

1. FOREWORD

Ralf Dahrendorf

When I came back to LSE as Director in 1974 (having been a student at the School twenty years earlier) I made a point of trying to read the major works of distinguished professors. As a social scientist, I was particularly pleased that an economics professor had written a book entitled, *The Economic Theory of Modern Society*. I happily dug into it but soon discovered that the author - who is of course Michio Morishima - had used very English understatement when he described Chapter 4 as “somewhat difficult” and recommended to people like me to “defer reading it until later”. The rest of the book is not much easier to read for the uninitiated who may find it difficult even to follow the author’s advice to “these people” to “read on, without pause, even though they may come across places where the mathematical equations used are difficult for them to understand”.

It was however easy to understand that Morishima was an author of intellectual depth, technical skill, and a notable sense of humour. It was this sense of humour which he deployed a little later to persuade the Academic Board of LSE to accept the generous gift by Suntory and Toyota which led to the creation of STICERD, the economic research centre which is Michio Morishima’s lasting gift to the School. (Yes, in those days academic bodies had to be persuaded to accept donations rather than spending precious time and hiring expensive fundraisers in order to get them.) Michio answered all doubts about possible strings attached to the new Suntory-Toyota Foundation by telling us that he had been to school with the donors and could therefore vouch for them. In any case, he would, if need be, keep them at bay. He commanded respect and confidence among his fellow-academics and had little difficulty to persuade them.

Years later, in 1981, Professor Morishima gave the Marshall Lectures in Cambridge. The book based on them is entitled, *Why Has Japan Succeeded?* It was a title laden with irony, as Japanese readers in particular will have noticed when it was published alongside my own little book *On Britain* which, on his instigation, got the title, *Why Has Britain Failed?* My argument was at the time that it was the very social strengths of Britain which stood in the way of its economic advancement. Michio Morishima by contrast argued that some of the more problematic features of Japanese culture, notably its nationalism, contributed to Japan's economic strength. And always he had a twinkle in his eyes as he made such a case!

At 75, Professor Morishima can look back to a distinguished academic career. But his achievements range much wider. He has enhanced the London School of Economics. He has contributed to a subtle understanding of the culture of his country of origin as well as his country of choice. He has also been, and continues to be, a great friend, loyal and trustworthy, serious and yet always fun. This volume is above all a testimony to the economist Morishima, but his influence extends beyond even the generously drawn boundaries of economics. He is a great social scientist, scholar, and man of culture.