RONALD DORE

Ronald Phillip Dore

1 February 1925 – 14 November 2018

elected Fellow of the British Academy 1975

by

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Summary. Ronald Dore was a remarkable social scientist, comparative and evolutionary sociologist and scholar of Japan whose publications span development studies, education, political economy, industrial and economic sociology, politics and international relations, and Japanese history. Intellectually curious, empirically focused and always willing to challenge conventional wisdom and theories, he used his pre-eminent mastery of classical and modern Japanese to analyse Japan's post-war rise – and subsequent stumble – and from this to question policies and practices in the UK and elsewhere. From 'the diploma disease', goodwill and relational contracting, to flexible rigidities and 'reverse convergence' late development, his conceptually rich and lucid writing remains influential today.

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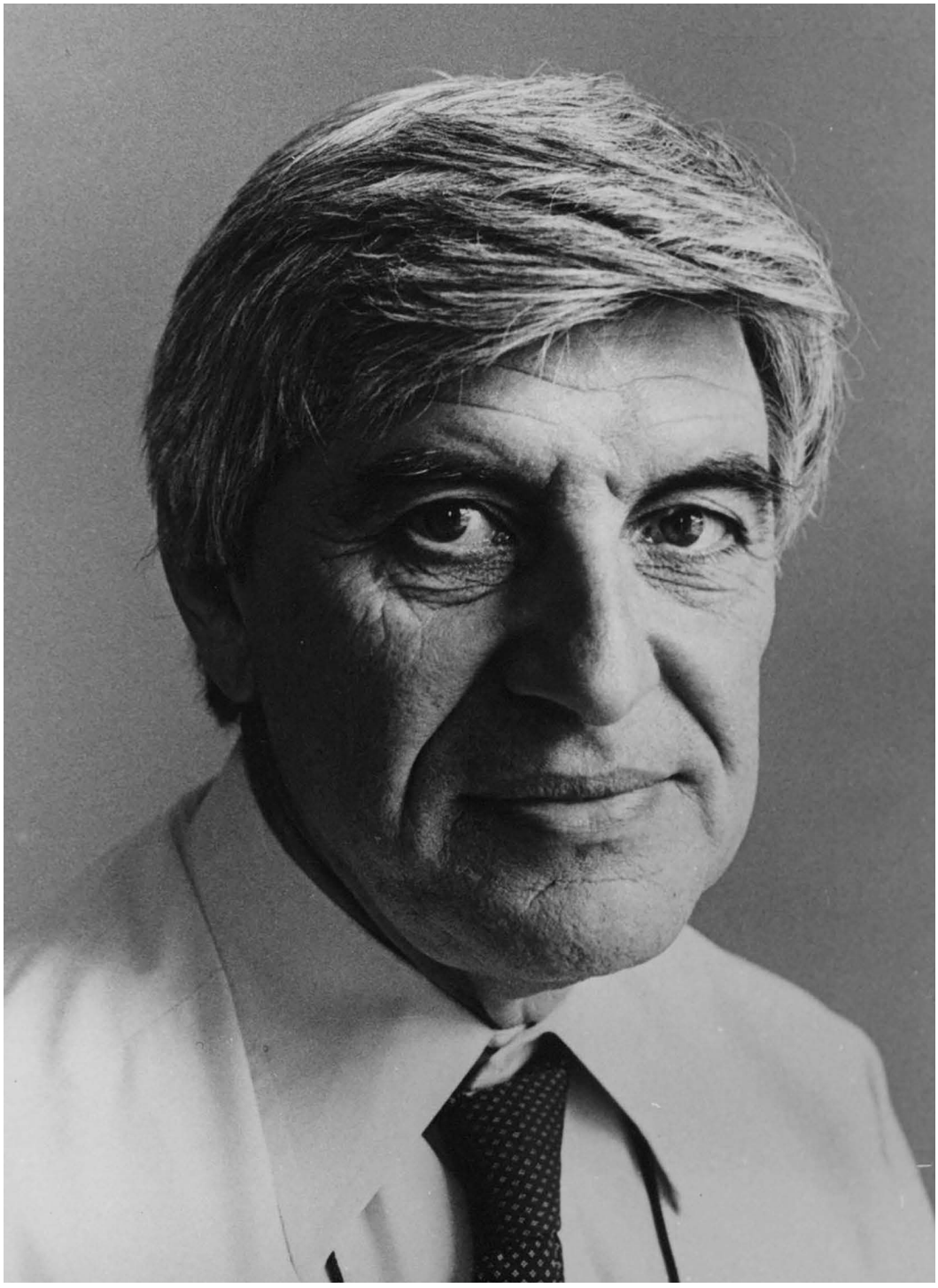

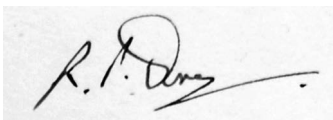

‘A series of accidents’

In the introduction to a collection of his writings,[1] Ronald Dore describes his early life as a series of fortunate accidents:

> the luck of being in the right place at the right time when an enthusiastic English teacher came into the classroom a few months after Pearl Harbour, waving a piece of paper about special courses in exotic languages to prepare for military intelligence work … The luck of being put on the Japanese course despite making Turkish my first choice … The luck of being so clumsy that when we were … doing our basic training, I tripped over my rifle, injured a knee, went to hospital … and was still available to be mobilized to teach expanded later courses ... The luck of being introduced not just to the Japanese language, but also to Japanese sense and sensibilities by splendid teachers … The luck of being able to take an external London BA in Japanese while seconded to the staff of the School of Oriental Studies … The luck of being given the perfect PhD subject …[2]

Son of railway worker Philip Henry Brine Dore and Elsie Constance Dore (née King), Ronald Dore grew up in Poole with a younger brother Eric. He won a scholarship to Poole Grammar School, and at the age of seventeen was selected to study Japanese at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) as one of the ‘Dulwich Boys’, so-named after their lodgings at Dulwich College. Kept from being sent to India by his injury, he stayed behind and taught Japanese to servicemen. The experience ‘induced academic ambitions’, which he pursued first by taking evening classes for A levels, then an external University of London degree in Japanese language and literature ‘all at the army’s expense. And then, when I was demobbed in 1947 they gave me a Further Education and Training Grant on the grounds that my education had been interrupted by the War!’[3]

The grant enabled him to embark on postgraduate work, but unable to go to Japan – General MacArthur’s GHQ would not issue visas to foreign students at the time – he spent the next three formative years studying Japanese Confucianism. While cataloguing

[1] This biographical memoir draws on ‘Ronald Dore’s Japan’ (Whittaker 2020), ‘Dore, Ronald Philip (Ron)’ (Sako 2022), as well as two collections of Ronald Dore’s writings. Dore & Whittaker (2001) has a substantial biographical introduction, and a collection of 28 papers, many abridged from longer works, organised into four parts: Technology-driven social evolution; And late development; But politics does matter, too; and Polemics. The second collection (Dore 2002) is complementary, with six parts including some of his less accessible works: Japanese politics; Matters agrarian and Japanese social structures; International society and Japan’s place in it; The Japanese economy; The world at large, and Afterthoughts (prefaces to new editions). *Pacific Affairs* 92:4 (2019) published several reflective articles. A substantial interview by Alan Macfarlane is at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5DPR3ThmgBM

[2] Dore (2002: vii).

[3] Dore & Whittaker (2001: 3).

the Satow and Aston Collections in the Cambridge University library, he came across Arai Hakuseki's autobiographical account of his 17th-century education, which left a deep impression. He reflected:

> It [Japanese Confucianism] 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 by my frequent references back to Confucian ideas, contrasted with those of 'individualistic' Christianity.[4]

In fact, Dore never finished his PhD, but with his BA he was still able to become a university lecturer. Several new 'Scarborough posts' for Japanese studies had been created at SOAS, but the Language and Literature ones were allocated, leaving just one titled 'Japanese Institutions', which he applied for and got. To prepare, he attended introductory sociology and psychology courses at LSE. In 1950 his visa was finally granted. His post was kept open, and he set sail for Japan, a six week voyage.

As 'honorary secretary to the Cultural Advisor' of the UK Liaison Mission, he lived with the family of George Fraser while commuting to the sociology department library of Tokyo University. Stirred by the scenes he saw from the train, he placed an advertisement in the *Asahi* newspaper seeking a room outside the Mission, and was able to rent a six mat room (roughly twelve square metres) in Hanazono-cho, Taito Ward, placing him in the midst of a vibrant *shitamachi* neighbourhood of small shop keepers, factory workers and their families. Impressed with Lynd and Lynd's 1929 classic *Middletown*, he set about doing his own study of the neighbourhood, with the assistance of some students from Tokyo University.

It may indeed have been circumstantial luck that, already at the beginning of his academic career, Dore was able to obtain a deep appreciation and mastery of classical Japanese, and at the same time a golden opportunity to observe first hand and close up a formative period in the evolution of post-war Japan, but it was his insatiable curiosity and ability that enabled him to take advantage of the very rare combination to launch a brilliant academic life.

From Japanese studies to comparative sociology

Returning to London in late 1951, Dore began to write *City Life in Japan* (1958), while lecturing at SOAS and further immersing himself in classes and seminars on sociology at LSE. Classes included Ginsberg's 'Theories of Progress' and Marshall's 'Elements of Social Structure', but he found the Thursday evening seminars organised by graduate

[4] Ibid.

students, such as David Lockwood and Ralf Dahrendorf, most stimulating. Talcott Parsons' sociology was a flavour of the moment; Dore had little time for his grand theory-building edifice, but he did find Parsons' recasting of traditional-versus-modern society ideal-typical 'pattern variables' useful as a yardstick to consider Japan with, and to show how Japan's pattern of modernisation was different, marking the beginning of his comparative and evolutionary sociology journey.

In the concluding chapter of *City Life in Japan* he argued that the eight decades following the Meiji Restoration (1868) had brought about greater individuation and personal choice, but not individualism. In fact Japan appeared to have skipped a 'stage' in its industrialisation and modernisation. In Riesman's (1950) terms, this was the stage of 'inner direction' of individuals in early competitive capitalist societies which had since given way to mass society and 'outer-directed' individuals. Or in British terms, it was the age of small businesses and business owners, fluid labour markets and atomistic business competition. Japan appeared to have gone from a traditional 'collectivity orientation' (almost) directly to a 'new collectivism', though one with greater individuation. Skipping a stage, however, raised questions about prospects for democracy in Japan, a topic of much debate at the time, and one which Dore engaged in.

In *City Life in Japan* we can already discern the embryonic form of Dore's evolutionary, late development thesis (about which more below), as well as his critique of static and polarised-other assessments of Japanese society such as Ruth Benedict's (1946) influential Japanese 'shame culture' contrasted with Western 'guilt culture'. Rejecting both cultural immutability and particularism, he showed how different types and combinations of both guilt and shame played out in different situations in Japan, and changed over time. The book found an appreciative audience for its rich detail, which later prompted Ezra Vogel to reminisce:

> He kindly lent me the page proofs of the book. It was so much more informative than anything I had managed to find that I read it page by page within three days. I was thrilled to learn so much about the urban Japanese family. And then I was terrified. I am going to Japan for two years to do research but what was I to write about the Japanese urban family that had already been done and done beautifully. What was there left to say?'[5]

The book won Dore many friends in Japan for its sympathetic depiction which did not pre-suppose the innate superiority of British (or Anglo-Saxon or Western) culture and civilisation. The sympathy no doubt stemmed from his own working class upbringing, and discomfort in the presence of middle and upper class 'nobs'.

[5] From 'A Celebration of the Life of Ronald Dore', Khalili Lecture Theatre, SOAS, 25 June 2019. Vogel's resulting book *Japan's New Middle Class* (1963), too, became a classic, as did many of his subsequent works.

His first direct exposure to Japan in 1950–51 left him eager for more. The chance came in 1955 when the Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House) commissioned a study on Japan's land reform and its implications for the stability of Japan's democracy and economic growth. He had gained some exposure to village life during his first sojourn by accompanying sociologist Fukutake Tadashi and students on rural survey expeditions. With a year's leave from SOAS, he now had the chance to complement his urban study with an extended stay in three villages, and to conduct a survey, again with the help of Tokyo University students.

The topic was controversial. Occupation authorities claimed that Japan's land reform had been spectacularly successful, while British and American sceptics believed that 'the leopard cannot change its spots' so easily. Japanese Marxists held that rural Japan remained semi-feudal, and that landlords would soon make a come-back. Taking an independent line, Dore disagreed with the Marxists, and that a return to the 1930s was highly unlikely. MacArthur's hyperbole aside, he argued that living standards in the countryside had improved, and were widely shared. He disagreed with academics like Fukutake that progress and democracy required a process of individuation and breaking down of traditional communal ties. On the contrary, he argued, the shift from landlord-dominated communities to owner-farmer ones had increased cohesion without threatening democracy.

Academic interest in 1950s Japan often focused on the democracy question, but interest in prospects for economic growth was also growing. In a rare conformity to the prevailing pessimistic mood in 1957, Dore opined that urban economic growth would be insufficient to absorb the younger sons of farming families, leading to rural underemployment. In fact, Japan was on the cusp of remarkable growth which would lead to a labour shortage by the mid 1960s. It was, he reflected in the Preface of the 1984 edition of *Land Reform in Japan* (originally published in 1959), a salutary lesson in the perils of prediction. 'The 1960s were a decade of land reform' for many countries, he also reflected. With Japan as a success story, he was ideally placed to take part in conferences and missions on land reform, including a year at the UN Food and Agriculture Organization. (FAO) in 1965, where he was the lead author of the UN's *Progress in Land Reform: Fourth Report* (1966).

Although cautious about the applicability of 'lessons from Japan', he formulated a 'reactionary thesis', namely that there are two types of landlord, and two types of land reform (1965b). Type 1 landlords obtain their lands through conquest or infeudation; lord and master over their lands, they extract rents (which may also be taxes), but are often absent. Type 2 landlords, by contrast, acquire their land by economic means – and by dint of hard work – and tend to live locally, with smaller holdings than Type 1 landlords. It matters what type of landlord is targeted by land reform, and in what sequence. In Japan's case Type 1 land reform was achieved during the Meiji Restoration, when a

centralised government dispossessed domain lords (with handsome compensation), but it was not until after the Second World War that Type 2 land reform was carried out. This mattered because Type 2 landlords, who were typically literate and often village heads, were a progressive force for bringing new agricultural ideas and technologies into villages, at least until around 1920, when in Dore's view Type 2 reform should have been carried out.[6] Post-war land reform in his view unlocked indigenous forces for change rather than causing them.

Returning to the 1950s, Dore resigned his post at SOAS in 1956 and spent six months in a village in Yamanashi – fondly depicted in *Shinohata* (1978) – writing up his land reform findings. He then moved to the University of British Columbia, where he helped to set up Japanese Studies, and once again took up his study of Tokugawa Confucianism and education, but with a different set of questions, mindful of the growing interest in 'pre-modern' facilitators of Japan's 'modernization'. Published in 1965 as *Education in Tokugawa Japan*, it explored the expansion of education during the Tokugawa period (1603–1868), and again drawing on Parsons' pattern variables, showed that the balance between ascription (status determined by family of birth) and achievement was increasingly tipped towards the latter in schools and administration. By the end of the regime in 1868, literacy rates were as high as those in Europe, including Britain. Moreover, right from the beginning of Japan's industrialisation, educational achievement became the means of securing good jobs, and those with good jobs were able to absorb knowledge from abroad because of their education, thus speeding Japan's 'modernization'. In Britain, by contrast, the link was ambivalent, and the professionalisaton of large business and government organization took longer.

> Learning was the royal road, not only to the professions and government, 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, 1965a: 293)

Stage skipping had now become late development. Dore was probably unaware of Gerschenkron's recently-published (1962) late development thesis; his own version was sociological, focused initially on education, and later on industrial relations. If the 1960s was the decade of land reform, it was also the decade of 'modernization', as he wrote in the Preface of the 1984 edition of *Education in Tokugawa Japan*. The final chapter of the book was presented at the first of a series of conferences on modernisation in Japan – the so-called Hakone conferences – which resulted in a series of publications by Princeton University Press, one of them organised and edited by Dore. The initiative was dubbed the 'Reischauer offensive' by critics on the left, after the US ambassador to Japan, one

[6] Dore (1965a); also Preface to the 1984 version of *Land Reform in Japan*.

of the overall organisers. They saw it as part of the US Cold War strategy in Asia. Refusing to take sides, Dore's 'balance sheet' evaluation was equivocal, and he co-authored a chapter in the final volume with a Marxist economic historian Ouchi on landlords and Japanese fascism (1971).

City Life in Japan, *Land Reform in Japan*, and *Education in Tokugawa Japan* created a broad intellectual platform spanning sociology, development studies and education, centred on (re-)emerging Japan. They equipped Dore with a strong comparative, evolutionary, historical and sociological sensitivity, and brought him into contact with a wide range of academics and policy makers in the 1950s and 1960s. His empirically-grounded, lucid writing style, and 'balance sheet' presentation for and against points of argument, made him a compelling intellectual force.

Late development, *British Factory–Japanese Factory*, and *The Diploma Disease*

In the 1960s Dore was based in London, as a Reader in Sociology at LSE from 1960–64, and Professor of Sociology at LSE and SOAS from 1965–69, with the year at FAO in between. He taught a course on the sociology of development with Tom Bottomore and Ernest Gellner at LSE from a comparative perspective, using Japan as his main reference point. The path to development was evidently through industrialisation, and central to that was industrial relations. From the account by Abegglen (1958) and others, Japan appeared to have created a distinctive set of institutions which included a 'lifetime commitment' to a particular company, and which were not simply a legacy of the past or a distinctive culture because they were most pronounced in the modern large firm sector.

He joined a project with Keith Thurley and Martin Collick in the UK, and Hazama Hiroshi and Okamoto Hideaki in Japan, to undertake a comparative study of industrial relations in three industries – construction, steel, and electrical engineering. Dore and Hazama undertook the electrical engineering study, which involved interviews, observation and a survey at two English Electric factories and two Hitachi factories. As the factories were heavy electric and consumer electric factories respectively, within-country as well as between-country comparisons were possible.

Dore spent a year at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton University writing up the findings, which were published as *British Factory-Japanese Factory* (1973). The book deployed his late development thesis provocatively. Japan's industrial relations had evolved, from pre-war 'welfare paternalism' to post-war 'welfare corporatism', in which extensive welfare provision was an employee right determined through collective bargaining rather than a matter of employer largesse. Britain's industrial relations, by contrast, were stuck in the 19th-century pattern of conflict deriving institutionally from

small firms, fluid labour markets, and adversarial industry- and occupation-based trade unions. They were 'market-oriented' as opposed to Japan's industrial relations, which were 'organization-oriented', and more suited to large, capital intensive factories of the 20th century, since there was less expensive down-time of expensive machines, and higher productivity. Far from Japan being backward and needing to become more like Britain, it was Britain which needed to become more like Japan.

This 'reverse convergence' thesis, as it came to be known, was met with indignation in the UK, and incredulity in Japan, contradicting as it did both Marxist and modernisation theory. Dore's research partner Hazama offered a more conventional interpretation of the findings; using Parsons' pattern variables he concurred that employment relations in the Hitachi factories were community-like while those of English Electric were more association-like, but within trade unions, the relation was reversed, and Japanese employees needed to learn from their British counterparts and become more individualistic and stand up for their rights.

In an exchange with Robert Cole, Dore denied that he was presenting Japan as a normative example for Britain, but rather that a newly industrialising country would be more likely to adopt Japan's industrial relations institutions than those of Britain, and that Britain was moving towards Japan faster than Japan was moving towards Britain. Cole also questioned a basic premise of Dore's argument, namely the evolutionary trend towards greater bureaucracy in large organisations. This premise was widely shared, by Schumpeter, for example, and more recently Andrew Shonfield, whose seminars Dore attended, and whose book *Modern Capitalism* (1965) was one of the progenitors of 'varieties of capitalism' writing (see below). Subsequent history proved Cole right on this point, but at the time, evidence for this shift was slight, and the rich empirical and comparative detail of *British Factory–Japanese Factory* inspired a generation of students of the sociology of industry, including the current author.

Returning from Princeton, Dore moved to the interdisciplinary Institute of Development Studies (IDS) at Sussex University. He took part in an OECD mission to study Japanese education, and the following year in an ILO mission to Sri Lanka to study youth unemployment, in which he spent six weeks visiting schools and talking to school administrators. This led to what became his most widely-known and enduring book, *The Diploma Disease* (1976), which he again interpreted through the lens of late development. He was struck by the sharp distinction between the modern and traditional sectors in developing countries, and the slow growth of the former relative to the expansion of school leavers and graduates hoping for places in it. Comparing Britain, Japan, Sri Lanka and Kenya, he proposed that the later the developer on this spectrum, the more widely education credentials are used for employment selection, the faster the rate of qualification inflation, and the more the education system becomes oriented towards gaining these credentials. Contrary to subsequent use of the term as a disease which

afflicts individuals, driving them to pursue credentials for the sake of gaining a job rather than engaging in deeper learning, he saw it as a societal phenomenon. His (then) IDS student Keith Lewin expresses it as follows:

> As countries develop the opportunities for employment become dependent on educational qualifications. The more unequal the rewards in different parts of the labour market for different levels of knowledge and skills certified by diplomas, the more likely learning will become ritualized and over-focused on selection rather than enlightenment and capability. This creates high stress competition in high-performing schools and universities, reduces the curriculum to teaching to the test, limits valid knowledge to that which can be assessed and used to discriminate between candidates, and stifles the space for cultivating open-ended capabilities of problem solving and creativity. Education may become more about 'learning to get a job rather than learning to do a job.[7]

Those who succeed suffer from a limited educational experience, while the majority who don't succeed leave school with fragmentary knowledge and disappointment. Screening theory trumps human capital theory (ibid). Michael Young's cautionary *The Rise of the Meritocracy* (1958) can be discerned in the background of the book.

In a special issue of *Assessment in Education* marking the twentieth anniversary, and publication of the second edition, another former student Angela Little commented: '(T)he global educational assessment scene has changed. Test tyranny, league tables, an explosion of qualifications and the assessment business generally – all point to the possibility that some of the fundamental tenets of the thesis hold good *in the industrialized countries of the North*, as well as the so-called "developing countries" of the South' (Little, 1997: 6, emphasis added).[8] Indeed, this was highlighted in Alison Wolf's entry on Britain in the special issue. Yet there were other disturbing developments in Britain as well. Reflecting on his theoretical framework in the Preface to the second edition, Dore comments:

> My assumption about the direction of social evolution was very much coloured by my experience of Japan… I assumed that [bureaucratic career structures, even in the private sector] would be more and more the case in Europe too… But then, along came Mrs Thatcher, Ronald Reagan and the neoliberal market individualists 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 (1997: xv).

[7] From 'A Celebration of the Life of Ronald Dore', Khalili Lecture Theatre, SOAS, 25 June 2019.
[8] As Little also noted the book had stimulated documentaries in the UK and Japan, research programmes, special collections, many reviews and encyclopaedia entries.

Taking Japan Seriously

As it turned out, Mrs Thatcher and Ronald Reagan were not aberrants, but pioneers of an increasingly influential set of 'solutions' for the economic problems besetting developed and developing countries alike. Dore continued to study development – e.g. Dore & Mars (1981) – but with increasing ambivalence. He turned his attention to the restructuring of industries in developed countries, Japan included, which competed with the exports of developing countries. He organised a study of textile industry adjustments in the UK, France and Japan. The planned book did not eventuate, but parts were published in papers, and later following an ILO-funded study of structural adjustment, in *Flexible Rigidities* (1986).

His shifting interest towards technological innovation, industrial policy and policy advocacy with Japan as a normative model contrasted with neoliberal policies was consolidated in his move in 1982 to the new Technical Change Centre, which was funded by the Leverhulme Trust, Science and Engineering Research Council, and Social Science Research Council. In his Hobhouse Memorial Lecture at LSE, later published as 'Goodwill and the Spirit of Market Capitalism' (1983) he cited Adam Smith's view of the butcher, brewer and baker, and questioned its 'sharp distinction between benevolence and self interest … I wish to argue apropos of benevolence, or goodwill, that there is rather more of it about than we sometimes allow, further to recognize the fact might help in the impossible task of trying to run an efficient economy and a decent society' (1983: 460). Japan's apparent rigidities deriving from long-term commitments, trust and 'relational contracting' had enabled Japan to adapt quickly to inflationary pressures despite heavy oil dependence in the 1970s, and then to strike the bargains necessary to restructure industries without undermining these commitments; it's 'X-efficiencies' (Leibenstein, 1966) outweighed short-term allocative efficiencies, and were more socially equitable.

Soon after *Flexible Rigidities*, he made the source of his inspiration clear in *Taking Japan Seriously: A Confucian Perspective on Leading Economic Issues* (1987), in which the subtitle was explained as follows:

> 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).

These two views of human nature were linked to two approaches to management, and in turn two sets of institutional configurations which he called the 'company law model' and the 'community (firm) model' respectively. These were polar ends of a spectrum, by which one has got hold of a new tool of analysis … a new means of measuring changes as a shift along that dimension … of analyzing compatibility of different institutions' (1987: 7). The community (firm) model, he argued, was both efficient and more equitable than the former, but as it was comprised of a combination of 'institutional interlock' and 'motivational congruence', and based on a different view of human nature, it could not be easily mimicked.

Dore's work at the Technical Change Centre encompassed technological innovation, skills and training, and youth unemployment. These were all areas in which Britain was struggling relative to Japan, which was conversely at the pinnacle of its post-war rise – buoyed by an effective education and vocational training system, depicted by Dore & Sako (1989). They presented a conundrum, as follows. As levels of technology rise, so the aptitudes and skills needed to work with the technology rise. This leads to a greater differentiation of prospects between those equipped with such aptitudes, and those who are not. (Here we may recall Michael Young's meritocracy dystopia.) As less skilled jobs disappear, those without the necessary aptitude for the new jobs face unemployment, or 'Mcjobs' with wages insufficient to meet either a welfare or dignity minimum. However, with a growing emphasis on egalitarianism, it becomes very difficult to talk about the issue, and hence to address it (Dore 1983b), an issue which continued to bother him. His proposal at the time was for a universal 'citizens' income' for those without jobs, and to which the wages of those fortunate enough to have good jobs would be added. This would require a massive redistribution of income, and a rediscovery of 'fraternity' or new communitarianism.

Since the 1970s the best way to address inflation and unemployment had pitted neo-corporatists against liberal market proponents. Evidence from northern Europe suggested that the former was not only viable, but also more equitable. With Colin Crouch, Dore co-ordinated a study of the extent to which corporatist institutions in the UK were resilient in the face of Thatcherite neoliberalism, which was eventually published as

Corporatism and Accountability (Crouch & Dore 1991).[9] They found that tripartite institutions had been dismantled by Thatcher, but old forms of corporatism in the professions, as well as new quangos and quagos, were very much alive. That said, the 'company law' model of the firm and shareholder interests were very much in the ascendence.

The clash of capitalisms

Dore became a visiting Professor at Imperial College, where in 1986 he started the Japan-Europe Industry Research Centre, and the following year a Masters programme in Japanese studies. Simultaneously, he was a Visiting Professor of Sociology at Harvard University (1986–89) and Adjunct Professor of Political Science at MIT (1989–94). This period spanned the collapse of the Soviet Union and the fall of the Berlin Wall; the 'end of history' as Francis Fukuyama (1989) boldly proclaimed, with the triumph of (US) liberal capitalism. 1989 also marked the peak of US-Japan trade friction, and the imposition on Japan of the 'Structural Impediments Initiative', supposedly a bilateral negotiation, but which insisted on Japan reforming a wide range of institutions to create a 'level playing field'. Rather than the end of history, it was in fact a new era of 'capitalism against capitalism'.

This was the title of a book by Michel Albert (1991), who pitted Rhine capitalism against Anglo-American capitalism. Despite the former – to which Japan was awkwardly assigned – being more efficient and equitable, the latter was more exciting, and starting to win the 'ideological beauty contest', Albert opined. In fact Dore had begun to have similar apprehensions about Japan, equivalent at first, but strengthening throughout the 1990s, following the bursting of Japan's asset bubble in 1990, and subsequent loss of economic vigour, and confidence, while the US was enjoying a resurgence. In the 1990 Preface to a new edition of *British Factory–Japanese Factory* he still stood by his assertion of an evolutionary trend towards greater organisation-orientation in employment relations. In his lectures to the Japan Business Federation (Keidanren) published in the same year he considered whether the Japanese would become individualists in the 21st century, eventually rejecting the idea, and relatedly that productionist and group corporatist ethics would also disappear.

By 1994 he had come to see the clash of capitalisms as a Darwinian contest (Dore 1994), with the Japanese model in part undermined by what Hirsch (1975) had called the 'depleting moral legacy' of capitalism; capitalism relies on pre-capitalist moral

[9] Cf. letter to the *Financial Times*, 15 June 1993. A collection of Dore's many Letters to the Editor were published in Japanese: *Bōeki masatsu no shakaigaku* (The Sociology of Trade Friction), Iwanami shoten, 1986.

dispositions, but at the same time progressively undermines them. As well, he detected a change in attitudes, as the children of the post-war generation, raised in urban prosperity, benefiting from their parents' savings and attending private schools, became susceptible to the Anglo-Saxon model of the ideological beauty contest, and the temptation of making money from money instead of making things. 'What a world we are away from Shitayama-cho, but also from the economic structures and values of Japan in 1950–51 … Finance, once the handmaiden of industry, is rapidly becoming its master,' he lamented in the Preface to the new edition of *City Life in Japan* in 1999.

The following year, and shortly before Hall and Soskice published their influential *Varieties of Capitalism*, Dore published *Stock Market Capitalism: Welfare Capitalism: Japan and Germany versus the Anglo-Saxons*, a book he originally intended to write with Wolfgang Streeck. Here the community firm model and the company law model were relabelled as the 'employee favouring firm' and the 'shareholder favouring firm', signalling a shift in focus to corporate governance, which had begun to influence Japan in the 1990s. Executive careers and remuneration, board selection and the legal framework of corporate governance were the key areas of contestation. The book was published amidst a flurry of legislation in Japan which de-emphasised post-war employment protections to facilitate corporate restructuring and to shift corporate governance practices towards the Anglo-Saxon model. There had always been a gap between the legal definition of shareholders as owners of the Japanese firm, and post-war practices in which they were treated almost as absentee landlords; the advocates of corporate governance reform sought to align law and practice.

Still, Dore predicted that despite Germany's legal framework, it was Japan that might put up the greater resistance. (In fact, as a result of political compromise companies were eventually given a choice of corporate governance form in 2002 legislation.) Even with ongoing corporate governance reforms and employment de-regulation in the 2000s, he still found real change to be limited. However, he asserted that ideological resistance to shareholder sovereignty had evaporated, and Japan had effectively undergone an 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' (2009: 161).

Disillusioned

Although he was a Senior Research Fellow, then Associate, at the Centre for Economic Performance at LSE from 1991 to 2000, Dore spent less and less time in the UK, preferring to live in Italy, where he renovated a farmhouse south of Bologna. His disillusionment with UK neoliberal politics gradually expanded to encompass Japan, which he saw as being converted, and losing the qualities that he had found so attractive. During the 1990s he was still inclined to encourage Japan to take a more proactive role in world affairs; in *Japan, Internationalism and the UN* (1997) he advocated a post-Cold War role for Japan commensurate with its economic power through a revamped United Nations, and a revised Constitution, as well as reduced reliance on the US. The book was a reworking of a 1993 Japanese publication '"*Kō shiyō*"*to ieru Nihon*' (The Japan That Can Say 'Let's Do This') in in a context of national debate about Japan's role following the First Iraq War.[10]

While he continued to publish many articles in English, he increasingly wrote in Japanese, to share his thoughts on Japan's changing society, economy and politics, to address the criticism that he had downplayed the darker side of Japan, and increasingly to voice alarm at the changes in Japanese companies and corporate governance, and growing inequality. A selection of these titles will give a sense of his increasing unease, ending in disillusion:

Nihongata shihonshugi nakushite nan no Nihonka (What is Japan if it Loses Japanese-style Capitalism? Kobunsha 1993 (with Y. Fukada,).

Kaisha wo dare no tame ni suru ka (For Whose Benefit Should the Corporation Function?) Iwanami Shoten 2006.

Kin'yu ga nottoru sekai keizai (Finance Taking Over the World Economy), Chūō kōron 2011.

Nihon no tenki: Beichū no hazama de do ikinokoruka (Japan's Turning Point: How Will Japan Survive Squeezed Between the US and China?), Chikuma shobō 2012.

Genmetsu: Gaikokujin shakaigakusha ga mita sengo Nihon 70nen (Disillusioned! A Foreign Sociologist Observing 70 Years of Postwar Japan), Fujiwara shoten 2014.

Dore's final book in English – remarkably published when he was 90 years old – was titled *Cantankerous Essays: Musings of a Disillusioned Japanophile* (2015). It was initially going to be called 'Conspiracies of Silence'. One conspiracy was the reluctance of scholars to engage with the social polarisation associated with technological change –

[10] The title is a play on Ishihara Shintaro and Morita Akio's *'No' to ieru Nihon* (The Japan That Can Say "No") (Kobunsha, 1989).

'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' (p. 53) – and the possible role of genes in this. The conspiracy that made him most cantankerous, however, picked up on his United Nations book. From the Congress of Vienna (1815) through the Congress of Versailles (1919) and the San Francisco Congress (1945), one might possibly discern a trend towards a 'more rational collective world government'. Would it take another disastrous war to take the step? A lot would depend, he foresaw, on how China's rise is accommodated.

A unique scholar and public intellectual

It may have been a series of accidents that led to Ronald Dore taking up Japanese studies, and sociology, and fortuitous that the Japan he observed progressed with unprecedented speed from post-war political and economic upheaval and developing country to economic powerhouse, without abandoning its distinctive cultural values but by re-formulating them. He may also have been fortunate to be part of a vibrant intellectual scene of 1950s and '60s London. But the fact that he was able to absorb all of this and craft a truly impressive conceptual world spanning so many different fields attests to a truly rare talent. His mastery of both classical and modern Japanese language was legendary. He had a rare talent, too, of being able to take almost any topic and turn it into an insightful full-length article. This biographical memoir has focused mainly on his key books, but beyond these his keynote, commemorative and exploratory article list is as long as it is diverse.

Dore's insatiable intellectual curiosity was always focused on the empirical, his theory inductive and comparative, with frequent use of ideal types and 'balance sheet' assessments for and against a proposition. 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 (1994: 1429).

A nomad among academic tribes, he was a social scientist. The underlying impulse, hinted at in this quote, is the value he placed on human dignity, and social democratic values. (His political allegiance moved from Labour to the Social Democratic Party

when it was formed in 1981.) He was not afraid to put his head above the parapet of public debate, or of proposing policies deriving from his work, while being aware that ideas taken from one context cannot be simply transplanted to another:

> In order to know whether or not [policies] 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.'[11]

He was the recipient of many honours, including:

Fellow of the British Academy 1975
Japan Foundation Prize 1977
Foreign Honorary Member, American Academy of Arts & Sciences 1978
Honorary Fellow, LSE 1980
Distinguished Scholarship Award, Association for Asian Studies 1986
Honorary Foreign Member, Japan Academy 1986
Order of the Rising Sun (Third Class) 1988
Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) 1989
Honarary Doctorate, Meiji Gakuin University 1989
Honorary Doctorate, Doshisha University 2008
Eminent Scholar, Academy of International Business 2008

Ron, as he was popularly known, loved company and lively academic discussion. 'Really?' is a refrain that many recalled, including his former students, at events held to commemorate his passing. He married Nancy Macdonald (1925–2016) in 1957. They had a son and a daughter, Jonathan and Sally. In 2017 he married his long-term companion Maria Paisley, with whom he had a son, Julian. He died at his home in Grizzana Morandi, south of Bologna, on 14 November 2018, and is survived by Maria, Jonathan, Sally and Julian.

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