this unprecedented threat, the shogunate blinked. Rather than make a unilateral decision, it opened foreign policy to public discussion by asking monarch and daimyo for input, only to discover that few agreed on what to do.

Debates over how to deal with the foreign threat led to repression, reform, and resistance. In 1858–1859 the shogunate tried to silence its critics, only to have the tables turned with the assassination of its chief minister. It then tried to conciliate daimyo and court by giving them more autonomy while radical samurai assassinated individuals who, they thought, had shown disrespect to the monarch. Commoners too expressed their outrage at political paralysis and foreign trade that disrupted existing markets in a variety of popular movements from dances to riots. Fear of foreign intervention may have kept Japan from exploding into civil war, but when the shogunate tried to rebuild its military along modern lines and reassert its authority, powerful daimyo from the southwestern domain forced the shogun to step down. A brief war in 1868 resulted in a clear-cut victory for the forces fighting under the banner of the Meiji emperor.

What changed between 1800 and 1868? Long before the Meiji Restoration, the commercial economy, opportunities for travel, and information networks eroded the status and geographical divisions that kept people in their place. Reforms by shogun and daimyo to shore up their authority and fill government coffers could not conceal the gap between reality and their ideal of the proper relations between rulers and commoners. Debates over how to deal with the foreign threat added further strain to the system by drawing more people into the public political sphere. When the shogunate collapsed in 1867, it left behind a dynamic economy, a pool of able administrators, and a population well educated for its time. Also passed on to the new government was a set of treaties with Western powers that recast Japan's relations with the outside world and opened the country to foreign trade, though not on terms favorable to Japan.

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CHAPTER TWENTY

# 20

# Meiji Transformation (1868–1900)

The Meiji State (1868–1900)

Material Culture: New Food for a New Nation

Biography: Deguchi Nao, Founder of a New Religion

Conservative Resurgence (1880s–1900)

Imperialism and Modernity (1870s–1895)

Documents: Fukuzawa Yukichi's "Leaving Asia"

Making the Meiji (MEH-e-g) emperor the head of state (called a restoration because the new regime claimed to restore the emperor to the power his ancestors had exercised in the eighth century) marked the beginning of profound changes in Japanese politics, culture, and society. A small group of self-selected men (called oligarchs because they monopolized power), who had led the drive to overthrow the shogun, abolished status distinctions that had put social groups into separate compartments and centralized government. Fearful of the West, they understood the need to import Western military technology, industry, legal norms, constitutional thought, science, dress, and food. (See **Material Culture: New Food for a New Nation.**) They built railroads, shipyards, and schools; created a new ideology to rally the citizens; colonized the Ryukyu Islands and Hokkaido; projected Japan's power abroad in Taiwan and Korea; and renegotiated treaties. They faced much opposition, often from within their own ranks. Farmers rioted against new state policies that threatened their livelihood; samurai rebelled at the loss of their traditional identity; local notables promoted democracy. Intellectuals, novelists, and essayists hammered out new identities that refused to fit a single pattern. By the end of the century, modernity had arrived.

To what extent did changes in the latter half of the nineteenth century build on what had gone before? Did the Meiji Restoration herald a revolution in politics and society, or simply a transition? Did modernization mean westernization?

## THE MEIJI STATE (1868–1900)

Oligarchs who created the new centralized government had little idea of what they hoped to accomplish and disagreed on what to do. A loose group of samurai from Satsuma and Chōshū, plus a few activist Kyoto aristocrats and imperial loyalists from other domains, they had varied interests and

## MATERIAL CULTURE

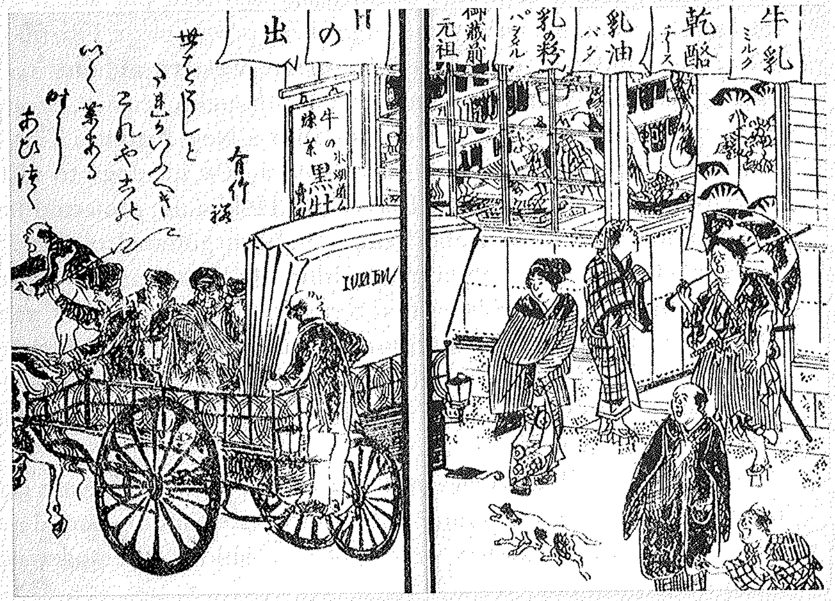
### New Food for a New Nation

Although rice had been grown in Japan since the eighth century B.C.E., it did not become a staple of the average Japanese diet until imported from Korea and China starting in 1873. Before that, most people ate wheat, barley, and millet. Between 1869 and 1900, the per capita consumption of rice went from 3.5 bushels a year to 5 bushels a year. Rice balls became common in lunch boxes, and except for the poor, steamed rice replaced rice gruel for breakfast.

The Meiji government officially promoted the eating of meat because it was thought to produce stronger workers and soldiers. In 1869 it established the Tsukiji beef company. In 1871 a butcher shop in Tokyo's Asakusa district became popular by selling beef for sukiyaki, a Meiji period invention, as well as milk, cheese, and butter. In the 1880s butcher shops started selling horse meat. It was cheaper than beef or pork and redder than chicken.

Vegetables, fruits, and breads had a harder sell. Asparagus, cabbage, cauliflower, and tomatoes did not blend easily into Japanese cuisine. Importing apples and grapes stimulated the cultivation and spread of native fruits such as persimmon, Satsuma tangerine, and Asian pear. Bread and cakes became popular only after they were modified to suit Japanese taste.

By selectively adapting Western foods, Japanese people developed a much more varied diet than they had in the past. They ate more, and what they ate was generally more nutritious, although overly refined rice caused beriberi in soldiers. An improved diet made most people stronger and healthier while increasing life expectancy and childbearing rates. A population of approximately 33 million at midcentury had grown to 45 million by the end of the nineteenth century.



Edo Tokyo Museum/ DNPartcom

**Aguranabe.** This flyer advertising Aguranabe, a butcher shop, linked eating beef to "civilization and enlightenment."

goals. Their first pronouncement came in the Oath of 1868, offered by the emperor in the company of court nobles and daimyo to the gods of heaven and earth. In it he promised that everyone was to unite in promoting the nation's well-being, government policy was to be decided through public discussion, all would be allowed to fulfill their just ambitions, "the uncivilized customs of former times shall be broken through," and "intellect and learning shall be sought throughout the world in order to establish the foundations of the

Empire."* The Five Injunctions issued to commoners the next day had a different message. They were to practice the Confucian virtues of loyalty, filial piety, chastity, obedience, and harmony; stop demonstrations and protests; shun Christianity; conform to international public law; and stay in Japan. Emigration to Hawaii began almost immediately.

Ambiguities in the oath speak to the oligarchs' lack of agreement on national goals. The nation's well-being could justify both a national land tax and universal military conscription as well as private entrepreneurs and compulsory education. None of the men present expected public discussion of national affairs to include anyone but themselves. In contrast to the past, when each daimyo had set policy for his domain, it meant that decisions and power were to be centralized. It did not mean parliamentary democracy, although it was later interpreted that way. By implying that hereditary status distinctions would be abolished, the third clause held out the promise of social mobility. Abolishing old customs acknowledged the reality of cultural imperialism inherent in international law and unequal treaties. The purpose of gaining knowledge was to serve the state.

At first, oligarchs looked to eighth-century models for a new government. The Council of State became the highest deliberative body, assisted by a board of 106 advisers, the activists in the Meiji Restoration, who made the real decisions. The Council of Shinto Affairs enjoyed a brief existence equal to the Council of State. This structure was reorganized four times in the next four months. Most daimyo remained in control of their domains, leaving the oligarchs who spoke in the emperor's name only the former shogun's lands. Money offered to the emperor from daimyo, the shogun's former retainers, merchants, and rural entrepreneurs staved off fiscal crisis in the short run, while the need to find tax revenues to fund the government forced the oligarchs to take hesitant steps toward centralization.

Centralization required convincing the daimyo to give up their domains. Some daimyo hoped to play a larger role in national affairs; some concentrated their efforts on strengthening their domains. Most stayed aloof from government and isolated from each other. In 1869, the daimyo of Satsuma and Chōshū agreed to make a formal declaration of returning their land and population registers to the emperor, with the understanding that he would then confirm their holdings as governors. The government put all the retainers above the level of foot soldiers into a single category called former samurai (*shizoku,* SHE-zo-ku). To streamline local administration and centralize tax collection, in 1871 the oligarchs abolished some 270 domains and established prefectures. (See Map 20.1.) They started the process of consolidating 170,000 towns and villages into larger administrative units with new local officials and created a household registration system whereby each household head had to establish a place of legal residence and inform the government of births, deaths, marriages, and divorces in his family.

Daimyo readily accepted the loss of their hereditary lands. The most important became prefectural governors controlling a larger territory than they had before because the number of prefectures was a mere seventy-two, later reduced to fifty. All daimyo benefited by no longer having responsibility for their domains' debts and being guaranteed a substantial income for their personal use without having to support standing armies of retainers. In place of their former titles, they received court rank. In return for giving up their already limited autonomy, they received wealth and prestige.

Abolishing domains disinherited roughly 2 million *shizoku*. All they received were small stipends later changed to government bonds. Oligarchs urged them to find another line of work, in agriculture, forestry, business, and the colonization of Hokkaido. Some succeeded; many did not. The shogun's former bureaucrats staffed the new government, but most domain samurai remained in castle towns. Political power had become sufficiently bureaucratized over the course of the Edo period that neither samurai nor daimyo became landed gentry.

Having taken the first steps toward a more centralized state, in 1871, one faction of oligarchs left for the United States and Europe in a delegation of forty-nine officials and fifty-eight students plus five girls. Headed by Iwakura Tomomi (E-wah-ku-rah TOE-moe-me), a former court noble, their goal was to convince the Western powers to revise the unequal treaties that infringed on Japanese sovereignty. Informed by President Ulysses S. Grant that Western powers would never consent to treaty revision unless Japan reformed its laws and institutions along Western lines, the diplomatic mission became a study mission. Officials inspected prisons, schools, factories, and government agencies, trying to learn the secret of wealth and power that the West had created through industrialization and centralized government. They

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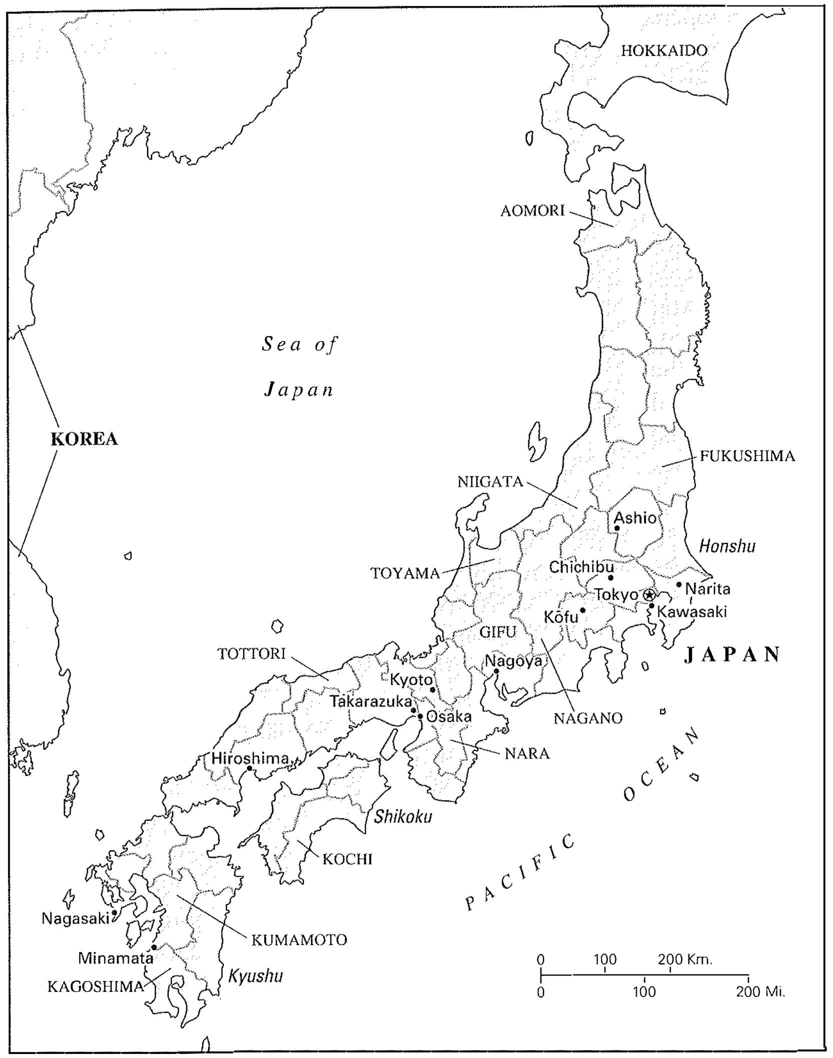
*Donald L. Keene, *Emperor of Japan: Meiji and His World, 1852–1912* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), p. 139.



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**Map 20.1 Modern Japan**

expected their absence to prevent any initiatives by the leaders left behind. In 1873, when Saigō Takamori (SAH-e-go TAH-kah-moe-re) proposed to invade Korea for having insulted the emperor in the first diplomatic exchange following the restoration, they rushed home to stop him. They opposed not the use of force but its timing. Domestic reform had to precede the use of military force abroad.

## Reforms and Opposition

The abolition of domains took place during social reforms that did not suit everyone. For many farmers, the emperor's progress from Kyoto to Edo (renamed Tokyo in 1869) in 1868 symbolized the Meiji Restoration. This, they felt, would usher in new prosperity and social justice. Instead, village officials continued to collect taxes, rents remained the same, and moneylenders charged high interest. Disappointment fueled the rage with which people punished what they saw as wrongdoing. When the new government replaced familiar faces in domain administrations with men from foreign parts, this too led to protest, as did the official end to discrimination against outcasts when status distinctions were erased and the outcasts became "new commoners." The first ten years of the Meiji period saw more protest and more violence than at any time during the Edo period.

Bureaucrats initiated reforms and technological innovations to strengthen the state against its domestic and foreign enemies. They hired Western experts to transform government, economy, infrastructure, and education. Drawing on Western models, they issued civil and criminal codes that replaced different regulations for samurai and commoners with rule by law that considered only the nature of the crime. They built telegraph lines and railroads to improve communications and foster unity. On January 1, 1873, they replaced the lunar calendar that farmers had used as a guide to planting and harvesting with the Western calendar. They outlawed traditional hairstyles for men and suppressed village festivals. Having received these directives without warning or explanation, farmers rioted in defense of time-honored custom.

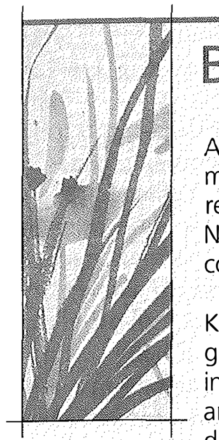
Religious practices also provoked strife. In the third month of 1868, the oligarchs ordered the separation of Shinto and Buddhism and the changing of what had been shrine-temple complexes into shrines by getting rid of Buddhist statues, rituals, and priests. In some regions, officials infected with Hirata Atsutane's doctrines destroyed Buddhist temples where the farmers' ancestral tablets were kept. Building Yasukuni (YAH-su-ku-knee) shrine to house the war dead in 1869 used Shinto to promote national goals while the creation of State Shinto in the 1870s consolidated local shrines and placed them under the Ise shrine to the sun goddess. Rather than shrines containing only gods particular to their region, people also had to accept gods of national significance. New religions founded in the Edo period received official recognition as Sect Shinto, but Meiji-period new religions were viewed with suspicion and often persecuted. (See **Biography: Deguchi Nao, Founder of a New Religion.**) Farmers protested the destruction of their familiar temples, and Buddhist priests fought back by using Buddhism as a weapon against Christianity, recalling ties to the imperial house and helping immigrants in Hokkaido.

Directives that had immediate effects and aroused the strongest opposition dealt with education, the military, and taxes. In 1872, the government decreed eight years of compulsory education for all children (shortened to four in 1879 and then increased to six in 1907) to fit them for their responsibilities as productive citizens in a modern nation, but communities had to pay for schools themselves. Outraged at the cost, farmers destroyed or damaged nearly two hundred schools between 1873 and 1877. Pre-Meiji teachers continued their unlicensed schools and talked parents out of sending their children to new ones. Needing their children's labor or unable to afford tuition, many parents never enrolled daughters or even sons or allowed them to attend school for only a few months. Over time, the number of children in school increased, reaching 90 percent in the twentieth century.

The slogan of the day was "Rich Country, Strong Army." In January 1873, the government issued a conscription ordinance crafted by Yamagata Aritomo (YAH-mah-gah-tah Ah-re-toe-moe) based on German and French models that summoned all males over the age of twenty to serve on active duty in the armed forces for three years, followed by four years in the reserves. Heads and heirs of family farms and businesses received exemptions, and exemptions could be purchased. This ordinance put Japan's defense on the shoulders of the masses and provided a way to educate conscripts and their families in the goals of government leaders. By revoking the samurai's monopoly of force, it did more than any other reform to eliminate status distinctions and create equality of opportunity.

Both farmers and *shizoku* opposed conscription. The ordinance used the term "blood tax," meaning that all citizens should willingly sacrifice themselves for their country. Farmers who took it literally assumed that the government wanted their blood. Even those who understood the message believed that they could best contribute to the nation by growing crops. Commoners opposed to conscription led demonstrations in sixteen localities in the months after the ordinance's announcement. Samurai opposition took longer to develop but cost more lives. Conservative oligarchs such as Saigō Takamori had already insisted that the national army be composed of the men bred to military service. When Iwakura and his faction outvoted Saigō on whether to invade Korea, he left the government. In 1876, the government ordered *shizoku* to stop wearing the two swords that distinguished them from the rest of the population. Between 1874 and 1877, more than thirty rebellions erupted in defense of samurai privilege. The largest and last, in Satsuma and led by Saigō, required the mobilization of sixty-five thousand troops and took eight months to suppress. Saigō committed suicide. In 1878, samurai counterrevolution ended with the assassination of the oligarch Ōkubo Toshimichi (OH-ku-bow TOE-she-me-che), also from Satsuma, because he had opposed invading Korea and arbitrarily initiated reforms.

Satsuma rebels also had reason to oppose the 1873 tax law. Applied nationwide to agricultural land, its aim was to provide a steady flow of income for the government by replacing the old hodgepodge of domain taxes on fluctuating harvests with a single,



## BIOGRAPHY

### Deguchi Nao, Founder of a New Religion

As one of the women who played a major role in creating Japan's new religions, Deguchi Nao (DEH-gu-che NAH-oh) (1836–1918), an illiterate commoner, became a prophet.

Nao was born in a castle town near Kyoto to a family on its way down. Her grandfather had the privilege of wearing a sword and using a surname as an official carpenter. Her father squandered his life on drink and died when Nao was nine. Nao went to work for a merchant who provided her with room and board; her earnings went to her mother. Nao helped with the cooking and cleaning; she spun thread and strung coins, thereby gaining a reputation for diligence and hard work. In her third year of service, the domain awarded her a prize for being a filial daughter.

Nao hoped to marry the man she loved, but her widowed aunt Yuri insisted that she accept an arranged marriage and be adopted into the Deguchi family as Yuri herself had done. Yuri drowned herself after Nao repeatedly rejected her offer. A few days later, Nao developed a high fever and lost consciousness. Upon her recovery, she attributed her illness to Yuri's vengeful spirit. To placate it and care for the Deguchi ancestral tablets, Nao agreed to marry the man Yuri had selected for her and continue the Deguchi house.

Nao's husband was no better than her father. By 1872 she had borne five children and was living in a rented house in Ayabe. She opened a small restaurant, and when it failed, she sold sweet-bean buns. She continued to have children—eleven in all, three of whom died in infancy. When her husband became paralyzed from a fall off a roof in 1885, Nao collected rags to support her family. His death in 1887 freed her to work in a silk-spinning factory as well.

One winter morning in 1892 while she was out collecting rags, Nao became possessed by a god. The experience transformed her personality and her outlook on the world. Instead of being gentle and humble, she became dignified, filled with divinely inspired authority. She rejected the social order because it rewarded vice and valued money, and she claimed that because the oligarchs and the emperor were responsible for these conditions, they exemplified absolute evil. They would soon be destroyed and replaced by a divine order of harmony and equality. Under the spell of her god, this formerly illiterate woman wrote hundreds of texts that spelled out what was wrong with the world and what was to come. She also became a faith healer. In 1899, her adopted son Deguchi Onisaburō (OH-knee-sah-bu-row) organized a sect called Ōmoto-kyō (OH-moe-toe-keyo) based on her revelations. Under his leadership, the group grew rapidly and suffered repeated government persecutions. Nao quarreled with him over his interpretation of her writings and his refusal to reject all that was modern. She died frustrated that she had not been able to reconstruct the world in accordance with her beliefs.

**Questions for Analysis**

1. How did Nao become a prophet?
2. What was Nao's message?
3. How does Nao fit within the context of Japanese religious beliefs?

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Source: Emily Groszos Ooms, *Women and Millenarian Protest in Meiji Japan: Deguchi Nao and Ōmoto-kyō* (Ithaca, N.Y.: East Asia Program, Cornell University, 1993).

uniform property tax. In most regions of Japan, land surveys that accompanied the new tax simply confirmed the property rights farmers already enjoyed. Satsuma domain had allowed *gōshi* (GO-she) (rustic warriors) to assign land to cultivators and treat them like tenant farmers. Faced with loss of income as well as hereditary status and privilege, *gōshi* became the shock troops for the Satsuma rebellion.

Even though Meiji oligarchs tried to promote industry and demanded loans from merchants, they had an agrarian mindset. Nearly 80 percent of the government's revenues came from tax on agricultural land through the 1880s. Farmers with market access for their products benefited; those who misjudged the market or suffered a crop failure had to sell their land to pay taxes. In some areas, officials imposed the new tax while requiring farmers to continue to pay the additional taxes it was supposed to replace. Farmers petitioned for help; they killed officials suspected of being corrupt. In 1876, widespread, if uncoordinated, opposition to the tax forced the government to reduce it from 3 percent of assessed value to 2.5 percent.

Composition of Tax Revenues, 1872–1940 (%)

| Fiscal Year | Land Tax | Liquor Tax | Customs Duties | Income Tax | Corporation Tax | Business Tax | Sugar Excise | Inheritance Tax | Other |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1872 | 90.1 | 1.5 | 3.3 | — | — | — | — | — | 5.1 |
| 1880 | 72.3 | 14.9 | 4.4 | — | — | — | — | — | 8.4 |
| 1890 | 58.1 | 22.9 | 6.9 | 1.6 | — | — | — | — | 10.5 |
| 1900 | 34.6 | 38.0 | 10.9 | 4.3 | 1.2 | 3.9 | 1.3 | — | 5.8 |
| 1910 | 23.8 | 26.2 | 15.3 | 10.0 | 2.9 | 7.0 | 5.1 | 0.9 | 8.8 |
| 1920 | 10.2 | 22.6 | 11.1 | 23.5 | 11.8 | 6.6 | 6.8 | 1.1 | 6.3 |
| 1930 | 7.9 | 26.4 | 15.1 | 22.1 | 6.6 | 6.2 | 9.6 | 3.5 | 2.6 |
| 1940 | 0.9 | 8.9 | 2.9 | 34.0 | 11.7 | 2.6 | 3.2 | 1.6 | 33.9 |

*Source:* Based on Minami Ryōshin, *The Economic Development of Japan: A Quantitative Study,* trans. Ralph Thompson and Minami with assistance from David Merriman (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986), p. 340.

While dealing with opposition from outside the government, oligarchs also quarreled among themselves. They created and abolished ministries to consolidate their power or deny rivals and argued over what kind of government Japan was to have. In the early 1870s, Kido Takayoshi (KEY-doh TAH-kah-yo-she) and Ōkubo advocated some popular representation in government lest arbitrary rule generate unrest. Their proposal contained a veiled attack on Itō Hirobumi (E-toe HE-row-bu-me) and Yamagata. Angry at having been shut out of power, Itagaki Taisuke (E-tah-gah-key Tah-e-su-keh) left the government in 1874, joined with disaffected *shizoku* from his home domain of Tosa to form the Patriotic Party, and petitioned the government to establish an elected national assembly. He disbanded the party when he was invited back into the government in 1875 at the Osaka Conference where the oligarchs agreed to establish prefectural assemblies (done in 1878) and plan for a national assembly. Four months later, the emperor announced that he would promulgate a constitution after due deliberation.

## Constitution and National Assembly

Publicity generated by the promise of a national assembly and constitution helped create the Popular Rights Movement. *Shizoku*, village officials, rural entrepreneurs, journalists, intellectuals, and prefectural assemblymen held meetings and circulated petitions for an immediate national assembly signed by hundreds of thousands of people. Radicals and poverty-stricken farmers rioted and planned attacks on the government in the name of human rights. A woman who held property demanded to be allowed to vote in prefectural elections (she was denied). Kishida Toshiko (KEY-she-dah Toe-she-co) and Fukuda Hideko (Fu-ku-dah HE-deh-co), both women, gave public lectures at which they demanded rights, liberty, education, and equality for women. Baba Tatsui (BAH-bah TAH-tzu-e) drew on Social Darwinism to argue that because democracy based on an egalitarian society was the most advanced form of government, it should come immediately. Local notables drafted model constitutions. Activists who criticized the oligarchs for blocking channels between emperor and people argued that a representative government would harmonize imperial and popular will by providing a forum for the free expression of popular opinion, thereby strengthening the nation. Drawing on French and British natural rights theories, Ueki Emori (U-eh-key EH-moe-re) crafted a theory of popular sovereignty and right of revolution.

Oligarchs responded to the Popular Rights Movement by issuing increasingly severe peace preservation laws. Press censorship began in 1875; the 1880 Ordinance on Public Meetings stationed policemen at assemblies to ensure that the speakers did not depart from texts that had been approved beforehand. Excluded from audiences were soldiers, off-duty police, teachers, and students. Demonstrations in Fukushima opposed to a particularly arbitrary governor in 1882, the Chichibu uprising of 1884 that mobilized tenant farmers in demanding debt relief, and other violent incidents met with mass arrests and executions. Having learned the cost of direct action, local notables organized political parties to get ready for the first election for the national assembly promised in 1890.

The Meiji Constitution defined institutions created before it was issued. In 1878 the military General Staff was made directly responsible to the emperor, bypassing the War Ministry run by bureaucrats. A new peerage destined to fill the upper house of the two-chamber national assembly, known as the Diet, was announced in 1884. First made up of oligarchs, former daimyo, and Kyoto nobility, over time it expanded to include entrepreneurs and academics. The lower house was to be elected by commoners. The cabinet, which made policy, replaced the Council of State in 1885. It was filled with ministers in charge of education, finance, foreign affairs, and other bureaucracies under the prime minister appointed by the emperor.

Itō Hirobumi drafted the constitution in great secrecy. He traveled to Europe in 1882 where for nine months he studied in Berlin under the most respected constitutional theorists of his day. Itō and his brain trust then created a document that defined the emperor in terms of his descent from the gods and employed Western notions of the rights and obligations of citizens. Once the constitution was finished, the Privy Council, a new institution headed by Itō, met to discuss it. On February 11, 1889, the date chosen to be the anniversary of Jimmu's enthronement 2,349 years earlier, the Meiji emperor bestowed the constitution on the prime minister. Three days of festivities announced to people across the nation that they were now citizens of a state founded on principles enshrined in a constitution.

Oligarchs wanted a constitution that secured the governing bodies and protected the imperial house through which they exercised power, and they distrusted "ignorant" masses. After its promulgation, they designated themselves *genrō* (GEHN-row), elder statesmen, charged with picking cabinet ministers for the emperor. The constitution defined the emperor as sovereign and sacred. The emperor:

- exercises executive power through the cabinet
- exercises legislative power with the consent of the Imperial Diet
- has supreme command of the army and navy
- declares war, makes peace, and concludes treaties
- determines the government's organization
- convokes the Diet and dissolves the lower house

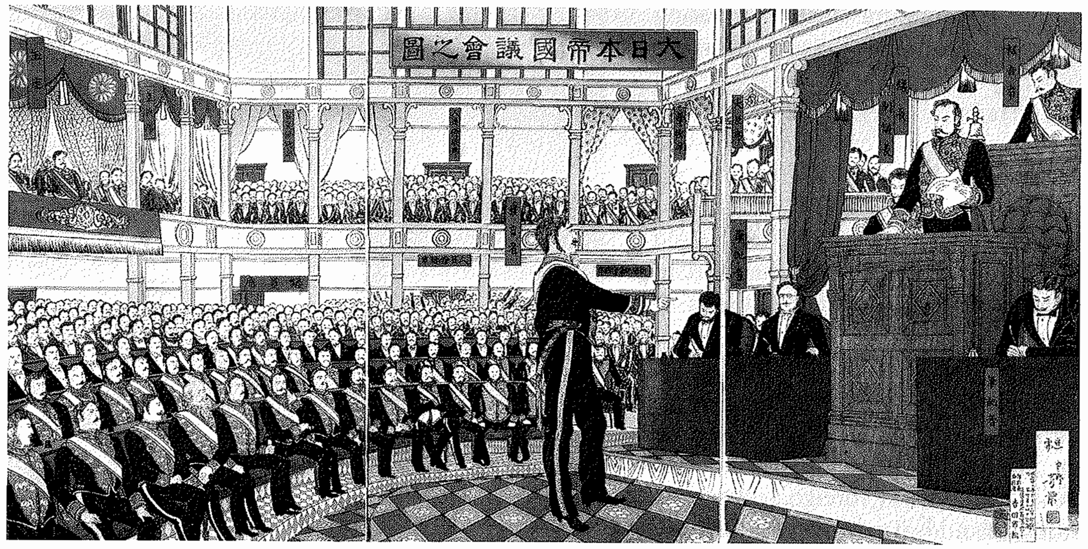
Subjects had rights and duties to:

- present petitions, provided that they observe the proper form of respect
- enjoy freedom of religious belief within limits not prejudicial to peace and order and not antagonistic to their duties as subjects
- enjoy freedom of speech, within the limits set by law*

Subjects had to serve in the military, a clause that excluded women from the category of "subject."

Japan's first experiment with parliamentary democracy nearly did not work. Although Itō and Yamagata had assumed that party politics had no place in an institution directly responsible to the emperor, they had to deal with opposition parties headed by Itagaki and other men who had been ejected from the oligarch's inner circle. Suffrage (the right to vote) was limited to men paying at least fifteen yen a year in property taxes, a qualification met by only 1.1 percent of the population, most of them in rural areas. Once elected, members discovered that the Diet had more power than the oligarchs had intended. Diet members could criticize the cabinet in memorials to the emperor; they could make speeches, published in newspapers, that outside the Diet might have landed them in jail. They had the power to approve the budget. If they refused, the previous year's budget remained in effect, but it seldom covered the government's needs. When the Diet opposed the cabinet, the prime minister dissolved it, forcing members into a costly reelection campaign. Campaign finance scandals and vote buying tarnished the reputations of politicians and oligarchs alike. Twenty-five men died during the 1892 election, most at the hands of the police.

Divided by personality and self-interest, oligarchs had to seek political support outside their narrow circle. In so doing, they enlarged the realm of political action to include bureaucrats, military officers, and politicians. In 1898, Itō had the sometime oligarchs Ōkuma Shigenobu (OH-ku-mah SHE-geh-no-bu), head of the Progressive Party, and Itagaki Taisuke, leader of the Liberal Party, participate in a coalition cabinet as prime minister and home minister, respectively. Horrified that Itō had caved in to politicians, Yamagata Aritomo sabotaged their cabinet by having the army minister refuse to accept cuts in the military budget. A few months later, Yamagata became prime minister for the second time. To increase military autonomy, he made it a requirement that all army and navy ministers be active-duty officers. To weaken the power of political parties and their resistance to higher taxes, he expanded the suffrage to 2.2 percent of the population and gave more representation to urban districts. In 1900, Itō responded by forming and becoming president of a new political party, the Friends of Government. His compromise with politicians dramatized the oligarchs' difficulty in controlling the institutions they had created.



**Triptych Showing Inauguration of the First Diet.** Members of the upper house dressed in uniform are in the foreground; lower house members sit farther back. The emperor is in the box at upper left. *[Gotō Yoshikage, Japanese, 1858–1922 Publisher: Yoshida Ichimatsu, Japanese The Imperial Diet of Japan (Dai Nihon teikoku gikai no zu) Japanese, Meiji era, 1890 (Meiji 23), printed November 13, published November 14 Woodblock print (nishiki-e); ink and color on paper. Vertical ban triptych; 35.8 × 73.1 cm (14 1/8 × 28 3/4 in.) Museum of Fine Arts, Boston Jean S. and Frederic A. Sharf Collection, 2000. 535a-c. Photograph © 2012 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston]*

## Industrialization

Oligarchs promoted economic reform and industrialization. They took over the arms-related industries already established by the domains and the shogunate, placing some under state control to supply the military; others were sold to cronies at favorable terms. Iwasaki Yatarō (E-wah-sah-key YAH-tah-ro) founded Mitsubishi (ME-tzu-be-she) enterprises on the maritime shipping line he acquired from Tosa and expanded it with low-interest government loans. The oligarchs had foreign experts write banking laws; they set up banks and issued paper currency. They made their first investments in advanced and expensive technologies, the kind needed to build railroads and shipyards. Although building support industries for the military constituted their main priority, they also worried about the effects of unequal treaties on the balance of payments and unemployment. To maintain social stability and to compete with foreign products, they built cotton-spinning and weaving factories to make cloth for the domestic market and imported French silk-spinning technology to produce thread for export. They founded a sugar refinery to help growers market their crop and compete with Chinese sugar. By bringing the state's resources to bear on industry, oligarchs squeezed out private capital.

Agriculture supported industrial growth. Agricultural development groups, seed exchange societies, journals, and lecture circuits taught farmers about new seed varieties, commercial fertilizers, and equipment, leading to growth rates in annual agricultural productivity of between 1.5 and 1.7 percent in the late nineteenth century. Because the land tax remained fixed, the increase put more income in the hands of rural entrepreneurs for use in promoting small-scale industry. Farmers were already

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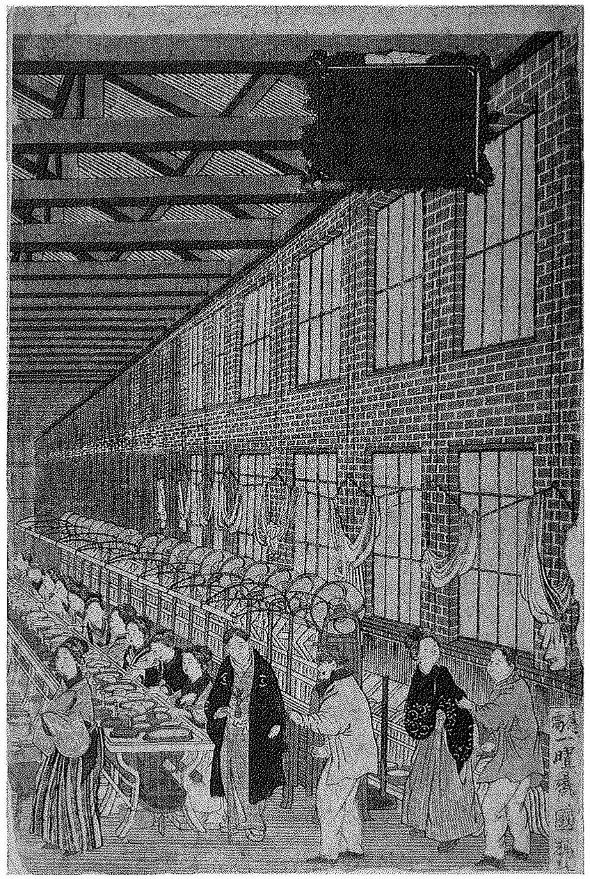
*Hugh Borton, *Japan's Modern Century* (New York: Ronald Press Co., 1955), pp. 490–507.

accustomed to producing handicrafts; eliminating internal restrictions on trade made it easier for them to market their goods.

Entrepreneurs and artisans developed intermediate technologies that adapted Western machines to Japanese circumstances. They modified the manufacture of new daily necessities such as matches to suit the domestic and Asian markets and undersold Western brands. The metric system, the new calendar, and Western timepieces brought the standardization and regularization modeled by military organization to ordinary work practices. Local clubs tried to preserve handicrafts in the face of foreign imports and sought national and international markets for specialty products. They pooled capital to upgrade local skills, brought in foreign technology when it fit their needs, and hosted industrial exhibitions to spread technological knowledge and stimulate competition. In the mid-1870s, small water-powered silk-spinning factories spread throughout the mountain valleys of central Japan, close to the silk-producing regions and a work force of young women. By 1900, silk thread accounted for one-third of the value of Japan's commodity exports, and textiles totaled more than half.

Another model for private enterprise was Shibusawa Eiichi (SHE-bu-sah-wah EH-e-e-che). Son of a rural entrepreneur, he used his connections with oligarchs to become president of First National Bank and provided capital for the construction of a privately owned shipyard at the mouth of Tokyo Bay. In 1880 he started the Osaka Spinning Mill, the first of more than one hundred companies. Thanks to investments like his, by the beginning of the twentieth century Japan's imports were of raw materials; it exported manufactured goods. Other entrepreneurs built equipment for railroads, mines, and factories. Many thrived with the government as their biggest customer, justifying their immense wealth by insisting that they worked for the good of the nation.

In 1880 the government faced financial disaster. It had printed money recklessly during the 1870s to finance its projects, and private banks issued their own notes. It spent heavily suppressing *shizoku* rebellions and other police actions; most of the industries it built operated at a loss. Inflation that doubled the price of rice in Tokyo between 1877 and 1880 reduced the value of property tax revenues, taxes did not cover spending, and the negative balance of payments sucked gold and silver out of the country.


Snark/Art Resource, NY

**Spinning Mill.** Established by the government in 1873, this spinning mill in Tomioka relies on the latest technology imported from France housed in a modern brick building with glazed windows where rows of young women happily work away, overseen by a French supervisor who guides visitors through the plant.

From an economic point of view, Japan faced the most serious crisis of the Meiji period.

After bitter debate, the oligarchs decided on a deflationary policy of retrenchment. Finance Minister Matsukata Masayoshi (MAH-tzu-kah-tah MAH-sah-yo-she) balanced the budget, reduced government spending until it fell within revenues, and established a sound currency backed by gold and silver. Except for railroad, telegraph, and military-related industries, he sold at a loss all industries that the government had tried to develop. He recalled students sent abroad on government scholarships, fired foreign experts, enacted sin taxes on tobacco and sake, and increased old taxes. Between 1881 and 1885, he reduced the quantity of currency by 20 percent and stifled commerce. Farmers who saw the price of rice fall 50 percent while taxes remained the same worked longer hours to increase production. Bad loans bankrupted banks started with samurai capital while small businesses collapsed. The ranks of tenant farmers and factory workers swelled. By 1886 key industries had become concentrated in the hands of a few wealthy capitalists with excellent government connections. The government had rid itself of drains on its income, the budget was balanced, and prices were stable.

By the 1890s Japan had a substantial work force in light and heavy industry. Silk-spinning factories employed single farmwomen who worked eighteen-hour days when demand was high. When they contracted tuberculosis, as many did, they were returned to their families. The spread of the disease made it modern Japan's most severe epidemic. The women who worked twelve-hour shifts in cotton mills were often married. Factory owners assumed that because women did not maintain households independent of fathers or husbands, they could keep wages low. The first strike in Japan's industrial history occurred at a silk-spinning factory in Kōfu in 1885 where women protested a proposed increase in hours and decrease in pay. Women unable to find factory work turned to prostitution. Poor women from Kyushu lured to brothels in Southeast Asia remitted money to their families that helped Japan's balance of payments.

Male factory workers in heavy industry earned up to five times the wages of women. They worked under bosses called *oyakata* (OH-yah-kah-tah) who contracted for specific jobs. Because workers ran the factory floor, they were able to retain a measure of autonomy that gave them pride in their work. Those who possessed skills in high demand moved at will from one factory to another. Despite these advantages, wages barely covered the rent for a shack in the slums and a dismal diet of rice and vegetables. In 1898 railroad workers launched the largest strike of the nineteenth century with demands for respect, higher status, and an increase in overtime pay.

Conditions for miners were worse. The low wages, dangerous work, and prison-like barracks made it so difficult to attract workers that the owner of the Ashio copper mine contracted for convict labor. By the end of the nineteenth century, the mine's demand for timber had stripped surrounding hills, leading to deadly floods. Toxic wastes from the mine had killed marine life in the Watarase River, devastated farmland, and caused premature deaths. Dealing with environmental damage pitted proponents of "Rich Country, Strong Army" against the well-being of ordinary citizens in a conflict that was to play out repeatedly in Japan's modern history.

## Civilization and Enlightenment

Local notables who had responded enthusiastically to the Popular Rights Movement wanted to bring a cultural revolution to their villages. In place of hidebound customs, they wanted "Civilization and Enlightenment," a slogan promoted by urban intellectuals and by oligarchs bent on modernizing communications, hairstyles, and education. The Meiji 6 Society founded in Tokyo in 1873 published a journal in which the members debated representative government, foreign affairs, modernizing the Japanese language, ethics, religion, and roles for women. That same year, local notable Ida Bunzō (E-dah BOON-zo) bought a copy of Samuel Smiles's *Self Help*. In a local magazine, he explained the virtues of sticking to a task and frugality, competition and progress, moral responsibility and the national interest. Other local notables used informal discussion groups to promote better hygiene and social improvement through hospitals, new foods, better roads, and technological innovation based on Western models. They tried to overcome their neighbors' opposition to the government-mandated schools that they saw as the best way to improve conditions for rural people and raise Japan's standing in the world.

The man who coined the phrase "Civilization and Enlightenment" was Fukuzawa Yukichi (FU-ku-zah-wah YU-key-che), a leading member of the Meiji 6 Society. In 1868 he founded Keiō (KEH-e-oh) University for the study of Western science and business. His multivolume *Western Matters* described modern institutions—schools, hospitals, newspapers, libraries, and museums—and Western ideas regarding the importance of entrepreneurship and achievement. In the bestseller *Encouragement of Learning*, he criticized Japan for its backwardness and urged citizens to seek learning for its practical value in the modern world. He also served as adviser to Mitsubishi and Mitsui, destined to become the largest conglomerates in Japan. Although he advocated equality, freedom, and education for women, he kept his daughters ignorant and arranged their marriages.

Civilization and enlightenment also pertained to personal appearance. To use Western technology, it was more efficient to wear Western-style clothes. Replacing distinctive styles of samurai armor with standardized military uniforms submerged the individual in the ranks. Uniforms also distinguished policemen from civilians. Changing appearances might help Japan gain the respect of foreigners who flaunted their cultural superiority. The government issued directives to men to stop shaving the tops of their heads and to women to stop blackening their teeth and shaving their eyebrows, with the emperor and empress leading the way. At his first public performance, the Meiji emperor had dressed in the court robes of his ancestors while wearing cosmetics and powder with false eyebrows smudged on his forehead. Within two years he had changed to Western-style uniforms, cut his hair, and grown a beard. The empress too appeared in Western-style clothing and hairstyles.

The new nobility and educated elite followed the imperial family's example. In 1883 the foreign minister built a modern two-story brick building called Deer-Cry Pavilion that contained a restaurant, billiard room, and ballroom. Invitations to garden parties, charity balls, and receptions went to Japanese and foreigners, husbands and wives, a startling innovation because samurai women had not previously socialized with their husbands. Western-style dancing by couples was customary, even at parties far from Tokyo sponsored by prefectural governments. The late 1880s government became known as the "dancing cabinet."

Newspapers, journals, and other mass media exemplified and promoted civilization and enlightenment. Woodblock prints used chemical dyes to depict the marvels of westernization. Prints of horse-drawn carriages, steam engines, new schools, and red brick buildings illuminated by gaslight in Tokyo's downtown Ginza district inspired progressive youths to seek modernity. (See Color Plate 28.) Magazines for women urged them to become educated in modern modes of thought to help them fulfill their roles as "good wives and wise mothers."

The professional journalist Fukuchi Gen'ichirō (FU-ku-che GEHN-e-che-ro) covered Saigō's rebellion in 1877 and later became chief editor of the influential *Tokyo Daily Newspaper*. It was a so-called big paper written in a style only the highly educated could read, with a focus on politics and serious editorials. Founded in 1874, the *Yomiuri Newspaper* aimed at the barely literate. Like other "small papers," it covered scandals and titillating stories of sex and murder. Hawked on street corners, it exploited the growing market for information and entertainment.

Modern newspapers serialized modern novels. In 1885 the fan of kabuki and student of English literature Tsubouchi Shōyō (TZU-boh-u-che SHOW-yo) wrote *Essence of the Novel*, which tried to define a new realistic literature. *Floating Clouds* (1887–1889) by Futabatei Shimei (FOO-tah-ba-teh-e SHE-meh-e) is deemed Japan's first modern novel because it tried to get inside the leading character's head and used language close to everyday speech. Perhaps the most subtle and gifted writer was Higuchi Ichiyō (HE-gu-che E-che-yo), who gained fame in the male world of letters only at the end of her short life. Dominated at the end of the century by the medical doctor Mori Ōgai (MOE-re OH-gah-e), who had studied in Germany, and Natsume Sōseki (NAH-tzu-meh SO-seh-key), who had studied in Britain, this world embraced modernity while questioning the superiority of Western civilization.

## CONSERVATIVE RESURGENCE (1880s–1900)

By the middle of the 1880s, many people thought that aping Western customs had gone too far. They tried to hold onto traditional values while accepting the need for Western rationalism in scientific inquiry and Western technology. In 1882 Kanō Jigorō (KAH-no G-go-row) began the transformation of martial arts into judo through the scientific selection of techniques from earlier schools specializing in unarmed combat. He emphasized that judo built character in a way that complemented developments in the study of ethics by religious figures and Western-trained philosophers. By establishing an absolute standard for "the good," they sought to use community values to suppress socially disruptive thought. The head of the Hygiene Bureau, Gotō Shimpei (GO-toe SHEEN-peh-e), claimed that the only way to get people to respond to public health initiatives was to work through established community structures and appeal to community values. Bureaucrats tried to promote social welfare and a collectivist ethic through factory laws, tenancy laws, and agricultural cooperatives for fear that a social revolution might undo their efforts to build a strong state. In 1890 the revised Police Security Regulations forbade women to participate in politics. The intent was to eliminate the need for selfish and unpatriotic competition and conflict.

The educational system bore the brunt of the conservative resurgence. In the 1870s it provided strictly utilitarian knowledge; in the mid-1880s it added Confucian ethics, Shinto mythology, and civic rituals. For the few who could afford to go beyond compulsory schooling, the Educational Code of 1872 had specified that a rigorous examination system would qualify students for middle schools, and the best would then take examinations for university. Founded in 1877, Tokyo University remained the only public institution at that level until 1897. Private universities such as Keiō and missionary schools provided lesser avenues for educational advancement. In 1886 the Ministry of Education established specialized higher schools above the middle schools. The First Higher School funneled students into Tokyo University for positions in the most prestigious ministries. Some higher schools offered degrees in liberal arts for students going on to universities and then to careers in the bureaucracy or business world. Others were vocational schools, military schools, teacher's colleges, and women's colleges. Each socialized the students by crafting character suitable to their station in life.

Education prepared citizens to serve the nation; it also provided a stepping stone for personal advancement. Oligarchs opened the ranks of government service to men who had demonstrated talent and ability measured through academic achievement, but only men from families wealthy enough to support them through years of schooling had any chance of success. Women were to serve the state as wives and mothers. Class and gender thus placed limits on equality, and the promise of social mobility concealed an economically stratified society.

Education trained citizens in civic virtues personified by the emperor. In the 1870s and 1880s he toured Japan to unite the people under his gaze. Newspaper reports of his diligent work habits and concern for his subjects' welfare made him into a symbol of national unity and progress. He moved his headquarters to Hiroshima during the Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895); celebrated war victories; and appeared at imperial funerals, weddings, and wedding anniversaries. Given pride of place in every school and public building, his portrait had to be treated with utmost respect. In 1890 he issued the Imperial Rescript on Education. It urged students to practice filial piety, harmony, sincerity, and benevolence; to respect the constitution; to obey the laws; and to be loyal to the *kokutai* (CO-ku-tah-e) (national polity).

The 1898 Civil Code adjusted the norms of Western legal systems to the conservative concern for civic morality. Unless the primacy of the house and the male authority of the household head were maintained in law, the legal scholar Hozumi Yatsuka (HOH-zu-me YAH-tzu-kah) warned, reverence for the ancestors, loyalty, and filial piety would perish. The Civil Code upheld legal equality, individual choice, and personal ownership of property for all men and single women, regardless of their former social status. Succession was to follow the male line, with all assets to go to the eldest son. A husband had authority to dispose of his wife's lands and buildings, though not her personal property (her trousseau); he decided when and whether to register a marriage and their children. As in the Edo period, divorce by mutual consent freed both partners for remarriage. The Civil Code thus balanced a concern for social stability and modern Western norms with an understanding of customary practice.

## IMPERIALISM AND MODERNITY (1870s–1895)

When Japan appropriated and adapted Western industrial technology, legal institutions, constitutional theory, and culture, it also studied Western imperialism. Social Darwinism taught that nations had to conquer or be conquered. Seeing what had happened to China and India, Fukuzawa Yukichi urged Japan to "leave Asia" for fear that it too might be conquered. (See **Documents: Fukuzawa Yukichi's "Leaving Asia."**)

The connection between modernity and imperialism appeared early in the Meiji period. As part of Japan's overtures to China in 1870 it tried to impose an unequal treaty because having taken steps toward a modern centralized state made it the more civilized. A treaty negotiated in 1871 granted mutual extraterritoriality. In 1874 Japan used the murder of Ryukyuan fishermen by Taiwanese three years earlier as an excuse to send an expeditionary force to Taiwan. The pretext was to punish the Taiwanese; a covert aim was to bring civilization to the natives by establishing a colony. The war dragged on for five months before a settlement reached in Beijing acknowledged China's claims to Taiwan and Japan's claims to the Ryukyus. The expeditionary force withdrew, though not before Japanese newspapers had celebrated its victory over barbarism.

The Ryukyus and Hokkaido became internal colonies. In 1871 the Ryukyus were made part of Kagoshima prefecture. In 1879 the king was invited to reside in Tokyo and become a member of the

DOCUMENTS

## Fukuzawa Yukichi's "Leaving Asia"

*The most prominent intellectual and promoter of westernization of Meiji Japan, whose views on domestic policy were decidedly liberal, Fukuzawa here takes a hard-line approach to foreign affairs. His ruthless criticism of Korea and China, published on March 16, 1885, can be read as justifying colonialism, while at the same time he urges his readers to reject the civilization they had to offer. In 1895, ten years after writing this call to action, he rejoiced at Japan's victory over China.*

Japan is located in the eastern extremities of Asia, but the spirit of its people has already moved away from the old conventions of Asia to Western civilization. Unfortunately for Japan, there are two neighboring countries. One is called China and another Korea. These two peoples, like the Japanese people, have been nurtured by Asiatic political thoughts and mores. It may be that we are different races of people, or it may be due to the differences in our hereditary or education: significant differences mark the three peoples. The Chinese and Koreans are more like each other and together they do not show as much similarity to the Japanese. These two peoples do not know how to progress either personally or as a nation. In this day and age with transportation becoming so convenient, they cannot be blind to the manifestations of Western civilization. But they say that what is seen or heard cannot influence the disposition of their minds. Their love affairs with ancient ways and old customs remain as strong as they were centuries ago. In this new and vibrant theater of civilization when we speak of education, they only refer back to Confucianism. As for school education, they can only cite precepts of humanity, righteousness, decorum, and knowledge. While professing their abhorrence to ostentation, in reality they show their ignorance of truth and principles. As for their morality, one only has to observe their unspeakable acts of cruelty and shamelessness. Yet they remain arrogant and show no sign of self-examination.

In my view, these two countries cannot survive as independent nations with the onslaught of Western civilization to the East. Their concerned citizens might yet find a way to engage in a massive reform, on the scale of our Meiji Restoration, and they could change their governments and bring about a renewal of spirit among their peoples. If that could happen they would indeed be fortunate. However, it is more likely that would never happen, and within a few short years they will be wiped off the world with their lands divided among the civilized nations.

From the perspectives of civilized Westerners, they may see what is happening in China and Korea and judge Japan accordingly, because of the three countries' geographical proximity. The governments of China and Korea still retain their autocratic manners and do not abide by the rule of law. Westerners may consider Japan likewise a lawless society. Natives of China and Korea are deep in their hocus pocus of nonscientific behavior. Western scholars may think that Japan still remains a country dedicated to Yin-Yang and the five elements. Chinese are mean-spirited and shameless, and the chivalry of the Japanese people is lost on Westerners. Koreans punish their convicts in an atrocious manner, and that is imputed to the Japanese as a heartless people. There are many more examples I can cite. It is no different from the case of a righteous man living in a neighborhood of a town known for foolishness, lawlessness, atrocity, and heartlessness. His action is so rare that it is always buried under the ugliness of his neighbors' activities. When these incidents are multiplied, that can affect our normal conduct of diplomatic relations. How unfortunate it is for Japan.

What must we do today? We do not have time to wait for the enlightenment of our neighbors so that we can work together toward the development of Asia. It is better for us to leave the ranks of Asian nations and cast our lot with civilized nations of the West. As for the way of dealing with China and Korea, no special treatment is necessary just because they happen to be our neighbors. Any person who cherishes a bad friend cannot escape his notoriety. We simply erase from our minds our bad friends in Asia.

### Questions for Analysis

1. In Fukuzawa's eyes, what was wrong with Korea and China?
2. Why did Fukuzawa think it important for Japan to turn its back to these countries?
3. What did Fukuzawa mean by "leaving Asia"?

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Source: David J. Lu, *Japan a Documentary History: the late Tokugawa period to the present.* Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1997, pp. 351–353, modified.

new Japanese nobility while a Japanese governor took his place. Japanese fishermen and settlers had already spread as far north as Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands, territory that Russia claimed. In 1874 Japan evacuated Sakhalin and negotiated a treaty ceding it to Russia in exchange for Japanese control of the Kurils. Hokkaido became a Japanese prefecture, and a modern definition of property ownership resulted in land the Ainu had customarily used for hunting and fishing being sold to Japanese developers. Without material support, Ainu culture lost its meaning.

Japan's relations with Korea also illustrate the relationship between modernity and imperialism. The diplomatic mission sent to "open" Korea in 1875–1876 imitated Perry's tactics in 1853–1854 and imposed a treaty that replicated the unequal treaties Japan had signed in the 1850s. The following years saw successive incidents as factions at the Korean court supported by Japan and China collided over the country's future course. In Japanese eyes, Korea was a weak, backward nation, easy prey for aggressive Western powers. A German military adviser warned that were Korea to be controlled by any other power, it would become a dagger pointing at the heart of Japan. In 1890 Yamagata Aritomo linked parliamentary politics with a militant international stance by telling the first Diet that for Japan to maintain its independence, it had to protect its territorial boundary, the line of sovereignty, and an outer perimeter of neighboring territory, a line of interest. Korea fell within Japan's line of interest.

Pressure brought by domestic public opinion to revise the unequal treaties affected Japan's diplomatic relations with its Asian neighbors. When negotiations for revision stalled in the face of Western opposition, clamor intensified for an aggressive stance toward China and Korea on the part of patriotic Popular Rights advocates as much as conservatives. In 1886 Britain and Germany proposed the partial abolition of extraterritoriality in exchange for allowing unrestricted travel by foreigners. The strength of domestic opposition to this compromise was so strong that the foreign minister had to resign. Finally, in 1894 Western powers promised to abolish extraterritoriality and to give Japan tariff autonomy in 1899.

Treaty negotiations took place in the context of the first Sino-Japanese War of 1894–1895. (See Chapter 18.) Fought over Korea, it lasted only nine months; Japanese troops expelled the Chinese army from Korea, defeated the north Chinese navy, captured Port Arthur and the Liaodong peninsula in south Manchuria, and seized a port on the Shandong peninsula. The Treaty of Shimonoseki in April 1895 gave Japan Taiwan and the Pescadores, Port Arthur and the Liaodong peninsula, an indemnity, and a promise by China to respect Korea's autonomy. Japan's victory took Western powers by surprise. In their eyes, it threatened peace and stability in East Asia. A week after the treaty was signed, Russia (with its own designs on Manchuria), France (Russia's ally), and Germany (hoping to steer Russian expansion toward what was now referred to as the Far East) collectively advised Japan to surrender its claim to territories in China. Despite popular outcry at the "Triple Intervention," the government had no choice but to obey. Russia then grabbed control of Port Arthur and the Liaodong peninsula.

## SUMMARY

Building a state capable of confronting domestic and foreign challenges proved difficult for the oligarchs—the men who had appointed themselves to be its leaders. They had to buy off the former ruling class of daimyo and samurai, centralize administration, develop a tax base, create a national education system, and reform the military, all the while facing criticism from within their own ranks and opposition from outside. The Constitution of 1889 and the Diet (national assembly) tried to balance the oligarch's desire for stability and control with the promise of parliamentary democracy.

Industrialization too got off to a rocky start. Although a few entrepreneurs used connections to government to their profit, others found that state-operated enterprises were squeezing them out before the oligarchs divested the government of everything but control over transportation, communications, and industries related to the military. Businessmen grew wealthy; the ranks of male and female workers swelled. To protest inhumane working conditions and demand better wages, they went on strike.

To counter the destabilizing effects of increased social mobility, new ideas, and changing industrial relations, the oligarchs and other conservatives promoted unity and harmony. They had the emperor model the man of character; they used education to promote civic virtues; they reinforced the authority exercised by the male head of household through legal codes. Even foreign adventures made a contribution: a sense of national identity that could unite factory owners with factory workers demanded imperialist enterprises to divert attention from their differences.

Japan did to its Asian neighbors what the Western powers had done to it by imposing unequal treaties. In the process of demarcating its boundaries, it turned the Ryukyu Islands and Hokkaido into internal colonies. Having negotiated an end to the unequal treaties, it fought a war with China that would have given it significant territory on the Asian mainland had Western powers not pressured it to back down.

How should we assess the changes that Japan experienced in the latter part of the nineteenth century? Historians who note that ordinary people's lives changed only gradually if at all prefer to speak of a Meiji "transition." Others who point to the official abolition of status distinctions and restrictions on mobility as well as new opportunities for political action talk about revolution. Comparing 1868 with the end of the nineteenth century makes it hard to deny that Japan had been transformed from a decentralized, largely agrarian regime into a centralized industrializing nation. Molded by schools and the military, informed by newspapers and journals, the peoples of Japan had become citizens. They had learned to ride on trains, wear Western-style clothes, and be self-reliant in striving for success. In dealing with the outside world, they had discovered that economic development and national defense required expansion abroad. Adaptation of Western models to local circumstances meant that Japan did not simply undergo a process of westernization. After all, the effects of modernity on community life, family relations, and definitions of individual identity required wrenching changes in Western nations as well.

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CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

21

# Korea in the Turbulent Nineteenth Century (1800–1895)

Politics and Society Under Child Rulers (1800–1864)

Material Culture: Gimchi

Documents: Donghak Beliefs

Attempts at Reform and External Pressure (1864–1894)

Biography: Queen Min

The Donghak Rebellion and the Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895)

Making Comparisons: Slavery

Nineteenth century Korea faced many challenges: three rebellions caused largely by the state's failure to solve long-standing institutional and economic problems, intermittent persecution of Catholics, a series of young kings whose wives' relatives dominated the government, and the threat to national survival by foreign imperialism. The last half of the century saw the birth of Korea's first new religion, failed attempts at reform followed by conservative Confucian anti-foreignism, and unprecedented Chinese interference in Korean affairs. Domestic rebellion and a strengthened Japan brought Chinese influence to an end in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–1895 and seemingly opened a path for serious reform.

What were the reasons behind the rebellions and the state's lack of response to them and foreign aggression? What changed in the lives of people outside of government? What was Korea's role in the Sino-Japanese War and how does that war speak to Korea's relations with its neighbors?

## POLITICS AND SOCIETY UNDER CHILD RULERS (1800–1864)

King Jeongjo's (JUNG-joe) death in 1800, leaving an heir of only eleven years old, marked the beginning of politics dominated by relatives of the king's wife, a situation that lasted to the end of the century. One reason was that all four nineteenth-century kings came to the throne as children under regencies established by the eldest living dowager (widowed) queen or were selected by such dowager regents when there was no crown prince. The dowager regent retained power until she resigned voluntarily or the king decided that it was time for him to rule on his own. Male relatives of dowager regents and queens benefited from this system in that they received appointment to high office.

Conflict between clans for control of the king turned on which had ties to the eldest living dowager and which supplied the king's wife. When King Cheoljong (CHEOL-jong) died without an heir in 1863, Queen Sinjeong (SHIN-jung) of the Pungyang Jo (POONG-yang JOE) clan, whose