

# A Comparative Study on the Traditional Foreign Policy Between China and Japan

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**Abstract:** As neighboring countries separated by a strip of water, China and Japan still have exchanges with each other, such as the exchanges between the Japanese and China during the Han Dynasty, the envoys sent by Japan to China during the Tang Dynasty, and the feudal reforms carried out by learning from the Chinese Tang Dynasty system - Dahua Renovate. Since modern times, both China and Japan have carried out internal reforms, with results ranging from success to failure. The resulting changes have many connections with the pattern of Northeast Asia and the modernization process of the world at that time. Focusing on the research on China and Japan, this article mainly combines relevant historical materials and references to conduct a comparative analysis of the traditional policies of China and Japan. This article uses textual criticism and comparative history methods to sort out and analyze this issue.

**Keywords:** Sino-Japanese relations; Foreign policy; Reform

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## 1. The foreign policy system of China and Japan

### 1.1 Tribute system

The tributary system mainly carried out cultural and political exchanges in China.

### 1.2 Treaty system

The treaty system has a considerable imperialist color, but it also played an objective role in promoting the national liberation movement and the formation of multi-ethnic states in modern Asian countries

## 2. Background of foreign policy implementation between China and Japan

2.1 The natural economy based on the small-scale peasant economy is the economic basis for the implementation of the tributary system. There is a classic saying in Marxist economics: manual grinding produces the society led by feudalism, and steam mill produces the society led by industrial capitalists. In the social scene of men ploughing and women weaving, the upper rulers pursued the ruling order of "under the whole heaven, or the king, the king, or the king". This tributary system of a sense of order bred by the natural economy based on self-sufficiency is the product of The Times and the inevitable of international communication among traditional society.

2.2 The feudal rulers of traditional countries in Asia pursued an orderly form of rule, and the feudal rulers of feudal countries in the same period followed the lead of the Central Plains of China. In politics, the suo-vassal relationship with the dynasty of the Central Plains, which is similar to the relationship between the vassals and the king of Zhou, but in essence, it is the international relationship between the equal state and the political power. In terms of economic and trade relations, the tribute relationship is formed, like different shapes of believers worship the gods in their hearts, pay tribute to the master, master back to the tribute, according to the special production situation of the country and their own economic strength. The rulers of the Central Plains dynasty of China communicated with the mentality of a great power, which is not only the embodiment of the country's strong economic strength, but also the expression of the cultural confidence of the rulers and pride in their own political system.

2.3 Institutional support. The Chinese and Japanese dynasties in the same period in East Asia were centralized by the central dynasties. Such as China formed mainly Chinese unified feudal partition perfect xia shang and zhou dynasties, county prefectural

officer system complete centralized rule since the qin, whether partition of the pre-qin era or give priority to with the monarchy of qin created the centralized, have "China" and fang, barbarians, surrounding countries, such as the past. The communication between Japan and neighboring countries was also relatively long. For example, the excavation of the Japanese imperial seal was the exchange with the Eastern Han Dynasty in China, and the arrival of the Tang envoy also brought the fire of the new feudal system to the reform of Japan. Both before the qin and han dynasties and after the centralized rule, the rule of the central local form ensures the stability of the country, also for the prevalence of east Asian traditional countries tribute system provides institutional guarantee, only effective political rule to ensure that the tributary is relatively stable relationship established and political sense of belonging.

2.4 Under the condition of small-scale peasant economy under the condition of relatively stable natural environment and a certain closed conditions of stable regime inheritance, easy to form a stable unity of the feudal society and relatively harmonious good-neighborly and friendly relations, it is easy to form the strong country as the center of political tributary relations, this is the traditional social tributary system popular historical background and the necessity of diplomatic development.

2.5 The central Plains dynasty and the surrounding ethnic minorities and foreign countries have the same goal under the feudal centralized rule, that is, the pursuit of relatively harmonious ethnic relations between the barbarians and China, which is the interest appeal of regional and ethnic integration that contributes to the formation of the tributary system. For example, China's Qing aid to Korea evolved into the First Sino-Japanese War. Japan's ownership to the four northern islands and Tsarist Russia.

2.6 The influence of geopolitics. The relative position of several countries in East Asia is also a major factor in the formation of the tributary system centered on the Central Plains dynasty of China. Geographical conditions and location are very important and critical for the adaptation of foreign policy. In traditional countries, due to the limited transportation modes and tools, neighboring countries are more likely to form traditional political exchanges and cooperation.

### **3. Comparative analysis of foreign policies of China and Japan**

China and Japan basically practiced the tributary trade system before the 19th century. Among them, the Central Plains dynasty of China as the center to conduct trade, political, economic and cultural exchanges with the affiliated countries. However, the difference is that in the period of the Edo Shogunate and the early days of the Ming Dynasty in China, Japan began to explore the tributary trade system with the Japanese shogunate as the main body. In order to strengthen Japan's own political rule, the shogunate began to lock up the country. That is, the shogunate ruling government of the Japanese government. Political exchanges between individual countries with official contacts. There is also the shogunate to control the countries that trade. Japan's isolation is different from that of the Chinese Qing government. The starting point of both governments is to strengthen their rule. But the form and function are generally different from those in Japan. China's feudal rule and the Japanese shogunate rule, the change of foreign policy is roughly the same time. After the signing of the Treaty of Nanjing in the Opium War, China began to be involved in the capitalist world market. However, China's foreign exchanges are still mainly in the form of the tributary system. Japan is different. After ending the Edo shogunate rule, Japan began the capitalist rule of the Meiji Restoration, and Japan began to seek world hegemony. At this point, China compares it with Japan. China's policy is relatively backward.

### **4. Analysis of foreign policy reform in modern China and Japan**

#### **4.1 Internal factors**

(1) Due to the development of social productive forces and commodity economy, the bud of capitalism has been bred in the feudal society of both countries. But in the mid-19th century, neither country had sufficient socioeconomic preconditions for a bourgeois revolution. It was only because of the colonial aggression of western countries that China and Japan were forced to put the task of "adopting the bourgeois mode of production" on the agenda. Since the general level of economic development in Japan is slightly higher than that in China, the conditions for its modernization are more favorable than those in China.

(2) In order to realize modernization, we must first change the old feudal system in China. China is a country with a fully developed feudal system. Its social and economic internal structure of the economy is relatively solid, and has a strong economic base and superstructure. At the same time, China's feudal society is a kind of flexible feudal society, with a strong mechanism to adjust social contradictions. The situation of Japan is not. Compared with China, the development of Japan's feudal system is obviously inadequate. The rigid land ownership and closed social structure make it lack the ability of self-regulation. Therefore, the resistance to the modern social change in China's old feudal system is obviously much greater than that of Japan.

(3) Under the immature conditions of capitalism and the bourgeoisie, whether the modern social change can be realized depends to a large extent on whether a revolutionary force can be divided in the old ruling camp. In China, the "four in one" formed by landlords, merchants, loan sharks and bureaucrats has a close interest in the existing economic and political system, and the Confucian

theory of traditional culture is their common ideological principle. Therefore, it is difficult to divide the revolutionary forces in this ruling camp with special cohesion. It is not the case in Japan. With the impact of commodity economy, the consciousness of national crisis and the influence of modern European science and culture, Japan formed a revolutionary force that advocated the reverse curtain reform, and the shogunate that maintained the old feudal system was trapped in an extremely isolated position. These are the main internal reasons for the different fates of China and Japan in modern times.

## 4.2 External factors

(1) Due to the different strategic status and strategic values of China and Japan at that time, the pressure of colonial aggression was much greater than that of Japan, which made Japan in a relatively favorable position. The reason why Japan was prevented from being a semi-colonial fate was caused by the conspiracy of Britain and France in Japan. However, the most important thing was that Britain devoted its efforts to China and gave Japan a necessary breathing space, so that it could get rid of the shackles of the feudal system.

(2) As early as 10 years before Perry led the American fleet to fall on it, China failed in the Opium War in 1840 and was forced to sign the first batch of unequal treaties with the Western powers. In 1856, Britain and France jointly launched the Second Opium War, which deepened the degree of semi-colonization of China. This caused a great shock in Japan and awakened the national consciousness of some first Jinshi. They regard China as a lesson and are determined to get rid of the national crisis faced after the founding of Japan.

(3) The Chinese people's revolutionary struggle against feudalism and anti-colonialism also, to a considerable extent, directly contained the aggression of the European and American powers against Japan, thus objectively supporting Japan's reverse movement. During the First Opium War, the broad masses of Sanyuan Li outside Guangzhou rose up to fight against the British invading army. In 1851, the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom movement broke out in China, which shocked the world. The Tianping Army bravely undertook the task of opposing the foreign invaders, which not only directly dealt a heavy blow to the Western colonists, but also objectively contained the aggression and interference of the Western powers in Japan.

(4) The counterstruggle of the Chinese people and the people of other Asian countries also enabled the western colonists to learn some lessons, thus making them take a more cautious attitude towards the Japanese people's uprising and counter-curtain forces. In a report to his government, Alkko once said, " We must be cautious about leading Japan. That is to say, we have suffered in China from the Taiping People's revolution... all this must be engraved in mind."Therefore, in the process of further development of the reverse movement in Japan, Britain, France and other western powers did not carry out armed intervention openly, so that the social reform in Japan could be realized more smoothly.

## 5. Peroration

The traditional foreign policies of China and Japan have different development trends due to their different national conditions and domestic historical traditions. Through the study of the foreign policies of the two countries, we can get some useful enlightenment: if a country wants to develop, it must not only develop technically and economically, but most importantly, it must find a path and model suitable for its own development from the system and carry out fundamental reform.

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