inequality, which the *chūryū nisei* turned a blind eye towards.

Corporate governance was a critical arena for the Darwinian contest. A substantial section of *Stock Market Capitalism: Welfare Capitalism* was devoted to attempts to shift the 'employee favouring firm' towards the 'shareholder favouring firm' (as the community firm model and company law model were renamed, to highlight what was at stake) through the global tide of corporate governance reform, which washed Japan's shores in the 1990s. Dore rightly identified executive careers and remuneration, board selection and the legal framework of corporate governance as bulwarks in defending the employee favouring firm, and with it social fairness and equity. Critically, there was a gap between the practice of corporate governance and its legal framework. In the past this framework, which stipulated that shareholders were the legal owners, was given lip service; now the reformers wanted to align practice with the law.

Dore had predicted greater resistance to the siren calls of shareholder capitalism in Japan than from the burghers of Zurich and Frankfurt. Indeed despite his framing of the reform debates in Japan, he actually found limited change in practice. Even as the pace of corporate governance reform in Japan increased in the 2000s, hostile takeover cases began to appear in courts, and (mostly US) activist funds pressured managers of middle-sized businesses to disgorge their retained earnings, he still found a gap between actual practice and the law. He did, however, find little or no overt resistance to the *ideology* of shareholder sovereignty, which he interpreted as ideological conversion:

> No-one, in short, challenges either the supremacy of shareholder interests, nor the thesis that vulnerability to takeover is an essential instrument for the discipline of managers, nor the corollary that the stock market should be designed to facilitate its role as a market for corporate control. A few managers may mutter their dissatisfaction, but after less than two decades of missionary activity, the conversion of Japan to the theology of shareholder sovereignty seems complete.'[39]

The lack of overt resistance, or silence over the merits of Japan's employee-favouring version of 'welfare capitalism,' clearly irked Dore. He originally intended to call his final book 'Conspiracies of Silence,' but was persuaded to change it instead to *Cantankerous Essays*.[40] Before considering other 'conspiracies of silence' mentioned in the book, perhaps we should pause to consider whether his assessment of ideological conversion was fair, or predominantly polemical – designed to warn Japan off stumbling into neoliberal stock market capitalism – or whether he was indulging in jeremiad lamentation for a lost world, as he sometimes wondered.

Perhaps the answer is a combination of the three. Japan has changed, to be sure, partly along the lines Dore feared. Whether it could, or should, have fought such change, or whether some of the same factors which brought about change in the UK and US were also behind change in Japan, such as de-industrialization, may be debated.[41] Regarding polemics, he was unabashed that his work had become more polemical since the 1980s, when he became more involved in policy debates. Indeed, he felt it was his duty as an academic to be polemical. The range of policy measures he advocated at various points is extensive, from a basic citizen's income (as a response to a skills-upgrading gap, mentioned below), to Fairness Councils (to address Britain's industrial relations problems), starting careers earlier and avoiding learning achievement tests (though not exams per se, as a response to the diploma disease), 'Investment Inviting Import Quantitative Restrictions' (to reduce farcical managed trade and trade tensions), and 2050 Departments (to avoid policies which pre-empt choices of our grandchildren).

Polemics often involves simplification, while Dore had a very fine eye for detail and nuance. By and large he combined polemics, and detail and nuance, very effectively, although his writing for a popular audience, and his later books written in Japanese, were tilted towards the former, while his academic writing, was somewhat more cautious. Amazingly, he continued to do fieldwork into his 80s. Would the younger Dore have produced such lamentation? Possibly, and possibly not. Japan was emerging from wartime defeat then, now it appeared to be abandoning the things that had brought about recovery, and its version of a fair society based on productionist, employee-favouring capitalism.

Ultimately, Dore was concerned about life chances and a decent society. He viewed technology as a key driver of social and economic evolution (although conversely a lot of his work pointed to how society shapes the deployment of technology). He thought new technology had led to a polarization of skill requirements of jobs, whereby some people are doubly fortunate in having interesting jobs and getting well paid for them, while others find themselves unemployed or in 'Mcjobs.' There are various reasons for this, but he suspected that genes play a role.

In *Cantankerous Essays* he invites the reader to consider a farming family in 1850s Britain, where genetically-derived learning differences might make a modest difference to family prosperity, but not much. A century later, the education system sifted students by IQ into different streams, which meant different jobs. Still, there were plenty of jobs for those sorted into lower streams. By the 2010s, however, many of those jobs had been automated, and 'what we have are a lot of bright people who have mastered the machines, working seventy hours a week and earning vast sums, and an underclass of people who can only do the sort of simple job that almost anyone can do, who work fewer hours of work for pitiful incomes, or

zero hours because they can't find a job.'[42] Perhaps the relationship between ability distribution within and between populations, and genes, is best considered his hypothesis. In the book he did not try to tease out what could be attributed to other factors – socialization and social class, for example – or to what degree job polarization was imposed by technology-introducing capitalists in globalizing markets, but he considered the *a priori* rejection of genes as another 'conspiracy of silence.'

The main conspiracy of silence which made him cantankerous, however, was macroscopic, namely the reluctance of people to criticize Japanese foreign policy, its kowtowing to US foreign policy, and its contradictions in East Asia. The lament is a far cry from his first major foray into Japanese foreign policy, the book *Kō shiyō to ieru Nihon*,[43] which enters the debate about Japan's international contributions, to propose that these should be carried out through a revamped UN. In it he touches on another sensitive issue, namely revision of Japan's Constitution. Dore finishes Cantankerous Essays with a question. Considering the Congress of Vienna (1815), the Congress of Versailles (1919) and the San Francisco Congress (1945), we might just discern a faltering but long-term trend towards more 'rational, collective world government,' but will it take another disastrous war to take a fourth, decisive step? Cantankerous though the essays might be, Dore was right to point out that the answer to this question depends a lot on how China's rise is accommodated.

Dore's contributions

Any attempt to assess Ronald Dore's work in terms of its conceptual 'bones' would be incomplete without acknowledging that so much lies in its 'flesh and blood.' His eye for

empirical detail and its theoretical implications on the one hand, and his skepticism towards deductive grand theory on the other, were effectively blended in a rich and distinctive writing style. Although he seldom engaged in abstract theoretical discussion *per se*, his stances were skillfully woven into his colorful, down-to-earth narrative. He created tension by juxtaposing contrary views, whether from an imagined reader, or from the unconvinced part of his own mind. The opposing views were empowered with their own empirical evidence, and weighed up in a 'balance sheet' which was persuasive. He contrasted:

> 'rationality-obsessed economists, political scientists and sociologists, and those who are struck with wonder at the world about them, seek explanations of their own and their fellow humans' behavior, and in seeking such explanations, allow for the possibility, not only of irrationality but also of altruism, and of adherence to norms - norms driven by conscience of concepts of self-respect, by guilt or shame. In part, it is a division between theorists and social scientists. But it is also, if you like, a division between those whose feet are planted firmly in the traditional Christian doctrine of Original Sin, and those who would find more congenial the Confucian doctrine of Original Virtue. (Not 100% virtue, of course, even according to the most optimistic of Confucianists such as Mencius or Mao Tse Tung…).'[44]

Clearly Dore placed himself in the latter camp on all counts, struck with wonder at the world about him, and seeking social scientific explanation with an open and optimistic mind about the ultimate roots of social behavior. It was an orientation towards generalization arrived at by induction and comparison, and refined through debate and constant self-examination. He occasionally systematized his views of causation in diagrammatic form, but rather than developing theory as an end, he preferred to stay close to the wonder of the world about him, and to propose policy solutions which he thought would make the world a better place. Policy propositions could not be offered lightly:

> In order to know whether or not they can be applied depends on whether or not, in the places they are operating, they are to be explained by certain historical factors or contemporary cultural factors which are not present in the place you want to transplant them to. The only way of ascertaining this is by detailed, historical analysis'[45]

Dore also eschewed academic tribalism. He self-identified as a sociologist, but in a loose sense, as a 'social scientist.' He mixed with historians, anthropologists, political economists and economists. Disciplinary nomads are seldom loved by boundary-maintaining tribalists, but Dore gained the rare distinction of being considered a member of several camps. One was the shifting and transient camp of economic sociology, especially the part that was formerly inhabited by industrial sociologists and industrial relations scholars, as well as the ground which overlaps with political economy. Another was the camp of education, in which The Diploma Disease is still read and debated, often without knowledge of the author's other interests.

And what of Japanese studies? Dore clearly started out in Japanese Studies, but he was uncomfortable at being introduced as a 'Japanologist.' Initially a fertile land of empathetic discovery, Japan became a source of comparative reference, in which Dore placed one foot while his attention was often directed towards other countries, first developing, and then developed. Comparative reference evolved into policy inspiration, notably to address de-industrialization and the 'British disease,' and as a counter to the neo-liberal remedies prescribed by Thatcher, Reagan and their advisors. But Dore saw neoliberalism and its pessimistic philosophical roots spreading to Japan in the 1990s, and as his empathy weakened, his sympathy turned into disillusionment.

As this essay has shown, however, there is more to the story. Dore admired many aspects of Japan's transitions in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and used Parsons' pattern variables as well as lively description to depict their distinctiveness. Achievement gained greater force, but ascription was retained in the form of acceptance of status and hierarchy; individual choice increased, but aspects of collectivism – acceptance of hierarchy, again, and horizontal interdependence – persisted. These conferred an advantage to Japan in a world characterized by growing organizational complexity and interdependence. Perhaps Dore should have viewed this complexity and interdependence in Durkheimian terms rather than Weberian bureaucratization, but it probably doesn't matter, given his ultimate concerns about life chances and a decent society, and policies to achieve them.

Dore visited Japan often, and had many Japanese friends, but he chose not to live there. In fact, he commented in the Preface to the Japanese translation of British Factory-Japanese Factory that he thought the Japanese system was better, but he was glad he didn't have to live there (a confession which Japanese readers were quick pick up on). He spent most of his last three decades living in Italy, which was communitarian *with* 'inner direction,' without neoliberalism.

Japanese studies and British social science was the richer for Ronald Dore's wide-ranging studies and interventions over seven decades. Remarkably, he was largely self-taught, and transgressed many of what are nowadays considered prerequisites for good scholarship – the things we are supposed to teach our Ph.D students wishing to build academic careers. His approach encourages us to continue to question what we study, and the context we study it in.

I am grateful for comments on an earlier draft by Arthur Stockwin and Kariya Takehiko, with the usual disclaimer.

[1] See the biographical and intellectual portrait in the Introduction of Ronald Dore and D. Hugh Whittaker, Economic Development, Social Evolution and Culture: Fifty Years of Taking Japan Seriously (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2001), pp. 1-31. This essay draws in part on this source, which also presents a selection of Dore's writing and list of publications up to 2000.

[2] Ronald Dore, City Life in Japan (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul; and Berkeley CA: University of California Press, 1958); Land Reform in Japan (Oxford: Oxford University Press; and Berkeley CA: University of California Press, 1959); Education in Tokugawa Japan (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul; and Berkeley CA: University of California Press, 1963).

[3] Ronald Dore, British Factory: Japanese Factory: The Origins of National Diversity in Industrial Relations (London: Allen and Unwin; and Berkeley CA: University of California Press, 1973).

[4] Ronald Dore, Flexible Rigidities: Industrial Policy and Structural Adjustment in the Japanese Economy 1970-1980 (London: Athlone; and Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 1986); Taking Japan Seriously: A Confucian Perspective on Leading Economic Issues (London: Athlone; and Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 1987).

[5] Ronald Dore, Stock Market Capitalism, Welfare Capitalism: Japan and Germany Versus the Anglo-Saxons (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

[6] Ronald Dore, Cantankerous Essays: Musings of a Disillusioned Japanophile (Folkestone: Renaissance Books, 2015).

[7] The research was eventually written up as Dore, Education in Tokugawa Japan, but he never completed the Ph.D.

[8] Discussion, 21 July, 1999, cited in Dore and Whittaker Economic Development, Social Evolution and Culture, p.3.

[9] Robert Lynd and Helen Lynd, Middletown: A Study in Contemporary American Culture (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1929).

[10] Dore's reputation in Japan is closely associated with City Life in Japan. *Asahi shinbun's tensei jingo* column obituary (21 November 2018) starts out with an appreciation of its richness.

[11] The other pattern variable pairs which Dore referred to less, but reworked similarly, were particularism-universalism, diffuseness-specificity, affectivity-affective neutrality, and expressive-instrumental orientations.

[12] David Riesman, Reuel Denney and Nathan Glaser, The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 1950). Other writing in this vein included William Whyte, The Organization Man (New York: Simon and Schuster,1956).

[13] Ruth Benedict, The Chrysanthemum and the Sword (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1946).

[14] If Riesman and others were right about outer-directed man, moreover, shame-induced, outer-directed behaviour was on the rise in the US as well.

[15] He was the author of the UN's Progress in Land Reform (1966). See also his Preface to the second (1984) edition of Land Reform in Japan. Dore took part in many missions, panels and publications on rural development in the decade following Land Reform in Japan.

[16] Cf. Robert Bellah, Religion in Tokugawa Japan (Glencoe IL: Free Press, 1957). Bellah was Parsons' student; Parsons had translated and interpreted Weber.

[17] Dore later adopted aspects of Gerschenkron's thesis, but the separate origins and sociological focus of his own approach warrant recognition.

[18] Dore edited the second Princeton volume – Aspects of Social Change in Modern Japan (1967) and contributed a paper with the Marxist historian Ouchi Tsutomu on "The Rural Origins of Japanese Fascism" to the 1971 volume (James Morley ed., Dilemmas of Growth in Prewar Japan) which dissected and qualified Barrington Moore's thesis of underlying similarities between late developers Germany and Japan: Barrington Moore Jr, Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World (Boston MA: Beacon Press, 1966).

[19] See, for example, John Dower ed., Origins of the Modern Japanese State: Selected Writings of E.H. Norman (New York: Pantheon, 1975), or the more recent Sebastian Conrad, "'The Colonial Ties are Liquidated': Modernization Theory, Postwar Japan and the Global Cold War," Past and Present, No.216 (August, 2012).
[20] James Abegglen, The Japanese Factory: Aspects of Its Social Organization (Glencoe IL: Free Press, 1958).
[21] Hazama Hiroshi, Igirisu no shakai to rōshi kankei (British Society and Industrial Relations) (Tokyo: Japan Institute of Labour, 1974).
[22] This echoed other assessments of Japanese industrial relations; unions had managed to secure 'citizen's rights' in companies but lost 'villager autonomy': Kumazawa, Makoto, "Shokuba shakai no sengo shi" (Postwar History of the Workplace Society) in Sengo rōdō kumiai undōshi ron (Debates About the History of the Postwar Labour Movement), Shimizu, Shinzo ed., (Tokyo: Nihon hyōronsha, 1982); cf also Andrew Gordon, The Wages of Affluence: Labor and Management in Postwar Japan (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1998); and Kawanishi Hirosuke Enterprise Unionism in Japan (London: Kogan Page International, 1992). Hitachi was one of Kawanishi's case studies.
[23] Robert Cole, "Review: British Factory-Japanese Factory," Contemporary Sociology, Vol.3, No.5 (1974), pp.389-92. Cole expanded on his critique in "The Late-Developer Hypothesis: An Evaluation of Its Relevance for Japanese Employment Practices," The Journal of Japanese Studies, Vol.4, No.2 (1978), pp.247-65.
[24] Michael Young, The Rise of the Meritocracy (London: Thames and Hudson, 1958).
[25] Actually it hadn't avoided them entirely. Unemployed graduates played a role in social conflict in the 1920s, albeit a limited one. Ronald Dore, "The Importance of Educational Traditions: Japan and Elsewhere," Pacific Affairs, Vol.45, No.4 (1972), pp.491-507.
[26] Dore, The Importance of Educational Traditions, quoted in Dore and Whittaker Social Evolution, Economic Development and Culture, p.200. The fact that Japan was not colonized, and had not built its education system around a colonial administration, was an important factor as well (ibid).
[27] Ronald Dore, "Preface," The Diploma Disease, second edition (London: Institute of Education, 1997), p.xv.
[28] Ronald Dore, Flexible Rigidities, p.250.
[29] Harvey Leibenstein, "Allocative Efficiency vs. 'X-Efficiency," The American Economic Review, Vol.56, No.3 (June, 1966).
[30] Evans was later to dub such developmental state – business interaction 'embedded autonomy.' Peter Evans, Embedded Autonomy: States and Industrial Transformation (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995).
[31] Dore was by this time a visiting professor at Harvard University, and subsequently at MIT.
[32] Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History?" The National Interest, No.16 (Summer, 1989), pp.3-18.
[33] The notion of systematic differences between capitalism in different countries was not at all new. Andrew Shonfield's *Modern Capitalism* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965) was a pioneering work, and Dore was part of a group of scholars and policy makers around Shonfield discussing these differences.
[34] Michel Albert, Capitalisme contre Capitalisme (Paris, Edition du Seuil, 1991) ; English edition Capitalism Against Capitalism (London : Whurr Publishers, 1993).
[35] p.195, English edition.
[36] Ronald Dore, "Japanese Capitalism, Anglo-Saxon Capitalism: How Will the Darwinian Contest Turn Out?" in Japanese Multinationals: Strategies and Management in the Global Kaisha, Nigel Campbell and Fred Burton ed.s (London: Routledge, 1994).
[37] Fred Hirsch, The Limits to Growth (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977).
[38] In the *JJS*, Dore (1999) singled out the earlier *JJS* article by Nakatani Iwao (1997) as an expression of these tendencies. Ronald Dore, "Japan's Reform Debate: Patriotic Concern or Class Interest? Or Both?" The Journal of Japanese Studies, Vol.25, No.1 (1999), pp.65-89. Nakatani Iwao, "A Design for Transforming the Japanese Economy," The Journal of Japanese Studies, Vol. 23, No. 2 (1997), pp. 399-417. Nakatani himself later very publicly recanted his advocacy of neoliberal solutions to Japan's problems: Nakatani Iwao, Shihonshugi wa naze jimetsu shitanoka (Why Did Capitalism Self-destruct?) (Tokyo: Shūeisha International, 2008).
[39] Ronald Dore, "Japan's Conversion to Investor Capitalism" in Corporate Governance and Managerial Reform in Japan, edited by D. Hugh Whittaker and Simon Deakin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p.161.
[40] The title of his final book written in Japanese was also blunt: Genmetsu: Gaikokujin shakaigakusha ga mita sengo Nihon 70nen (Disillusioned! A Foreign Sociologist Observing 70 Years of Postwar Japan) (Tokyo: Fujiwara Shoten, 2014).
[41] Using Dore's own earlier framework, institutional and ideological change could be the result of borrowing from abroad, or indigenous change from technological innovation and economic development. In an exchange with this author (Nihon rōdō kenkyū zasshi, No.507, 2003, pp.44-64) over Hitachi's management reforms, Dore argued that Hitachi was basically dancing to the 'reform' tune, following Nikkei cheerleading, as well as aping the bottom-line boosting GE restructuring by Jack Welch, while I saw the reforms as necessary to restore Hitachi's competitiveness in the face of deteriorating performance, as well as to reposition itself for changing technologies, and indeed social change.

[42] Ronald Dore, Cantankerous Essays, p.53.
[43] Ronald Dore, Kō shiyō to ieru Nihon (The Japan that can say "Let's do this") (Tokyo: Asahi shinbunsha, 1993). The title is a play on Ishihara Shintaro and Akio Morita's "No" to ieru Nihon (The Japan That Can Say "No") (Tokyo: Kobunsha, 1989). The English version of Dore's book was published as Japan, Internationalism and the UN (London: Routledge, 1997).
[44] Ronald Dore, "Why Visiting Sociologists Fail," World Development, Vol.22, No.9, p.1429.
[45] Discussion, 10 January 1997, cited in Dore and Whittaker, p.25.