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New Middle School History: Japanese History and the World

(revised version)

(* Items marked with an asterisk are scheduled for future translation.)

Chapter 4 Ongoing Modernization in Japan and the World

1. The Rise of Modern Society

EUROPEAN EXPANSION

Growth of the European nations

In Europe, countries such as Spain, Britain, France, the Netherlands, and Russia had come into being by the eighteenth century. Among them, those with Atlantic coasts competed to cross the ocean and advance into foreign countries from the end of the fifteenth century, when new sailing routes were developed. In the American continent, Spanish colonies were created, followed by British and French, and trade flourished across the Atlantic Ocean between the American continent and Europe. Products such as sugar, tobacco, and coffee grown and processed in the American colonies were transported to Europe, affecting the everyday lives of European people. In the eighteenth century, territorial conflicts between Britain and France intensified, occasionally escalating into warfare, and eventually Britain gained superiority.

GUIDE TEXT: What was happening around the world during the time when Japan was closed off under the policy of national seclusion?

PHOTO: A coffee house (Britain). This was a place for merchants and aristocrats to socialize, and also a place for exchanging news.

FIGURE: Changes in the amount of tobacco, sugar, and tea consumed. As these were not essential everyday items, the graphs indicate the increasing affluence of people's lives.

PHOTO: A sugar plantation.

PHOTO: The Port of London at the mouth of the River Thames.

Birth of the United States of America

In the middle of the eighteenth century, Britain had 13 colonies on the eastern coast of the North American continent, and these developed substantially through trade with Britain. However, in the latter half of the eighteenth century the people of the colonies banded together and started the American War of Independence because Britain was attempting to increase the tax burden of the colonies. France was in conflict with Britain at the time and sent reinforcements, and Britain found itself fighting an ever-harder battle; it granted independence to the colonies in 1783. Having achieved their independence, the colonies soon drew up the world's first written constitution.¹ Thus was born the **United States of America**, a country without a king. In the nineteenth century, the economy of the United States of America prospered, and settlement of the western part of the country (the continental interior) progressed, while the indigenous people were forced onto reservations. By the mid-nineteenth century, a huge continental nation, stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific coast, had been created.

FIGURE: The situation in the North American continent around the middle of the nineteenth century. Gold mines were discovered in California around this time, and substantial settlement progressed in the West.

PHOTO: The adoption of the American Declaration of Independence. July 4, 1776. The five people in the center of the picture are the people who drafted the Declaration of Independence.

BOX: The Declaration of Independence (paraphrased excerpts)

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.

¹ A constitution is the laws forming the basis of the nation.

Development of world trade

Trade with Asia was opened up by the Portuguese. The Netherlands advanced into Asian trade in the seventeenth century, and the entry of Britain and France in the eighteenth century caused trade to flourish even further. Britain imported tea from China and cotton from India, and the Netherlands procured spices from Southeast Asia. The European countries thus conducted trade around the world with America and Asia, and they also zealously expanded their territory overseas. Around the end of the eighteenth century, about a third of the whole land surface of the world was under European control.

PHOTO: A sailing ship of the East India Company. Britain formed the East India Company in order to carry out trade around the world.

THE RISE OF MODERN EUROPE

The French Revolution and its repercussions

In France, riots in Paris in 1789 led to the **French Revolution**.² As the revolution progressed, the monarchy was brought down, and other European nations, fearful that the revolution would spread to within their own borders, made war on France. **Napoleon**, a military man who successfully directed the war, gained the support of the French people and became the Emperor of France in 1804. For a time, he ruled over a large part of Europe, with the exception of Britain and Russia. Napoleon's rule over Europe soon collapsed, but the spirit of equality of citizens and unity of the people that the French Revolution had aimed to achieve created a model of a civil society that allowed people freedom of activity without class distinction. This ideal of the French Revolution had an impact not just on Europe but also on the whole world.

PHOTO: The storming of the Bastille. The citizens of Paris attacked the Bastille, where people who resisted the autocratic rule of the king were imprisoned. This day (July 14) is still celebrated today in commemoration of the French Revolution.

² The French Revolution, the American War of Independence, and other revolutions in which citizens took a leading role in changing feudal society are called popular revolutions. The popular revolutions played a major role in the development of democracy.

PHOTO: Napoleon's coronation. Napoleon crowned himself and also crowned the Empress. (Painting by David)

PHOTO: The picture on the title page of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, which was adopted during the French Revolution. The goddess on the left is cutting a chain symbolizing the old system; on the right is a goddess symbolizing law.

GUIDE TEXT: How did Western countries grow in strength to advance across the world?

The Industrial Revolution

The country that most profited from world trade was Britain, which simultaneously also opened up new fields in industry. A method of weaving cotton with machines using coal-generated steam power was introduced. Eventually the machinery industry, which made the machines to manufacture a variety of products, and the iron-making industry, which produced the materials with which the machines were made, developed. During the nineteenth century, Britain also made the world's first steam locomotive.

The **Industrial Revolution** that had started from light industry shifted its focus to heavy industry in the nineteenth century. Gas and other new energy sources were introduced, and industrial technology continued to advance.

The Industrial Revolution gave birth to industries using machinery to mass produce goods in factories. This was the start of our present-day lifestyle of successive development and mass marketing of new goods, followed by mass consumption.

West European nations and the United States had seen Britain acquire dramatic economic power through the Industrial Revolution, and in the latter half of the nineteenth century they began to have the same level of industrial power. Western countries, which allowed citizens to engage freely in industry or commerce, achieved rapid growth.

FIGURE: Changes in the amount of iron production in Britain and other countries.

PHOTO: The opening ceremony of the Great Exhibition held in London (1851).

PHOTO: A mechanized spinning factory. Even after mechanization, many of the workers were women and children.

PHOTO: The birth of factories (Sheffield, Britain, 1858). As a result of the Industrial Revolution, peaceful rural villages became factory towns with rows of chimneys.

PHOTO: The *Rocket*, a steam locomotive invented by Stephenson. (Britain, 1829)

Digging Deeper into History 8: The development of modern European thought and science*

THE WESTERN POWERS ADVANCE INTO ASIA

The European powers advance around the globe

The European nations had developed their industries through the Industrial Revolution. Seeking raw materials for these industries, markets in which to sell their manufactured products, as well as the profits of taxes obtained by ruling over regions with large populations, the European nations stepped up their advances around the world.

In the nineteenth century, all the coastal regions of Africa with the exception of the North African coast gradually became colonies of European nations, and regions of Oceania such as Australia became British colonies. Meanwhile, the Spanish and Portuguese colonies in South America had achieved independence but in economic terms were still ruled by Europe.

PHOTO: The Indian Mutiny. Indian soldiers employed by the British East India Company rose up in rebellion against Britain.

MAP: Asia in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Asia was colonized by European countries.

GUIDE TEXT: What reasons did the European nations have for colonizing Asia and Africa?

PHOTO: Laying a railway in India. The British used railways in their rule of India.

PHOTO: Drying coffee beans. People on the island of Java, Indonesia, were forced by the Dutch to cultivate coffee beans.

Colonization of Southeast Asia and India

The European nations had a flourishing trade with Asia, and by the eighteenth century Spain had colonized the Philippines and the Netherlands had colonized the region that is present-day Indonesia.

In the latter half of the eighteenth century, Britain, which had beaten France in a struggle for power between the two nations, set out to rule India for the purpose of siphoning off taxes from the large population. By the mid-nineteenth century, the whole of India had become a British colony. Britain had brought about the Industrial Revolution and become the greatest economic power in Europe. By obtaining the vast colony of India it was at the forefront of the advance into Asia, and started to expand its colonial territory into Southeast Asia and East Asia. Following in Britain's wake, France was aiming to advance into the Indochina Peninsula.

China in crisis

This full-scale advance of the European nations into Asia during the nineteenth century eventually reached China. At the time, China (the Qing state) was East Asia's largest power and had not permitted the expansion of trade that the European nations sought. In the nineteenth century, Britain became frustrated with China for not importing British manufactured goods and began making profits by smuggling into China opium cultivated in the colony of India. In 1840 the **Opium Wars** broke out between Britain and the Qing government, which was attempting to prevent opium smuggling. The Qing government gave way under the pressure of the British, and two years later it ceded Hong Kong to Britain and approved the opening of five trading ports.

The Qing became unable to check the advance of Britain and other European nations that was triggered by the Opium Wars, and the rule of the Qing government started to crumble.

PHOTO: An opium storehouse in India. From the first half of the nineteenth century, the British East India Company was actively involved in smuggling opium into the Qing state.

PHOTO: An English warship bombards Chinese ships. The Qing warships are burning. The Opium Wars gave the European nations the opportunity to encroach upon the Qing. The steamship to the right is a British warship. (The Tôyô Bunko, Tokyo)

PHOTO: Hong Kong, which became a British territory after the Opium Wars. Hong Kong was returned to China in 1997. (Present-day photograph.)

FIGURE: Trade relations up until the Opium Wars

Despite the fact that the amount of tea imported by Britain from China was increasing, China did not import British cotton textiles or other goods. Britain thus had an import surplus.

Digging Deeper into History 9: The Europeans' global unification and immigration; the world around the nineteenth century*

THE ARRIVAL OF PERRY'S SHIPS AND THE OPENING OF JAPAN

The arrival of Perry's ships

When the news reached Japan that the great Qing state had been defeated by Britain in the Opium Wars of 1840, there was a heightened sense of crisis that Japan would be encroached upon by the West. To avoid conflict, in 1842 the Edo shogunate abolished the Order for the Repelling of Foreign Ships, and made preparations for defense around the coast as a precaution for any eventuality. Furthermore, the Dutch king sent a letter explaining the changes taking place in the world, in which he advised opening the country. However, the shogunate made no effort to change its policy of national isolation.

In 1853, American emissary **Commodore Matthew Perry** arrived at Uraga (Kanagawa Prefecture), at the mouth of Edo Bay, leading four warships. America at that time had extended its territory to the Pacific coast, and was planning to set up a route for steamships across the Pacific Ocean in order to open up trade with China. The Americans had come in order to demand that Japan, which lay on

this route, open up its ports. The shogunate, however, said that it would give an answer the following year, and Perry left.

Perry returned to the Ryûkyûs, and the following year he once again came to Japan. Showing the might of his warships, he pressed strongly for the opening of the country. As a result, the shogunate did not completely carry through the policy of national isolation, instead signing the **Treaty of Peace and Amity between the United States and the Empire of Japan**, opening the two ports of Shimoda (Shizuoka Prefecture) and Hakodate (Hokkaidô), and promising to supply fuel, water, and provisions. The shogunate subsequently concluded the same sort of treaties with Britain and Russia, and with the Netherlands it signed a treaty putting into writing the way trade had been carried out between the two countries until that time.

GUIDE TEXT: How did Perry sailing to Japan change relations between Japan and other countries?

PHOTO: Commodore Matthew Perry.

PHOTO: Perry lands at Kanagawa (now Yokohama). Commodore Perry of the American East India Squadron first landed in the Ryûkyûs and then sailed to the Ogasawara Islands, where he inspected land for coal depots. After this he headed for Edo Bay. The illustration below shows him landing in 1854, and the tree to the right is on the site of the present-day Yokohama Archives of History. (*Peri Kanagawa jôriku zu* [Illustration of Perry's landing at Kanagawa])

BOX: Research Perry's movements from *Narrative of the Expedition of an American Squadron to the China Seas and Japan*

Perry wrote a book that still remains, *Narrative of the Expedition of an American Squadron to the China Seas and Japan*. This is the official record of his expedition to Japan, based on his own logs and diaries and those of his crew, as well as reports and other sources. This book helps bring some facts about his journey to light.

First, according to his sailing chart, Perry left the port of Norfolk in America, crossing the Atlantic and Indian Oceans and calling at Macao, Hong Kong, and the Ryûkyûs before arriving at Uraga in 1853 (check this on page 138).

Next, by comparing the map of Edo Bay (now Tokyo Bay) that Perry surveyed with a present-day map of the bay, it can be seen that the coastline has changed a lot.

The spot where Perry landed at Kurihama (Kanagawa Prefecture), near Uraga, is also illustrated. There is a direction board at present-day Japan Railways Kurihama Station, and it is possible to go to the spot where Perry landed. A memorial stone has been erected there, and a museum of the opening of the port has been built.

The Treaty of Peace and Amity between the United States and the Empire of Japan, concluded when Perry returned to Japan in 1854, was signed in Yokohama. The Yokohama Archives of History were built on that spot. There, materials mainly from after the opening of the port are arranged in a spacious area. There is also a room where you can browse books relating to Yokohama at the end of the shogunate.

The Unequal Treaties

Townsend Harris, the American consul general who came to Shimoda under the Treaty of Peace and Amity between the United States and the Empire of Japan, requested that Japan not only open its ports, but that it also commence formal diplomatic relations and trade. At that time, the shogunate had begun to think in terms of abandoning the policy of national isolation and developing Japan while maintaining an association with the West. Consequently, Chief Councillor Ii Naosuke of the shogunate concluded the **United States–Japan Treaty of Amity and Commerce** with Harris in 1858. This treaty stipulated that the two countries assign diplomatic officials to each other's capital, and that free trade begin in five ports, including Hakodate and Kanagawa (Yokohama). Treaties with the same provisions were then concluded with the Netherlands, Russia, Britain, and France. In this way, the national seclusion that had lasted some 220 years came to an end.

These treaties of amity and commerce were unequal treaties for Japan. They recognized extraterritoriality³ only for the other countries, and did not give

³ The right for foreigners not to be subject to the laws of the country in which they reside. In this case, foreigners who committed crimes in Japan were not subject to Japanese law, and instead were tried according to the law of, and in a court of, their own country.

tariff autonomy⁴ to Japan. However, the people of the time did not realize that the treaties were unequal, being far more concerned with the issue of whether to open the country or to continue national isolation.

PHOTO: Ii Naosuke. From being a lord of the Hikone domain (Shiga Prefecture), he became the Chief Councillor of the shogunate. (Gôtokuji Temple, Tokyo)

THE SONNÔ JÔÎ [REVERE THE EMPEROR, EXPEL THE BARBARIANS] MOVEMENT AND THE SATSUMA-CHÔSHÛ ALLIANCE

Rise of the *sonnô jôî* movement

Because the treaties of amity and commerce clearly aimed for an end to national isolation, there was strong opposition from the Imperial Court, as well as the feudal lords, the warriors, and the masterless samurai. Chief Councillor Ii Naosuke consequently punished many of the opposing factions, including the father and son at the head of the Mito domain and Yoshida Shôin, thus quelling the opposition (**the Ansei Purge**). However, when Ii was killed outside the Sakurada Gate of Edo Castle by former warriors of the Mito domain in 1860, the movement to rally round the emperor and drive out the Europeans rapidly gained ground (**the *sonnô jôî* [revere the emperor, expel the barbarians] movement**). The warriors and masterless samurai who joined this movement saw trade begin and the price of rice and other items start to rise sharply, and believed that opening the country was a mistake. They attacked Europeans and petitioned the imperial court in an attempt to make the shogunate break off the treaty.

GUIDE TEXT: What political changes within Japan did abandoning national isolation bring about?

Powerful daimyo move to merge the imperial court and the shogunate

Meanwhile, among the daimyo of the Satsuma, Echizen, and other domains, there were those who stressed the need to bring the powerful daimyo to power and to govern the country with respect for domestic public opinion and public

⁴ The right for a country to freely levy taxes on items imported into or exported from the country in trade with other countries.

debate,⁵ in order to stave off the crisis caused by the country's opening. They believed that even with the marriage of the fourteenth shogun to the younger sister of the emperor the conflict between the imperial court and the shogunate would not end and the turmoil in the country would not subside. They therefore positioned themselves between the shogunate and the imperial court, attempting to reform the shogunate and mediate between the two sides (**union of court and shogunate**).

In 1863, the Chôshû domain, which advocated *sonnô jôi* ("revere the emperor, expel the barbarians"), received the support of the imperial court and bombarded foreign ships passing through the Kanmon (Shimonoseki-Moji) Straits. It went as far as planning to topple the shogunate, which was reluctant to expel foreigners. However, other powerful daimyo were opposed to toppling the shogunate and expelled representatives of the Chôshû domain from Kyoto. The Satsuma domain and others took this opportunity to effect a reconciliation between the court and the shogunate; moreover, they planned to bring the court round to the idea of opening the country and make a new government in which the Tokugawa clan and the powerful daimyo would join together under the emperor. The result of this mediation was that the shogunate successfully came to a reconciliation with the court, but it rejected the participation of the powerful daimyo in government that they had been seeking. In response to this slight, the Satsuma domain gradually came into conflict with the shogunate.

PHOTO: Soldiers from four countries capture the Shimonoseki Battery. The year after the Chôshû domain bombarded foreign ships passing through the Shimonoseki Straits, Britain and three other countries captured the Shimonoseki Battery (the Four Countries' Attack on the Shimonoseki Battery Incident). (Leiden University, Netherlands)

The Satsuma-Chôshû Alliance

In 1864 the Chôshû domain attacked Kyoto in an attempt to regain its standing. Together with the shogunate, the Satsuma domain repelled the Chôshû forces and called for a punitive expedition. However, when Satsuma later found out

⁵ Public debate was the idea that the problems directly facing Japan at the time should be widely debated in order to formulate policy. It was also known as open discussion, and was later incorporated into the first article of the Charter Oath.

that the Chōshū had discarded its position of expelling the foreigners, it made an about-face and approached the Chōshū in order to fight the shogunate. In 1866, Saigō Takamori and Ōkubo Toshimichi of the Satsuma domain and Kido Takayoshi of the Chōshū domain concluded an alliance (the **Satsuma-Chōshū Alliance**) through the mediation of Sakamoto Ryōma, a masterless samurai from the Tosa domain (Kōchi Prefecture), to resist the shogunate's punitive expedition against Chōshū. The shogunate carried out its punitive expedition without the cooperation of these powerful daimyo, and the expedition ended in failure.

BOX: Sakamoto Ryōma

Ryōma was born to a family of a low-ranking samurai of the Tosa domain. He went to Edo to learn swordsmanship, and meeting Katsu Kaishū led him to start thinking widely about the world. He was highly skilled at judging the tide of the times, and appreciating the need for foreign trade he set up a trading company, Kaientai. Then, as he helped the Chōshū and the Satsuma domains to import Western-style weapons and ships, he managed to get both domains, which had previously been in conflict, to join forces.

Ryōma was assassinated in Kyoto in 1867. It is said that it was on the day of his thirty-second birthday.

PHOTO: The Kagoshima Bombardment. At around the time of the four countries' attack on the Shimonoseki Battery, the Satsuma domain also suffered bombardment by a British fleet that came to Kagoshima Bay (the Kagoshima Bombardment) because *han* warriors had killed and injured British citizens in Namamugi (in present-day Yokohama City). As a result of these incidents, the Chōshū and the Satsuma domains both realized that expelling foreigners would be very difficult. (Shōkoshūseikan, Kagoshima Prefecture)

PHOTO: Japanese samurai and the Sphinx. There are 27 samurai in this photo. This is the mission sent by the shogunate to Europe in 1863. Even in the midst of the unrest surrounding the end of the Edo period, the shogunate and the domains sent students and others to Western Europe for the benefit of the following era.

THE FALL OF THE EDO SHOGUNATE

The social impact of Japan's opening

After Perry's arrival, the movement to take in Western knowledge spread across Japan. The shogunate set up Western schools in Edo and Nagasaki, and allowed the retainers of the feudal lords to enter these schools. There they studied not just Dutch learning, but also learning from Britain, France, Germany, and other Western countries. Also, emissaries were sent abroad. The emissaries were accompanied by others who studied with great zeal to learn about the West.

With the start of trade, such goods as raw silk and tea began to be sold overseas, of which raw silk became the most important export. For this reason, there was a rapid growth in the silk-producing regions, mainly in eastern Japan, and silk was also produced through manufacturing processes in factories. However, textile manufacturers and consumers suffered from shortages and rising prices.

Meanwhile, because of the need for exchange of domestic and foreign currencies,⁶ the shogunate released currency of reduced quality. As huge quantities were also produced for the purchase of warships, there were sharp price hikes and social unrest spread. The shogunate was beaten in its punitive expedition against Chôshû in 1866, and with a failed rice harvest that year there were many destructive riots and peasant uprisings. From then until the beginning of the Meiji era, riots and uprisings by the peasants became frequent occurrences, and some of these demanded social reform. Also, prompted by the unease of the breakdown in order, there was a huge craze for mobs to dance around to the refrain of "*ee ja nai ka*" [Why not, it's okay!].

GUIDE TEXT: What was the chain of events leading to the fall of the Edo shogunate?

FIGURE: Changes in prices.

PHOTO: Rising prices satirized in an *ukiyo-e* woodblock print. (Historical Archive of the National Institute of Japanese Literature, Tokyo)

BOX: Politics sold out—Edo at the time of the fall of the shogunate.

⁶ When gold and silver were exchanged overseas it was in the ratio of gold 1: silver 15, but in Japan it was in the ratio of gold 1: silver 5. Japan's gold thus went overseas.

This picture shows people in a destructive riot in Edo in 1866. There were outbreaks of rioting across the country during this year, and in many areas people destroyed rice shops and pawnbrokers. In Edo, the magistrate's offices were unable to stop the rioting, and it is said that a sign reading "Politics has sold out" was posted in front of the gates of the office. Perhaps the people had already realized that the power of the shogunate was failing.

PHOTO: (*Bakumatsu Edo shichû sôdô zu* [Illustration of riots in Edo at the time of the fall of the shogunate], Tokyo National Museum)

The Restoration of Imperial Rule and the Boshin Civil War

In 1867, the Satsuma and Chôshû domains allied with the court noble Iwakura Tomomi, who was aiming for the restoration of imperial rule, and planned to bring down the shogunate by force. In response to this, Tokugawa Yoshinobu, the fifteenth shogun, on the advice of the Tosa domain, declared the return of authority to the imperial court (**Return of Political Rule to the Emperor**).

Yoshinobu's aim was to maintain authority by creating a council of feudal lords under the emperor, with Yoshinobu himself at the head of the council. However, the faction trying to bring down the shogunate forestalled Yoshinobu by issuing the **Edict for the Restoration of Imperial Rule**, and made a new government. The hereditary lords and retainers who opposed this fought back at Toba and Fushimi, to the south of Kyoto, but were beaten.

The Edo shogunate thus fell, and the samurai government, which had begun with the Kamakura shogunate and continued some 700 years, came to an end.

Yoshinobu stepped down, and the shogunate official Katsu Kaishû, who was left to take charge of affairs after him, avoided conflict and made peace with the new government. However, some of the shogun's retainers barricaded themselves in at Hakodate, and the Aizu domain (Fukushima Prefecture) and other domains of the Tohoku region opposed Satsuma and Chôshû. The new government obtained the support of many feudal lords and attacked the opposing domains, bringing the civil war to an end with the surrender in Hakodate in 1869. This succession of domestic struggles is called the **Boshin Civil War**.

PHOTO: Goryôkaku, Hakodate. This was Japan's first Western-style castle, where the shogun's retainers barricaded themselves in during the Boshin Civil War.

PHOTO: "*Ee ja nai ka*" [Why not, it's okay!]. In this dance of the people, it was said that shrine talismans and Buddhist images fell from the sky. People did things like making rich families provide food and drink, and this popular movement spread around the country. (Historical Archive of the National Institute of Japanese Literature, Tokyo)

PHOTO: Tokugawa Yoshinobu in French military uniform. (Ibaraki Prefectural Museum of History)

2. The Meiji Restoration

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE MEIJI GOVERNMENT

The Meiji Restoration and the new government

As a result of the Restoration of Imperial Rule, the shogunate and regent system was abolished and a new government centered on Emperor Meiji was established. Not only court nobles and leading daimyô, such as those from the Satsuma and Chôshû domains, but also daimyô's retainers held important posts in this new Meiji government, and talented individuals were recruited from across the country.

The Charter Oath—issued in March of 1868 (Keiô 4) with an oath made by the emperor to the gods—was based on the ideals of open debate and public opinion, while setting out a fundamental policy of learning greatly from foreign countries and remaking Japan into a modern nation. The government in that year renamed Edo as Tokyo and made it the nation's capital, changed the name of the era to Meiji, and began reforms. The series of reforms since the end of the shogunate that sought to modernize the politics, economy, and society of Japan is referred to as the **Meiji Restoration**.

GUIDE TEXT: What reforms did the Meiji government carry out in order to make Japan a modern state?

PHOTO: An official of the new Meiji government announces the dissolution of the domains. In 1871, the former lords of the domain were called in front of the emperor and the dissolution of their domains ordered. (*Haihan chiken* [Dissolution of the domains, and establishment of prefectures], painting by Kobori Tomone in the collection of Meiji Jingû Seitoku Kinen Kaigakan, Tokyo)

Charter Oath

- An assembly shall be widely convoked, and all measures shall be decided by open discussion.
- High and low shall be of one mind, and the national economy and finances shall be greatly strengthened.
- Civil and military officials together, and the common people as well, shall all achieve their aspirations, and thus the people's minds shall not be made weary.
- Evil practices of the past shall be abandoned, and actions shall be based on international usage.
- Knowledge shall be sought all over the world, and the foundations of imperial rule shall be strengthened.

FIGURE: Five Public Notices. The day following the promulgation of the Charter Oath by the new government, five different placards were posted, ordering the people to continue to obey existing prohibitions (bans on uprisings and Christianity) and to not attack foreigners. This is a photo of the third placard, prohibiting Christianity.

GUIDE TEXT: What was prohibited?

Dissolution of domains and creation of prefectures

The biggest reform carried out by the new government was to abolish the *han* and create a country governed by a single, centralized government. At the time of the Boshin Civil War, the new government seized the territories belonging to the shogunate and also the lands belonging to the *han* that had fought against the government. These were made into urban prefectures and prefectures, but the daimyo of the other *han* were allowed to continue ruling as they had done in the past. However, the leaders of the new government saw the ideal system as direct rule by the emperor over the whole country, in the manner of the *ritsuryô* eras; in

1869, it ordered the daimyo to return their territories (*han*) and the registers of the people living there (*seki*) to the emperor (*hanseki hôkan* [formal return of domain registers to Emperor Meiji]). As a result of this, the lord-vassal relationship between the daimyo and his retainers disappeared. However, the daimyo remained as officials ruling over their former domains, meaning that the policies of the new government were not thoroughly enforced around the country. The new government therefore abolished all the *han* in 1871 and created prefectures, and officials of the central government were dispatched to govern the urban prefectures and prefectures⁷ as, respectively, *fuchiji* and *kenrei* (prefectural governors) (**establishment of the prefectural system**).

Thus ended the period of rule by roughly 260 *han*; Japan became a country of centralized authority, with the whole country being ruled under the same rules by a central government.

TEXT BOX: Establishment of the prefectural system as seen from the provinces:
Fukui

July 18. A thunderbolt has fallen! A political earthquake emanating from the very center of Japan has rocked the country. The effects can be seen clearly here in Fukui. In town today, there was a tremendous uproar in the houses of the warriors. . . . The number of local government officials in Fukui has been reduced from 500 to 79. . . . Since olden times, the biggest disease afflicting Japan has been a surfeit of officials and good-for-nothings who do no work at all. It is just as if Sindbad has shaken off the Old Man of the Sea. Long live the newborn Japan!

July 19. . . . According to what the students say, some of the elder people in town are going crazy with worry, and a small number of rioters . . . are hoping the imperialists are assassinated because the current state of affairs is their fault. However, the real warriors and the people with power are of one voice in supporting the decree of the emperor. Their view is that the current situation is inevitable and necessary, not for Fukui but for the whole country, and that the current times demand it as the circumstances of the country have changed. Some of these people are talking very enthusiastically about the future of Japan, saying, "Japan is now going to join the ranks of the countries like your country and

⁷ At the time, there were 3 urban prefectures and 302 prefectures. Later, prefectures were merged together so that in 1888 there were 2 urban prefectures and 43 prefectures, very nearly the same number as today.

Britain.” (From the diary of an American who came to Japan as a teacher at the beginning of the Meiji era)

“CIVILIZATION AND ENLIGHTENMENT” AND SOCIAL REFORMS

“Civilization and enlightenment”

The Meiji government not only sought to reform the political system, but also sought to widely reform social systems such as the economy and education. It considered the cultures of the West as advanced civilization and sought to actively adopt them (“Civilization and enlightenment”). This commitment to pursue “Civilization and enlightenment” not only existed within the government, but also spread among citizens.

Development of school education

Children’s school education was considered vital for achieving “Civilization and enlightenment.” Many private Western-style schools⁸ were built in large cities, while in the regional cities, middle schools based on former domain schools were established in which children of former samurai families and wealthy commoners studied.

The government sought to improve the abilities of not only some people, but all citizens, and in 1872 (Meiji 5) it issued the **Education Order**, which required all children to study at elementary schools. In addition, the government committed itself to adopting Western learning, established various public universities, and invited many Westerners as teachers to Japan. A number of these university students eventually traveled to the West for further study, and later returned to Japan to take the place of foreign teachers and teach Western learning at universities.

GUIDE TEXT: What sort of policies did the Meiji government pursue to reform society?

PHOTO: A man wearing European clothes and eating beef. (*Aguranabe*)

⁸ Nijima Jo founded Dôshisha in Kyoto and Ôkuma Shigenobu founded the *Tokyo senmon gakkô* (later Waseda University).

PHOTO: Customs of civilization (woodblock print). New methods of transportation—steamships, trains, horse-drawn carriages, and bicycles —are depicted. Most people are still wearing traditional kimonos, and there are some with topknots.

BOX: Fukuzawa Yukichi. Born the son of a lower ranking samurai of Nakatsu domain (Nakatsu, Ôita Prefecture) in Osaka in 1834. After becoming a disciple of Ogata Kôan, he taught Western (Dutch) learning in Edo. Unable to communicate in Dutch with a foreign merchant in Yokohama—which had become an open trading port—he realized the necessity of English and joined the shogunate’s mission to the West and expanded his knowledge. Yukichi argued that if Japan was to become a great country it was important for citizens not to depend on the government, but to make their own efforts in studying and starting businesses. As a result, in books like *Gakumon no susume* [An Encouragement of Learning], he preached the equality of humans and self-reliance.

Reform of economic systems

At the beginning of the Meiji Period, Japanese per capita gross domestic product was only roughly a quarter that of England. The government carried out various economic reforms necessary to promote industry in order to enrich the country and become a strong nation that could stand shoulder to shoulder with the West.

The government reformed the tax system first. Initially, the government’s revenues were largely dependent on the annual taxes paid in rice by farmers, as was the case in the Edo period. But rice was inconvenient to store, and both harvest amounts and prices constantly fluctuated. The government therefore formally recognized land ownership of citizens and then demanded taxes from land owners in the form of cash, instead of rice (**Land Tax Reform**). As a result, the government was able to receive stable revenues regardless of bountiful or poor rice harvests, making it easier to plan budgets. But as the burden of the land tax rate remained largely unchanged from the Edo period, farmers’ living conditions were difficult, and uprisings against the Land Tax Reform occurred across the country.

The government also reformed the currency and financial system. It unified the complex currency system into a decimal system of yen, *sen*, and *rin*, established banks across the country, and made it easier to raise the funds

necessary for industry. In 1882, the **Bank of Japan** was established to regulate the issuing of currency.

Policies to boost production and nurture industry

The government adopted railway, steamship, postal and telegraph systems from the West, and made rapid and mass transportation and communication possible. It also built model farms, dairy farms, and factories and sought to disseminate advanced Western technologies in the private sector. The government also engaged in pioneering projects in various regions, including Hokkaido, to create income opportunities for former samurai.

PHOTO: Land deeds. By issuing these land deeds to land owners, property rights were recognized, and the land value, as well as the tax on this property, was clarified. The land tax is written to the left of the land price. There is a column on the reverse side to record the name of new owners when ownership changes.

PHOTO: Uprising against land tax reform. A woodblock print from the time, drawn from imagination, depicting an uprising that occurred in Mie Prefecture. (Reproduction)

FIGURE: Women working at the Tomioka Silk Mill (woodblock print). Government model factory built in Tomioka, Gunma Prefecture.

ABOLITION OF THE CLASS SYSTEM

“Equality of the four classes”

The Meiji government abolished the class system of the Edo period in order to draw out the citizens’ abilities as much as possible and realize the policy of **“Enrich the country, strengthen the military”**. Daimyô and court nobles were made into the peerage, samurai became former samurai, and peasants, craftsmen, and merchants became commoners. In addition, commoners were granted the right to officially hold surnames, and in 1871 those who had been classified as *eta* or *hinin* during the Edo period were liberated by the Emancipation Edict and made commoners. Marriage between individuals from different classes was permitted, as was the freedom to choose one’s occupation and residence. Later on, all classes were subject to equal criminal punishment. The former samurai

once had advantageous rights over the commoners, but these privileges were gradually taken away.

The Conscription Ordinance

In 1873 the government issued the **Conscription Ordinance**, setting out its policy of requiring military service of all men over the age of 20 based on selection by lottery. Until then, only former samurai were obliged to become soldiers; commoners had no such duty. This system of using the strength of all citizens for military affairs was partly a policy for attaining equality.

GUIDE TEXT: Why did discrimination remain even though the class system of the Edo period was abolished?

FIGURE: Proportion of the population comprised by the peerage, former samurai, and commoners.

FIGURE: Avoiding conscription. It was possible to be exempt from military service if one was a government official or household head, or if one paid proxy money. This book explained these various ways of avoiding conscription and was read widely.

BOX: Conscription system and blood tax. Concerning the conscription system, the Meiji government pronounced: "There is nothing in this world that is not taxed. These taxes are used for government expenses. In the West, the conscription system is called blood tax. It means to serve the country with the lifeblood of human beings. That is why all men over the age of 20 must become soldiers and prepare in the event of a national emergency." Some people opposed the conscription system, reasoning that "people's lifeblood will be taken away."

PHOTO: People recruited for their first conscription examination. Because there were various exemption regulations at first, many of those who were actually conscripted were the second or younger sons of farming families. These exemptions were later abolished.

Dissolution Abolition of hereditary stipends and the *haitôrei* (edict prohibiting the wearing of swords)

The government also abolished hereditary stipends to the warrior class. The stipends had to be paid regardless of whether the recipients worked or not; they were a wasteful outlay for a government that was hoping to boost production and nurture industry. It was therefore decided to halt the payments and issue national bonds in their place. The government also took away the right of the warrior class to wear swords. Some members of the warrior class were dissatisfied with the way their rights had been taken away, and there were those who openly rebelled. However, many had high hopes for the possibilities opened up by the new era and became officials or farmers or entered new professions, becoming teachers, journalists, and businessmen.

PHOTO: The business code of the warrior class. The warrior class could not live on the interest accrued on national bonds (a type of certificate indicating a sum of money, which could be exchanged for cash) alone, and some of them sold their bonds and used the money to start businesses. However, many of them were not suited to running a business; in the picture to the right, the ex-samurai shop owner puts on airs, forcing the customers to take a humble attitude toward him. Everything shown on the list of goods in the picture satirizes the warrior class. (Saitama Prefecture, in the Abe collection)

Lingering discrimination

This series of reforms greatly eroded the rights of the former ruling class, and together with the abolition of the *han* it provided an opportunity for sweeping changes in society. However, this did not lead to a completely egalitarian society. The nobility continued to receive generous protection from the state, and the concept of class discrimination, which was created under the shogunate system, remained deeply entrenched among the people even after the abolition of the class system.

In particular, just as during the Edo period, the freedom of the people classed as *eta* or *hinin* to enter new professions, move to new addresses, or receive an education was severely restricted, and discrimination against them

continued.⁹ In part because the government gave no economic assistance using public funds, discrimination remains even today, and efforts are continuing to resolve it.

FORGING NEW INTERNATIONAL TIES

Relations with the West and East Asia

The Meiji government made clear its policy of “opening the country and peace and amity” soon after its establishment, and in 1871 (Meiji 4) it sent a mission of influential government figures led by Iwakura Tomomi to the West. This mission was undertaken to prepare for revisions of the unequal treaties that Japan had signed with the Western countries at the end of the shogunate, as well as to inspect the advanced cultures of the West and put this knowledge to use for the modernization of Japan. The party attempted to revise treaties in the United States but failed, after which they traveled to Europe and studied the political, economic, and social conditions of these various countries. Strongly feeling the need to make Japan a civilized nation on par with the West, the mission returned to Japan after a year and nine months.

MAP: The route of the Iwakura Mission.

PHOTO: Female students abroad. Five female students who traveled to the United States together with the Iwakura Mission. Second from the right is Tsuda Umeko, who turned seven years old on the ship to the United States (she later founded Tsuda College).

Relations with neighboring countries

The government worked to establish new ties with its Asian neighbors. First, in 1871, it signed an equal treaty with the Qing government of China, with whom it had had only limited trade relations during the Edo period, and instituted formal diplomatic ties with that country. With regard to Korea, with whom the Edo

⁹ The jobs that had always been performed by the *eta* class (*buraku* outcasts who suffered discrimination) were lost to businessmen and others, who eyed the profits these jobs brought in. In addition, the *eta* were shouldered with new obligations such as conscription, and their way of life became even harder. Also, there were farmers who believed that they would suffer disadvantage as a result of the *eta* attaining social status equal to their own, and in some districts they rioted against the Emancipation Edict.

shogunate had maintained diplomatic relations, the Japanese informed the government there of the restoration of imperial power and attempted to forge a new relationship. However, Korea at that time had adopted an exclusionist policy, and it refused to enter into negotiations with the new government.¹⁰

After the restoration, there were those who held the view that Japan should send a military force to Korea to demonstrate its might (*seikanron*), and the abovementioned response by Korea offered a good excuse for such an expedition. This *seikanron* was supported by the samurai, whose position was threatened by the replacement of the feudal *han* [domains] with prefectures and the establishment of a system of conscription, and it was represented in the government by Saigô Takamori, Itagaki Taisuke, and others. However, after returning from their mission to the West, Iwakura, Ôkubo Toshimichi, Kido Takayoshi, and others rejected the arguments of Saigô and his group, insisting that the conquest of Korea would be too risky given Japan's strength at the time, and that getting the country's domestic affairs in order should come first. As a result, Saigô, Itagaki, and others resigned from the government in protest in 1873, followed by a number of military officers. The next year, however, the government sent an expedition to Taiwan to mollify discontent among the remaining officers. The Qing government, which then controlled Taiwan, protested vigorously, but war with China was averted through diplomatic negotiations.

Meanwhile, in 1876, the government took a tough stance against Korea, which had begun to relax its exclusion policy, and concluded the Japan-Korea Amity Treaty. Like the treaties the Western powers had signed with Japan in the final years of the Tokugawa shogunate, this was an unfair treaty from Korea's standpoint, but within Japan it served to deprive the *seikanron* movement of its rationale.

GUIDE TEXT: What posture did the Meiji government adopt toward East Asia and Korea in particular?

Chronology of Foreign Relations

¹⁰ Having turned back assaults by French warships in 1866 and American warships in 1871, Korea was confident in its ability to exclude foreigners. In addition, the Korean government had rejected an official message sent by the Meiji government in 1868 on the grounds that it contained discourteous wording.

| Year | Event |
|------|--|
| 1871 | Sino-Japanese Amity Treaty Iwakura Mission departs for United States |
| 1872 | Ryûkyû made a <i>han</i> |
| 1873 | Iwakura Mission returns Saigô et al. resign over <i>seikanron</i> |
| 1874 | Forces dispatched to Taiwan |
| 1875 | Treaty of St. Petersburg Kanghwa Incident |
| 1876 | Japan-Korea Amity Treaty Government notifies Western countries of territorial claim to Ogasawara Islands |
| 1879 | Ryûkû <i>han</i> becomes Okinawa Prefecture |

[BOX] Iwakura Tomomi's Regrets

Although originally opposed to *seikanron*, Iwakura Tomomi agreed to it after he became the target of an assassination attempt by the *seikanron* faction, and he later regretted this deeply. In his resignation, submitted the following year, he wrote as follows: "The military expedition to Taiwan last year was a result of unavoidable circumstances, but . . . although I was at the forefront of the forces calling for it, I was unable to make adequate provision. Uncertain whether we would succeed or not, I caused the emperor to worry and the people to tremble in fear. This pains me. . . . Although the expedition somehow succeeded, our gains did not justify our losses. (More than 500 soldiers were killed and more than 5 million yen spent, yet the indemnity won was only 500,000 taels.) The blame for this lies with me alone."

FIGURE: Negotiations with Korea. In 1875, Japan sent warships to the seas off Kanghwa Island on the pretext of surveying the area. When hostilities were exchanged, Japan took advantage of the situation to force Korea into treaty negotiations, and in 1876 the Japan-Korea Amity Treaty was concluded. The painting depicts the Japanese mission at the head of a military unit proceeding toward the site of negotiations. (From *Chôsenkoku shinkei*)

HOKKAIDÔ AND OKINAWA

The settling of Hokkaidô and the Ainu

In the early modern age, Ezochi was a region where some 20,000 Ainu and other ethnic minorities lived. In the south was the Matsumae domain, a region ruled directly by the Japanese government, where *wajin* (as the Japanese were then referred to) lived.

In 1869 (Meiji 2) Ezochi's largest island was renamed Hokkaidô by the Meiji government, which established the Hokkaidô Colonization Office and embarked on direct rule of the region. Under a treaty toward the end of shogunal rule, Sakhalin was inhabited by both Russians and Japanese, while the Kuril Islands became Russian territory. In 1875 Russia and Japan concluded the Treaty of St. Petersburg, under which Sakhalin became Russian territory and all of the Kuril Islands became Japanese, thus demarcating the northern border of Japan.¹¹

The government placed great importance on settling Hokkaidô, and it improved transportation access to allow people from inland Japan to migrate to Hokkaidô to develop agricultural areas and mines. The government sent former samurai who had lost their jobs to Hokkaidô as *tondenhei* (colonist militia), and it tried to create large-scale farms by establishing an agricultural college in Sapporo to study US agricultural practices.

At the same time, the lives of the Ainu people grew harder as the land was opened up; they were thrown off the lands they had used for hunting and fishing because of the start of agriculture and forestry, the immigrants overhunted the lands, and new infectious diseases spread. The government enacted the Hokkaidô Former Native Protection Law of 1899, but it was hard for the Ainu to live by farming. Their lives suffered, and their ancient language and culture also began to disappear.¹²

¹¹ In the world before the Meiji era there were areas of land here and there that did not come under the rule of any one country, and the north of Ezochi belonged to neither Russia nor Japan. Also, Ryûkyû was a country in its own right, but at the same time was subject to the rule of both China and Japan. From the modern age onward, the system spread whereby land would be divided by a single border and a given piece of land would come under the rule of just one country. The only exception today is Antarctica.

¹² A new law was passed in 1997, the *Ainu bunka shinkôhō* (Ainu Culture Promotion Law), which guarantees Ainu their full rights. While the Hokkaido Former Native Protection Law of 1899 gave nominal protection to the Ainu, it was also a source of continuing discrimination. The passage of the new law finally scrapped the discriminatory measures.

GUIDE TEXT: What was the process leading to the formation of Hokkaidô and Okinawa Prefecture?

PHOTO: Ainu people fishing for salmon. (Hakodate City Central Library)

PHOTO: *Tondenhei* (colonist militia) working to settle the land (*Hokkaidô junkô tondenhei goran* [The Imperial Procession to Hokkaidô Observes the *Tondenhei*] by Takamura Masao, in the collection of the Meiji Memorial Picture Gallery), and a settler's hut. (Hokkaidô University Library)

The establishment of Okinawa Prefecture

The Ryûkyû Kingdom of the early modern period regularly sent emissaries and rendered its services to the Qing court, while at the same time it was ruled by the Satsuma domain.

After the Satsuma domain was changed to Kagoshima Prefecture under the establishment of the prefectural system, the Meiji government made the Ryûkyû Kingdom into the Ryûkyû domain in 1872, and after the Taiwan expedition the government prohibited Ryûkyû from sending emissaries to Qing. In 1879 the government sent troops and abolished the domain, creating Okinawa Prefecture and making Ryûkyû completely Japanese territory. There were those among the former Ryûkyû officials who resisted this, and Qing also protested vehemently, but Japan maintained that this was an issue of domestic politics and paid no heed. The United States and the other Western countries that had concluded treaties with Ryûkyû at the end of the shogunate accepted Japan's position.

Learning in Ryûkyû was influenced by China, and writing used Chinese *kanji* characters as well as the Japanese *kana* syllabary. At the same time, Ryûkyû was a country that developed its own, unique culture, such as the *Omorosôshi* anthology of songs and the *sanshin*, a three-stringed musical instrument. After the Japanese government turned Ryûkyû into Okinawa Prefecture, it adopted a policy of not making rapid changes to the local political and economic structure. For this reason, even with the creation of the Constitution of the Empire of Japan, no preparations were made to elect members of the House of Representatives from Okinawa, and it was not until 22 years later that a representative was finally chosen.

TEXT BOX: Iha Fuyû's Okinawan Culture

Iha Fuyû was born in Naha in Ryûkyû in 1876. He studied at Tokyo Imperial University, and from around the end of the Meiji era he reevaluated the traditions and culture of his native Okinawa, making them the subject of his studies. Iha became friendly with Yanagita Kunio, the scholar who launched folklore studies, and this led to greater attention being paid to the relationship of Okinawa and the other southern islands with the culture of mainland Japan. Iha passed away at the age of 71, leaving behind a large body of written work. In his last book, Iha wrote, "When imperialism disappears from the face of the Earth, the people of Okinawa will be released from *nigayo*, the era of unhappiness, and will enjoy *amayo*, the world of happiness. Then will they be able to use their unique customs to enrich the culture of the world."

PHOTO: *Omorosôshi*. An anthology of popular Okinawan songs from olden times, which was compiled from the sixteenth century onward. It is written in *kana* (Japanese syllabary characters), mixed with Chinese *kanji* characters. This book is invaluable for learning about Okinawa's ethnology and religion.

PHOTO: Ryûkyûan emissaries return to Naha. In 1872 emissaries from Ryûkyû came to Tokyo to celebrate the Restoration of Imperial Rule. The government then named the king of Ryûkyû the head of the Ryûkyû domain. The picture shows the return of the emissary to Naha the following year. (*Ryûkyû han setchi* [Establishment of Ryûkyû Domain] by Yamada Shinzan, in the collection of the Meiji Memorial Picture Gallery, Tokyo)

3. The Advent of Constitutional Government

THE PUSH FOR AN ELECTED NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AND REBELLION BY THE SAMURAI

New principles of government

By the eighteenth century a system of government in which important discussions were made by a parliament created through elections had gradually taken shape in Britain. This system later spread to the United States of America and European countries as an excellent way to ensure that rulings on policy or

changes of administration could be carried out peacefully. This political system also attracted great interest in Japan as a concrete way of implementing the ideal of public debate that had been put forward since the last years of the shogunate.

GUIDE TEXT: How did Japan adopt a system of constitutional government?

PHOTO: *Oppekepê* song. The ideas of freedom and people's rights were also spread among the common people through songs such as this.

BOX: The Tosa Memorial

The Tosa Memorial, which was submitted by Itagaki Taisuke and his followers, contained things like this:

“Power in the present government lies neither with the emperor nor with the people, but is held only by the high-ranking officials of the Chôshû and Satsuma domains. Ordinances are put out one after another and then soon revised, matters of government and criminal punishment are swayed by personal feelings, and reward or punishment are decided by affection or hatred. The way to speech is blocked, and there is no way to denounce this hardship. In considering how to relieve this situation, the only way is through open debate throughout the country and the establishment of a parliament of elected people.”
(Excerpt)

Aiming for constitutional government

In the early Meiji government, the study of a system of government based on a constitution and a parliament (constitutional government) was carried out by only a very limited number of officials. However, Itagaki Taisuke and others who left the government in protest over its insistence on *Seikanron* (debate over whether Japan should send a punitive expedition to Korea) were the first to openly announce the need for such a system. In 1874 (Meiji 7), they submitted the **Tosa Memorial** (a written argument) to the government, urging it to end the oligarchy of officials from the Chôshû and Satsuma domains and to create a parliament created through elections in order to activate public debate. The government of Ôkubo Toshimichi incorporated some of the demands of the Tosa Memorial the following year and publicly pledged to implement constitutional government in the future.

PHOTO: Ôkubo Toshimichi. Ôkubo was from the Satsuma domain, and was a leader of the Meiji government at the time of its establishment. (Copperplate engraving by an Italian artist)

The Satsuma Rebellion

Etô Shinpei, who had helped draft the Tosa Memorial, caused a rebellion in Saga Prefecture soon afterwards, suggesting that at that time, the anti-government movement thus made no distinction between a campaign by words and a campaign by force. In 1876, the anti-government warrior classes staged successive rebellions in Kumamoto, Fukuoka, and Yamaguchi when the prospects for invading Korea disappeared with the conclusion of the Japan-Korea Amity Treaty, the *haitôrei* was passed, and the stipends they had received were abolished. In 1877 the samurai of Kagoshima rose up in armed rebellion, taking as their leader Saigô Takamori, who was a leader of the Meiji Restoration. The government dispatched an army of conscripts to meet the rebellion with full force, and after a struggle lasting eight months the rebellion was quashed (**the Satsuma Rebellion**).

MAP: Revolts by the samurai and riots by farmers.

PHOTO: The government army and Saigô's army. On the left is the army formed through conscription, which had modern equipment and training. On the right is Saigô's army. They referred contemptuously to the government army as the "farmers' army." (Tokyo Metropolitan Central Library)

PHOTO: Ôkubo Toshimichi. Ôkubo was from the Satsuma domain and became a leader of the Meiji government around the time of its establishment. (Copperplate print by an Italian artist)

THE FREEDOM AND PEOPLE'S RIGHTS MOVEMENT AND PUBLIC COMMITMENT TO A NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

The movement to establish a national assembly

When the Satsuma Rebellion ended in defeat, the former samurai class changed their attitude, renouncing rebellion by force and instead starting to aim for authority by influencing the government through speech. They followed the example of the Risshisha (Self-Help Society), established by Itagaki Taisuke and

his followers in Kôchi, and political organizations started to grow up around the country. These organizations spread the thinking of freedom and people's rights that was introduced by Nakae Chômon¹³ and his followers and appealed for the need to open a national assembly. Meanwhile, landlords and other influential commoners were encouraged by the abolition of the class system, and being elected to the prefectural assemblies that the government had established at that time, they also boosted the desire to participate in politics. As a result, the **Freedom and People's Rights Movement** spread rapidly among commoners.

Itagaki gathered together people representing different regions of the country and founded the Aikokusha (Society of Patriots). Changing the group's name to the League for Establishing a National Assembly, he carried out a massive movement to petition the government. More than 300,000 signatures were collected on the petition from around the country.

GUIDE TEXT: What was the Freedom and People's Rights Movement aiming for, and what sort of government was it demanding?

PHOTO: Nakae Chômin.

Toward constitutional government

In response, the government cracked down on the assemblies and speech of the Freedom and People's Rights Movement through public assembly ordinances and other means, while at the same time it also began internal discussions on constitutional government. However, opinions ranged from those who said that it was too early for constitutional government to those like Ôkuma Shigenobu who said that British-style party politics should be adopted immediately, and the government was unable to reach an agreement. However, when the problem of the government's sell-off of facilities constructed to open up Hokkaidô¹⁴ emerged in 1881, the people criticized the government, and calls for the establishment of a

¹³ Chômon was from the Tosa domain. He studied in France, and after returning to Japan he worked to spread the idea of people's rights. He translated Rousseau's *The Social Contract* and came to be known as the Rousseau of the East. He also called for the enfranchisement of the *buraku*, who were the object of discrimination.

¹⁴ The government planned to sell off factories, shipyards, warehouses, and other facilities, which it had constructed at a cost of 14 million yen in order to open up Hokkaidô, to the trading company of a merchant from the Satsuma domain and others for a little over 380,000 yen. This was reported in the newspapers, and the government was criticized.

national assembly increased. The government therefore canceled the sell-off, while at the same time expelling Ôkuma for his involvement in this criticism of the government, and promised to open a national assembly after 10 years.

BOX: The spread of the Freedom and People's Rights Movement

Article 45: Every Japanese person shall attain rights and liberty, and shall not have this liberty denied by any other, and the law of the nation shall guarantee this.

Article 46: Within the limits recognized by the Constitution, Japanese citizens of wealth or intellect shall participate in the government of the country, and shall have the right to speak in favor of or against the government and to take decisions.

Article 47: All Japanese citizens shall be equal before the law, without regard to class distinctions between nobility or commoners.

Article 49: The body, life, property, and honor of all people inhabiting Japan, be they Japanese or foreign citizens, shall be rigidly maintained.

Article 51: Insofar as they obey the law, all Japanese citizens shall be freely able to publish their ideas, opinions, arguments, or pictorial representations, and to lecture, argue, or speak in public, without prior censorship.

(Excerpts)

This is a private plan for the constitution, known as the draft Itsukaichi Constitution, which was written in the second decade of the Meiji period (1877–1886). Many other private plans were also made during this time. At this time the Constitution of the Empire of Japan had not yet been formulated, and the Freedom and People's Rights Movement was very active.

This draft constitution was discovered in Itsukaichi, a mountainous area on the outskirts of Tokyo that was a small town at the time. During the second decade of the Meiji period, even in places like this there were fervent discussions regarding the ideal form of government. In the "People's Rights" section on the left, Article 45 was written based on the idea that the right to freedom is a natural right of the people, and the state must protect this right. Article 47 maintains that all people are equal. These articles closely resemble the present constitution, and it is very surprising for a private draft constitution as advanced as this to have been drawn up at that time.

BOX: The Chichibu Incident

In the Chichibu region of Saitama prefecture there was little arable land and people made a living through sericulture. However, the people began to suffer from debt when the price of silk cocoons and raw silk fell as a result of economic depression. They formed the Konmintô (“Indigents’ Party”) and pleaded with the extortionate creditors and the local government for relief, but their pleas went unheard. Then in November 1884 they rose up in rebellion. Some 10,000 peasants were organized under people who took on such roles as prime minister and treasurer. Armed with fowling muskets and swords, they carried out disciplined attacks on local government offices, police stations, and creditors. For a time they took control of the Chichibu district, but they were beaten by the government army a few days later, and over 4,000 of them were punished. The photograph shows Muku Shrine, where the rebellion broke out (Yoshida Town, Saitama Prefecture).

PHOTO: The crackdown on the political movement. As the Freedom and People’s Rights Movement gained strength, political lecture meetings became popular. The picture shows the audience at a lecture meeting protesting against the police, who are ordering it to end. (*Eiri jiyû shinbun* [Illustrated freedom newspaper])

Formation of political parties

In response to this decision, Itagaki Taisuke and his followers immediately formed a **political party** called the Liberal Party, and the following year Ôkuma and his followers formed the Constitutional Reform Party. They considered draft proposals for a constitution and published their ideas in newspapers. However, at this time a policy was advanced of reducing the number of bank bills, which had been increased during the Satsuma Rebellion, and increasing taxes. This resulted in an economic depression, and influential commoners became unable to fund the movement. It thus became very difficult to run the political parties. Some members of the Liberal Party joined with peasants who were struggling to make a living and rose up in rebellion in such places as Fukushima and Chichibu, but the government put the rebellions down and also clamped down heavily on the entire Freedom and People’s Rights Movement. The Liberal Party was consequently dissolved in 1884, immediately before the Chichibu Incident, and Ôkuma parted from the Constitutional Reform Party, which lost its momentum.

THE CABINET SYSTEM AND THE ENACTMENT OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE EMPIRE OF JAPAN

Enactment of the constitution

After promising to establish a national assembly, the government permitted the political parties formed among the people to participate in politics, while at the same time adopting a policy of ensuring that it could not be stripped of its authority. Deciding to use the content and the implementation of the German constitution, in which the authority of the monarchy was powerful, as its main guide, the government chose Itô Hirobumi to draw up the constitution and sent him to Europe. After his return to Japan in 1885 (Meiji 18) Itô created the **cabinet system** and various other systems relating to the constitution, and he became the country's first prime minister. The cabinet was comprised of people from the Chôshû or Satsuma domains, and political parties criticized it for its favoritism toward these domains. Itô next drew up a draft constitution, and after deliberations carried out only within the government, the **Constitution of the Empire of Japan** (Meiji Constitution) was promulgated and formally presented to the people by the Emperor.

GUIDE TEXT: What were the special features of the first constitution to be formulated in Japan?

PHOTO: Itô Hirobumi. Itô was from the Chôshû domain. He was the child of a farmer's family but rose to the status of low-ranking samurai. He played a role in the Meiji Restoration and was later appointed Prime Minister and Resident-General of Korea. He was assassinated in 1909.

The Constitution of the Empire of Japan

The Constitution of the Empire of Japan gave the emperor tremendous power and authority. It stipulated that as the supreme ruler, the emperor had authority over all legislation, administration, judiciary, and military affairs. However, these were not exercised on the judgment of the emperor alone, as it was stipulated that they were to be exercised according to the provisions of the constitution with the respective assistance of the Diet, the ministers, the courts, and the army and navy. The constitution also obliged the subjects (the people) to fulfill military service and to pay taxes, while at the same time it recognized their

freedom, within the limits of the law, of body, assets, and religion, as well as of speech, assembly, and association.¹⁵

BOX: The Constitution of the Empire of Japan

Article 1: The Empire of Japan shall be reigned over and governed by a line of Emperors unbroken for ages eternal.

Article 3: The Emperor is sacred and inviolable.

Article 5: The Emperor exercises the legislative power with the consent of the Imperial Diet.

Article 11: The Emperor has the supreme command of the Army and Navy.

Article 20: Japanese subjects are amenable to service in the Army and Navy, according to the provisions of the law.

Article 29: Japanese subjects shall, within the limits of law, enjoy the liberty of speech, writing, publication, public meetings and associations.

(Excerpt)

PHOTO: Newspaper journalists are gagged and forbidden to speak. The Press Ordinance was issued before the Constitution of the Empire of Japan was promulgated, and freedom of speech was limited. Under the revision of 1887, newspaper publishing was changed from a licensing system to a registration system, but the restrictions on speech became stricter. Bigot's picture satirizes the situation.

PHOTO: The ceremony for the promulgation of the constitution. Emperor Meiji is presenting the constitution to Prime Minister Kuroda Kyotaka. (*Kenpô happushiki* [The ceremony for the promulgation of the constitution], by Wada Eisaku, Meiji Memorial Picture Gallery, Tokyo)

PHOTO: The day of the promulgation of the constitution. Emperor Meiji's procession passes in front of the Imperial Palace after the ceremony for the

¹⁵ Human rights relating to political activity had been restricted prior to the constitution by such ordinances as the ordinance on assembly, the ordinance on publication, the ordinance on newspapers, and the ordinance on the preservation of peace. The Diet was able to make these into law or abolish them. The restrictions on political parties were loosened, but mass activity outside the Diet and labor movements were dealt with severely. During this period there was scant awareness of human rights, and the police frequently used violence when they arrested or interrogated people.

promulgation of the constitution. A German person wrote in his diary a few days earlier, "There is indescribable excitement across the whole city of Tokyo because of the preparations for the promulgation of the constitution on February 11. There are celebratory arches, illuminations, and plans for processions. However, the ridiculous thing is that no one knows what is in the constitution."
(Contemporary woodblock print)

A national education system

Around the same time, various other systems were also put in place. One of these, the school education system, aimed to produce ideal citizens for the country through education. The government issued the **School Law**, which set out a system of four years of compulsory elementary school education and such institutions as normal schools, middle schools, and imperial universities. Meanwhile, the **Imperial Rescript on Education** was distributed to schools and read out at formal events with the aim of cultivating a spirit of loyalty to the emperor and love for the country among students.

CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT TAKES ROOT

The Constitution's parliamentary system

The Constitution of the Empire of Japan stipulated that a Diet made up of the House of Peers and the House of Representatives would be set up as the body for making laws. It stipulated that the members of the House of Peers were to be chosen by the country and the members of the House of Representatives were to be chosen by the people, and the agreement of both houses was needed for laws and budgets. For this reason, the government was unable to ignore the political parties in the operation of the House of Representatives.

GUIDE TEXT: How did Japan's constitutional government take root?

The Imperial Diet and political parties

In 1890 (Meiji 23), the year after the promulgation of the constitution, a general election of the members of the House of Representatives was held for the first time. The right to vote was accorded only to males aged 25 or over, with the condition that only those who paid 15 yen or more in direct national taxes could vote, so that only 4% of males over 25 were eligible to vote. The eligibility to stand as a candidate had the same criteria with regard to taxes as the eligibility to

vote, and was limited to those of age 30 or over. Most of the candidates were provincial landowners, and many had been supporters of the Liberal Party and the Constitutional Reform Party since the time of the Freedom and People's Rights Movement. In the first Imperial Diet, which was convened the same year, it was the political parties like the Liberal Party and the Constitutional Reform Party that claimed a majority. Aiming for the formation of a cabinet composed mainly of people from the political parties, it came into fierce conflict with the government made up of the *hambatsu* domain cliques.

After this, on several occasions the government attempted to increase the number of members of the House of Representatives who supported the government by dissolving the House and interfering with elections, but the side of the political parties always won and held its majority.

FIGURE: The proportions by profession of the members of the House of Representatives elected in the first general election.

PHOTO: Scene of the second session of the Imperial Diet. (Saitama Prefecture, in the Abe collection)

The parliamentary system takes root

After the Sino-Japanese War, the government gradually toned down its favoritism toward certain domains and its opposition to political parties. This is because the government had to increase its budget year by year in order to advance its policy of "Enrich the country, strengthen the military," and for this it was essential to make concessions to the political parties. Consequently, the cabinet came to include representatives of the political parties, and in 1898 Ôkuma Shigenobu formed the first cabinet in which the political parties took a leading role. This party-based cabinet only lasted for a short time, but in 1900 Itô Hirobumi, who had previously been opposed to the party-based cabinet, formed a party called the Constitutional Political Friends Association and organized a cabinet. After the Russo-Japanese War, cabinets were alternately formed by the domain cliques and bureaucrats on the one hand and the Friends of Constitutional Government on the other.

Thus authority was not in the sole hands of certain individuals or parties in Japan at the end of the Meiji period, and a convention was established of handing over power peacefully. Party politics were not fully implemented, and

there were limits attached to speech, publication, assembly, and association; but this attempt to carry out constitutional government was the first of its kind to take root in Asia.

FIGURE: List of prime ministers (until 1911).

PHOTO: A scene of voting from that time. There is a ballot box in front of the official, and voting took place by signed ballot under the eye of a police officer with a lowered saber. (Picture by Bigot)

BOX: Government interference in the election

(Kôchi-ken minri ryôtô gekisen [Battle between the people's parties and officials' parties in Kôchi Prefecture], Kochi Liberty and People's Rights Museum)

In the second House of Representatives election, held in 1892, the government tried to prevent candidates from political parties (the people's parties) from being elected by interfering with the election across the country. This interference was particularly strong in Kôchi Prefecture, where it is said that prefectural and county officials, and even police officers, took the side of the government and warned the people, "If you don't do what police officers say, in the future the police will take no notice of violent people or burglaries," in an attempt to make members of the House of Representatives from the people's parties lose their seats. Around the country, some 400 people were killed or injured in struggles between the people and officials over this interference.

4. International Politics and Developments in Japan

REVISION OF THE UNEQUAL TREATIES AND TIES WITH NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES

Revision of the Unequal Treaties

During the Meiji period, the desire to protect Japan from foreign advances and also to stop discrimination against the Japanese spread amongst the people. The treaties concluded with Western nations in the last years of the shogunate were unequal in that they recognized extraterritoriality only for the other countries and did not give Japan tariff autonomy. Revision of these treaties was therefore

seen as an issue of paramount importance as it would put Japan on an equal footing with the West.¹⁶

For this reason, from the time of the Iwakura Mission onward the government made requests to the Western nations for revisions on several occasions, but the Western nations made no attempt to meet these requests. The government then created a constitution, laws, and courts, and it actively absorbed other aspects of Western culture as well, in an attempt to demonstrate that Japan was as much a civilized country as the Western nations were. A proposal was put forward that some of the judiciary should be Westerners, and for a while the West was persuaded to accept abolition of extraterritoriality in return for this. However, public opinion was against the way the inequality continued in another form, and the negotiations were curtailed.

After the opening of the Diet, the government succeeded in abolishing extraterritoriality with Britain in 1894. This was because Britain was alarmed by Russia's advances into East Asia and sought friendship with Japan, which was developing at an astounding rate. The other Western countries learned from this after the Sino-Japanese War, and after the Russo-Japanese War full tariff autonomy was returned to Japan in 1911. Meiji Japan had had to struggle for 40 years to achieve an equal footing with the West through treaties.

GUIDE TEXT: What were the problems with the unequal treaties that were concluded with other countries at the end of the shogunate, and what were the events leading up to the revision of the treaties?

PHOTO: The *Normanton* Incident. In October 1886, the British cargo ship *Normanton* was wrecked off the coast of Wakayama Prefecture. The British crew of over 30 escaped in a boat (three later died), while the 25 Japanese passengers all drowned. The people's awareness of the unequal treaties increased as a result of this incident, because the British captain of the *Normanton* was tried in a

¹⁶ In ports that had been opened, such as Yokohama and Kôbe, Japanese law did not take effect completely. If a foreigner harmed a Japanese person and was sent to court, the Japanese person was at a disadvantage in the consular courts. Also, as tariffs were set low and Japan could not freely change them, the government suffered through being unable to obtain the necessary funds for carrying out its policy of "Enrich the country, strengthen the military."

British court under extraterritoriality and was first found not guilty (he was later sentenced to three months' imprisonment). (Picture by Bigot)

FIGURE: The road toward revision of the treaties.

PHOTO: Rokumeikan. The Rokumeikan was built in Hibiya, Tokyo, in 1883, to the design of a British person. The Meiji government had not previously been very enthusiastic about construction, but in the period of Westernization the Imperial Palace was rebuilt for the first time, and at the same time plans were made to construct a Western-style administrative district spanning Hibiya and Kasumigaseki.

PHOTO: A ball at the Rokumeikan. This ball was held by foreign diplomats, government officials, and their families. (Copied from a contemporary woodblock print)

Japan, China, and the Korean problem

Like the Ryûkyû Kingdom, Korea was originally one of China's tributary countries. The Meiji government called on Korea to do as Japan had done, that is, become independent from China, implement Western-style reforms, and develop ties with countries around the world.

After the conclusion of the Japan-Korea Amity Treaty, Japan and Korea began to conduct trade. In addition, Korea sent missions to both China and Japan and began to explore options for opening the country. Seeing this movement, diplomats in the legation China had newly established in Tokyo advised the Korean mission in Japan that Korea should strive for friendship with Japan and start by establishing diplomatic relations with Western nations, while continuing to strengthen its ties with China. As a result, the king of Korea embarked on a policy of opening the country, sending students to China and Japan, and built a Western style military force. Then, in 1882, Korea concluded the Treaty of Peace, Amity, Commerce, and Navigation with the United States.

However, that same year, the old military joined forces with the conservative faction and staged a rebellion. China sent its forces to quell the revolt, supporting the opening policy. Then, in 1884, a group of Koreans who had studied in Japan and had come to favor radical reform launched a coup d'état, counting on support from Japan. However, this rebellion was also

suppressed by the Chinese army. This incident raised tensions between China and Japan, but the following year both countries withdrew their forces from Korea, and tensions eased. China then sent influential politicians to Korea and interfered heavily in domestic politics there. Since Japan was militarily weaker than China at that time, the Japanese government decided to exercise restraint in its intervention in Korea.

THE SINO-JAPANESE AND RUSSO-JAPANESE WARS

GUIDE TEXT: How did modern Japan's first foreign wars come about? What was their outcome?

The Sino-Japanese War

Around the end of the nineteenth century, Japan grew dramatically stronger in a number of areas, including its government, its economy, and its education system. At around the same time, Russia was beginning work on the Siberian Railway and was showing a heightened interest in East Asia. Consequently, Korea emerged as an important issue from Japan's point of view.

In Korea, a rebellion by peasant followers of Tonghak¹⁷ broke out in 1894. The Korean government sought help from China, but when Japan learned of the rebellion it also sent in forces. Although the peasants reached a settlement with the Korean government, the Japan refused to withdraw its forces. It demanded reforms of the Korean government and began to wage war with the Chinese.

Defying the world's expectations, Japan defeated China in the **Sino-Japanese War**. The following year China promised to (1) recognize Korea's independence, (2) cede the Liaodong Peninsula, Taiwan, and other territory to Japan, and (3) pay a large indemnity (the **Treaty of Shimonoseki**). In response, Russia, which was planning to advance into Northeast Asia, joined with France and Germany to pressure Japan to return the Liaodong Peninsula to China (the **tripartite intervention**). Japan had no choice but to accept this demand.

MAP: Military map of Sino-Japanese War. The war broke out off P'ungdo, southwest of Hanseong (now Seoul).

¹⁷ A nationalistic Korean religion that arose swiftly in reaction to the spread of Western learning (Western culture).

FIGURE: A caricature by Bigot. Russia is watching to see whether Japan or Qing will catch the fish (Korea).

The Russo-Japanese War

As a result of the tripartite intervention, Japan, which had been guiding Korean domestic reforms, lost its influence in Korea following the Sino-Japanese War, while Russia's clout increased. In China, meanwhile, the European powers competed with one another to secure leases¹⁸ on port cities and rights to build railroads and excavate mines. In preparation for the completion of the Siberian Railway, Russia secured the right to run a branch line through Manchuria (northeastern China) all the way to the coast of the Sea of Japan, and south from there to Dalian. After the failure of the 1900 Boxer Rebellion, a grassroots uprising that aimed to expel foreign interests from China, Russia stationed a large army in Manchuria. Japan began to worry that Russia would grab Korea¹⁹ as well.

For this reason, Japan entered into the **Anglo-Japanese Alliance** (1902) in a bid to contain Russia. It also proposed that Manchuria be regarded as within the Russian sphere of influence and Korea within the Japanese sphere. When Russia rejected this proposal, Japan opened hostilities in 1904. The **Russo-Japanese War** went in Japan's favor at the beginning, but food and weapons were in short supply, and it was only by borrowing from other countries that Japan was able to continue. Russia was also faced with the need to end the war as soon as possible because the revolutionary movement was gathering momentum at home. For this reason the two countries concluded a treaty the following year with the help of the US president's mediation. Under the treaty, Russia agreed to (1) recognize Japan's leadership in Korea, (2) cede to Japan its leases in Port Arthur and Dalian on the southern Liaodong Peninsula and its railway rights from Changchun southward, and (3) cede the southern portion of Sakhalin to Japan (the **Treaty of Portsmouth**).

As a result of the Russo-Japanese War, Japan secured control of Korea and also seized territory from Russia and China. At the same time, the war was

¹⁸ Long-term contracts to rent territories (major ports and their environs). In effect they gave the lessee control of those territories.

¹⁹ In 1897, Korea changed its name to Daehan Jeguk, or the Great Han Empire, and began referring to its king as the Daehan emperor.

closely watched by non-neighboring peoples in Asia and North Africa, who were inspired and encouraged by the first victory of a nonwhite nation over a white power.

MAP: China under encroachment. Following the tripartite intervention, Russia secured leases on Port Arthur and Dalian, Germany on Jiaozhou Bay, and France on the port of Guangzhou. Britain reacted by securing leases on Kowloon Peninsula and Weihaiwei. Japan prevailed on the Chinese government to promise not to give any other country control of Fujian Province.

MAP: Military map of the Russo-Japanese War. Where did most of the fighting take place?

FIGURE: Comparison of the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese Wars.

MODERN JAPAN IN ASIA

GUIDE TEXT: What sort of relationship did Japan build with other Asian nations following the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese Wars?

Japanese colonial rule

Having secured Taiwan as a colony as a result of the Sino-Japanese War, Japan established a Government-General there and gave it total power to rule over the island. After using military force to put down resistance by the inhabitants, it carried out land surveys, established a land system based on modern notions of ownership rights, and instituted elementary education in the Japanese language.

On China's Liaodong Peninsula, where Japan had secured leaseholds under the Treaty of Portsmouth, Japan established a Guandong Government-General and set up the South Manchuria Railway Company (Mantetsu) in an attempt to control the economic transport routes linking Manchuria as a whole, China, and Japan.

With regard to Korea, in 1905, having first gained the support of the Western powers, Japan declared Korea a protectorate. The Japanese government took away the Koreans' right to conduct diplomacy independently and set up an Office of the Resident General there to direct domestic policy as well. The Korean people put up fierce resistance, and the independence activist An Chung-gun

assassinated the first resident general, Itô Hirobumi. The following year, 1910, Japan carried out the **annexation of Korea**.

Japan established the Government-General of Korea and instituted a form of rule similar to that implemented in Taiwan, but the Korea people, with their long and proud history, continued to resist. With the death of the former emperor in 1919, an independence movement gathered momentum but was harshly suppressed by the Japanese (the **Samil Independence Movement**).

PHOTO: Korean Volunteer Armies. Armed organizations that sprang up spontaneously among the people were called Volunteer Armies. Some 150,000 Koreans are thought to have joined these militias, which persevered in their fierce resistance to Japanese rule.

MAP: Samil Independence Movement. The movement spread through 211 out of Korea's 218 counties.

PHOTO: Tôyô Takushoku Co., Ltd. After the annexation of Korea, the Government-General of Korea conducted land surveys and deprived Korean farmers of land by declaring communally owned land to be state property. It then sold the land cheaply to Japanese real estate companies such as Tôyô Takushoku.

Going to study in Japan

After the Sino-Japanese War, Japan attracted many students and politicians from other parts of East Asia. Hoping to learn the knowledge and methods needed for modernization from Japan—the first non-Western nation to turn itself into a major power—they read Japanese translations of Western works in Japanese schools and eagerly observed Japan's education system. Among these foreign students were Chinese politicians in exile, such as Kang Youwei²⁰ and Sun Yat-sen, who sought reform or revolution in their own land. They in turn attracted many other students. A number of Japanese figures offered these expatriates assistance, hoping thereby to expand Japan's influence in Asia.

²⁰ Qing statesman. Advocated actively for government reforms in the final years of the Qing dynasty.

The Xinhai Revolution

After the Boxer uprising, the Qing government began preparations to adopt a new education system and introduce constitutional government. But before these efforts could bear fruit, revolution broke out in 1911. Around China, the military declared their independence from the Qing government, and in Nanjing the government of the **Republic of China** was established with Sun Yat-sen as provisional president. In Beijing, meanwhile, the powerful warlord Yuan Shikai forced the emperor to step down (**Xinhai Revolution**). Yuan Shikai seized the position of president from Sun Yat-sen and even attempted to succeed to the imperial throne before dying unexpectedly in 1916. Thereafter in China, various warlords battled one another for regional authority, and the situation in the central government remained highly unstable.

PHOTO: Relief of the Samil Independence Movement. A girl named Yu Gwan-sun joined the Samil Independence Movement, which began on March 1, 1919, when she was only 15. Later she herself organized demonstrations and other activities, but she was arrested and died in prison at the age of 16. (Pagoda [now Tapgol] Park, Seoul)

PHOTO: Disaffection with the Qing Government. The load the figure representing the people is carrying bears the words "foreign debt, indemnity, and all taxes." A Qing official rides on top.

BOX: Sun Yat-sen and the "Three Principles of the People"

Sun Yat-sen was born in Guangdong Province in 1866. He converted to Christianity and in 1895 engineered a coup in Guangzhou, which failed. He then fled into exile in Japan and the West. In Tokyo in 1905, he organized Chinese nationals studying in Japan into a revolutionary society called the Chinese United League, and spearheaded a movement based on the Three Principles of the People: independence of the people, government by the people, and stability in the people's livelihoods. Returning to China in 1911, he became provisional president the following year and created the Kuomintang. However, he soon came into conflict with Yuan Shikai and fled again to Japan, where he continued his revolutionary activities. He is known today as the father of the Chinese revolution. He died in 1925.

5. The Industrial Revolution and Social Change

JAPAN'S INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

GUIDE TEXT: How did Japan's Industrial Revolution develop, and what effect did it have on society?

Foreign trade and the Industrial Revolution

An important issue for Japan during the Meiji era was nurturing domestic industry in the midst of competition from trade with foreign industries. For this reason, advanced technologies from the West were introduced and an **Industrial Revolution** was promoted across various different areas.

Japan's Industrial Revolution started with the fabrics industry. Exports of raw silk from agricultural communities bound for Europe and the United States increased, and private-sector factories developed rapidly as a result of efforts to raise quality by introducing the technology of government-operated factories. Raw silk exports made the biggest contribution to the acquisition of foreign currency. Cotton yarn had been a secondary industry for agricultural communities during the Edo period, when it was widely made across the country. As the Industrial Revolution progressed, factories on a vast scale were constructed through the clout of private-sector businessmen, and so production of yarn increased enormously. Eventually, domestically produced cotton yarn began to be exported, mainly to China.

The Industrial Revolution that had started with light industry eventually spread to heavy industry. Japan at the time was using the foreign currency obtained from exports of raw silk and other commodities to import vast quantities of articles manufactured by the heavy industries of Western countries, such as naval vessels and cannons; machinery and installations for railways, telegraphy, and factories; and also steel. However, a policy was pursued of promoting domestic production in these fields as well. After the government set up munitions and shipbuilding factories, it commenced production at the **Yawata Iron and Steel Works** in 1901 using iron ore from China and coal from Kitakyûshû; thus began the provision of iron and steel, which forms the basis of

modern industry. After the Russo-Japanese War, various machine industries began to develop in the private sector.

PHOTO: A spinning factory. The Osaka Spinning Company was established by Shibusawa Eiichi. Through the introduction of 24-hour operations and steam power, it was the first successful modern spinning factory.

FIGURE: Changes in the amount of imports and exports of raw silk and raw cotton. (*Kindai Nihon keizaishi yôran* [Japanese Economic History Digest])

PHOTO: Yawata Iron and Steel Works. Built with the war reparations from the Sino-Japanese War and other funds, it began production in 1901. The photograph, in front of a blast furnace under construction, was taken to commemorate the visit of Itô Hirobumi and others.

PHOTO: The *Hitachi Maru*. This was Japan's first large ship, built in 1898. It served shipping routes to Europe. (Photo in the collection of Nippon Yusen Kaisha Maritime Museum)

The spread of the company system and the formation of *zaibatsu*

During the period when the Industrial Revolution was advancing, private companies were founded one after another by businessmen who had played a major role in the development of modern industry. Eventually, the system of joint-stock companies, which was better suited to amassing funds, spread. Among these, Mitsui, Sumitomo, Mitsubishi, and others linked up with the government and underwent massive growth by expanding their involvement into a range of different businesses. Called *zaibatsu*, they came to have enormous influence, not just in the economic sector but in politics as well.

PHOTO: The former Iwasaki residence. This was a mansion belonging to Iwasaki Yatarô, who set up the Mitsubishi *zaibatsu*.

The beginnings of environmental problems

Along with economic growth, the Industrial Revolution brought about environmental pollution. In particular, copper poisoning from the Ashio Copper Mine (Tochigi Prefecture) became a major social problem. At that time, copper

was a valuable export commodity, along with raw silk and coal, for obtaining foreign currency. Extraction and refining of copper ore flourished at the Ashio Copper Mine, with the result that the forests were laid to waste by smoke, and every time there was a flood toxic copper flowed into the Watarase River and was carried to the paddy fields in the river basin in large quantities, killing off the crops. Tanaka Shōzō, a member of the House of Representatives, joined with the farmers who had suffered damage to repeatedly petition the government for aid measures, including shutting the mine down. He went as far as making an appeal directly to the emperor in 1901. However, the problem of poisoning from the Ashio Copper Mine was addressed only with work to prevent flooding, and the problem was deemed to be over although there was no fundamental resolution.

MAP: Areas relating to the Ashio Copper Mine. Damage from copper poisoning spread to Tochigi, Gunma, Saitama, Ibaragi, Chiba, and Tokyo.

PHOTO: Tanaka Shōzō. He played a part in the Freedom and People's Rights Movement as a member of Tochigi prefectural assembly and was elected to the House of Representatives in the first general election. He brought the problem of Ashio copper poisoning to light by raising it in the Diet. After resigning from the House of Representatives, he moved to Yanaka Village in the basin of the Watarase River and worked for the rest of his life on resolving the pollution problem.

SOCIAL CHANGE

GUIDE TEXT: How did Japanese society change as a result of the Industrial evolution?

The development of cities and transportation

With the Industrial Revolution, many factories were built in large urban areas and outlying cities, and people moved from agricultural communities to the cities. Cities like Tokyo, Yokohama, and Osaka underwent enormous population growth. The creation of railways quickened the movement of people and the flow of goods, and at the same time played a huge role in spreading culture

around the whole country. These social changes also brought on new social issues.

Emergence of social issues

Factory workers received low wages and had to work long hours in cramped, dark surroundings. Many fell sick or were injured. The working environment of women in the spinning industry (the women factory workers) was particularly poor. The intellectuals who took an interest in social issues that emerged in Europe quickly raised this point in newspapers and magazines. Among the workers, there were those who joined strikes or formed labor unions. In response, the government established the Public Order and Police Law of 1900 and clamped down on labor and social movements. This clampdown became even harsher following the High Treason Incident of 1910. At the same time, the government attempted to improve working conditions by enacting the Factory Law.

PHOTO: A newspaper announcing the High Treason Incident. In 1910, 26 socialists, including Kôtoku Shûsui, were prosecuted for plotting to kill Emperor Meiji. The trial was not open to the public, and the following year 12 of the accused were sentenced to death, despite opposition from socialists from around the world. Kôtoku and most others are today believed to have been innocent.

FIGURE: A day at a spinning factory. The example of Owari Spinning from 1905. There are two shifts, a day and a night shift. It was normal for the time for breakfast and lunch to take up no more than 15 minutes each out of a 12-hour working day. (*Shokkô oyobi kôfu chôsa* [Survey of Factory and Mine Workers])

The rural village in flux

The way of life of rural villages also changed as a result of the growth of trade and industry, and farmers became able to buy new clothes rather than second-hand clothing. At the same time, the rural villages became caught up in the economic changes of the time, and during times of recession many farmers gave up their land. The landowners took this opportunity to accumulate even more land, and they also ran banks and businesses, coming to have enormous influence in regional assemblies and the national Diet. Farmers who lost their

land cultivated the farms for landowners as tenant farmers, sending their children to the towns to work as artisans, live-in apprentices, or factory laborers.

PHOTO: The house of a subsistence farming family. For a very long time in Japan light had been provided by burning rapeseed and other oils, but kerosene lamps spread around the end of the Meiji era, and it became possible to spend the night in greater light than before.

TEXT BOX: The way of life of the common people in the cities
Running water began to be installed in large cities around 1900 (Meiji 33), but in old neighborhoods, where many common people lived, people depended on wells for their everyday water. Sewage systems were not completely in place, either, and so there were frequent outbreaks of infectious diseases, such as dysentery and cholera. Sewage and factory wastewater flowed untreated into rivers and the sea, giving rise to environmental pollution.

People continued to wear traditional kimonos, and on their feet they wore *geta* clogs.

It was in such circumstances that modernization was pushed forward. In 1903, trams began to run on the streets of Tokyo, and many lines were established. Electric lighting also spread in the latter half of the Meiji era.

PHOTO: The life of poor people. A scene in the area of Yotsuya, Tokyo, around 1900. There are rickshaws and people who seem to be returning home after selling wares. Humble tenement houses stand side-by-side. (*Fûzoku gahô* [Manners and Customs in Pictures])

PHOTO: Buying rats. There were outbreaks of the plague in Kobe in 1899, Osaka in 1900, and Tokyo and Yokohama in 1902. The local authorities bought rats for a price of five *sen* each. (*Fûzoku gahô* [Manners and Customs in Pictures], February 1900)

PHOTO: A well. (*Fûzoku gahô* [Manners and Customs in Pictures])

MODERN CULTURE

GUIDE TEXT: What sort of culture did the people of the Meiji era create?

The *ie* (household) system

The way of thinking of Edo-period samurai households spread among the common people during the Meiji era. Under the Civil Code, which went into effect in 1898 (Meiji 31), great importance was placed on the household system, and powerful rights given to the head of the household. The eldest son was given preference in inheritance, and the second or third sons and daughters had few rights.

The family and women

The word “family” (*katei*) was introduced to Japan from the West at the start of the Meiji era. It was also around this time that a married couple came to be known as *shujin* (literally, “master”) and *shufu* (“housewife”). In the higher ladies’ schools established to provide secondary education to girls, the idea of a “good wife and wise mother” was advocated, and girls were taught that a desirable life for women was to look after the home for a husband who went out to work and to raise children who would serve the country. At the same time, besides factory workers there were also other “vocational ladies” working outside the home, such as teachers or nurses, and there were also women who were involved in addressing social problems.

Changing lifestyles

During the Meiji era, the influence of Western culture came to be felt in people’s everyday lives. While people continued to hold festivals to honor guardian deities and celebrate traditional events, such as the seasonal festivals, government agencies, schools, and other organizations began to also make Sunday a holiday in the Western style. While faith in various deities was part of people’s everyday lives, the government emphasized Shintô as a state religion and controlled the shrines across the country. The prohibition on Christianity was lifted, and the number of believers among intellectuals grew.

PHOTO: A newspaper seller and rickshaw man reading a newspaper. This is the scene of a rickshaw man from the start of the Meiji era reading a newspaper. It can be seen that newspapers were being read even among the common people. (Ôtsû City, in the Yamana collection)

PHOTO: *Sugoroku*. A day in the life of a girl at home and at school, made into *sugoroku* (a game similar to snakes and ladders). Compare this with the lifestyle and clothes of today. (*Katei* [home] *sugoroku*, supplement to the January 1904 edition of the magazine *Shôjokai* [Girl's World])

Modern culture

Throughout the Meiji era, Western culture was widely accepted and new culture was created on a foundation provided by the Edo-period culture of the samurai and townspeople.

Education spread rapidly, and the elementary school enrollment rate at the end of the Meiji era was over 96%. Around this time, government-designated textbooks, produced and published by the government, started to be used in elementary schools, and later by middle schools as well. Newspapers and magazines were also being published in greater numbers, with new titles appearing all the time, and new culture spread from such big cities as Tokyo and Osaka to outlying cities.

In the field of science and technology, there were scholars who made world-class discoveries and inventions. These include Kitazato Shibasaburô, who discovered a cure for tetanus, and Honda Kôtarô, who invented the exceptionally durable KS magnet steel.

In the field of literature there were such figures as Mori Ôgai and Natsume Sôseki, who created a unique literary world while also being strongly influenced by the West. There were also poets such as Ishikawa Takuboku who actively turned their attention to take a broad look at society and the state. In the arts, Western painting flourished, but at the same time the American Ernest Fenollosa expounded on the splendor of Japan's ancient art together with Okakura Tenshin, and there were outstanding painters in the Japanese style, such as Yokoyama Taikan.

TEXT BOX: Noguchi Hideyo

Hideyo was born in 1876 into a farming family in Fukushima Prefecture. He endured a severe burn as a child and worked his way through school, passing the examination to start a medical practice. In 1898 he started research at Kitazato Shibasaburô's laboratory of infectious diseases. He later went to the United States, where he entered the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research and produced notable research in the field of infectious diseases. In his later years he

studied yellow fever in Africa. He became infected with the disease and died in 1928.

PHOTO: *Shûkaku* (Harvest). This is a work from 1890, but a *senba koki* (toothed threshing tool) is still being used. (By Asai Chû, in the collection of Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music)

FIGURE: The spread of compulsory education. Just after the Education Order of 1872 (Meiji 5) was enforced, children were regarded as a source of labor, and there were parents who did not send their children to school. However, school enrollment rates rose sharply in the latter half of the nineteenth century. (*Gakusei 90 nen-shi* [Ninety-year History of the Education Order])

PHOTO: Mori Ôgai. He studied in Germany as a military doctor, and after returning to Japan he worked to translate Western literature and introduce it to Japanese readers. He also wrote short stories, such as *Maihime* (The Dancing Girl).

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER