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Social Studies: History for Middle School Students

Japan's Path and World Events

(first revised edition)

Chapter 7 Contemporary Japan and the World

1. JAPAN'S POSTWAR GROWTH AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. The Constitution Needed for a New Era

Occupation under the Allied forces and various reforms

After Japan's surrender, the Allied armed forces led by the United States occupied Japan. Under instructions from the **general headquarters (GHQ) of the Allied Powers**, headed by Supreme Commander Douglas MacArthur, the Japanese government undertook various reforms. First of all, the armed forces were broken up, and those who had led or cooperated with the war were purged from public office. In 1946 the International Military Tribunal for the Far East began. The emperor, moreover, denied that he was a descendant of god in issuing his "renunciation of divinity."

In order to advance the process of democratization, laws that had curbed freedom of speech, such as the Peace Preservation Law of 1925, were abolished. Political parties were allowed to freely carry out political activities, and the rights of men and women aged 20 and over to participate in elections were recognized. The rights of workers to organize and create labor unions were also recognized. As for economic democratization, zaibatsu that had monopolized industry and the economy, such as Mitsui, Mitsubishi, Sumitomo, and Yasuda, were dismantled. In agriculture as well, the **Land Reforms of 1946** were carried out that rejected the system of landlordism, with farmland being purchased by the government and resold cheaply to tenant farmers. In this way, the number of farmers owning their own land increased considerably.

GUIDE TEXT: This photo at right came as a big surprise to many people when it was released. Why do you think MacArthur had this photo taken?

PHOTO: Emperor Shōwa and Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers MacArthur.

PHOTO: "Story of the New Constitution." This is a book for middle school students about the Constitution that was published by the Ministry of Education (now the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology).

GUIDE TEXT: What kind of postwar world was sought while working on the Constitution?

FIGURE: Changes in the number of farming households. Many farmers were tenants, but the Land Reforms of 1946 provided them with farmland and enhanced their eagerness to produce.

The establishment of the new constitution

The Japanese government launched efforts to enact a new constitution under orders from GHQ. Political parties and private scholars also created their own draft. GHQ judged the government-prepared bill not thoroughgoing enough in promoting democratization, however, and called for revisions by submitting its own draft. The revised government bill was approved by the Diet and promulgated as the **Constitution of Japan** on November 3, 1946 (Shôwa 21), and came into force on May 3 the following year. Because of this process, some have claimed that the Constitution was imposed on Japan by GHQ, but it nonetheless reflected the expectations of Japanese citizens at the time on three points, namely, its declaration that (1) sovereign power resides with the people (**popular sovereignty**), (2) Japan would never again start a war (**pacifism**), and (3) **fundamental human rights would be respected** (individual dignity). The Local Autonomy Law was enforced based on this Constitution, and governors, who had been appointed by the government, came to be selected through direct popular elections. The **Fundamental Law of Education** was also enacted, and it became possible to seek equality of educational opportunities, coeducation, and respect for individuals. With this, the Diet invalidated and eliminated the Imperial Rescript on Education.

The Constitution of Japan provided for the equal rights of men and women and freedom of marriage, with marriages being based on the mutual consent of both sexes. The Civil Code was amended so that the husband and wife came to enjoy the same rights under the law.

BOX: Connections with the present: New education system

A new education system was launched following the war. It called for nine years of compulsory education consisting of six years of elementary school and three years of middle school (6-3 system). Classes in ethics were eliminated, being replaced by social studies and home economics. A board of education was established in each municipality. The democratization of education was advanced under this system. In 1951 a collection of essays written by middle school students about life in a farming village was published as *Yamabiko gakkô* (Echo School), and this became regarded as a model of democratic education.

GUIDE TEXT: Looks like a system of school lunches was launched. What other institutions were begun at this time?

PHOTO: The start of the school lunch program (1947).

PHOTO: A textbook used during wartime (above) and the same textbook (below) with passages blotted out with ink for use following the war.

PHOTO: Women enter society. In 1946 women were given the right to vote for the first time, and 39 women were elected to the Diet. It remained difficult, though, for women to win in local elections. Photo shows some of the first female Diet members.

Something to try:

- Compare the Constitution of the Empire of the Japan with the Constitution of Japan and identify areas that you think were changed.
- Of those changes, which do you think is the most important? Explain your reasons and discuss your choice.

2. A cold war and the United Nations

The United Nations and the Cold War

During World War II, the Allied nations came to believe that a new international organization was necessary to prevent future wars. They adopted the United Nations Charter, and in October 1945 the **United Nations (UN)** came into being. The world following World War II became sharply divided, though,

between the capitalist countries centered on the United States and the socialist countries centered on the Soviet Union. This became known as a **cold war (Cold War)** because it did not directly involve the exchange of fire. In Europe, Germany became divided into East and West, and the division of the continent was described as having been separated by an “Iron Curtain.” The United States was intent on containing socialism, while the Soviet Union focused on reinforcing the solidarity of socialist countries.

The Cold War engendered an arms development race and posed the danger of triggering a nuclear war. Test explosions of the hydrogen bomb by the United States resulted in the irradiation of Japanese fishing vessels, and a movement to prohibit atomic and hydrogen bombs was launched in Japan.

GUIDE TEXT: What do the colors on this map mean?

MAP: The world after World War II.

PHOTO: Construction of the Berlin Wall. Berlin became divided into East and West due to the confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union. In 1961 a high, thick wall was built along the border and became a symbol of East-West confrontation.

Trends in Asia

After the Second World War, Asian nations were liberated from colonial control, with the Philippines, India, and Indonesia gaining independence and Vietnam rising up in arms against France for its independence. In China, the Kuomintang and the Chinese Communist Party had been waging a civil war, but the Communist Party, led by Mao Zedong, came to power in October of 1949 and established the People’s Republic of China. The Kuomintang, however, fled to Taiwan.

The Korean War

Though Korea was liberated from Japanese colonial control, it was divided into South and North Korea by the United States and the Soviet Union. In 1948, the Republic of Korea (South Korea) was established in the south and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (North Korea) was established in the north. In June 1950, the North Korean military crossed the 38th parallel to try

and unify the Korean Peninsula, starting the **Korean War**. A United Nations force led by the US military supported South Korea, while Chinese volunteer soldiers joined North Korea. The Korean War came to an end after fierce battles in 1953 with the signing of a cease-fire agreement.

When the Korean War started, the General Headquarters of the Allied Powers instructed the Japanese government to create the National Police Reserve (which later became the Self-Defense Forces) for maintaining law and order. In addition, the GHQ restricted labor movements and revised its democratization policy. Japan was brought into the Cold War in this way. Since the US military used Japanese bases during the Korean War and Japan received orders for the production of military supplies (**special demand**), Japan's economy was revived.

MAP: The Korean War.

Something to try:

- Give two examples in the world where a nation has been divided by the Cold War and note them on a map.
- Interview people who know about this period of history and ask them what has changed since the Cold War era. Write up a report of the interviews.

3. Japan's independence and security

Signing the peace treaty and joining the United Nations

In 1951 (Shōwa 26) the San Francisco Peace Conference was held,¹ and Japan signed the **San Francisco Peace Treaty** with the United States and 47 other nations, mostly capitalist nations.² As a result, Japan was able to regain its independence. In this treaty, Japan admitted the independence of Korea, relinquished its rights over Taiwan, the Kuril Islands, and Southern Sakhalin, and agreed to allow Okinawa and the Ogasawara Islands to remain under US administration. As for war reparations, most countries did not demand reparations, believing that Japan would not be able to afford large outlays. At the same time as this conference, Japan and America also signed the **Japan-US**

¹ Fifty-five countries were invited to the conference, but Yugoslavia, Burma (Myanmar), and India refused to attend. China and Korea were not invited. Among the countries attending the conference, the Soviet Union refused to sign the peace treaty.

² There were those in Japan who argued that it was necessary to sign a peace treaty with all countries, including the socialist states.

Security Treaty, which permitted the US military to place bases (facilities and other areas) within Japan.

Japan later signed the **Soviet-Japanese Joint Declaration** with the Soviet Union and restored diplomatic relations with the country. Japan was then able to join the United Nations and rejoin the international community.

PHOTO: Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru signs the San Francisco Peace Treaty.

PHOTO: Japan's postwar borders. Japan's national territory was limited to Honshû, Hokkaidô, Kyûshû, Shikoku and the surrounding islands, as stipulated in the Potsdam Declaration. The four islands of the Northern Territories that the Soviet Union had occupied (Kunashiri, Etorofu, Habomai, and Shikotan) were included in this territory. The Soviet Union did not return these islands even after bilateral relations were restored in 1956. The issue remains unresolved, and Japan continues to negotiate with the Russian Federation for the islands.

GUIDE TEXT: The conflict between the US and Soviet Union played a role in the decision to hold the San Francisco Peace Conference.

GUIDE TEXT: How are Japan's territories different today from when it signed the San Francisco Peace Treaty?

The formation of new forces

Around the mid-1950s Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru became the center of a movement among newly independent states seeking closer solidarity and neutrality from the Cold War (Non-Aligned Movement). In 1955 the **Asian-African Conference** was held in Bandung, Indonesia, at which the assembled nations confirmed their opposition to colonialism and desire for peaceful coexistence under the Cold War framework. Many African countries gained their independence in 1960, which became known as the "Year of Africa."

The two-party system and *anpo tôsô* (popular protests against the Japan-US Security Treaty)

In the world of politics, two large parties representing the conservative and

progressive wings of the political spectrum, namely, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and the Japan Socialist Party (JSP), were formed in 1955 (1955 Setup). These two parties clashed bitterly over the revision of the Japan-US Security Treaty. The LDP cabinet signed the new treaty and forced its ratification through the House of Representatives in May 1960. People opposed to the treaty warned that Japan could become embroiled in a war involving the United States, and they staged massive demonstrations around the National Diet Building from May to June (**popular protests against the Japan-US Security Treaty**). The cabinet resigned with the coming into force of the new treaty, which further reinforced political and economic ties between Japan and the United States.

BOX: Connections with the present: Japanese-born Koreans

There were some 2 million Korean residents in Japan at the end of World War II due to Japan's colonization policy. Many of these residents returned to the Korean Peninsula following the war, but there were some 600,000 who remained in Japan for such reasons as employment and family. They were considered foreigners under postwar laws and lost their "Japanese citizenship." Many struggled in the face of discrimination and restricted rights but are still living in the country as Japanese-born Koreans.

GUIDE TEXT: I didn't know that these schools couldn't participate in national soccer and other tournaments until quite recently.

PHOTO: People registering as resident foreigners.

PHOTO: Korea Town in the Ikuno district of Osaka.

PHOTO: Osaka Chôsen High School competed in the All Japan High School Soccer Tournament (2001).

PHOTO: People rallying around the National Diet Building to protest the Security Treaty. The revision of the Japan-US Security Treaty triggered a large-scale opposition movement. Many people demonstrated to declare their opposition.

Something to try:

- Cite three items that were decided at the San Francisco Peace Conference.
- Create a one-minute radio news broadcast describing the peace conference and the three items cited above.

FIGURE: The popularization of privately owned cars and electric household appliances in the era of rapid economic growth.

GUIDE TEXT: How did the popularization of electric household appliances affect our lives?

PHOTO: An abundance of electric household appliances. The era of rapid economic growth led to a proliferation of products in the home.

FIGURE: Japan's real economic growth rate.

PHOTO: The opening ceremony for the Tokyo Olympic Games (1964). In preparation for the Olympics, roads and a variety of facilities were built.

4. Development known as rapid economic growth

Rapid development and shifts in lifestyles

Japan's economy, which had been devastated by the war, returned to its prewar level around the mid-1950s, and people began to proclaim the postwar period over. Then came 15 consecutive years of rapid economic expansion, a period known **as the era of rapid economic growth**, which raised the standard of living of Japan's citizens.

People's lifestyles underwent a vast transformation. Rice consumption declined, while demand for fish and meat increased. Products made from nylon, plastic, and other new materials began to become popular. The electric washing machine, refrigerator, and television set were touted as the "three sacred treasures." Thanks to the popularization of electric household appliances, less time was required for housework, providing people with spare time in which to enjoy leisure activities. Construction of large-scale housing complexes began from 1955.

When the cabinet launched a policy initiative in 1960 aimed at doubling

national income, the public began to take a great interest in economic growth. A revolution in consumption and distribution was proclaimed, and supermarkets began to appear. The advertising age arrived, triggering an expansion of media organizations. In preparation for the 1964 Tokyo Olympic Games, roads were paved, expressways were built, and the Tōkaidō Shinkansen (bullet train) opened for service.

In the industrial sector, heavy and chemical industries expanded. Petrochemical complexes were constructed, primarily along Japan's Pacific coast. In overall terms there was a widening disparity in income between people working in industry and those working in agriculture, and fewer people took over the farm from their parents. The populations of Japan's big cities exploded, leading to overcrowding, while rural areas became depopulated.

As a result of the era of rapid economic growth, by 1968 Japan's gross national product (GNP) was the second largest among all capitalist countries, after that of the United States. Because of this, most people came to have a "middle-class consciousness."³ This era also saw the rise of a trend toward well-defined gender roles, with men dedicating themselves to their jobs and women looking after the family as full-time homemakers.

BOX: Connections with the present

Businesses and pollution

The Shiranui Sea in Kyūshū was a rich source of fish, but around 1953 people who fished there began to experience numbness and other physical abnormalities, which ultimately proved to be fatal for some. In 1956 it was officially announced that the cause of this condition, called Minamata disease, was organic mercury emitted by a factory in Minamata, Kumamoto Prefecture. Effective countermeasures were not taken, however, and the number of victims continued to increase. In 1967 Minamata disease was finally identified as a pollution-related disease. Similar incidents have been reported elsewhere in the world; striking a balance between development and environmental preservation is a major challenge.

GUIDE TEXT: A problem similar to Minamata disease has occurred in Canada, too.

³ The attitude that one's own standard of living is neither "higher" nor "lower" than the general "average."

MAP: Mercury contamination and environmental problems around the world.

PHOTO: Wastewater flowing out of a Minamata factory (1973).

Serious pollution problems

While the era of rapid economic growth brought prosperity to people's lives, it also brought a wave of **pollution problems**. This occurred because economic activities gave foremost consideration to the pursuit of profits, with concern for human health and nature being neglected.

Particularly serious damage resulted from the so-called four major pollution-related diseases: Minamata disease (in Kumamoto and Kagoshima Prefecture), Niigata Minamata disease (Niigata Prefecture), Yokkaichi asthma (Mie Prefecture), and *itai-itai* disease (Toyama Prefecture).⁴ This sparked movements among people in the afflicted areas to oppose the destruction of the natural environment, which caused damage to people's health. By enacting the Pollution Countermeasures Basic Law, establishing the Environment Agency, and taking other steps, the government began to make an effort to address these problems.

PHOTO: A movie reflecting problems in the society.

GUIDE TEXT: Something to try:

- Make a list of electric appliances that began to be used in homes during the era of rapid economic growth.
- Interview someone who is familiar with this era and find out what kinds of changes occurred when new electric appliances were introduced. Then prepare a table summarizing these changes.

5. Changes in international relations and Japan

PHOTO: President Nixon's visit to China. The United States made an effort to make friends with China, a socialist state, in an effort to bring the Vietnam War to a favorable conclusion. People around the world were amazed.

⁴ Lawsuits brought by victims of these four pollution-related diseases were called "the four major pollution trials"; all four were decided in favor of the victims.

PHOTO: Flower children (1967). Protesting against war and calling for peace, young Americans placed flowers in the barrels of weapons held by soldiers.

GUIDE TEXT: Why did the United States pay a visit to China?

5. Changes in international relations and Japan

The impact of the Vietnam War

The situation in Asia became turbulent in the mid-1960s. In Vietnam, which had been divided into North and South, the United States supported the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam) against the forces seeking popular liberation (the National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam). The National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam became more powerful with backing from the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam), and in 1965 the United States began bombing North Vietnam and sending troops into the area (**the Vietnam War**). Fierce fighting ensued, triggering a worldwide antiwar movement and international criticism of the United States. A peace agreement was concluded in 1973, and the United States withdrew its troops. After North and South Vietnam were reunified in 1976, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam was established. Such events as the US effort to achieve closer relations with China, which was antagonistic toward the Soviet Union, greatly changed the situation in East Asia.

BOX: *Hikaku sangensoku* (Three Nonnuclear Principles)

The government, while observing the Three Nonnuclear Principles—not producing nor possessing nuclear weapons nor allowing them into the country—and using the appropriate means at the time of the return of Okinawa to Japan, should enact measures to ensure that there are no nuclear weapons in Okinawa and no nuclear weapons will be permitted there after Okinawa’s return.

(House of Representatives Resolution Concerning Nuclear Weapons and the Reduction of US Military Bases in Okinawa; November 24, 1971)

Japan and East Asia

Japan’s relationship with East Asia shifted together with changes in US foreign policy. In 1965 (Shôwa 40), Japan signed the **Korea-Japan Treaty** and

normalized ties with the Republic of Korea. Japan still has no diplomatic relations with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, however. In 1972, the **China-Japan Joint Communiqué** was ratified and bilateral ties were established. In 1978, the **Japan-China Peace and Friendship Treaty** was signed and the relations between the two countries were furthered.

PHOTO: Prime Minister Tanaka Kakuei visiting China. The prime minister of the time, Tanaka, visited China and signed the China-Japan Joint Communiqué which was prefaced with the statement that Japan "is keenly conscious of the responsibility for the serious damage that Japan caused in the past to the Chinese people through war, and deeply reproaches itself." Diplomatic relations with the Nationalist government in Taiwan were broken off at the same time.

BOX: Connections with the present

The return of Okinawa and US base problems

Okinawa was returned to Japan on May 15, 1972. Under the terms of the Japan-US Security Treaty, however, US military bases have remained there, with some becoming Self-Defense Force bases. In the village of Yomitan, US military continued even after the war to occupy land that had been requisitioned by the Japanese military during the Battle of Okinawa, and the US base there was expanded. Local residents joined forces and demanded that the base be returned. A portion was returned and became a hub for local industry and culture. Since then, campaigns to reorganize and reduce US military bases have succeeded in moving the site of some US military exercises to other locations in Japan, although Okinawa is still the site of 75% of the US military bases in Japan.

GUIDE TEXT: Why are there so many military bases in Okinawa?

PHOTO: A US fighter jet taking off from a military base.

FIGURE: Okinawa and US military bases.

PHOTO: People hoarding toilet paper.

GUIDE TEXT: Something to try:

- Consult an atlas to determine where the oil currently consumed in Japan comes from.
- Hold a discussion about what can be done to prevent another oil crisis.

The return of Okinawa and US base problems

For many years in Okinawa, which was under the administrative authority of the United States, there had been a movement seeking Okinawa's return to Japan. Okinawa was finally returned on May 15, 1972. The US military bases in Okinawa remained, but a set of principles was established that included a prohibition on bringing in nuclear weapons.

Japan which overcame the oil crisis

In 1973 a war in the Middle East, the world's largest oil-producing region, drove up the price of oil. This dealt a major blow to Japan and the other industrialized nations, for whom oil was the principal source of energy (**the oil crisis of 1973**). The result was a worldwide economic recession. In Japan, people took up the cry of "energy conservation." Commodity prices rose due to the withholding of goods and panic buying, and there were shortages of toilet paper and other goods. Japan overcame two oil crises, the second of which occurred in 1979, and continued its drive to become an "economic superpower." Exports of manufactured products continued to increase, and trade friction with the United States became a problem.⁵ The oil crisis prompted the **first summit meeting⁶ of the leaders of the major industrialized nations** in 1975, in which Japan took part.

2. JAPAN AND THE WORLD IN THE FUTURE

1. Changes in the world and Japan

The end of the Cold War and globalization

The world began to undergo great changes toward the end of the twentieth century. With the easing of East-West tensions, the Berlin Wall, which had been a symbol of the Cold War, was removed in 1989 (Heisei 1). The following year,

⁵ Antagonism between nations arising from trade. Friction occurred because Japan had a large trade surplus with the United States.

⁶ A summit meeting was held among six nations: the United States, Britain, France, Germany, Italy, and Japan. Today Canada and Russia also take part, and the gathering is known as the summit of the Group of Eight leading nations.

Germany was reunited as the Federal Republic of Germany, with East Germany being absorbed by West Germany. The Soviet Union, whose economy had become stagnant due to its arms race with the United States, failed in its attempts at reform; influenced by the cataclysmic changes in Eastern Europe, the republics that had constituted the Soviet Union, including Russia, declared their independence, leading to the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

This marked the end of the Cold War. It also led to the diversification of international society, which until then had been composed of states separated by national borders. The European Union (EU), which was launched in 1993, extended its experiment in promoting cooperation through the lowering of national borders to Eastern Europe. Meanwhile, a new type of war emerged fought not among states but between national governments and terrorist groups united by a common political goal. In private life as well, it has become possible to maintain close ties with any part of the world regardless of one's location through the Internet, e-mail, and satellite broadcasts.

This situation in which there is increasing mutual dependence transcending the framework of nation-states is called **globalization**.

GUIDE TEXT: Which countries are considered industrial countries? Is Japan one of those countries?

MAP: Per capita GDP and caloric intake per day. Gross domestic product refers to the total of goods and services produced in a country in a year, minus the raw materials used in the production.

PHOTO: People tearing down the Berlin Wall. The Berlin Wall was opened on November 9, 1989. People gathered at the wall to tear it down.

PHOTO: Simultaneous terrorist attacks in the United States (September 11, 2001). Terrorist attacks in New York, Washington D.C., and elsewhere resulted in 3,000 people dead or missing.

GUIDE TEXT: The end of the Cold War is seen as the closing of one era, and the simultaneous terrorist attacks is regarded as the start of another.

Engaging the North-South problem

With the advance of globalization, closer attention has been paid to the economic divide (**North-South problem**) between industrial countries, including Japan, and developing countries. As an economic power, Japan has played a large role in its resolution, having been the world's largest donor of official development assistance (ODA) for over 10 years.

FIGURE: The world's largest donors of ODA (2002)

Post-war reparations and neighboring nations

As for compensation and reparations to the countries Japan had colonized during the Pacific War, the government determined that the issue had been closed with the signing of the peace treaty. The government therefore turned down demands for personal compensation. But as the treatment of the Korean and Chinese people during the war became known, Japan was faced with the problem of its war responsibility towards these people.⁷ Neighboring countries have also been critical of Japan's perceptions of the war.⁸ With the end of the postwar era and the Cold War and increasing trade ties with our neighboring countries, particularly China, it has become necessary for us to become aware of Japan's position and consider what must be done to establish genuinely friendly international relations.

Something to try:

- What is the relationship between GDP and calorie intake as seen in chart 1? Write down how these are connected.
- What is the reason for the relationship? Discuss it with others.

BOX: Connections with the present: Japan in Asia

The end of the Cold War structure influenced the relationship between Japan and Asia. International economic cooperation going beyond the East-West conflict, such as in the Asian-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum, is

⁷ The compensation issues of women who had been sent to *ian shisetsu* [comfort stations] and Korean and Taiwanese men who had been conscripted as Japanese soldiers during the war have been taken to courts.

⁸ In 1982, a debate arose whether Japan's military actions in the past were an "invasion" or "advance." This debate was criticized in China, South Korea, and North Korea.

increasing. There have also been instances in which Japan has been asked to increase imports from Asia for the sake of revitalizing their economies.

Exchanges are increasing culturally as well. Korea, which once banned Japanese culture, has gradually liberated imports of Japanese culture. In 2004, the sales of Japanese CDs and video games were legalized and performances by Japanese singers were held in Korea. Korean singers have also been active in Japan, and Asian movies are gaining popularity here. More and more Asian students are coming to Japanese universities and companies to learn about technology and services.

GUIDE TEXT: We can find a lot of Asian culture around us.

FIGURE: Exchange students from Japan and other Asian countries, 1998. (From *Monbushô tôkei yôran* [Education Ministry survey of statistics] and other sources)

PHOTO: Japanese *manga* have been translated into various Asian languages. Japanese culture, including *manga*, is popular around the world.

2. Returning to our own situation today

GUIDE TEXT: For every period in history, there are various challenges. Our ancestors have overcome them. It is our turn next. What kind of future would you like to make?

Engaging the twenty-first century

We need to consider the various problems of the contemporary world from different angles. We have inherited challenges from past political conflicts. These include the problem of how to manage and abolish the massive number of nuclear weapons produced during the Cold War and how to handle the economic gap between developed and developing nations. There are other challenges that we must go beyond the thinking of individual nations to deal with. These include the issue of maintaining international peace, as seen in the examples of international terrorism and the Iraq War, and the need for balance between economic development and protection of the natural environment.

Japan today is using its technological know-how for various international aid efforts. Examples of this are Japan's development of more

environmentally friendly cars and its guidance in the construction of roads and dams in developing nations. The Kyoto Protocol, which regulates the emission of carbon dioxide in order to prevent global warming, went into effect in 2005. As globalization continues, the world is looking forward to Japan's efforts, together with those of the United Nations, to promote peace, and its contributions to areas like education and the environment.

In the meantime, there are many problems to be solved within Japan itself. Discrimination against the *Burakumin*, the Ainu people,⁹ and Koreans living in Japan, as well as the creation of a society where men and women can participate equally,¹⁰ are serious issues relating to basic human rights. Though the nation has become wealthy, problems of juvenile crime and domestic violence remain. In addition, Japan faces a host of new problems, including the acceptance of foreign workers and the nature of social welfare as the population ages and fewer children are born.

GUIDE TEXT:

"People in the past each had different lifestyles and fashions."

"Yeah. It seems they are similar to us in some ways, and I have become more interested in history. What about you two?"

"What are we going to do after studying history? It seems there are more things we need to know."

"I feel like there are more things I want to study."

Towards an era of symbiosis

In 2004 Japan was struck by the Mid-Niigata Earthquake, and outside Japan there was a giant tsunami caused by an earthquake off the coast of Sumatra. Immediate assistance and broad support in the wake of these disasters were provided not only by national governments, as in the past, but also by private groups called nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and by individual citizens.

Problems of a global scale can no longer be isolated from national issues, for they are intimately linked to one another. Now that we have entered the

⁹ The Law to Revive Ainu Culture was passed in 1997 (Heisei 9) to restore and revive traditional Ainu culture. With the passage of this new law, the Law to Protect the Former Indigenous People of Hokkaidô of 1899 (Meiji 32) was abolished.

¹⁰ The Basic Law for a Gender-Equal Society was enacted in 1999 to enable men and women to participate equally in society with their unique qualities and talents.

twenty-first century, people are searching for new ways of looking at history and society. As global citizens who share the same planet, each one of us must recognize individual differences and other ways of thinking. The path to the proper resolution of the many domestic and international issues we face today is for all of us to bear our share of responsibilities and to have an understanding of history.

Something to try:

- Write down the most memorable things you learned in the study of history.
- If you were to tell people living a hundred years from now about history, what will you tell them? As a museum curator, think about the kind of exhibit you would organize for people in the twenty-second century.