

New History Textbook

(Chapter 4 & 5)

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CONTENTS

What It Means To Study History

CHAPTER 4: THE MAKING OF A MODERN NATION

1. Overture from the West

The Shogunate Crisis

43 Industrial and Social revolution

44 Western Encroachments upon Asia

45 The Arrival of Commodore Perry and the Opening of Japan to the West

46 A New Loyalist-Exclusionist movement Emerges

47 The Satsuma-Choshu Alliance and the Fall of the Shogunate

2. The Meiji Restoration

48 The Opening of the Meiji Restoration

49 The road to a Centralized Government

50 Education, Conscription and Taxation Reform

51 Defining Borders with Neighboring Nations

52 The Iwakura Mission and the Debate over Sending a Punitive Expedition to Korea

53 Efforts to Increase Production and Promote Industry
Civilization and Enlightenment

3. The Forming of a Constitutional Nation

54 The Struggle to Amend Unfavorable Treaties

55 The Movement for Freedom and Human Rights

56 The Meiji Constitution

57 The Sino-Japanese War

58 The Russo-Japanese War

59 Japan Joins the Ranks of the World Powers

4. The Evolution of Modern Japanese Industry and the Shaping of a National Culture

60 The Evolution of Modern Industry

61 The Meiji Culture Thrives

CHAPTER 5: JAPAN AND THE AGE OF WORLD WARS

1. The World War

62 World War

63 The Russian Revolution and the End of World War

64 The Treaty of Versailles and the World Situation after World War

65 Development of Party Politics

66 Japan-U.S. Relations and the Washington Conference

67 Taisho Culture

2. The World War Era

68 The Ascendancy of Communism and Fascism

69 The Ant-Japanese Movement in China and the Failure of Cooperative Diplomacy

70 The Manchurian Incident

71 The Second Sino-Japanese War

72 Japan-U.S. Relations Deteriorate

73 World War

74 The Greater East Asian War (Pacific War)

75 The Assembly of Greater East-Asiatic Nations

76 Life in a War Zone

77 Diplomacy at the End of World War and Japan's Defeat

3. Japan's Recovery and the International Community

78 Occupied Japan and the Constitution of Japan

79 A Shift in Occupation Policy and the Restoration of Sovereignty

80 Japan and the World during the Cold War

5. Economic Superpower Status and Japan's Historical Mission

81 Japan's Miraculous Recovery and Rapid Economic Growth

82 The World after the Collapse of Communism and Japan's Role

Putting Your Study of History into Perspective

What It Means To Study History

The History Our Ancestors Lived

Most people may believe that the reason for studying history is to learn what happened in the past, but that is not necessarily correct. A more accurate definition of history as a discipline is learning how people of the past lived in the context of the events of the past — what they believed, what caused them pain, and how they overcame difficulties.

The history you are about to study is the history of Japan. In other words, you will be familiarizing yourselves with the stories of your ancestors — your blood relatives. Your closest ancestors are your parents, who were preceded by your four grandparents. As you go back further in time, the number of ancestors increases with each generation. Then you realize that the humans who populated the Japanese Archipelago are ancestors you share with the other students in your classroom. In every era, Japanese history was made by ancestors common to all of us.

Traditions of the Japanese Civilization

Every nation in the world has a unique history; Japan is no exception. From time immemorial, our land has been the wellspring of civilization and unique traditions. In ancient times, the Japanese studied and appreciated the civilization that arose in China, but they never lost sight of their own traditions. Over the centuries, they built an independent nation. To see our ancestors' accomplishments, you need only visit important cultural and historical sites.

In the modern era, the U.S. and Western European nations threatened to engulf East Asia. But Japan sought harmony with Western civilization — a harmony that could be achieved while retaining Japanese traditions. As Japan transformed itself into a modern nation, it made every effort to maintain independence. But those were difficult times, and tension and friction arose between Japan and other nations. We must be grateful to our ancestors for their unceasing efforts, which made Japan a wealthy and safe nation (the safest in the world, in fact).

Identifying with Our Ancestors

The most important aspects of studying history are to become knowledgeable about the problems our ancestors faced throughout history, and to imagine what you might have done in their place. Then you will see that historical facts are not simply disconnected events to be memorized. You will awaken to people's hopes and inspirations, and the connection between one event and others. The more you delve into history, the more likely you are to make unexpected discoveries and to develop the ability to see events from different perspectives.

When you study history, you are holding a conversation with people of the past — a conversation that looks to the future.

CHAPTER 4: THE MAKING OF A MODERN NATION

1. Overtures from the West The Shogunate in Crisis

43 Industrial and Social Revolution

What events led to the birth of Europe's modern nations?

The Industrial Revolution in Europe

The dawn of the 18th century brought changes to the daily lives of Europeans. They began to prefer clothing woven from cotton over the wool garments they had previously been wearing. The new garments, made from raw cotton imported from India, were popular because they were lighter, sturdier, more sanitary and cheaper than wool garments. In those days, clothing was made by hand, with the aid of simple tools. Cotton clothing became so desirable that factories couldn't keep up with the demand.

By the second half of the 18th century, machines were invented to satisfy the demand for cotton clothing. They were used by the spinning industry to make thread, and by the weaving industry to weave cloth from that thread. These new machines could manufacture large amounts of products in a short period of time. Better coal-burning steam engines, which supplied power to machines used in the spinning and weaving industries, were developed. People began to cluster in large factories, where they worked in groups near machinery. Productivity increased with amazing speed, both meeting the needs of the community and creating new demands. All these changes, taken together, are referred to as the **Industrial Revolution**.

At one time, agriculture was the focus of English communities, with their rolling fields and horse-drawn carriages traveling at a leisurely pace. But the Industrial Revolution brought cities filled with factories belching black smoke, and railroads. Industry had replaced agriculture as the focus of the community. By the middle of the 19th century, the Industrial Revolution had spread to France, Germany and the U.S.

American Independence and the French Revolution

During the 100 years between 1750 and 1850, new political movements arose. For instance, the **Glorious Revolution** occurred in England in 1688. The ruling king of England was accused of having violated the rights of members of other social classes, dethroned, and replaced by a new king. This chain of events, known as the **Glorious Revolution**, led to the establishment of a constitutional monarchy and a parliamentary system.

In 1776, Great Britain's North American colonies issued a **Declaration of Independence** in protest against high taxes and other forms of oppression imposed on them. After winning the War of Independence, the newly formed United States drew up a Constitution based on the separation of the three powers (the legislative, executive and judicial processes of government).

In France, national debt triggered a revolt against the king and the nobility. As a result, the nobles lost their privileges, and a **Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen**, emphasizing freedom and equality, was issued. The situation grew worse, and eventually there was bloodshed, including the execution of the French king. These events are referred to as the **French Revolution**.

The objectives of the revolutions that took place in France and the United States were the abolition of aristocratic privileges and the creation of a society in which all citizens were equal. This is why they were called **people's revolutions**, and thanks to them, we now have modern nations comprising citizens who enjoy equal rights and a common national identity.

Having accomplished industrial and popular revolutions, Europeans became the dominant force in the world. They soon began to extend their influence far beyond Europe.

44 Western Encroachments upon Asia

How did Europeans and Americans encroach upon Asia?

The British Colonization of India

With industrial and people's revolutions behind them, Europe and the U.S. encroached upon Asia, seeking plentiful sources of raw materials and markets for their own mass-produced goods. The nation most successful in these endeavors was Great Britain.

Great Britain inundated its first target, India, with cotton cloth mass-produced in huge British factories. The chief agency in this enterprise was the British-owned East India Company. India's handicraft industries could not compete with low-priced British products, and soon weakened. Thousands of craftspeople were deprived of their livelihoods.

In 1857, Indian soldiers called Sepoys who worked for the East India Company started an uprising. They were joined by angry craftspeople and farmers, and the rebellion spread throughout India. The British suppressed the rebellion with military force. The colonization of India had begun.

European Military Superiority

During the 300 years between 1500 and 1800, European military technology advanced at an amazing rate. But the situation in Asia was quite different. For instance, neither Edo-era Japan nor Qing Dynasty China showed much enthusiasm for military technology, once domestic strife had ended and society became stable. There had been uninterrupted peace in East Asia for 250 years.

Thus, European military power came to surpass, by far, that of the Asian nations. Mongolian horsemen-warriors once ruled the grassy plains of Eurasia. But 300 years later, Europeans were

shooting cannons from battleships, and colonizing other parts of the world.

The Opium Wars and the British Encroachment upon China

In the early 18th century, another change occurred that affected the daily lives of Europeans: the popularization of tea-drinking. This was especially true of England, where tea from China was rapidly becoming a necessity, and an expensive one. The British ordered farmers in India, their colony, to grow the narcotic opium, which they pressured the Chinese to buy. Income from opium sales was used to pay for British tea purchases (triangle trade).

When China prohibited the importation of opium, the British responded by sending warships, claiming that the Chinese authorities were obstructing free trade. The year was 1840, and the hostilities that broke out are referred to as the **Opium Wars**. The battles continued for more than two years. The British Navy imposed blockades. In 1842, the Chinese signed the **Treaty of Nanking** (one of the Unequal Treaties). China's position increasingly became that of a quasi-colony of Great Britain. The news traveled to Japan, where it was received with alarm.

45 The Arrival of Commodore Perry and the Opening of Japan to the West

What events forced Japan to open its doors to the West?

The Arrival of Commodore Perry

Closed to outsiders, Japan had enjoyed peace and stability for some 260 years. The first nation to disturb that peace was the United States. In June 1853, a fleet of four warships (known in Japan as "black ships") appeared at the entrance of Edo Bay off Uraga (now Kanagawa Prefecture). The warships were equipped with nearly 100 cannons. The fleet's commander was naval officer Commodore Matthew Perry. He carried a letter from President Fillmore requesting diplomatic relations and trade between the two nations.

The Shogunate felt obliged to accept the letter. Perry announced that he would return the next year to receive Japan's response.

Senior Councillor Abe's Dilemma

After Perry's departure, Senior Councillor Abe Masahiro agonized over the reply to be delivered in six months' time. The simplest solution was to reject President Fillmore's demands and drive the black ships away with military force. But the Edo Shogunate was not capable of repelling Perry's fleet because no attempts had been made to improve Japan's military strength for a very long time.

Abe decided that it would be better to have the Shogunate invite all of Japan's *daimyo* (feudal lords) to participate in the decision. But none of them had a good solution to offer. To make matters worse, the idea that decisions about important national policies should not be made by the

Shogunate alone gained broad acceptance, which consequently undermined the Shogunate's authority.

The Signing of the Treaty of Kanagawa and the Arrival of Townsend Harris

In January 1854, Perry's fleet returned to Kanagawa. After some negotiation, the Shogunate agreed to the American demands. **The Treaty of Kanagawa, between Japan and the U.S.**, was concluded in March of that year. Japan had emerged from isolation. According to the treaty, American vessels could obtain coal, provisions and water at two Japanese ports: Shimoda (in Shizuoka Prefecture) and Hakodate (in Hokkaido Prefecture). In addition, a U.S. consul general would be stationed in Shimoda.

Townsend Harris was the first American consul general, arriving in 1856, in accordance with the terms of the treaty. He asked that a commercial treaty be signed so that trade between the two nations could begin. The Shogunate felt that it must, again, oblige, and obtained permission from the imperial court. This was an unprecedented request, since the Court had long since yielded the right to make political decisions to the Shogunate.

Should Japan drive away the Americans or open its doors by concluding a commercial treaty with them? This was a question that split Japan's authorities into two camps. Both of them attempted to influence the imperial court, which had suddenly become the arena of national policy.

46 A New Loyalist-Exclusionist Movement Emerges

Describe the evolution of the sonno joi movement.

Treaty of Amity and Commerce Concluded

Even though Shogunate officials had not yet received permission from the Imperial Court, they signed the Treaty of Amity and Commerce (commonly known as the **Harris Treaty**) in 1858. This agreement opened five ports to U.S. trade: Hakodate (now Hokkaido Prefecture), Kanagawa (now Yokohama), Niigata, Hyogo (now Kobe) and Nagasaki.

Later, Japan concluded similar treaties with other foreign nations, all of them unequal. For instance, every one of them contained an extraterritoriality clause, which prevented Japan from trying foreigners for crimes committed on Japanese soil. The treaties also deprived Japan of the right to set duties on imported goods.

The Sonno Joi (Loyalist-Exclusionist) Movement

The Shogunate's signing of the Harris Treaty prompted harsh criticism and accusations that it had ignored Court's wishes and surrendered to foreign pressure. The movement that emerged, *sonno joi* (Revere the Emperor! Expel the barbarians!) combined two concepts (loyalty and exclusionism) and two goals: gaining support for the Imperial Court and driving away foreigners.

Shogunate Chief Councillor Ii Naosuke had authorized the signing of the treaty. In a campaign later called the Ansei Purge, Ii took drastic steps to suppress the more than 100 members of the sonno joi movement, who included Tokugawa Nariaki (former head of the Mito fief) and Yoshida Shoin of the Choshu fief (now Yamaguchi Prefecture). But in 1860, Ii was ambushed and killed near Sakurada Gate on his way to Edo Castle. His attackers were lordless samurai (warriors) from Mito and other fiefs seeking revenge for the Ansei Purge. After Ii's death, the already weak Shogunate grew even weaker.

The Choshu fief had been defeated in the great Battle of Sekigahara in 1600. As a result, it lost a great deal of its territory. Most of the lingering Choshu resentment was directed towards the Shogunate. The influential Yoshida Shoin had been preaching the doctrine of sonno joi to his students at a school he established, and to great effect. By the time Yoshida was executed during the Ansei Purge, two of his former students, Takasugi Shinsaku and Kido Takayoshi, had attained high positions within the fief. The Choshu fief established connections with some of the Court nobles, and convinced the Court to embrace extremist exclusionary views.

Exclusionism in Action

Under pressure from the Court, the Shogunate ordered all fiefs to put exclusionism into action in 1863. Choshu responded by firing on an American merchant ship passing through the Shimonoseki Strait. In 1864, a fleet of four warships representing Great Britain, the U.S., France and the Netherlands arrived to avenge the Choshu attack. Overwhelmed by the superior firepower of the Western forces, Choshu suffered a crushing defeat.

During the last days of the Shogunate, the only fief that compared with Choshu as far as power and influence were concerned was Satsuma (now Kagoshima Prefecture). In 1862, four Englishmen on horseback encountered the procession of the lord of Satsuma on his way home from Edo. Since the foreigners did not dismount to show their respect, a Satsuma warrior killed one of them in what is known as the Namamugi Incident. The next year, British warships arrived in Satsuma to demand compensation for the murder, shelling Kagoshima until it became an inferno in what is now referred to as the **Anglo-Satsuma War**.

The warriors of both Satsuma and Choshu had personally experienced the strengths of Western civilization through their battles with foreign forces. They realized that exclusionism alone was not going to save Japan. Satsuma and Choshu secretly turned away from exclusionism, at the same time increasing their protests against the Shogunate.

47 **The Satsuma-Choshu Alliance and the Fall of the Shogunate**

How did the reign of the Tokugawa Shogunate come to an end?

The Satsuma-Choshu Alliance and the Movement to Overthrow the Shogunate

In 1863, the Shogunate expelled Choshu forces and nobles who sympathized with them from the Court. It then set up a leadership coalition consisting mainly of Tokugawa family members and powerful fiefs, such as Satsuma and Aizu (now Fukushima Prefecture). The following year, the Shogunate led armies from several fiefs in a victorious assault on Choshu. But in Choshu, Takasugi Shinsaku organized a revolt against fief officials because they had given in to Shogunate demands. He and Kido regained control of Choshu, and recommenced their campaign to topple the Shogunate.

Similarly, in Satsuma, Okubo Toshimichi and Saigo Takamori had acquired positions of leadership in the fief government. Their experiences in the Anglo-Satsuma War had convinced them that the joi or exclusionist strategy should be abandoned in favor of improving Japan's military strength. Eventually, they began preparing to confront the Shogunate, which by then was again in power, having expelled the Choshu faction from the capital, Kyoto.

In 1866, Sakamoto Ryoma of Tosa fief (now Kochi Prefecture) indicated that it was necessary to build a united Japan strong enough to compete with foreign forces. He succeeded in arranging a meeting between former enemies Saigo Takamori of Satsuma and Kido Takayoshi of Choshu. The result was the Satsuma-Choshu Alliance, whereby the two fiefs entered into a secret agreement to overthrow the Shogunate. The sonno-joi movement was now a campaign to overthrow the Shogunate.

The Fall of the Shogunate

Tokugawa Keiki became the 15th shogun in 1866, when the previous shogun died. In 1867, Emperor Komei, who had been sympathetic to the Shogunate, also died. With the ascension to the throne of his successor, 14-year-old Emperor Meiji, the anti-Shogunate faction gained the upper hand.

In October 1867, Keiki decided that the Tokugawa family could no longer retain the reins of government, at least not in the form of a shogunate. He returned the powers vested in him to the Court. Keiki convened a meeting of all feudal lords in the presence of the Emperor. He expected the Tokugawa family, the largest landholders in Japan, to maintain actual control.

Saigo Takamori and Okubo Toshimichi of Satsuma deduced Keiki's plan. Together with Iwakura Tomomi, a Court noble, and Kido Takayoshi and other Choshu leaders, the two men plotted to drive Keiki out and confiscate his land.

At the end of 1867, the Court issued a proclamation announcing **the restoration of imperial rule**. The proclamation stated that Japan would return to the system that had prevailed in ancient times,

and that a new government would be established with the Emperor at its head. It marked the end of 260 years of Tokugawa Shogunate control, as well as the end of warrior-controlled government.

<Related Information>

Shift from the Tokugawa Shogunate to the Meiji Government

Only 15 years after Commodore Perry urged Japan to come out of isolation, the Tokugawa Shogunate fell. In the face of Western pressure, the Yi Dynasty in Korea lasted 44 more years, and the Qing Dynasty in China, 72 more. In comparison, Japan's Tokugawa Shogunate was toppled by the Satsuma-Choshu forces within a very short period of time. How do we account for this phenomenon?

Because civil service examination systems were in place in both Korea and China, the government offices of both nations were populated by exceedingly intelligent men. The Korean king and the Chinese emperor were extremely powerful, but regions far from the capitals were weak. In Japan, on the other hand, there was no examination system for civil servants. Since each fief educated a great many of its men, there were large clusters of power in fiefs distant from Edo. Those clusters of power proved to be the driving force behind the toppling of the Shogunate.

Furthermore, Japan has an emperor system and, throughout history, every warrior in the nation was a servant of the emperor. Although political power was not in the hands of the emperor, he has always been the symbol of authority. That is why, when the Shogunate weakened as foreign pressure increased, the imperial court replaced it and unified Japan, and consequently the transfer of power proceeded smoothly and quickly.

2. The Meiji Restoration

48 The Opening of the Meiji Restoration

What policies were forged to build a new nation during the Meiji Restoration?

The Boshin Civil War and the Defeat of the Former Shogunate Forces

The top-ranking posts in the new government, headed by Emperor Meiji, were awarded to Court nobles and warriors who had joined in the effort to overthrow the Shogunate. Not only was Tokugawa Keiki not among them — he was even ordered to surrender his land. Angry at the way Keiki had been treated, former Shogunate warriors battled the new government's forces (drafted mainly from Satsuma and Choshu) in January 1868, but were defeated (Battle of Toba-Fushimi).

Saigo Takamori, commanding the new government's army, pursued the former Shogunate's forces, and more battles ensued until Japan had plunged into civil war. Government forces marched

behind the emperor's brocade flag, which lent prestige and authority to their mission, as they triumphed in conflict after conflict. Eventually, the Imperial Army occupied Edo. After Saigo (representing the new government) conferred with Shogunate military official Katsu Kaishu, Edo Castle was surrendered without bloodshed.

The hostilities continued in northern and eastern Japan. In Aizu fief, the White Tiger Corps, which comprised 19 young men no more than 17 years old, committed mass suicide in the face of defeat. In May 1869, Goryokaku in Hakodate, the former Shogunate forces' final stronghold, fell to the Imperial Army. This 18-month conflict is known as the **Boshin Civil War**.

Blueprint for the Building of a Modern Nation

The order that proclaimed the restoration of imperial rule mentions that old practices will be replaced by new ones — that all things shall begin anew. These words served as the inspiration for the name of the period extending from the last days of the Shogunate to the beginning of the Meiji era: the **Meiji Restoration**.

In March 1868, Emperor Meiji issued the Charter Oath of Five Principles, which describes the policies that would serve as the blueprint for the building of a new nation, under his leadership, with the aid of the Court nobles and daimyo. Among those policies were the establishment of deliberative assemblies as political arenas and the recommendation that all Japanese, regardless of class, exercise their newly acquired freedom of speech by playing an active role in the affairs of state. The Charter Oath paved the way for the assimilation of Western civilization, and the transformation to a modern constitutional government.

The name of the current era was changed from Keio to Meiji in September 1868, and it was decreed that henceforth there would be only one era name per emperor. Edo was renamed Tokyo, and Emperor Meiji moved there from Kyoto. In 1869, Tokyo became the new capital and the hub of modern Japanese politics.

49 The Road to a Centralized Government

How did Japan become a unified nation with a central government?

Return of the Land and People to the Emperor

Though the Imperial Army had won the Boshin Civil War, the new government was little more than a collection of fiefs, and its foundation was shaky. Obligated to be sensitive to the wishes of the feudal lords, the new government experienced great difficulty in implementing national reforms. Furthermore, in this transitional situation, Japan was extremely vulnerable to foreign attack, which it could not possibly withstand because it was not truly united. Clearly, the government's first priority was unification.

At that point, the key fiefs in the new government were Satsuma, Choshu, Tosa (now Kochi Prefecture) and Hizen (now Saga and Nagasaki prefectures). In 1869, the lords of those fiefs voluntarily returned their land and subjects (people) to the Emperor. Other fiefs were quick to follow their example. All Japanese territory and inhabitants now became the property of the Emperor. However, actual political control remained in the hands of the former fiefs.

Prefectures Replace Fiefs

In 1871, Okubo Toshimichi and other leading figures in the new government began secret discussions about another reform: summarily abolishing all the fiefs. In July of the same year, they summoned all former daimyo currently in Tokyo to the Imperial Palace (formerly Edo Castle). Also at the palace were approximately 10,000 soldiers attached to the Imperial Army and recruited from Satsuma, Choshu and Tosa. The meeting began and a proclamation, issued in the name of the Emperor, was read: fiefs would be abolished and new entities called prefectures would replace them.

Abolishing the fiefs meant doing away with decentralized government, and establishing prefectures, local entities that would be accountable to a central government. It also meant that the military capability and taxation rights remaining in the fiefs would be turned over to the central government. Taxes (mainly in the form of crops) collected from farmers would be handed over not to the fiefs, but to the new government. The fiefs' warriors were decommissioned, but for a time, the new government paid them salaries.

The new government officials feared an uprising from the fiefs, but there was no major rebellion. Governors were assigned to serve in the newly formed prefectures. Japan was now a unified nation with a centralized government.

Equality for All Japanese

The central government, wishing all Japanese to have equal rights and equal responsibilities, abolished the old class system. Daimyo and court nobles became peers, and warriors entered a special class called *shizoku*, which consisted solely of ex-warriors. Farmers and merchants became commoners. For the first time ever, commoners were permitted to take surnames. All Japanese won the right to choose their own professions, marriage partners and residences. They were now free to travel wherever they wished. In 1871, people formerly relegated to the underclasses were declared commoners, and afforded the same rights and status commoners enjoyed. However, prejudice against the former underclasses lingered, appearing in various forms of discrimination.

<Related Information>

How Did Warriors React to the Replacement of Fiefs with Prefectures?

An American named Griffiths was hired as a teacher at a school in Fukui fief. One day a notice announcing that fiefs would be abolished and replaced by prefectures

arrived from Tokyo. The fief's warriors, who were about to lose their livelihoods, were furious and made a huge commotion. But even in the midst of the confusion, the more perceptive warriors reacted more reasonably. According to an entry in Griffiths' diary, those warriors were elated, convinced that Japan would someday become an equal partner with the U.S. and Great Britain in the community of nations.

Former Shogunate official Fukuzawa Yukichi once mentioned feeling as though he was "living two lives in one." When he heard that fiefs would be replaced by prefectures, he was "so happy I could die," as he wrote to a friend. Warriors with foresight understood the need for reforms.

50 Education, Conscription and Taxation Reforms

How did the three major reforms accomplished during the Meiji Restoration proceed?

The Meiji government promoted three robust system reforms, involving the school system, conscription and taxation. These reforms strengthened the foundation of a modern nation whose citizens all enjoyed equal rights. They involved obligations to complete elementary education, serve in the military and pay taxes, and were soon widely accepted by the people.

In 1872, educational reforms were proclaimed. The Japanese people were told that education benefits not only the nation but also the individual. They were exhorted to ensure that "every family in every community sent their children to school, and that every child of every family in every community went to school."

Children were required to complete elementary school. Most of the temple schools that had educated children during the Edo era were converted to elementary schools. In just a few years, 26,000 new elementary schools opened. At first, fewer than 50% of Japan's children attended school, but their numbers had risen to nearly 100% by the end of the Meiji era.

Institution of a Conscription System

In 1873, a conscription system was instituted. All males (with no distinctions made between commoners or shizoku) were required to serve in the military when they reached the age of 20. The conscription system was modeled on Western systems. The purpose of this reform was to build a national military force while adhering to the principle that all classes were now equal.

Through the Edo era, only warriors were permitted to carry weapons and do battle. For them, military service was both an honor and a privilege. In the early days of the conscription system, all male citizens bore the responsibility of serving in the military. This aspect of the system offended the shizoku, who believed that their rights had been taken away. Commoners were not pleased, either, claiming that the conscription system created hardships for them, because they needed young men to help with family businesses.

Land Tax Reform

When the government decided, in 1868, that farmers should be permitted to plant any crop they wished in their fields, it issued a proclamation announcing that it was permissible to buy and sell farm fields. The government also set land prices, determined the rightful owners of plots of land, and issued deeds to those owners. Deeds contained information, such as the owner's name, land area, price and tax rate. The government used those deeds as references when the land tax reforms were implemented in 1873.

During the Edo era, taxes were paid in rice, based on the amount harvested. Taxation rates varied from fief to fief. The 1873 land tax reform dictated a tax rate of 3% of the land price, to be paid in currency. Therefore, it became possible to levy taxes uniformly throughout Japan, enabling the government to collect a stable annual revenue.

Land tax reform recognized farmers' land ownership rights. It also established their obligation to pay taxes, and bolstered the fiscal foundation of a modern nation.

<Related Story>

The Meaning of the Meiji Restoration

Japan Escapes Colonization by the Western Powers

The Western powers, whose territory occupied 35% of the Earth's land mass in 1800, used their tremendous military strength to colonize other regions. By 1914, when World War I began, that figure had risen to 84%. The Meiji Restoration had been accomplished by 1914; if it had not, Japan would most likely have been taken over by one or another of the world powers.

The expansionist policies of the Western powers are sometimes referred to as "imperialism." Therefore, it follows that the period of history during which Japan maintained its independence and joined the ranks of the world powers was the age of imperialism.

How Japan Differed from China and Korea

Qing Dynasty China failed to gain an accurate grasp of the world situation, or of the threat presented by the military strength of the Western powers. Korea, which paid tribute to China, was just as oblivious. The Opium Wars had more of an impact on Japan than on China.

From ancient times, the Chinese had tended to view their civilization as the center of the world. To them, nations like Great Britain were barbarians who inhabited remote areas of the earth. Perhaps for this reason, Chinese efforts to incorporate aspects of Western civilization into their own never bore fruit. The Western powers encroached on more and more of China until it seemed that Chinese territorial integrity was in jeopardy.

In contrast, with a warrior culture that dated back to the Edo era, Japan was very sensitive to military threats from the West. For instance, Satsuma and Choshu (Japan's two most powerful fiefs) had waged war with Western nations toward the end of Shogunate rule. That conflict had taught them a painful lesson about the difference between Japanese and Western military strength. It had also inspired the Japanese to make a policy shift towards assertive research into Western ways.

Reforms Made at the Expense of the Reformers (Japan's Warriors)

The reforms of the Meiji Restoration included the abolition of the class system, which heralded a classless society. The Japanese were now free to choose their occupations, and to engage in free economic activity. The warriors lost their privileges, and the warrior class itself ceased to exist.

The Meiji Restoration was unlike the revolutions that took place in Europe, the French Revolution in particular. No violent, angry mobs attempted to purge the nobility. It was none other than the Meiji government, all of whose members were warriors, that abolished the warrior class.

A French scholar named Maurice Pinguet wrote about this subject in his book entitled *La Mort Volontaire au Japon* (Voluntary death in Japan). An excerpt follows.

Warriors, once Japan's privileged class, were not overthrown by members of another class. Rather, they were the very ones who promoted reforms in the face of foreign menaces, and by eliminating their own class, they made the ultimate sacrifice. This was a revolution that cannot be construed by the usual meaning of the word, which involves one class overthrowing another. The hope of those warriors was to summon up the inherent strength of the nation that is Japan, which had lain dormant for so long.

The Meiji Restoration was an age of reforms set in motion by warriors who viewed the pursuit of the public good as their personal missions.

The Meiji Restoration and Education

Education was to be the basis of the nation-building reforms that were promoted during the Meiji Restoration. The tradition of emphasizing education was carried over from the Edo era. Even the fiefs that sided with the Shogunate felt the same way.

One of the pro-Shogunate fiefs defeated in the Boshin Civil War was Nagaoka (today Niigata Prefecture). Adding to Nagaoka's woes was a critical food shortage caused by floods. A sympathetic neighboring fief sent 100 bales of rice to Nagaoka. But the fief's chief official, Kobayashi Torasaburo, distributed not one grain of that rice to his vassals. Instead, he sold the rice and used the proceeds to open a fief school intended to nurture future leaders. Philosophies like Kobayashi's — giving priority to education when allocating resources — were instrumental to successful modernization.

In the Edo era, there were two types of educational institutions: fief schools attended by the children of warriors, and temple schools attended by the common people's offspring. As soon as it

was able, the new Meiji government established a school system that offered every Japanese a fair and equal opportunity to benefit from education. According to the Education System Order, one of the government's goals was to open 26,000 elementary schools. Most of those established were converted temple or fief school facilities. The schools were opened to all children on an equal basis. The offspring of warriors found themselves matching wits with the offspring of merchants and farmers in the same classroom. A system that offered the possibility of future success to any child on the basis of intelligence and effort helped to eradicate class-consciousness. This is how Meiji Restoration education policies became the foundation for Japan's modernization.

51 Defining Borders With Neighboring Nations

How did Japan go about defining borders with its neighbors?

Demarcating the Northern Territories

Once Japan had accomplished the Meiji Restoration and had begun the process of building a modern nation, it was time to define borders with neighboring nations. Without national boundaries, it would have been impossible to guarantee the lives and property of Japanese citizens, or to ensure that they enjoyed equal rights.

After Mamiya Rinzo explored Karafuto (Sakhalin), one of the northern islands, Japanese went to live there. Later, Russians also settled in Karafuto. Russia forced the Japanese to agree to the island's accommodating both Japanese and Russian communities, and disputes often arose between the two.

Great Britain warned the Meiji government that if Japan should go to war with Russia, Japan would lose not only Karafuto, but also Hokkaido. To avoid such a war, the new government concluded the Treaty of St. Petersburg with Russia in 1875. According to the terms of that treaty, Japan ceded rights to all of Karafuto to Russia, in exchange for which it received the Chishima archipelago (Kuril Islands).

In the Pacific region, the Ogasawara Islands (Bonin Islands) were internationally recognized as Japanese territory in 1876. The crew of a British ship had already hoisted the Union Jack on one of the islands, but the U.S. protested, and the islands were annexed by Japan.

Military Expedition to Taiwan and the Ryukyu Islands

Japan signed the Sino-Japanese Friendship Treaty in 1871, thereby establishing diplomatic relations with China. The treaty, modeled on the principles of international law, specifies an equal relationship between the two nations.

Also in 1871, 66 Ryukyu islanders were shipwrecked on Taiwan. Fifty-four of them were murdered by Taiwanese they encountered there. At that time, the Ryukyu islanders were subjects of both Japan and China. Japan demanded that China accept responsibility for the murders of

Ryukyuans. China refused, claiming that the Taiwanese were not true subjects of the Qing Empire.

Sensing an obligation to punish the Taiwanese, the Japanese government sent a military expedition to Taiwan in 1874. This conflict arose because of a difference in philosophy between Japan and China which did not fully comprehend the concept of a modern nation. The problem was resolved through consultations with China which from then on recognized the Ryukyuans as Japanese citizens. The Ryukyu Islands became part of Japan (Okinawa Prefecture) in 1879 (Ryukyu annexation).

By that time, Japan had succeeded, for the most part, in defining the borders with its neighbors.

Relations with Korea

Soon after the Meiji Restoration, in 1868, the Japanese government sent an envoy to Korea to establish diplomatic relations with that nation. But Korea refused to sign the treaty declaring that inappropriate language was used in the message in the name of Emperor Meiji. The Meiji government's first attempt to establish diplomatic relations with Korea had hit a stumbling block.

52 The Iwakura Mission and the Debate over Sending a Punitive Expedition to Korea

What effect did the observations made by the Iwakura Mission have on subsequent nation-building efforts?

The Iwakura Mission

In 1871, after fiefs had been replaced by prefectures, a mission was dispatched to the U.S. and European nations with which the new government had concluded treaties. Later referred to as the **Iwakura Mission**, the party (numbering some 110 persons, including exchange students) was headed by Iwakura Tomomi, and also included Okubo Toshimichi and Kido Takayoshi. Their objective was to engage in preliminary negotiations concerning the amendment of those treaties.

After having observed European and American civilization for nearly two years, the members of Iwakura's party estimated that Japan lagged behind the West by about 40 years. They realized that only by establishing modern industries, and thereby enriching Japan, could they hope to achieve equal footing with and possibly surpass the West.

The Debate Over Sending a Punitive Expedition Korea

However, back in Japan, in 1873, a debate arose among the shizoku over sending a punitive expedition to Korea. Those in favor of such an expedition argued that Korea's refusal to open its doors at Japan's request was insulting. The shizoku were already discontent because they had lost their livelihoods when the fiefs were abolished. The institution of a conscription system was a further blow to their pride. Some of them were intent on proving themselves in a battle with Korea.

Those shizoku in favor of a punitive expedition looked to Saigo Takamori as their leader, since he had taken charge of government affairs in the absence of officials who were overseas with the Iwakura Mission. Although Saigo was part of the new government and advocated the reforms needed to build a modern nation, he believed that the ex-warriors' spiritual health was just as important, as was the protection of their social positions and honor.

Saigo insisted on personally traveling to Korea as an emissary. Itagaki Taisuke, Eto Shinpei and other Cabinet members gave his plan their blessing. Saigo was prepared for eventual war with Korea if the negotiations did not result in Korea's opening its doors.

Government Split and Satsuma Rebellion

Then Okubo Toshimichi, Iwakura Tomomi and other members of the Iwakura Mission returned to Japan. During their travels they had personally observed the tremendous military might of the Western nations. They had come to think that their first task was strengthening Japan, and feared that any mobilization of Japanese military personnel would invite interference from Western nations. Secret consultations between the Court and the government resulted in a decision to postpone sending Saigo to Korea as an emissary, even though the decision had already been made officially by the Cabinet. Furious, Saigo, Eto and Itagaki resigned from their government posts.

In 1876, the government decided to discontinue paying stipends to the shizoku (it had taken over that responsibility when the fiefs were abolished), instead awarding them a lump sum. An uprising by dissatisfied shizoku was suppressed by the government. Saigo returned to Kagoshima, where he opened a private school. But the disgruntled shizoku looked to him for relief. In 1877, they again rose up against the government, this time under Saigo's command. His army was defeated by soldiers who had been drafted from among the commoners (**Satsuma Rebellion**). The shizoku never again attempted to use military force against the government.

53 Efforts to Increase Production and Promote Industry Civilization and Enlightenment

How did government policies designed to increase production, promote industry, and encourage civilization and enlightenment progress?

Efforts to Increase Production and Promote Industry

The Western powers' establishment of colonies in Asia did not cease after the Meiji Restoration. Wishing to avoid a similar fate, the Japanese government intensified its nation-building efforts under the slogan *fukoku kyohei* (enrich the nation, increase military strength).

In 1868, the government took over the operation of mines and shipyards previously run by the Shogunate. The first telegraph line was laid in 1869; a postal system was established in 1871. In 1872, railway service began between Shinbashi (Tokyo) and Yokohama.

After the departure of Saigo Takamori and his followers, Okubo Toshimichi (now the key government figure) set about formulating policies that would increase production and promote industry. An important aspect of those policies was strong government guidance and investment, designed to create a modern industrial base in Japan. Government-run silk-reeling and spinning factories were built and equipped with modern machinery from overseas; foreign technicians were hired. By the time the factories were privatized, light industry had become firmly established. Japan modernized its industries by building on technologies that already existed in the Edo era, and incorporating new technologies from the West.

In 1869, the government renamed the Ezo region Hokkaido, and sent shizoku and soldier-farmers there to develop the region. Once policies intended to increase production and promote industry were implemented, further attempts were made to exploit the resources of Hokkaido.

Civilization and Enlightenment

Soon after the Meiji Restoration, some Shintoists and sympathizers of the National Learning movement began to exhibit radical behavior, partly in reaction to the proclamation that power had been restored to the Emperor. They criticized Buddhism and destroyed Buddhist temples and statues all over Japan.

Japanese gradually accepted the fact that they needed to incorporate aspects of Western civilization. Soon there was general advocacy of cultural and institutional borrowing from the West (referred to as *bunmei kaika*, or **civilization and enlightenment**).

In 1873, Japan adopted the solar calendar (which assigned 24 hours to each day and seven days to each week). Sunday was declared a day of rest. Christians were now permitted to practice their faith.

At about the time when the fiefs were converted to prefectures, Fukuzawa Yukichi's *Encouragement of Learning* and other pedagogical works were published. There was much talk about (and attention paid to) the importance of independence and self-respect in a society that now valued ability more than class. Many newspapers and magazines were launched, some of which began to carry feature articles on Western customs, ways and ideas.

Major changes occurred in the daily lives of the Japanese people. In urban centers like Tokyo, more and more people wore hats and Western clothes, ate meat and used lamps to light their homes. Western architecture appeared in rows of brick buildings; gas lights illuminated the streets at night. Rickshaws and horse-drawn carriages were other manifestations of civilization and enlightenment.

3. The Forming of a Constitutional Nation

54 The Struggle to Amend Unfavorable Treaties

What problems did treaties concluded with Western nations during the last days of the Shogunate present? How did Japan go about solving them?

Points of Contention in the Unequal Treaties

The treaties Japan had signed with various Western nations toward the end of Shogunate rule contained several unequal terms, and were therefore viewed as insulting to the Japanese. One point of contention was the granting of extraterritoriality (the right to disregard the laws of a host country) only to the citizens of the relevant Western nation, and another was the absence of a provision allowing Japan to set its own customs duties. **The amendment of the offending portions of the treaties** to correct the discriminatory terms became Japan's foremost diplomatic priority.

The first attempt to solve these problems concerned treaties concluded with the U.S. It was made by the Iwakura Mission, whose members visited the U.S. in 1871. But their request for negotiations was denied on the grounds that Japan did not have a criminal code or other legal codes in force.

The Japanese government decided to set the extraterritoriality problem aside for the moment, and attempted to negotiate with the British for the right to determine customs duties. However, in the aftermath of an opium smuggling incident, the British invoked extraterritoriality. The trial was held at a British consular court with the British consul-general presiding. The court acquitted the British merchant, having presumed the opium to be used for medicinal purposes. The Japanese public was outraged, and in 1878, the government was forced to cancel planned treaty amendment negotiations because extraterritoriality was not on the agenda.

Rokumeikan and the HMS Normanton Incident

In 1883, the government constructed a Western-style building in Hibiya, Tokyo, which it named Rokumeikan. Dance parties were held there, to which foreigners were invited. The building was erected to show the world that Japan now boasted a culture equal to that of the Western nations, and thus help Japan make progress with treaty revisions.

The HMS Normanton incident in which British sailors escaped while Japanese passengers were abandoned when the ship sank off Wakayama Prefecture took place in 1886. The British consular court, which oversaw the investigation of the incident, gave the ship's captain a very light sentence (three months in prison). The Japanese people raised an increasingly loud clamor, demanding that the treaties be revised and extraterritoriality abolished.

In 1887, the government drafted a compromise proposal, which allowed a majority of foreign judges to sit on Japanese benches in exchange for the abolition of extraterritoriality. However, this proposal, too, failed in the face of violent public protest.

The Abolition of Extraterritoriality

One of the main reasons behind the drafting of the Meiji Constitution in 1889 was the desire to revise treaties Japan had signed with other nations. Ultimately, Great Britain, then the most powerful Western nation, recognized Japan's efforts toward modernization. The British, motivated by their desire to counter Russia's inroads into the Far East, agreed to hold negotiations with Japan over treaty revisions. The labors of Foreign Minister Mutsu Munemitsu, the chief negotiator, bore fruit. In 1884, on the eve of the Sino-Japanese War, the **Anglo-Japanese Commercial Treaty** was signed and sealed. According to this treaty British citizens would be permitted to travel anywhere in Japan in exchange for the British renunciation of extraterritoriality. After Japan emerged victorious from the Sino-Japanese War, all of Japan's treaty partners, including the U.S., agreed to abolish extraterritoriality.

In 1911, after winning the Russo-Japanese War, Japan conducted negotiations with the U.S. during which it succeeded in regaining tariff autonomy. Japan's quest for treaty revision, which began with the Iwakura Mission's attempts at negotiations, was finally over after forty long years.

<Related Information>

Excerpt from Foreign Minister Mutsu Munemitsu's 1893 address to the Diet concerning treaty revision

The purpose of treaty revision, or more accurately, the purpose of Japanese diplomacy, is to possess the rights that any nation should enjoy and to carry out the responsibilities every nation should shoulder, to the fullest. In other words, although the Empire of Japan resides in Asia, we wish to receive special consideration from the Western powers — considerations not afforded to other Asian nations. Therefore, we must demonstrate that Japan forges policies and guidelines that do not exist in other Asian nations. We must also show that the Japanese people can elicit a special spirit of enterprise not found in any other Asian nation.

(Mutsu's speech emphasizes the significance of allowing foreigners to travel anywhere in Japan in exchange for the abolition of extraterritoriality.)

55 The Movement for Freedom and Human Rights

What efforts did the government and the freedom and civil rights movement make toward establishing a parliament?

The Beginning of the Movement for Freedom and Human Rights

The first principle in the Charter Oath of Five Principles (promulgated in 1868) declares that the establishment of parliamentary politics will be one of Japan's fundamental policies. Later, several attempts were made to establish a parliament, but none of them was successful.

In 1874, Itagaki Taisuke (and others who had left the government during the debate over sending a

punitive expedition to Korea the previous year) submitted a petition to the government calling for the formation of a national assembly chosen by the people. They were attempting to pave the way for representative politics.

Besides submitting the petition, Itagaki also formed the Risshisha (Society of Self-Made Men), a political group, the majority of whose members were shizoku from Kochi Prefecture. He and his followers claimed that the current government was a “clan government,” composed only of men from Satsuma and Choshu. In protest, they launched a movement that advocated free participation in politics. This movement, called the “**movement for freedom and civil rights**,” spread throughout all Japan.

Public and Private Efforts To Lay the Foundation for a Constitution

In 1878, prefectural assemblies were established to pave the way for a national parliament. The purpose of these assemblies was to give the Japanese people an opportunity to experience parliamentary politics. Sympathizers of the freedom and human rights movement won seats in local assemblies. Political groups were formed all over Japan, which established and then strengthened a national network. In 1880, representatives of these groups met in Osaka and formed the **League for the Establishment of a National Assembly**; they promoted their cause through the newspapers and gatherings where speeches were delivered.

As the movement for freedom and human rights grew more robust, government officials disagreed about when the national assembly should be established. In 1881, one of them, Councillor Okuma Shigenobu argued in favor of establishing a parliament in 1883, as well as a cabinet that would be responsible to the parliament, and party politics. Ito Hirobumi thought 1883 was too soon, and objected, eventually driving Okuma out of the government. At the same time, the government promised the Japanese people that a national assembly would be established in nine years.

As preparations proceeded, several political parties were established, among them the Liberal Party, headed by Itagaki Taisuke, and the Constitutional Reform Party, headed by Okuma.

Away from the capital, civic-minded men began consulting foreign books, and some groups even prepared drafts of a constitution. The fact that private citizens submitted proposals for a constitution attests to the intellectual curiosity and the high intellectual level of ordinary people of that time, as well as to their ardent patriotism.

The government and the freedom and civil rights movement both agreed that Japan needed a Constitution and a national assembly to revise unequal treaties and to build a modern nation. However, the freedom and civil rights movement wanted immediate action, while the government favored steady, but slower progress. Ito Hirobumi was now the central figure in the government. He prepared the draft of Japan’s Constitution, using as his model mainly the Prussian Constitution, after having investigated the constitutions of all the European nations.

Ito also established a cabinet system in 1885, and served as the first prime minister.

56 The Meiji Constitution

Describe the gist of the Meiji Constitution. How was it received by the rest of the world?

Promulgation of the Meiji Constitution

On February 11, 1889, Japan's first Constitution was adopted. Snow had been falling since the evening of the 10th, enveloping all of Tokyo in a silvery blanket. The city was in a festive mood. There was celebratory gunfire, costumed revelers parading, and floats snaking their way through the streets.

The Constitution placed the Emperor as the nation's unifying figure. Day-to-day political activities would be performed in accordance with advice from cabinet ministers, since the Emperor would not bear political responsibility. The people's rights were guaranteed within the boundaries of the law, and they would enjoy the privilege of electing the members of the Lower House. Approval of parliament (called the Diet) was required for the enactment of legislation and budgets. In addition to the Lower House, there was a House of Peers, whose members were nobles, distinguished scholars and former bureaucrats.

Lower House Elections and the Imperial Diet

The next year (1890) marked the first Lower House election and the first session of the Imperial Diet opened. Japan was now a constitutional nation, the first nation in Asia to hold such a status in an age when the conventional wisdom was that only Western nations were capable of such a feat.

Promulgation of the Imperial Rescript on Education

Before the Diet met for the first time, in 1890, the **Imperial Rescript on Education** was promulgated. The Rescript is a set of teachings that sets forth guiding principles for Japanese citizens. It instructs them to show affection and respect to their parents and ancestors, cultivate a thirst for learning, and to serve the nation when emergencies arise. The Rescript, which was used at every school in Japan until the end of World War II (1945), was largely responsible for forming the moral fiber of the modern Japanese citizen.

Meiji Constitution Lauded at Home and Abroad

When the Meiji Constitution was promulgated, even Japan's newspapers, which had been consistently critical of the government, heaped praise on it, describing it as a fine Constitution, one far better than expected.

The Constitution was translated and disseminated to the nations of the world. One British newspaper wrote that it was nothing short of a miracle that a parliamentary Constitution had come into being after much careful preparation, and called it a grand endeavor. A British scholar was

most impressed by the Meiji Constitution because of its moderate tone and its respect for time-honored history and customs.

A German legal scholar commended the Japanese for having established a bicameral parliament (with a Lower House and a House of Peers). He reasoned that the lower house of any nation's parliament tends to be radical. Upper houses, whose members are conscientious men who care deeply about the fate of their nations, have a moderating influence on lower houses, preventing the latter from resorting to rash behavior that results in social unrest.

<Related Information>

Excerpt from the Imperial Rescript on Education

My people, I counsel you to respect and obey your parents, be affectionate to your brothers and sisters, live in harmony with your spouses, and be true to your friends. Be modest and moderate in all things you do, and be kind to everyone. Improve your minds and build character by seeking knowledge and embracing the arts. Endeavor to enrich your nation and your communities. [...] If an emergency arises, offer yourselves in service to your nation.

<Portraits from Japanese History>

Ito Hirobumi (1841-1909)

Growing up poor

Ito Hirobumi, who fulfilled a central role in the building of modern Japan, was born in Choshu fief toward the end of Shogunate rule. He was the son of a lowly foot soldier. The family was so poor that when he was served whitebait (a specialty of Hagi) in celebration of his first trip to Edo, he wept tears of joy.

In his adolescence, Ito studied at the Shoka Sonjuku, a school founded by Yoshida Shoin. There he learned that the best way to advance was to interact with distinguished men. Ito had the opportunity to get to know many such men at a young age, and they recognized his potential. Kido Takayoshi supported him when both were part of the anti-Shogunate movement. When the Meiji government took office, he was appointed governor of Hyogo. Later, Okubo Toshimichi, realizing that Ito showed great promise, awarded him the position of councillor (equivalent to cabinet minister today).

“Hinomaru” Speech Praised

Ito was a member of the Iwakura Mission, which spent nearly two years traveling through the U.S. and Europe. In fact, he was deputy ambassador under Ambassador Iwakura Tomomi. When a speech was to be made at one of the mission's destinations, it was Ito who delivered it, since he

spoke English.

In one of those speeches, Ito remarked that “a feudal system, firmly established many centuries ago, has been completely abolished, without firing a gun or shedding a drop of blood.” (He was referring to the government’s having replaced fiefs with prefectures.) Ito ended his speech with an allusion to the *hinomaru* (Japanese flag): “The red disc in the centre of our national flag, shall no longer appear like a wafer over a sealed empire, but henceforth be in fact, what it is designed to be, the noble emblem of the rising sun, moving onward and upward amid the enlightened nations of the world.” Ito’s now famous speech was greeted with thunderous applause.

Ito became one of the most important members of the Meiji government. He expended more energy than anyone else on the effort to build a modern Japan, one that could enjoy a status equal to that of the Western powers.

The Struggle To Enact a Constitution

Ito Hirobumi’s greatest achievement was the enactment of the Meiji Constitution and the establishment of Japan’s Diet. He went to Europe in 1882, where he studied for more than a year, benefiting from the wisdom of German constitutional scholars. In 1885, he was appointed Japan’s first prime minister at the age of 45.

During the next few years, Ito completed his draft of the Constitution, after consulting with a great many men. During his attempt to have the Constitution adopted, Ito succeeded in ensuring that all budgets and laws would require the approval of the Diet, overcoming the opposition of numerous conservative politicians. His considerable labors culminated in the promulgation of the Meiji Constitution in 1889. It is true that Ito had learned from the German Constitution, among others. But the draft he prepared, which was rooted in Japanese tradition, won the praise of both progressive private citizens who favored freedom and civil rights, and overseas media organizations.

Unlike other *genro* (elder statesmen), Ito did not accumulate significant wealth during his lifetime, nor was he discriminatory in his social interactions. It was patriotism that motivated him, as the following quote demonstrates: “Even when I’m enjoying a drink of *sake*, two words (‘my country’) are always at the back of my mind. My thoughts never turn to my children or grandchildren, or to my home. I’m always thinking about my country, wherever I am, and at any given moment.”

<Related Story>

The Korean Peninsula and Japan

The Protection of Japan’s Independence and the Korean Peninsula

If you look at a map of East Asia, you’ll see that Japan is a group of islands situated a short distance from the coast of the Eurasian mainland. The Korean peninsula resembles an arm jutting out of Asia. The geographic proximity between the two countries has had great significance throughout history.

Beginning in ancient times, aspects of advanced civilizations (Chinese civilization, for instance) were transmitted to Japan through the Korean Peninsula. But Korea was infiltrated, from time to time, by hostile forces that threatened Japanese security. Japan had to make a constant effort to keep abreast of trends in China and on the Korean Peninsula. Japan’s quest for independent status within Asia was one reason for the early adoption of the *ritsuryō* system, whereby the nation was governed by a criminal code and other regulations.

It was Korea that had served as Kublai Khan’s base of operations during the Kamakura era. On the other hand, there was a time when Toyotomi Hideyoshi had sent a large army to the Korean Peninsula. During the Edo era, relations between the Tokugawa Shogunate and Korea were cordial, with Tsushima fief serving as a bridge between the two.

Japan and the Modernization of Korea

As soon as the Meiji government was firmly established, its officials sought diplomatic ties with Korea. But Korea, already paying tribute to the Qing Court in China, rebuffed Japanese overtures. The Japan-Korea Amity Treaty, signed in 1876, opened Korea to Japan. Article 1 of that treaty,

designed to free Korea from Qing influence, describes Korea as an independent nation.

More fearsome than China to the Japanese was Russia, which was now looking to East Asia for an ice-free port. In 1891, Russia began work on the Trans-Siberian Railway, and the threat seemed more imminent. If the Korean Peninsula came under the control of Russia, which was extending its empire eastward, it would serve as the base for an attack on Japan. As an island nation, Japan would have great difficulty defending itself.

Therefore, after Korea opened to Japan, Japan assisted Korea in its first efforts to modernize by supporting military reforms. Missions were sent by Korea to learn from the achievements of the Meiji Restoration. It was important to Japan's national security that Korea become an impregnable fortress.

Conflict between Japan and China over Korea

China, however, saw the East Asian situation from a different perspective. The incorporation of the Ryukyu Islands, which had also been paying tribute to China for centuries, into Japanese territory as Okinawa Prefecture in 1879, was a crushing blow to the Chinese. Later, China lost the Sino-French War and was forced to cede Vietnam. This successive loss of tributary nations was a harbinger of the decline of the Qing dynasty. It was also a sign of looming crisis that might cause the East Asian order centered as it was on China, to crumble.

Determined not to lose Korea, its last important tributary nation, China began viewing Japan as its enemy. An examination of Japan's participation in the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese wars must be informed by international relations in East Asia as described in this section.

57 The Sino-Japanese War

How did disputes between Japan and China lead to the Sino-Japanese War?

Japan and China Clash over Korea

After Korea came out of isolation, Japan helped it modernize by supporting military reforms. However, in 1882, some Korean soldiers whom the reforms discriminated against rioted (the Military Rebellion of 1882). China sent several thousand soldiers into Korea to suppress the mutiny, thereby weakening Japan's influence over Korea.

In 1884, Kim Ok-kyun and other progressives endeavoring to implement reforms along the lines of the Meiji Restoration, attempted a coup d'état. But they, too, were thwarted by troops sent by China.

Having twice been defeated in the power struggle over Korea, Japan took immediate steps to bolster its military strength, anticipating hostilities with China. Soon Japan was, militarily, on an equal footing with China.

The Sino-Japanese War and the Reasons for Japan's Victory

In 1894, there was a peasant uprising (the Tonghak Uprising) in southern Korea. The peasants, wanting to be rid of foreigners and corrupt government officials, fought for and won temporary control of a portion of the Korean Peninsula. The Korean Court, which had very little to rely on in the way of military strength, asked China for help in suppressing the rebellion. Japan also sent troops to Korea, citing the terms of an agreement signed with China. There was a confrontation between Japanese and Chinese troops, which marked the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War.

The first battles were fought in Korea, and then the hostilities expanded to southern Manchuria (northeastern China). The Japanese emerged victorious, having subdued Chinese troops in battles on both land and sea. Modern weapons and the superior training and discipline of the Japan's military personnel were factors contributing to Japan's victory. But just as important was awareness on the part of the Japanese that they were now one people and citizens of a united nation.

The Treaty of Shimonoseki and Tripartite Intervention

In 1895, the Treaty of Shimonoseki was concluded between Japan and China. China recognized Korean independence and paid reparations amounting to more than 200 million taels (¥300 million or approximately three times the Japanese government's annual revenue at the time). The Liaodong Peninsula and Taiwan were ceded to Japan.

China was viewed as posing so great a threat that the nation was called the "sleeping tiger." But China was no match for "upstart" Japan. The order that had prevailed in Asia since ancient times had collapsed. The Western powers immediately set about partitioning China.

But the Western powers were not willing to treat Japan as their equal. Russia, which had ambitions in East Asia, convinced Germany and France to join it in forcing Japan to return the Liaodong Peninsula to China. This conspiracy is referred to as the Tripartite Intervention. Though Japan had succeeded in defeating China, it was not yet strong enough to do battle with Russia, Germany and France. Reluctantly, Japan gave up the Liaodong Peninsula in exchange for an indemnity payment. The Japanese then embarked on a campaign, a joint effort of the public and private sectors, to make their nation strong enough to confront Russia, adopting an old Chinese saying (*gashin shotan* in Japanese), that means "suffer privation for vengeance" as a slogan.

58 **The Russo-Japanese War**

Why did Japan decide to start the Russo-Japanese War?

The Anglo-Japanese Alliance

The experience of the Tripartite Intervention made it clear that Japan would have to enter into an alliance with either Russia or England. Within the Japanese government, opinions were divided as to which nation to choose. At the heart of the debate were perceptions about Russia. When the **Boxer Rebellion** broke out in China in 1900, the Russians used it as an excuse to send 20,000 soldiers to northeastern China; they remained there even after the rebellion had been crushed. The major question debated was whether Japan could convince Russia not to move its troops from Manchuria into the Korean Peninsula.

The debate was settled by a written opinion prepared by Komura Jutarō, minister of foreign affairs. His opinion weighed the merits of an alliance with Russia or Great Britain, and concluded with the recommendation that Japan opt for an Anglo-Japanese alliance. Komura's written opinion was adopted as government policy and used as the basis for negotiations. In 1902, the Anglo-Japanese alliance was concluded. During the 20 years it remained in force, it contributed significantly to Japan's security and prosperity.

The Outbreak and Course of the Russo-Japanese War

Boasting a national budget and military strength 10 times as large as Japan's, Russia had reinforced its troops in Manchuria, and begun construction on a military base in North Korea. It was clear that if Japan stood by idly, the Russian military presence in the Far East would grow so powerful that Russia would have a clear competitive edge over Japan. The Japanese government decided to initiate hostilities with Russia before it was too late.

The Russo-Japanese War began in February 1904, when Japan launched an attack on a Russian military vessel. Its battles were fought on Korean and Manchurian soil. In 1905, Japan's armed forces succeeded in occupying Liaodong after a tremendous struggle, and went on to win another victory at Mukden.

In an attempt to turn the tables on its superior opponent, Russia dispatched its Baltic fleet from the Baltic Sea. Thirty-eight of the fleet's ships rounded the southern tip of Africa and crossed the Indian Ocean. After a seven-month voyage, the Baltic fleet arrived at the Japan Sea. Awaiting the Russians was Japan's Combined Fleet under the command of Admiral Togo Heihachirō. With their superior morale and technical skills, Togo's men annihilated the Baltic fleet, scoring a miraculous victory that has left its mark in the annals of history (**Battle of Tsushima**).

A Japanese Victory that Changed the World

By the time Japan emerged victorious from the Battle of Tsushima, military expenses (for which

funds were raised by borrowing from other nations and issuing government bonds) had consumed an amount eight times Japan's annual budget. If the war had lasted longer, the outcome would have been the opposite, since Russia was a far wealthier nation. U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt arranged peace talks between Japan and Russia at a time that was most favorable to the Japanese. As a result of the talks, held at Portsmouth, New Hampshire in September 1905, the **Treaty of Portsmouth** was concluded.

According to the treaty, Russia conceded control of Korea (which was renamed the Great Han Empire in 1897) to Japan. Japan also acquired southern Sakhalin, Russia's leases of the southern part of the Liaodong Peninsula (later called Kanto Province by the Japanese), and ownership of the railway constructed by the Russians in southern Manchuria. Back in Hibiya Park, Tokyo, riots broke out because Japan had not succeeded in collecting reparations (the ordinary Japanese citizen was unaware that continuation of the war was a financial impossibility).

Japan's survival hinged on the Russo-Japanese War. By winning it, Japan had established its own national security. A nation populated by people of color, which had only recently entered the ranks of modern nations, had defeated the Russian Empire, the world's military giant, which was populated by white people. Japan's victory gave heart to people whose territories had been colonized, inspiring them with the hope that they too might achieve independence someday. But at the same time, this same victory caused the belief in the supposed threat posed by the yellow race (known as the **yellow peril**) to spread through Europe and the U.S.

<Related Information>

Advantages of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance (from a written opinion prepared by Komura Jutarō)

Great Britain's objectives in Asia are not to expand its empire, but to maintain the status quo and to reap profits from commerce. An alliance with Great Britain will help control Russia's ambitions and sustain peace in the Far East for a relatively long period of time.

Therefore, international public opinion will support an Anglo-Japanese alliance because its intentions are peaceful and defensive.

If we align ourselves with Great Britain, Chinese trust in Japan will increase, as will Japan's profits.

To resolve the Korean problem, we must conclude treaties with strong nations so that Russia is forced to do Japan's bidding. Great Britain is the most suitable nation with which to form an alliance.

Forming an alliance with Great Britain will heighten international confidence in the Japanese economy. Furthermore, the British people are likely to make efforts in Japan's financial and economic interest since, as our allies, they too will benefit.

There is no comparison between the British Empire and Siberia, as far as the value of commerce to Japan is concerned.

The Russian navy is much weaker than the British navy, and thus a less formidable opponent.

The Russo-Japanese War and the Awakening to Independence

“By defeating Russia, Japan has inspired the peoples of Asia with hope that they too may someday achieve independence.”

(Sun Yatsen, father of the Chinese Revolution)

“If Japan was able to defeat one of Europe’s most powerful nations, how can anyone say that India could not do the same?”

(Jawaharlal Nehru, one of the leaders of India’s independence movement and the first prime minister of independent India)

“By adopting constitutional politics, Japan has increased its stature and succeeded in vanquishing a mighty enemy.”

(Shirazi, Iranian poet)

“We are amazed by Japan because it is the first Eastern government to utilize Western civilization to resist the shield of European imperialism in Asia.”

(Mustafa Kamil, leader of the Egyptian nationalist movement)

<Great Moments in Japanese History>

Battle of Tsushima

Baltic Fleet Advances

In October 1904, the Russian Empire ordered its entire Baltic Fleet (then in Europe) to head for Japan, hoping to turn the tide of the Russo-Japanese War in its favor. The journey was a major undertaking, for more than seven months had elapsed when the fleet finally arrived in the East China Sea, having traversed the Indian Ocean.

Admiral Togo Heihachiro, commander of the Japanese Navy's Combined Fleet, had concentrated all his ships in the Tsushima Strait (situated between Kita Kyushu and Tsushima) by May 26, 1905. In contrast to the Russian sailors, who were exhausted after their long journey, Japanese naval personnel had gotten plenty of rest. The Japanese had also undergone intensive training, and their rate of firing accuracy had improved significantly.

Before dawn on May 27, when informed that the enemy had been sighted, the Combined Fleet set out. At about 2:00 p.m., 40 Japanese vessels encountered the Russian fleet. When Staff Officer Akiyama Saneyuki transmitted a radio message ("Having been notified that enemy ships have been sighted, the Combined Fleet will set out to attack and destroy them") to Tokyo, he added another line: "Weather is clear today, but the waves are high."

A Great Victory for Japan

Thirty-eight Russian ships were proceeding north in the Japan Sea in two columns. When all ships in Japan's Combined Fleet were 6,000 meters away from the enemy, they made a sudden left turn, blocking the Russians' path. The Japanese squadron launched a concentrated attack on the lead ships, including *Suvorov*, the Russian flagship (which carried the Russian commander).

The outcome of the battle was decided in 40 minutes. *Suvorov* burst into flames, and its conning tower blew off. Then the Japanese sank four battleships. The wounded Russian commander eventually surrendered.

Japan's victory in this naval battle may be attributable to the fact that Japanese gunners hit their targets more often, and to the use of a highly explosive gunpowder invented by engineer Shimose Masachika.

The Japanese pursuit of the Russian fleet, which began in the evening and lasted till the next day, ended in an unambiguous victory for Japan. Of the 38 ships in the Russian fleet, Japan sunk 16, captured six, and detained six more that had initially escaped. Only three Russian ships succeeded in evading the Japanese, eventually making their way back to Vladivostok. Only three Japanese ships were sunk. This was the most decisive victory in the history of naval warfare.

After the war, Army General Nogi Maresuke, who had distinguished himself in the conflict's land

battles, did everything in his power to spare the life of the defeated Russian general. Even in Meiji Japan, the precepts of *bushido* (the traditional samurai code), one of which is showing mercy to the vanquished, were still alive.

59 Japan Joins the Ranks of the World Powers

What was the significance of Japan's joining the ranks of the world powers?

A New Challenge for Japan

By winning both the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese wars, Japan attained an objective that it had been endeavoring to accomplish since the last days of the Shogunate: maintain Japanese independence in the face of pressure from the Western powers. Japan's status in the international community rose, as the nation joined the ranks of the world powers. The modernization of Japan had been completed.

However, with Japan's rise in international stature came a heavy burden. The Western powers began to view Japan, the only great power populated by people of color, as a threat.

The Annexation of Korea

After the Russo-Japanese War, Japan proceeded to control Korea more tightly, establishing a Residency-General there. Japan recognized the Western powers' colonies and spheres of influence: India (Great Britain), Indochina (France), the Philippines (the U.S.) and Outer Mongolia (Russia). In exchange, they accepted Japanese influence in Korea.

The Japanese government decided that it was necessary to annex Korea to protect Japanese security and Japanese interests in Manchuria. In 1910, Japan proceeded with the annexation, suppressing protests with military force.

Within Korea, there was bitter opposition to the loss of independence. Even after Japanese annexation, the movement to restore independence remained deep-rooted and active.

Some of the colonial policies implemented by the Government-General of Korea, established after annexation, were development projects designed to construct railroads and irrigation facilities; land surveys began. But due to the surveys many Koreans were driven off the land they had been cultivating. Furthermore, introducing of Japanese language instruction into school curriculum and other assimilation programs increased anti-Japanese sentiments among the Koreans.

Birth of the Republic of China

Japan proceeded to develop Taiwan (acquired after the Sino-Japanese War), establishing a Government-General on the island, and suppressing popular resistance. China, Japan's former enemy, sent numerous exchange students to Japan to learn from Japan's modernization. In 1905,

Sun Yatsen formed the United League, most of whose members were exchange students, in Tokyo. With the three principles of people's rights as their goal, they began a movement to overthrow the Qing regime.

By 1911, most of China's provinces had seceded from the Qing government due to anti-Qing demonstrations compounded by a soldiers' mutiny (**Revolution of 1911**). In the same year, leaders of the revolution gathered in Nanking, and selected Sun Yatsen as the temporary president of China. In 1912, the **Republic of China** was formally established.

Yuan Shikai, a former official of the Qing government, joined hands with the revolutionaries and arranged for the abdication of the emperor, thus ending the Qing Dynasty. In exchange, Sun Yatsen offered Yuan the presidency. But once installed as president, Yuan began working against the revolutionaries and plotting ways to increase his power. China lost its unity, and large and small warlords who controlled sections of China declared their territories independent.

<Portraits from Japanese History>

The Development of Taiwan and Hatta Yoichi

When Taiwan came under Japanese control, the Jianan Plain accounted for one-sixth of the arable land on the island, but it was in a terrible state. It might as well have been a wasteland, since it was flooded during the rainy season, and parched in the dry season.

Hatta Yoichi (1886-1942), a native of Ishikawa Prefecture, was assigned to the Taiwan Government-General after earning a degree in civil engineering at Tokyo Imperial University. Once there, he surveyed the Jianan Plain and submitted plans for the construction of a dam that would retain the upper reaches of a river that ran through the plain, and an irrigation facility that would provide a reliable supply of water.

The actual construction work was fraught with difficulty. One day there was a gas explosion that killed more than 50 people. The grief-stricken Hatta remarked, "Now nobody will follow my instructions." But it was the Taiwanese people who comforted him, saying, "It wasn't your fault. It was an accident. You're risking your life, for us, for Taiwan."

By 1930, the Jianan Plain had been transformed into a green oasis. It had taken 10 years to make Hatta's brainchild — one of the most ambitious projects of the century — a reality. The U.S.-based Society of Civil Engineers called it the Hatta Dam, and introduced his engineering miracle to the rest of the world.

4. The Evolution of Modern Japanese Industry and The Shaping of a National Culture

60 The Evolution of Modern Industry

How did Japan's industrial revolution evolve?

In the early years of the Meiji era, the Japanese government made a concerted effort to increase production and promote industry. Government-operated businesses served as useful examples of how the Western industrial model works. In the 1880s, the government established the **Bank of Japan** and developed a financial system. Government-run factories were sold to private citizens, in whose hands economic growth now rested. Cotton thread, raw silk and cotton fabric mass-produced in factories equipped with machinery became Japan's key exports. The revenue from the sale of those exports was used to pay for imports (raw cotton and other raw materials, as well as battleships, iron, and machinery).

Reparations paid to Japan in accordance with the Treaty of Shimonoseki were invested in heavy industry. The year 1901 marked the opening of the government-run **Yahata Ironworks**, the site of Japan's first iron production. Another growing industry was shipbuilding; after the Russo-Japanese War, Japan was capable of manufacturing vessels weighing more than 10,000 tons.

Such developments are viewed as Japan's **industrial revolution**. One of the reasons why industry grew during the Meiji era was the high level of education offered to the public since the Edo era; another was the Japanese work ethic. Once Japan became a classless society, people believed they could shape their own destinies by working hard and using their ingenuity. Self-made men like Shibusawa Eiichi came onto the scene in great numbers.

Changes in Japan's Cities and Farming Villages

Industrial growth was aided by the extension of a modern transportation network. The Tokaido Line was completed in 1889, and Japan's national network of railroads continued to expand. Roads were improved to accommodate horse-drawn carriages and other vehicles. As more railway lines were added, other urban centers and farming villages became accessible. The areas around train stations became centers of activity, replacing the shops and inns on the old main public roads.

The spectrum of occupational and entrepreneurial choices widened as modern industry evolved and a transportation network was established. Farmers experimented with part-time or seasonal work other than agriculture to supplement their incomes. The standard of living rose, enabling more people to eat a rice diet, and Japan's population increased steadily. Young women were sent to the cities to work temporarily in silk-reeling factories; many workers moved to cities to become factory workers, forming an urban labor force.

In Tokyo and other large cities, the use of glass for shop windows became common, as did glass sliding doors in residences. Once clock towers were installed on street corners, people became accustomed to knowing the correct time and planning their schedules accordingly. In factories, the hour became the standard unit into which the workday was divided.

The Emergence of Social Problems

As modern industry evolved, objections were raised to long workdays in factories and the low wages paid to factory workers. After the Sino-Japanese War, movements to unionize workers arose. In 1891, public attention was drawn to a poisoning incident at the Ashio Copper Mine and again in 1901 to Tanaka Shozo's direct appeal to the Emperor for a remedy. The rapidity with which industrialization was accomplished caused new problems that demanded a resolution.

61 The Meiji Culture Thrives

How did the importation of Western culture influence the Meiji culture?

Universities and Scientific Research

In 1877, Tokyo University, Japan's first true university, was established. At about the same time, private institutions, such as Keio and Doshisha universities, and Tokyo Senmon Gakko (the predecessor of Waseda University) came into being. Many of Japan's brightest young people were educated in these schools. The main focus at these institutions of higher learning was the absorption of Western scholarship, then viewed as the ideal.

When Western standards of scholarship became the norm, Japanese scholars began to conduct legitimate research in medicine, physics, chemistry and other sciences. Researchers like bacteriologist Noguchi Hideyo and atomic physicist Nagaoka Hantaro made discoveries that were recognized throughout the world.

The New Japanese Literature

The starting point for Japan's new literature was *Essence of the Novel* by Tsubouchi Shoyo, who encouraged writers to abandon the old moralistic tendencies in favor of realism. Tsubouchi inspired Futabatei Shimei to write *Ukigumo* (Drifting clouds) in colloquial Japanese.

At around the time of the Sino-Japanese War, a romantic movement that stressed the expression of free human emotions was gaining force. Among those active in that movement were Shimazaki Toson and Yosano Akiko. By the time the Russo-Japanese War broke out, naturalism (the unselectively realistic portrayal of life and society) was in vogue, popularizing novelists like Tayama Katai.

Mori Ogai introduced the Japanese to European literature. Toward the end of his life, he wrote historical novels. Natsume Soseki, the author of *Wagahai wa neko de aru* (I am a cat) and *Kokoro* (Heart), was also a contributor to the flourishing of modern Japanese literature.

Trends in the Visual Arts

The Meiji era was a time when Japanese artists made frantic efforts to absorb the flood of modern

Western art that was inundating Japan. It was also a time when they thought deeply about the meaning of traditional Japanese culture.

When the phrase “civilization and enlightenment” was prevalent, there was a tendency to worship Western ways to the point of believing that traditional Japanese artworks and Buddhist statues were of no value. But Ernest Fenollosa, an American professor who taught at Tokyo University, was captivated by Japanese art. Thanks to his determination and that of his colleague Okakura Tenshin, Fenollosa’s efforts to preserve and revive traditional Japanese art led to a new appreciation of its merit. Okakura was mentor to Kano Hogai and other artists struggling to breathe new life into Nihonga (Japanese-style painting).

In the genre of Western-style painting, Takahashi Yuichi and Asai Chu attempted to create realistic oil paintings. Kuroda Seiki studied in France; after he returned to Japan, his canvases abounded with light, bright colors. Sculptors like Takamura Koun worked in wood, crafting realistic pieces.

The importation of Western musical instruments resulted in the incorporation of singing (of songs mostly based on Western melodies) into the elementary school curriculum, which became immensely popular. Songs like “*Kojo no tsuki*” (Moonlight on the ruined castle) and “*Hana*” (Flowers), composed by Taki Rentaro, captured the hearts of the nation.

<Portraits from Japanese History>

Tsuda Umeko

First Female Exchange Student from Japan

In 1871, a large group of travelers (the 110-member Iwakura Mission) sailed for the U.S. from Yokohama. Sixty of the 110 were exchange students, five of whom were Japan’s first female exchange students. One of the girls, Tsuda Umeko (1864-1929), was about to celebrate her seventh birthday. On her shoulders she bore a heavy burden: her destiny was to become the model that would define the new Japanese woman.

In the U.S., Umeko stayed with an American family who lived in the suburbs of Washington, D.C. Her host family showered her with love. She studied a wide range of subjects (among them English, French, mathematics, physics and music). Umeko’s grades were always excellent. One commencement day, she played the piano in front of the guest of honor, the First Lady.

A Homecoming Fraught with Problems

After spending 11 years in the U.S., Umeko returned to Japan at the age of 17, together with her friend Yamakawa Sutematsu (another of the five female exchange students). In her heart she harbored a secret desire — to found a girls’ school where she could share the knowledge that she had acquired in the U.S.

Upon her return to Japan, Umeko discovered that she had lost her fluency in Japanese. She also experienced difficulty readjusting to Japanese food, *tatami* mats and other aspects of daily life in Japan. What troubled her most, however, was her realization of the huge gap between the education she had received in the U.S. and the schooling available to Japanese girls.

School for Girls Opens

In 1889, Umeko traveled to the U.S. a second time. There she attended an exclusive women's college and broadened her knowledge significantly. She returned to Japan after three years, but later traveled to Great Britain and the U.S. from time to time, making friends and winning supporters.

Finally, in 1900, Umeko opened a private school, the Joshi Eigaku Juku (Women's Institute for English Studies), on the site of what is today Tsuda College. This was a revolutionary concept, involving individualized training of a small number of women in specialized subjects. Umeko not only taught English, but also endeavored to nurture women who wished to broaden their horizons and to become self-sufficient.

Her English remained more proficient than her Japanese (Umeko composed her lectures in English). But she also valued Japanese traditions, warning that Japan's good points should not be discarded along with the bad ones. For instance, at public venues like commencement ceremonies, Umeko always wore Japanese clothing.

When she was introduced to U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt and the First Lady, Mrs. Roosevelt asked Umeko to name the Japanese traditions most important to her. Umeko replied, "Self-sacrifice and loyalty," greatly impressing the President, an admirer of *bushido* (the Japanese warrior code).

CHAPTER 5: JAPAN AND THE AGE OF WORLD WARS

1. The World War I Era

62 World War I

What intra-European relationships gave rise to World War I? In what way did Japan participate in the war?

The Outbreak of World War I

After the Russo-Japanese War, Russia abandoned its ambitions of southward expansion into East Asia, once again setting its sights on Europe. The situation in Europe grew increasingly tense. Germany had already entered into an agreement with Austria and Italy (the **Triple Alliance**), and was now in the process of augmenting its navy and preparing to make inroads overseas. Great Britain, fearful of a mightier Germany, made overtures to France and Russia. Their discussions developed into the **Triple Entente** in 1907. Germany was surrounded. Each of Europe's nations formed an alliance with one or the other of these two camps, exacerbating an already precarious situation.

Also gaining strength at this time were nationalist movements on the Balkan Peninsula. The European powers, all of which had interests in those movements, used them to extend their influence. Therefore, the Balkan peninsula was referred to as the "powder keg of Europe," and this explosive situation persisted. Russia supported Serbians and other Slavic peoples, and opposed Austria-Hungary.

In 1914, a young man with pro-Russian leanings assassinated the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne and his wife in Sarajevo, Bosnia. This was the immediate cause of World War I, in which all members of both the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente would eventually participate.

Japan's Participation in the War and the 21 Article Demands

As a party to the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, Japan sided with the Triple Entente nations and declared war on Germany. Japan occupied Qingdao on China's Shandong Peninsula and islands in the Pacific north of the equator, all German leaseholds. Furthermore, when Germany resorted to a tactic involving unrestricted submarine attacks on enemy merchant ships, without warning, Japan dispatched a destroyer fleet to the Mediterranean Sea.

China requested the withdrawal of Japanese troops from Qingdao. In 1915 Japan issued demand to China, including Japan's succession of German interests in Shandong Province, and extension of Japan's lease on Guandong ("Kanto" in Japanese) Province. China expecting intervention of foreign powers, called them the **21 Article Demands** and publicized the confidential non-mandatory parts which, above all, requested the acceptance of Japanese advisers. Great Britain and the U.S. protested to Japan. Japan issued an ultimatum and made China accept the demands except for the non-mandatory parts. This stimulated anti-Japanese sentiment in China.

63 The Russian Revolution and the End of World War I

How did World War I change the world?

The Russian Revolution

The Russian Revolution broke out in 1917, in the midst of a protracted war. Soldiers congregated in cities whose residents had started riots because of food shortages. The Romanov Dynasty fell. Lenin, who had gone into exile abroad to wait for the right time to foment a revolution, in accordance with Marxist theory, took advantage of this turmoil. After staging an armed uprising, Lenin and his followers set up a government whose primary unit was the council (soviet), consisting mainly of workers and soldiers. Later, he used military force to eliminate other parties and factions, building a one-party communist regime, of which he was the helmsman.

The soviet government ceased hostilities with Germany, and plunged headlong into civil war against domestic forces that opposed the Revolution. The tsar and his immediate family, as well as numerous nobles, landowners, members of the bourgeoisie, religious leaders and intellectuals perceived as enemies by the Communist Party were executed.

Japan Sends Troops to Siberia

Having feared southward Russian expansion for many years, Japan was even more apprehensive about the effects of the communist revolution than was the U.S. At the same time, the nations of Europe, terrified of communism, sent troops to Russia to quell the revolution.

In 1918, Japan was among the nations (including the U.S.) that sent soldiers to Siberia to rescue a Czech unit stranded on Russian territory, and to expand its sphere of influence there. American soldiers eventually withdrew, but Japanese troops remained there, fighting the communists until 1922.

Total Warfare

When World War I began, everyone believed that the hostilities would end within a short period of time. But the war, which encompassed the Russian Revolution and other major events, lasted for four years. Furthermore, it differed radically from wars that had previously been waged.

The combatant nations in World War I exhausted all their forces, and not one of their citizens' lives was left untouched by the conflict. This type of war is called "total warfare." As a consequence of scientific advancements, new weapons like airplanes, airships, tanks, submarines and even poison gas came into use. The inhabitants of warring nations were subjected to aerial bombings. They were also mobilized to work in munitions factories, and suffered from shortages of daily necessities.

The War Ends

World War I came to an end in 1918 with the defeat of Germany and the other Triple Alliance

members. Europeans had experienced the horror of the first total war in human history, since it was on their soil that most of the battles were fought. Huge numbers of them were caught up in the conflict, and the years of mutual slaughter came to haunt them later in numerous ways.

Japan, however, was able to join the ranks of the victors without making tremendous sacrifices. Neither was this war one in which the U.S. invested all of its resources. But after World War I, the voices of two nations separated by the Pacific Ocean — Japan and the U.S. — internationally became more forceful.

64 The Treaty of Versailles and the World Situation after World War I

How were post-World War I settlements made?

The Treaty of Versailles and the League of Nations

The Paris Peace Conference was held in 1919. As one of the five Great Powers (the U.S., Great Britain, France, Japan and Italy), Japan sent a delegation to the conference, which produced the **Treaty of Versailles**. The treaty stated that Germany would accept responsibility for the war, and would lose all of its colonies and some of its European territory. The unreasonably steep reparations Germany was forced to pay would end up crippling the nation financially and become one of the causes of World War II.

At the Paris Peace Conference, U.S. President Wilson submitted his Fourteen Points (which contained his proposal for an association of nations that would transcend national interests and work toward world peace and international cooperation) as a basis for the negotiations. France and some of the other victors opposed the Fourteen Points, presenting arguments totally divorced from political reality. But since it was through American participation that the Allies were able to win the war, Wilson's proposal was accepted after extended negotiations. The **League of Nations** was formed in 1920. However, since the U.S. did not become a member due to opposition from Congress, the League never functioned with full effectiveness.

Independence Movements in Asia

After World War I, Asia too was the scene of independence movements, which arose amid a growing trend toward ethnic self-determination. In India, Gandhi and Nehru, both of whom used nonviolent methods to achieve their objectives, demanded autonomy from Great Britain, which India had been promised. British suppression of the independence movement only served to strengthen it.

In Japanese-controlled Korea, mourners at a funeral service in Seoul for the former king held on March 1, 1919, staged a demonstration at which Korean independence was declared and marchers shouted, "Independence for Korea!" This movement soon spread throughout Korea (the **March First Movement**). At the time, the Government-General of Korea used military force to subdue the demonstrators, but later shifted to more benign methods.

At the Paris Peace Conference, it was decided that Japan would take over Germany's leaseholds in China. This decision touched off student protests in Beijing on May 4, 1919, which soon grew into a protest movement that later spread across China. (**May Fourth Movement**).

World War I Brings Economic Boom to Japan

During World War I, Japan's munitions exports increased steeply. Exports to Asia also grew significantly, leading to the rapid development of heavy industry. Japan experienced an unprecedented economic boom, referred to as the "World War boom." **Zaibatsu** (conglomerates) like Mitsui, Mitsubishi and Sumitomo thrived when they diversified into finance, foreign trade and shipbuilding.

World War I represented Japan's third successive victory (following the conflicts with China and Russia). However, since it was a victory attained without great sacrifice, Japan's leaders failed to heed a worldwide trend: future wars would be total wars.

65 Development of Party Politics

How did party politics evolve in Japan?

The Birth of Cabinets Formed by Political Parties

After the Russo-Japanese War, Japanese politics was characterized by alternation between cabinets formed from either **Rikken Seiyukai (Friends of Constitutional Government)** members or politicians from Satsuma and Choshu. When the Taisho era began in 1912, a movement arose calling for politics that reflected the will of the people, in keeping with the spirit of the Constitution (**Constitution Protection Movement**). Yoshino Sakuzo, who translated the English word "democracy" as *minponshugi*, or "government that reflects the people's wishes," popularized the notion that the political party that wins a majority through election by universal suffrage should form the cabinet.

In 1918, the price of rice increased due to rumors that some merchants, anticipating that Japanese troops would be sent to Siberia, were cornering the market. Angry mobs attacked rice dealers all over Japan (the **Rice Riots**). When the cabinet resigned that same year, Rikken Seiyukai president Hara Takashi became prime minister and formed a new cabinet. Hara selected his cabinet ministers from among Diet representatives belonging to his party (also the majority party), with three exceptions: the ministers for the Army, Navy and foreign affairs. His was Japan's first genuine **party-based cabinet**.

Taisho Democracy and Social Change

During the Taisho era, especially in the aftermath of World War I, political parties (centered on the Diet and mandated by the Meiji Constitution) took root in Japan. Movements for universal suffrage

and other social change gained energy. The desire for democracy and international cooperation increased. These trends are collectively referred to as **Taisho Democracy**.

This period also saw the birth of many labor unions, and disputes between tenant farmers and landowners. In 1920, May Day was observed in Japan for the first time; labor and farmers' movements gained force. The Zenkoku Suiheisha (**National Levelers' Association**) was established in 1922; the organization campaigned for the elimination of discrimination against the *burakumin* (Japan's underclass).

Feminist movements were organized; Hiratsuka Raicho helped win more advocates of women's suffrage. The Russian Revolution influenced Japanese intellectuals and students, many of whom embraced Marxism.

The Regular Procedures of Constitutional Government

When Hara Takashi was assassinated by a thug in 1921, supporters of political party-government had lost an effective leader. Succeeding cabinets were not political party-based until 1924, when a three-party coalition Cabinet was formed, with Kato Takaaki as prime minister. During the next eight years, the cabinet was formed by the president of the political party with a majority in the lower house, and these procedures (regular procedures of a constitutional government) became enconced. In 1925, the Kato Cabinet succeeded in getting **universal suffrage legislation** enacted. Now any male Japanese who had attained the age of 25 could vote, regardless of the amount of taxes he paid. The first general election was held in 1928; Seiyukai won a majority.

66 Japan-U.S. Relations and the Washington Conference

How did Japan-U.S. relations change between the end of the Russo-Japanese War and the mid-1920s?

A Shift in Japan-U.S. Relations

After the Russo-Japanese War, Japan was the leading nation in East Asia. The U.S., which had occupied the Philippines, now had a rival in the Far East.

Unfortunately, immediately following the Russo-Japanese War, Japan-U.S. relations were marred by racial discrimination. A movement had arisen on the West Coast of the U.S., especially in California, claiming that the Japanese workers, who were conscientious and skillful, were stealing their jobs, white Americans wanted to expel them. U.S. government officials demonstrated their appreciation of the plight of the Japanese immigrants, but were unable to control anti-Japanese agitation in the western states.

At the Paris Peace Conference, which followed World War I, Japan submitted a resolution to insert a racial equality clause into the Covenant of the League of Nations. As Japan's aim to obliterate the racial discrimination of its immigrants, Australia and other nations that imposed limits on the

immigration of people of color objected vehemently. The U.S. initially sided with Japan, but joined the opposition, fearing a hostile reaction from the western states. The resolution was not adopted. But Japan's proposal touched the hearts of people all around the world.

The Washington Conference and International Cooperation

The Washington Conference (1921-22) was called by the U.S. mainly to discuss naval arms reduction and the China problem. It was attended by representatives of nine nations. The objectives of the conference were to establish a stable order in East Asia by coordinating the interests of the represented nations in that region.

At the conference, the ratios of warships to be held by the U.S., Great Britain and Japan were set at 5:5:3, respectively. A Nine-Power Pact, whose signatories promised to respect the territorial integrity of China and the commercial Open Door policy, was signed. Additionally, the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, which had lasted for 20 years, was dissolved at the urging of the U.S.

The reciprocal reduction of capital ships was in keeping with post-World War I disarmament trends, and worked to Japan's advantage (Japan did not have enough economic strength to be competitive in an arms race). But resentment against the limitations gradually mounted within the Japanese Navy. Party politics was by then virtually established in Japan. In an effort to cooperate with the international community, Japan scrupulously abided by the terms of the pact.

The Great Kanto Earthquake

On September 1, 1923, a tremendous earthquake devastated the Kanto district. Huge fires raged in Tokyo and Yokohama. More than 100,000 people were killed or unaccounted for (the **Great Kanto Earthquake**). During the chaos that resulted, rumors spread that Koreans and socialists were hatching turbulent conspiracies. Bands of vigilantes who took the rumors seriously killed a number of Koreans, Chinese and socialists. The Great Kanto Earthquake dealt a severe blow to the Japanese economy.

<Great Moments in Japanese History>

An American Fleet Visits Japan

In March 1908, 16 battleships from the U.S. American Fleet sailed toward Japan on their way around the world. To the Japanese, this was a huge fleet because, at the time, Japan had only seven battleships. President Theodore Roosevelt, who was personally involved with the construction of these ships, wanted to impress the world with a show of force. Since all the ships were painted white, they were named the Great White Fleet, in contrast to the black ships that had arrived in Japan 50 years earlier.

The Japanese government decided that the people of Japan should welcome the fleet with open arms. Roosevelt was determined to make a good impression, and insisted that only dependable sailors be

given shore leave. When the fleet docked at Yokohama, it was greeted by crowds of well-wishers waving tiny flags, and American naval officers were guests of honor at party after party. When the train carrying the Americans arrived at the station, it was met by 1,000 elementary school students singing “Stars and Stripes Forever.”

English-language greeting in the October 18, 1908 edition of the *Asahi Shinbun*

67 Taisho Culture

What were the distinguishing characteristics of Taisho culture?

New Academic Disciplines and Literature

During the last years of the Meiji era and through the Taisho era, the focus of young Japanese people, ever thirsting for knowledge, turned inward. This was a luxury they could enjoy because by then, Japan had attained a status equal to that of the Western powers. During that same period, people were urged to respect individuality and achieve self-realization, and to broaden their horizons by learning about Western literature, art and philosophy.

This liberal, intellectual ambience encouraged new developments in scholarship. For instance, it inspired figures like Nishida Kitaro, who superimposed Western philosophy on the Zen experience, creating his own brand of philosophy (Nishida philosophy); and Yanagida Kunio, Japan’s first ethnologist, who studied the folklore of Japan’s common people.

The spirit of the new era informed literature as well. Onto the scene came the Shirakaba (white birch) school of writers with their humanitarian ideals; among its adherents were Shiga Naoya, Mushakoji Saneatsu and Arishima Takeo. Also influential were Tanizaki Jun’ichiro, whose work is famous for its aesthetic sensibility, and Akutagawa Ryunosuke, known for his intellectual style. Toward the end of the Taisho era, proletarian literature, which depicted workers’ lives and revolutionary movements from a Marxist perspective, appeared. The first modern dramas, modeled after Western theater, were written and performed at this time.

The Popularization of Culture and the Shaping of an Urban Lifestyle

Beginning in the middle of the Taisho era, many middle schools, girls’ high schools and universities were founded. As the literacy rate rose, so did the readership of material other than newspapers, such as general-interest magazines like *Chuo Koron* and *Bungei Shunju*. Literary anthologies were published in great numbers. Radio programs were broadcast for the first time, and the popularization of culture continued.

As modern industry evolved, the number of urban residents grew. Private railways were built to connect city centers and suburbs. The tone was being set for today’s lifestyle, as bus routes were extended, department stores opened, more women wore Western clothes, and foreign dishes such as curry, croquettes and pork cutlets gained popularity. New employment opportunities opened up for

women, to whom positions such as bus driver's assistant and telephone operator became available. After World War I, Japan was inundated with American culture; U.S. films were particularly in demand.

2. The World War II Era

68 The Ascendancy of Communism and Fascism

Describe the characteristics of communism and fascism, both of which greatly influenced 20th-century history, and list common aspects of the two ideologies.

Two Totalitarian Trends

Two political ideologies, both emanating from Europe, gained ascendancy in the 1920s and 1930s, and proceeded to spread throughout the world.

One was communism, an extension of Marxism and the ideology that brought about the Russian Revolution. The other was fascism, which was embraced mainly by Germany and Italy, but also infected other European nations.

Both are totalitarian ideologies, and both sparked revolutionary movements, informed the institution of distinctive political systems, and had a powerful effect on the history of the 20th century.

Communism

According to communist theory, the objective of communism is an ideal society devoid of class distinctions. Such a society is achieved after the following processes have taken place: the working class unites, starts a revolution, expels capitalists, and operates a planned economy. The method of achieving it is single-party totalitarianism (all authority rests in the Communist Party).

After the Russian Revolution, the Soviet Union, a communist nation, came into being. Following Lenin's death, Stalin took power. Stalin championed the building of heavy industry and collective farming; using secret police and concentration camps, he ordered the executions of millions of people. Although the Soviet Union claimed to be striving for an ideal, classless society, its main "products" were labor camps and countless deaths.

Communism spread from the Soviet Union to the rest of the world. The Comintern (Communist International), an administrative organization, was formed in 1919 to oversee the world's communist parties, which were designated as its branches. Orders emanated from the Moscow headquarters of the organization, whose aim was to topple all non-communist governments.

Fascism

The dictatorship of Mussolini's **Fascist Party** over Italy began in 1922. Italian troops invaded Ethiopia in 1935. The dictatorial militarism of the Fascist Party was called "fascism." After the Great Depression, fascism spread to nations suffering economic woes.

Germany, already saddled with huge reparations payments from World War I, was beset by hyperinflation, which caused serious unrest among the citizenry. Soon Hitler emerged as the leader of the **Nazi Party**. He promised to restore to the German people the glory that was once theirs, and gradually won their support. Capitalizing on internal chaos resulting from the Great Depression, which began in 1929, the Nazi Party became the majority party in Parliament. The next year, Hitler took the reins of government and immediately began exerting dictatorial control.

Paramount on the Nazi platform was race. The Nazis spared no pains to preserve the racial purity of the German people. The Jews were the victims of particularly drastic persecution. Like Stalin, Hitler made use of secret police and concentration camps, slaughtering millions of people. The two totalitarians were always rivals, but each learned from the other's skill at wielding power.

69 The Anti-Japanese Movement in China and the Failure of Cooperative Diplomacy

At a time when cabinets were party-based, why did Japan's diplomacy of cooperation fail?

The Anti-Japanese Movement in China

Post-Qing China was being splintered by warlords and their private armies. Chiang Kai-shek, who had succeeded Sun Yatsen as Nationalist Party leader, attempted to unite the warring factions. By 1928, Chiang had gained control of Beijing, where he established a new government. The movement to unite China eventually reached Manchuria, where Japan had interests. Japan's response was to send troops to the Shandong region three times, ostensibly to protect Japanese settlers there.

As efforts to unite China progressed, attempts to expel foreign nationals with interests in China, as a result of the unequal treaties, gained momentum. Among them was ethnic opposition from Chinese against control by Western powers (which eventually became radical), influenced by Soviet communist ideology, which had prompted the Russians to stage a successful, though violent, revolution. An anti-Japanese movement, which arose in reaction to an increasing Japanese presence in China, also gained momentum. Japanese goods were boycotted, and Japanese citizens attacked.

The Failure of Diplomacy of Cooperation

Shidehara Kijuro served two party-based cabinets as foreign minister. He favored a diplomacy of cooperation that empathized with Chinese ethnic pride, and supported China's demands for the restoration of tariff autonomy, while honoring the terms of treaties signed with Great Britain and the U.S.

But the anti-Japanese movement, perhaps encouraged by the Chinese government, never lost force.

In Japan, some elements, mainly in military circles, believed that it would be impossible to maintain a policy of non-interference in China. Criticism of Shidehara's diplomacy as being too conciliatory grew stronger.

The Great Depression and Increasing Expectations of the Military

In 1929, panic erupted in the U.S., the world's economic superpower after World War I, when stock prices collapsed. The resulting depression (the **Great Depression**) spread throughout the world. The Japanese economy, which relied heavily on income from exports to the U.S., also suffered a severe blow and many Japanese found themselves out of work (the **Showa Depression**). Farmers found it difficult to make ends meet when U.S.-bound raw silk exports plummeted.

An international conference was held in London in 1930 (the **London Naval Conference**). On the agenda was the limitation of auxiliary ships. Some military officials and opposition party politicians who sided with them directed scathing criticism at the Japanese government, claiming that it had agreed to terms that ran against Japanese interests. Prime Minister Hamaguchi Osachi was attacked by a gunman and forced to resign (he later died of his wounds).

The Imperial Rescript for Soldiers forbade military personnel from interfering in politics. But in military circles, dissatisfaction grew stronger with party politics that could not alleviate the problems presented by the anti-Japanese movement: the plight of Japanese settlers in Manchuria, and the threat to Japanese interests in that region. Consequently, a group of officers began to formulate its own policies, which were then debated. Social unrest was already breaking out due to the economic recession. After living and breathing so much political strife, the Japanese people had lost faith in the ability of party politics to solve problems, and began to place their hopes in the military.

<Related Information>

Shidehara Kijuro's Views on Chinese Diplomacy

Faced with the ignominy of unequal treaties, Japan sought to have them abolished. However, rather than blaming the Western powers for her misfortune, Japan engaged in intense soul-searching. Rather than clamoring for the defeat of imperialism, Japan calmly embarked on exhaustive reforms of her domestic politics. Our predecessors endured unimaginable suffering during the age of imperialism. But when Japan's modernization had been accomplished, the Western powers readily agreed to conclude equal treaties with her. Even when foreigners enjoyed extraterritorial rights on her soil, Japan did not curse Western imperialism, but instead concentrated on national progress. [...] We are not insisting that China follow Japan's example, but since China is eager to achieve equality [with the Western world], I advise her government and people to exercise prudence.

(From *Shidehara Kijuro*)

U.S. Diplomat John MacMurray's Views on the Situation in China

The Chinese, in their resurgence of racial feeling, had been willful in their scorn of their legal obligations, reckless in their resort to violence for the accomplishment of their ends, and provocative in their methods; though timid when there was any prospect that the force to which they resorted would be met by force, they were alert to take a hectoring attitude at any sign of weakness in their opponents, and cynically inclined to construe as weakness any yielding to their demands. [...] --- and such friends of the Chinese would urge that persistence in a course of antagonism and bad faith toward foreign nations must sooner or later drive one Power or another to assert itself against an intolerable situation.

(Excerpt from his MEMORANDUM in 1935)

70 The Manchurian Incident

What were the events leading up to the Manchurian Incident, and what was the world's reaction to it?

Manchuria on the Eve of the Incident

By winning the Russo-Japanese War, Japan acquired the leasehold on Guandong (Kanto) Province in the southern part of the Liaodong Peninsula, as well as the rights to the **South Manchurian Railway**, from Russia. At the beginning of the Showa era there were already more than 200,000 Japanese living in Manchuria. An army unit comprising 10,000 soldiers (the Kanto Army) was stationed there to protect the Japanese settlers and guard South Manchurian Railway facilities.

When the Kanto Army attempted to gain tighter control of Manchuria by planting a bomb that killed Manchurian warlord Zhang Zuolin, the anti-Japanese movement in China grew more intensive. There were frequent incidents in which trains were sabotaged or Japanese schoolchildren were attacked. Additionally, Japan faced two potential threats, from the Soviet Union to the North, and the Nationalist forces in the South. A group of Kanto Army officers began planning a military occupation of Manchuria, which they believed would reduce those threats.

From the Manchurian Incident to the Creation of the State of Manchuria

In September 1931, the Kanto Army dynamited South Manchurian Railway tracks near Liutiao Lake in a suburb of Mukden (now Shenyang). The army claimed that the explosion had been perpetrated by the Chinese, and occupied the cities near the railway line. The Japanese government and military officials in Japan announced a non-expansionist policy. But the Kanto Army proceeded to occupy all important areas of Manchuria; the Japanese government later sanctioned the occupation (the **Manchurian Incident**).

There was a great deal of public support for the Kanto Army occupation in Japan, due to growing dissatisfaction with a foreign policy that had failed to put a halt to illegal offences targeting Japanese settlers in Manchuria. Contributions poured into Army Headquarters. In March 1932, the Kanto Army created the **State of Manchuria**, and later installed Pu Yi, the last Qing emperor, as emperor of Manchuria.

World Reaction to the Manchurian Incident

On May 15, 1932, Prime Minister Inukai Tsuyoshi (Seiyukai), who had been striving to find a resolution to the Manchurian problem through negotiations, was assassinated by a group of young naval officers (**May 15 Incident**). His death marked the end of an eight-year period during which all of Japan's cabinets were party-based. For some time thereafter, military men or former bureaucrats were appointed prime minister.

Other nations, including the U.S., criticized Japan for having caused the Manchurian Incident. The League of Nations sent an investigation team headed by the Earl of Lytton to Manchuria. The report issued by the Lytton Commission recognized the fact that the safety and interests of Japanese living in Manchuria were in danger. But it recommended that Japanese troops be withdrawn and that Manchuria be governed by an international body. The Japanese government, which had already recognized the State of Manchuria, disregarded the recommendation and withdrew from the League of Nations in 1933.

Later, Japan and China agreed to a truce. Under Japanese rule, and encouraged by the slogans "harmony among five races" and "righteous paradise," the State of Manchuria prospered, accomplishing rapid economic growth, partly due to the expansion of Japanese heavy industry there. There was also a huge influx of Chinese drawn by Manchuria's prosperity. But actual control of Manchuria was in the hands of the Kanto Army, and anti-Japanese incidents continued.

71 The Second Sino-Japanese War

How did the Second Sino-Japanese War develop into a protracted war?

The February 26 Incident

On February 26, 1936, young army officers and more than 1,400 men under their command stormed the prime minister's office, Metropolitan Police Headquarters and other public buildings. They killed a cabinet minister and several other government officials, and then occupied buildings in Tokyo's Nagata-cho area (**February 26 Incident**).

The objective of the ringleaders was to oust political parties, zaibatsu and senior advisors, and install a military government with the emperor at its head. But Emperor Showa made it absolutely clear that he wanted nothing to do with rebels who had murdered his senior advisors. It took three days to suppress the mutiny; the ringleaders were severely punished. But later, an old system that allowed only military personnel in active service to serve as minister of the army or navy was revived. It was now impossible to form a cabinet without the support of both the army and the navy.

The Xian Incident

China was in a state of civil war due to violent confrontations between Chiang Kai-shek's

Nationalist government and the Chinese Communist Party (Nationalist-Communist War). The Chinese Communist Party asked for Nationalist cooperation in fighting the Japanese. But Chiang Kai-shek was determined to stick to his initial policy (defeat the communists first, then do battle with the Japanese), and he did not veer from it. Nationalist troops far outnumbered the communists, on whom they were gaining ground.

Warlord Zhang Xueliang, who had been driven out of his home base in Manchuria by the Kanto Army, was ordered by Chiang Kai-shek to subdue the communists. But Zhang really wanted to join the communists in resisting the Japanese. In 1936, he arrested Chiang Kai-shek in Xian, and held him captive until he agreed to end the civil war with the communists and join them in fighting Japan (Xian Incident).

From the Marco Polo Bridge Incident to War with China

Tension between Japan and China heightened when Japanese troops established a pro-Japan government in the Hebei region, which adjoins Manchuria. The Japanese were motivated by the desire to preserve their interests in Manchuria and gain access to natural resources. At that time, 5,000 Japanese soldiers were stationed near Beijing, in accordance with a treaty concluded after the Boxer Rebellion (the Western powers concluded similar treaties with China). On July 7, 1937, shots were fired at Japanese soldiers while they were engaged in maneuvers near Marco Polo Bridge (located outside Beijing). By the next day, this incident (the **Marco Polo Bridge Incident**) had escalated into hostilities with Chinese troops. The incident was of relatively small magnitude, and efforts were made to resolve it locally. But Japan decided to send a large number of troops to China when the Nationalist government issued an emergency mobilization order. These events marked the beginning of a war that lasted for eight long years.

Full-Scale War with China

In August 1937, two Japanese soldiers, one an officer, were shot to death in Shanghai (the hub of foreign interests). After this incident, the hostilities between Japan and China escalated. Japanese military officials thought Chiang Kai-shek would surrender if they captured Nanking, the Nationalist capital; they occupied that city in December. *But Chiang Kai-shek had moved his capital to the remote city of Chongqing. The conflict continued.

72 Japan-U.S. Relations Deteriorate

How did Japan-U.S. relations worsen as the Second Sino-Japanese War wore on?

Note*At this time, many Chinese soldiers and civilians were killed or wounded by Japanese troops (the Nanking Incident). Documentary evidence has raised doubts about the actual number of victims claimed by the incident. The debate continues even today.

Caught in the Mire of a War with No Clear Objectives

In 1938, with no end of the war with China in sight, the Japanese Diet enacted the National General Mobilization Act to facilitate the mobilization of all national resources for the war effort. This law gave the government the right to appropriate resources and labor without the approval of the Diet. Moreover, freedom of speech was sharply curtailed and censorship became increasingly strict.

The war was lasting longer than expected, and there was no end in sight. Peacemaking attempts were made, but they were disregarded in favor of the military's hard-line policy that favored prolonging the hostilities. In 1940, Diet representative Saito Takao (Minseitō) posed the following question to the Imperial Diet: "What is the objective of this war?" The government, however, was unable to offer a precise answer to his question.

After the Great Depression, the trend toward a regulated economy in nations like Germany and the Soviet Union spread to other nations, including Japan. By 1940, Japan's political parties had disbanded, replaced by the **Imperial Rule Assistance Association**.

Japan-U.S. Relations Deteriorate

From 1933 on, colonialist nations like Great Britain and France, which had laid claim to a huge amount of territory, strengthened economic ties between the home country and the colonies. The goal was self-sufficiency within that economic sphere, at least where important goods were concerned. They adopted policies that excluded goods originating from nations outside that economic sphere by imposing high tariffs, creating what is referred to as a **bloc economy**.

In 1938, Prime Minister Konoe Fumimaro announced the institution of a New Order in the Far East, as well as the formation of an independent economic bloc consisting of Japan, Manchuria and China. This concept later inspired the slogan "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere," which included Southeast Asia as well as East Asia.

The U.S. protested strongly against Konoe's announcement, citing the Open Door policy and equality of opportunity in China, and refused to recognize an independent economic sphere created by Japan. The Americans remained neutral, at least officially, but after the Konoe's New Order announcement supported Chiang Kai-shek openly. This chain of events set Japan and the U.S. on the path to war.

In 1939, U.S. officials announced that they would not renew the Japan-U.S. Treaty of Commerce and Navigation. The American decision thrust Japan, relying as it did on petroleum and other imports from the U.S., into dire economic straits.

The notion that Japan should advance northward to counter the threat presented by Russia was a traditional one in army circles. But in the late 1930s, the idea of a southward advance (to Southeast Asia) for the purpose of acquiring petroleum and other resources gained impetus. However, an invasion of Southeast Asia, where Great Britain, the U.S., the Netherlands and France had all established colonies, would surely result in a clash with those nations.

73 World War II

How did World War • begin, and what was Japan's involvement in its outbreak?

The Conflict between Nazi Germany and Europe

By 1933, Nazi Party leader Adolf Hitler had risen to power in Germany, the nation defeated in World War I. Hitler persecuted the Jews, and also used military force to win back lost territory and acquire new territory. Germany, having concluded a non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union, used blitzkrieg tactics to defeat Poland in September 1939; Germany then partitioned Poland with the Soviet Union. Great Britain and France then declared war on Germany. **World War II** had begun. In 1940, German troops advanced to Western Europe, entered Paris and accepted the French surrender.

The Failure of the Tripartite Pact

The Japanese were dazzled by Germany's victories in Europe. In 1940, Japan concluded the **Tripartite Pact** with Germany and Italy to enhance its status in Asia. But a military pact with two nations so distant from Japan proved to be of no practical use. Signing the pact also served to worsen relations with the U.S., which supported Great Britain.

In April 1941, Japan entered into a **neutrality pact with the Soviet Union**, thinking that it, combined with the Tripartite Pact, would extract some compromises from the Americans. But this hope was dashed when Germany invaded the Soviet Union in June of the same year.

Japan Constrained by Economic Blockade

Seeking a source of petroleum, Japan approached the Netherlands about obtaining oil from Indonesia (a Dutch colony), but was rejected. Japan was cornered economically by the ABCD (American, British, Chinese and Dutch) encirclement.

Negotiations intended to break the impasse in Japan-U.S. relations opened in Washington, D.C. in April 1941, but were not successful. In July, units from the Japanese Army and Navy entered Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City) in what is referred to as the "advance into southern French Indochina." Saigon was a militarily strategic location, destined to serve as the base for Japan's southern advance. The Americans, sensing a crisis, immediately retaliated by freezing Japanese assets in the U.S. and imposing an embargo on petroleum exports to Japan. In August, British and American officials conferred on board ship in the Atlantic, and issued the Atlantic Charter, which stated both nations' war objectives. According to the charter, neither nation would seek territorial expansion, nor desired redefinition of national borders; both nations expressed their respect for ethnic self-determination. Japan-U.S. negotiations continued, but made no progress. In November, the U.S. sent a note to the Japanese demanding the unconditional withdrawal of all troops from China and Indochina (the Hull Note). The Japanese government, interpreting the Hull Note as an

ultimatum, decided to go to war with the U.S.

<Portraits from Japanese History>

Japanese Who Saved Jewish Lives: Higuchi Kiichiro and Sugihara Chiune

In March 1938, a group of Jewish refugees arrived at Otopol Station, a stop on the Trans-Siberian Railway located on the U.S.S.R.-Manchurian border. The Jews had fled persecution in Nazi Germany, escaping with their lives, but had no visas. At that time, Japanese-German relations were cordial. When he received the information about the group's plight, Lt.-Gen. Higuchi Kiichiro (then head of the Harbin Special Agency) treated the case as a humanitarian one, based on the principle of "harmony among five races" upon which the State of Manchuria was founded. Higuchi instructed the Manchurian Railway to operate special trains for the refugees, who eventually reached Shanghai and other cities safely. When the Germans found out what Higuchi had done, they protested to the Japanese Foreign Ministry, which replied that "Japan is not a satellite of Germany." The Germans did not pursue the matter. According to reports, several thousand Jews took advantage of this escape route.

In July 1940, after the outbreak of World War II, Jews who had been driven out of their homes by German troops gathered outside the Japanese Consulate in Lithuania (located on the Baltic coast). They were hoping to reach the U.S. via Siberia and Japan. Japan's alliance with Germany was only two months away, but Consul-General Sugihara Chiune saved the lives of 6,000 Jews by issuing visas to them, writing them day and night until his hand was swollen.

After the war was over, the government of Israel paid homage to Higuchi and Sugihara for their courageous acts.

74 The Greater East Asian War (Pacific War)

Describe the course of the Greater East Asian War.

Attack on Pearl Harbor

On December 8, 1941, the Japanese Navy bombed Pearl Harbor in Hawaii, inflicting damage that destroyed most of the U.S. Pacific Fleet. The objectives of this operation were to destroy the main American fleet, and take command of the Pacific Ocean away from the Americans. On the same day, Japanese Army units landed in Malaysia, defeated the British troops there, and advanced toward Singapore.

Japan declared war on the U.S. and Great Britain, maintaining that this was a war of survival and self-defense, and naming it the **Greater East Asian War**. Germany and Italy also declared war on the U.S. World War II developed into a conflict whose battles were waged all over the world, pitting the Axis nations (Japan, Germany and Italy) against the Allies (the U.S., Great Britain, the

Netherlands, the Soviet Union and China).

Most of the people of Japan, who learned of the outbreak of war through the news media, were intoxicated by reports of victory after victory. The U.S. government told the American people that the assault on Pearl Harbor was a cowardly act, calling it a “sneak attack” because it had occurred before the note indicting that Japan-U.S. talks were handed over. The Pearl Harbor attack was a military success, but it served to unite the American people (who had previously been opposed to the war) against Japan behind the battle cry, “Remember Pearl Harbor!”

The Fortunes of War Turn Against Japan

Japan’s initial victories were dazzling. Once they had landed on the Malay Peninsula, Japanese troops destroyed the British fortress in Singapore (located at the southern tip of the Malay Peninsula) in only 70 days. Partly because the Allied forces were unprepared, the Japanese quickly occupied all of Southeast Asia.

But in 1942, Japan’s Combined Fleet was defeated by the U.S. Navy in the Battle of Midway. Japan lost four aircraft carriers in that conflict. It was at this point that the Americans began to gain the upper hand. Japan lost command of the Pacific, and its supply line was cut off. American submarines sank countless Japanese supply ships. The gap between Japanese and American productivity became increasingly obvious. Faced with shortages of weapons and ammunition, Japanese soldiers experienced unimaginable suffering. But officers and enlisted men alike fought fiercely and bravely.

75 The Assembly of Greater East-Asiatic Nations and the Nations of Asia

What was the significance of Japan’s war to the peoples of Asia?

Hope of Independence Spreads Throughout Asia

Japan’s initial victories encouraged the peoples of Southeast Asia and India, and instilled in them the hope that they too might achieve independence. Sweeping Japanese military success in Southeast Asia could not have been accomplished without local assistance. The Japanese captured Indian soldiers fighting for Great Britain. It was from the ranks of those prisoners of war that the Indian National Army was formed. Its members marched alongside Japanese troops as they advanced to India. Armies were formed in Indonesia and Burma as well, under Japanese guidance.

The Assembly of Greater East-Asiatic Nations

In November 1943, Japan sponsored the **Assembly of Greater East-Asiatic Nations**. The purpose of the assembly, held in Tokyo, was to seek the cooperation of the nations of Asia in the war effort, and to demonstrate solidarity with other East Asian nations. At the Assembly, a joint declaration (**Joint Declaration of the Assembly of Greater East-Asiatic Nations**) was issued in response to the Atlantic Charter. It spoke of the autonomy and independence of all nations, economic progress

achieved through cooperation, and the eradication of racial discrimination. Following the assembly, Japan issued clearer explanations of its reason for waging war: the building of a **Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere**, from which the Western powers would be excluded.

The Nations of Asia and Japan

The war inflicted a huge amount of devastation and suffering on the peoples of Asia, where it was fought. The casualties (both military and civilian) attributable to Japanese invasions were particularly high in China.

Each time the Japanese occupied a Southeast Asian nation, they set up a military administration. Leaders of local independence movements cooperated with those military administrations so that they could liberate their countries from the yoke of the Western powers.

But when the Japanese insisted that local populations learn the Japanese language and worship at Shinto shrines, they met with resistance. Anti-Japanese elements who aligned themselves with the Allies engaged in guerrilla warfare, which Japanese troops dealt with severely. Many people, civilians included, were killed during these confrontations. When the fortunes of war turned against Japan and food supplies ran short, the Japanese often forced the local population to do back-breaking work. After the war was over, Japan paid reparations to those nations. Then Japan was accused of promoting the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere philosophy to justify the war and occupation of Asia.

Later, after Japan was defeated and Japanese troops had withdrawn from Asia, all these former colonies achieved independence through their own efforts during the next dozen years. Some Japanese soldiers remained in Asia and participated in the various struggles for independence. The initial goal of Japan's southward advance was to obtain resources, but it also served to spur on nascent independence movements in Asia.

<Related Information>

Japanese Actions Inspire the Peoples of Asia

Japanese soldiers drove out the forces of Western Europe, which had colonized the nations of Asia for many years. They surprised us, because we didn't think we could possibly beat the white man, and they inspired us with confidence. They awakened us from our long slumber, and convinced us to make the nation of our ancestors our own nation once again.

We cheered the Japanese soldiers as they marched through the Malay Peninsula. When we saw the defeated British troops fleeing, we felt an excitement we had never experienced before.

(Excerpt from the writings of Raja Dato Nong Chik, leader of the Malaysian independence movement and former member of the Malaysian House of Representatives)

Indonesians Welcome Japanese Soldiers as a Liberating Army

An oral tradition had been handed down in Indonesia, which was a Dutch colony for several hundred years: “Soon people of the yellow race will appear from the north to free us from oppressors. When the corn ripens, they will depart. Then we will be free.”

Indonesians were aware that the Japanese Navy had overwhelmed the Baltic Fleet in the Russo-Japanese War. They came to believe that the “yellow race” in the legend referred to must be the Japanese, and waited patiently for the southward Japanese advance.

When Japanese troops occupied in 1942, having defeated Dutch forces, Indonesians lined the roads and cheered. Japanese forces were a liberating army to rid them of the Dutch. During the occupation, which lasted three and a half years, the Japanese trained PETA, a military force, opened middle schools, and established a common language. The many reforms implemented served as a foundation for future independence.

But when war neared its end and food was scarce, Japanese military police sometimes forced locals to do harsh labor, and were cruel to the local people in other ways as well. The fact that the Indonesian language contains not only Japanese loanwords like *seishin* (spirit), but also *romusha* (laborer) and *kenpei* (military police) reflects the complex situation of the times.

76 Life in a War Zone

What were the lives of the Japanese people like toward the end of World War II?

Mobilization of an Entire Nation

After World War I, war was waged not only by soldiers on the front lines, but by every citizen of the combatant nations, whose lives, education and culture it engulfed. As soon as the Second Sino-Japanese War erupted, a general mobilization system whereby the government controlled and regulated every aspect of life (including resources, the economy, industry and transportation) was established in Japan as well.

As the conflict wore on, resources became scarce and, as a result, formerly familiar materials such as textiles made of pure cotton and pure wool, as well as leather and rubber goods, disappeared from the lives of the Japanese people. With its National Spiritual Mobilization Movement, the government urged people to consume less and save more.

When the tide of the Greater East Asian War (Pacific War) turned against Japan, government control tightened further. The labor shortage was eased by a conscription system. Additionally, students who had completed the second year of middle school and single women (Girls' Volunteer Corps) went to work in Japan's factories. University students lost their draft deferment privileges,

and went off to war (**student mobilization**).

On the Korean Peninsula, the beginning of the Second Sino-Japanese War marked the implementation of assimilation policies, including one that required Koreans to adopt Japanese-style names. Toward the end of World War II, Koreans and Taiwanese were drafted to serve as soldiers and laborers, and suffered greatly as a result. Many Koreans and Chinese were forced to work in Japan's mines under harsh conditions.

Resources were in short supply. Just about everything made of metal, even temple bells, was donated to the war effort. The daily necessities of life were extremely difficult to obtain. But despite the deprivation, the great majority of Japanese worked and fought with all their might, hoping for victory.

Destruction Wrought by Air Raids

Toward the end of World War II, the horrors of war descended directly upon the people of Japan. In July 1944, Saipan (one of the Mariana Islands and a Japanese mandate) fell. The U.S. now had air superiority. At the end of 1944, the Americans began bombing Japan's home islands, using B-29 aircraft. Parents sent their children to the countryside, where they stayed in temples and other facilities, in the hope that they would be safe there (student evacuation). On March 10, 1945, Tokyo was the target of a massive firebombing attack. One hundred thousand people were killed in the space of one night.

In April, American troops landed on Okinawa. The 75-day battle that ensued ended with the American occupation of the island, but not until it had claimed the lives of 94,000 Japanese soldiers and 94,000 civilians.

77 Diplomacy at the End of World War II and Japan's Defeat

How was the Japanese war brought to a conclusion?

From Yalta to Potsdam

In both Europe and Asia, the outcome of the war was about to be decided. In February 1945, the heads of state of the U.S., Great Britain and the Soviet Union met in Yalta in the Crimea to make the Allies' postwar plans (**Yalta Conference**). U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt asked the U.S.S.R. to enter the war to lessen the American burden. Stalin replied that the Soviet Union would go to war against Japan three months after the end of the Soviet-German conflict, but only if southern Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands were given to the U.S.S.R. Great Britain and the U.S. agreed to his demand.

President Roosevelt died suddenly in April, and was succeeded by Vice President Truman. When the Allies invaded Germany, Hitler committed suicide. Berlin lay in ruins. In May, Germany surrendered unconditionally.

In July, British, American and Soviet leaders gathered in Potsdam (a suburb of Berlin). There they announced the **Potsdam Declaration**, which stated the terms for ending the war with Japan, on behalf of the U.S., Great Britain and China.

The Atomic Bombing of Japan and the Soviet Invasion

Beginning in June, following the occupation of Okinawa, the top-ranking officials of the Japanese government met several times to discuss ending the war. The government (not realizing that the U.S.S.R. had secretly agreed to participate in the war against Japan) asked the Soviet Union to serve as intermediary between Japan and the U.S. in negotiating an end to the war.

When the Potsdam Declaration was issued, Prime Minister Suzuki Kantaro and his chief cabinet ministers noticed that it was a request for conditional surrender, and were inclined to accept it. But Army officials insisted on fighting a decisive battle in Japan proper. The government decided to wait until a response from the Soviet Union was forthcoming. On August 6, the U.S. dropped the first atomic bomb in history on Hiroshima, convincing the Japanese government that it had no choice but to bring the war to an end as quickly as possible. On August 8, the U.S.S.R. violated the Japan-Soviet neutrality pact by declaring war on Japan. The following day, August 9, marked the Soviet invasion of Manchuria and the dropping of a second U.S. atomic bomb on Nagasaki.

Emperor Showa's Decision

Late at night on August 9, government officials held a meeting in the presence of Emperor Showa to discuss whether to accept the Potsdam Declaration. The opinions of those assembled were evenly divided on this question. At 2:00 a.m. on August 10, Prime Minister Suzuki approached the Emperor and requested an imperial decision. Emperor Showa told them to tell the Allies, immediately, that Japan would surrender in accordance with the terms of the Potsdam Declaration. At noon on August 15, the people of Japan heard the Emperor's voice on a radio broadcast informing them that the long war was over and Japan had been defeated. It was Japan's first defeat since the Meiji era.

Japan's surrender marked the conclusion of World War II. Casualties from the conflict have been estimated at 22 million killed and 34 million wounded.

<Related Information>

American Diplomats Who Saved Japan from Annihilation

Acting Secretary of State Joseph Grew

U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt wanted the Japanese to submit to an unconditional surrender. No responsible government could agree to a demand for unconditional surrender. Hostilities would have continued until all of Japan had been destroyed.

Upon Roosevelt's sudden death, Joseph Grew (then acting secretary of state) was an enthusiastic advocate of presenting conditions to Japan for bringing the war to a close. For the 10 years preceding the outbreak of the war against the U.S., Grew was U.S. ambassador to Japan. He had great affection for Japan, and did not want to see the nation destroyed. His efforts and those of other Japanophiles influenced the Potsdam Declaration and saved Japan from total destruction.

Remarks Made by Emperor Showa Following His Decision to End the War

Given the current situation, I am terribly worried about the outcome of a decisive battle waged on Japanese soil. It is entirely possible that every single Japanese will be killed. Then we would have no nation to hand down to our descendants, and no descendants to inherit it. To avoid that eventuality, we must save the lives of as many Japanese as possible, so that they may rebuild our nation in the future. [...] The people of Japan may be concerned about me, but I care not at all about my own fate. I have resolved to end this war immediately for reasons that I have just stated.

(As told to Sakomizu Hisatsune, chief cabinet secretary)

3. Japan's Recovery and the International Community

78 Occupied Japan and the Constitution of Japan

How did the occupation of Japan proceed?

The Occupation Begins

At the end of August 1945, the occupation of Japan by Allied troops (mainly American military personnel) began.

The objective of the American occupation was to change Japan's national polity so that Japan would never again pose a threat to the U.S. The Japanese government remained in place, but was responsible to GHQ (General Headquarters) under Supreme Commander MacArthur; the government merely carried out orders issued by GHQ.

In keeping with the Potsdam Declaration, the Japanese Army and Navy were demobilized. Japanese troops remaining abroad were disarmed and repatriated.

The Tokyo Trials (International Military Tribunal for the Far East) began in 1946. At the proceedings, men who had served in wartime as government officials, military personnel and politicians, and who had been branded war criminals, were charged with and tried for "crimes against peace" among other crimes. Moreover, GHQ purged nearly 200,000 people, including holders of public office during the war.

GHQ issued an order instructing the Japanese government to carry out five major reforms. They included women's suffrage, the enactment of the Labor Union Law, and an overhaul of the education system. Since several of these reforms (referred to collectively as "democratization") matched reforms the Japanese government had already planned to implement, the process moved forward very rapidly. Among economic reforms was the dismantling of the zaibatsu, which had been extremely influential during the war. Farming villages were the scene of agrarian reforms.

The Constitution of Japan

GHQ demanded that the Meiji Constitution be revised. Since Japanese officials had already experienced Taisho democracy, they thought democratization could be effected by making relatively minor revisions to the Constitution. But in February 1946, GHQ presented a draft of the Constitution, which had been written in about a week, to the Japanese government, insisting on a complete reconstruction of the Constitution.

Government officials were shocked by the content of GHQ's draft. But they accepted it, fearing that the Emperor's status might be jeopardized if they did not. They then prepared the draft based on the one written by GHQ. The draft was approved by the Imperial Diet and promulgated on November 3, 1946 (the **new Constitution** went into effect on May 3, 1947).

According to the new Japanese Constitution, the Emperor, whose status is hereditary, is a “symbol of the state and of the unity of the people.” The rights and duties of the people are also laid out; the Diet is described as the highest organ of state power. The Constitution also specifies the function of the Cabinet and contains regulations regarding people’s rights. It renounces war as a means of settling international disputes, as well as the potential to settle those disputes by military means.

<Related story>

War in the 20th Century and the Victims of Totalitarianism

International Laws of War and War Crimes

The annals of human history contain a seemingly endless list of wars that arose when the interests of nations or peoples conflicted. Therefore, a body of rules was formulated to place international limitations on the conduct of warfare. These rules are called the “international laws of war.” Representative of the laws is the Hague Convention Respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land (issued in the Netherlands in 1907).

The international laws of war prohibit the wounding or killing of noncombatants and the torture of enemy soldiers taken prisoner (prisoners of war), which they define as war crimes. But these laws were flagrantly violated during the two world wars. In actuality, there is no nation that has not tortured and killed unarmed civilians in wartime. Japanese soldiers also tortured and killed prisoners of war and civilians in regions they invaded.

Aerial and Atomic Bombing; Internment in Siberia

Toward the end of World War II, the U.S. launched indiscriminate bombing raids on dozens of Japanese cities, including Tokyo, and then dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Violating the Japan-Soviet Neutrality Pact, Soviet troops invaded Manchuria, where they robbed, raped and killed countless Japanese civilians. They then transported approximately 600,000 Japanese, including prisoners of war, to Siberia. The Japanese were incarcerated and forced to do hard labor under conditions that killed 10% of them.

The Victims of Two Brands of Totalitarianism

Nazi Germany committed innumerable atrocities against Jews during World War II. These crimes were not the carnage that accompanies war, but a calculated German national crime. The Nazis also instituted a euthanasia program, whereby handicapped or sick Germans were killed by injection and other means.

In the U.S.S.R., the single-party communist regime headed by Stalin sought to eradicate wealthy farmers by executing or starving them, as part of its agricultural collectivization policy. There were frequent purges of Communist Party officials. Later, the number of political prisoners to be sent off

to concentration camps was determined by quotas set for each region.

Every nation involved in the two world wars caused devastation and suffering. But we must be mindful that the deaths of the innumerable victims of fascism and communism are attributable not to the wars, but to national crimes.

79 A Shift in Occupation Policy and the Restoration of Sovereignty

What events prompted a shift in U.S. occupation policy?

The United Nations and the Beginning of the Cold War

The Allied nations, mindful of the devastation resulting from two world wars, formed the **United Nations** in October 1945. The United Nations was intended to be an international organization that would prevent further warfare. But the winds of war did not die down. On the contrary, after having occupied Eastern Europe, the U.S.S.R. began to infiltrate Western Europe through the activities of communist parties in the various nations. To contain the communist influence, the U.S. provided massive economic support to Western Europe. In 1949, NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization), a military alliance, was established to counter communist expansion.

By 1949, the U.S.S.R. possessed an atomic bomb. In 1955, the Soviets and the nations of Eastern Europe established the Warsaw Treaty Organization (WTO) in opposition to NATO. Germany was partitioned into West Germany and East Germany. The world had now entered into the era of the **Cold War**, polarized into two rival camps: the democratic camp led by the U.S., and the communist camp led by the U.S.S.R.

In China, after Japan's defeat, civil war between the Nationalist and Communist parties (which had until then joined forces against the Japanese) resumed. In 1949, the Communist Party under the leadership of Mao Zedong won the war and established the **People's Republic of China**. Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist government fled to Taiwan. On the Korean Peninsula, two separate nations were formed in 1948: the Republic of Korea in the south (South Korea), supported by the U.S.; and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the north (North Korea), sponsored by the Soviet Union. Conflict soon arose between the two Koreas. The Cold War had spread to East Asia.

A Shift in Occupation Policy

When the Cold War began, the U.S. changed policies designed to suppress Japanese economic growth. Replacing them were policies enabling Japan to function as an economically robust member of the anti-communist democratic camp.

In June 1950, North Korea, seeking to unite the Korean Peninsula by military means, invaded South Korea with Soviet support. United Nations troops, mainly from the U.S. and led by MacArthur, fought back. The war continued, with neither side gaining the upper hand, until 1953 when an

armistice was signed (the **Korean War**). To maintain order while American troops previously stationed in Japan were fighting in Korea, Japan (under orders from GHQ) established a National Police Reserve. Moreover, supplying a huge amount of goods to the U.S. military went a long way toward reviving Japan's economy (Korean War boom).

Restoration of Japanese Sovereignty

The Korean War prompted the U.S. to restore Japanese sovereignty sooner than expected, with the condition that American military bases remain in Japan. In September 1951, at a peace conference held in San Francisco, Japan joined the democratic camp by concluding a peace treaty with the U.S. and 47 other nations (the **San Francisco Peace Treaty**). Also signed was a mutual security treaty (**Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between Japan and the U.S.**), which agreed to the continued presence of American military personnel in Japan.

Japanese sovereignty was restored when the San Francisco Peace Treaty went into effect on April 28, 1952.

Japan could not sign a peace treaty with the Soviet Union because the latter refused to acknowledge Kunashiri and Etorofu as Japanese territory. However, with the **Japan-Soviet Joint Declaration**, issued in October 1956, the state of war between the two nations ended, and diplomatic relations were reestablished. In December 1956, with Soviet opposition out of the way, Japan joined the United Nations, becoming once again a full-fledged member of the international community.

80 Japan and the World during the Cold War

How did the Cold War intensify during the 1960s?

The Cold War Intensifies

After its sovereignty had been restored, Japan threw itself into the task of rebuilding. Meanwhile, the Cold War between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. was intensifying. Both nations succeeded in developing hydrogen bombs, which are even more destructive than atomic bombs. Having deployed nuclear weapons called ICBMs (Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles), each nation was capable of launching a direct attack strong enough to destroy the other.

In 1961, a wall was built in Berlin on the border between East and West Germany (the **Berlin Wall**), to prevent East Germans from escaping to the West. When the Soviet Union attempted, in 1962, to install nuclear missile bases in Cuba, which is within striking distance of the U.S., war nearly broke out between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. (the Cuban missile crisis). But in the face of the U.S.'s firm stance, the Soviet Union withdrew its missiles.

In 1965, fearing that the entire Indochinese Peninsula would be taken over by communists, the U.S. sent troops to support the South Vietnamese Army. The Americans fought alongside the South Vietnamese against North Vietnamese troops supported by China and the U.S. S. R. and

anti-government elements in South Vietnam (**Vietnam War**). But the communist forces proved undefeatable and in 1973, American troops withdrew from Vietnam. Two years later, North Vietnam conquered and absorbed South Vietnam, establishing the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

In the Soviet Union, Khrushchev had become first secretary of the Communist Party, after Stalin died. In 1956, Khrushchev criticized Stalin's policies and attempted to reorganize the socialist regime. Between the Cuban missile crisis and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, the U.S.S.R. focused its energy on weapons buildup, at the same time appearing to go along with Western détente policies.

Economic Recovery and Revision of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty

After the Korean War boom, Japan enjoyed a long period of prosperity. The Japanese economy had recovered steadily; prewar levels were soon attained. By 1956, it was so strong that the government proclaimed that "the postwar period is over."

Kishi Nobusuke, who became prime minister in 1957, sought to revise the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty, given Japan's economic recovery. In January 1960, he signed the new treaty, which put the two nations on a more equal footing.

But then, a movement opposing the revision of the treaty arose. In May 1960, the LDP (Liberal Democratic Party) forced the new treaty through the Diet, sparking demonstrations near the Diet Building that lasted for days and turned into riots (Security Treaty protests). After the Diet approved the treaty, Kishi resigned.

Ikeda Hayato, Prime Minister Kishi's successor, did not address controversial issues, such as Japan's drafting its own Constitution and bolstering defensive strength. These were goals that had been stated when the LDP was formed. But Ikeda wanted to avoid a recurrence of the riots brought on by the Security Treaty. Instead, he implemented economic policies intended to double the national income within 10 years.

4. Economic Superpower Status and Japan's Historical Mission

81 Japan's Miraculous Recovery and Rapid Economic Growth

How did rapid economic growth change Japanese society?

Rapid Economic Growth

Beginning in 1960, Japan's economy experienced a period of rapid growth (**rapid economic growth**) that was described as nothing short of miraculous — an achievement that occupies a unique place in world history: an annual growth rate of 10% for nearly 10 years. In 1968, Japan's GNP (gross national product) ranked second among free-world nations, surpassed only by the U.S. Thriving companies like Sony, Honda, Toyota were now players on the international stage. But not

to be forgotten are the countless employees of small and medium factories, whose inventiveness and ingenuity were instrumental to the advancement of Japanese industry.

A network of highways was constructed, and Bullet Trains were introduced. Ordinary citizens could now afford electrical appliances and even automobiles. Farming villages prospered; rice crops were so plentiful that the government found it necessary to implement policies restricting field use. Japan's profile in the international community rose: the Olympic Games were held in Tokyo in 1964, and an international exposition in Osaka in 1970. Neither of these events had ever been held in Asia before.

Japanese Society after the Era of Rapid Economic Growth and the Economy

Beginning in the late 1960s, the Japanese awakened to the effects of **pollution** caused by industrial waste, such as smoke and waste water emitted by factories. Cures for pollution-caused diseases, such as Minamata disease and Yokkaichi asthma, were sought, as were methods of combating air pollution from automobile exhaust, and the pollution of rivers by household detergents. To solve these problems, the Environment Agency was established in 1971; policies to prevent pollution were put in place, and the situation gradually improved.

When the 1970s arrived, the oil-producing nations in the Middle East began limiting petroleum exports. The Japanese economy, which depends on oil from this region for energy needs, suffered this severe shock twice (**oil crises**). But the development of energy-saving technologies, for instance technologies that significantly decrease the amount of electricity consumed by household appliances, helped Japan weather the oil crises. They even strengthened the Japanese economy, and served as a foundation for later economic growth.

Advancements in Diplomacy

In 1965, Japan concluded the **Japan-South Korea Treaty of Basic Relations**, whereby diplomatic relations were normalized. Japan promised economic aid to Korea in the amount of \$200 million, as well as \$300 million in low-interest loans.

In Okinawa, then under American administration, a movement demanding the return of the islands to Japan was gaining influence. Sato Eisaku's Cabinet announced the **three antinuclear principles**. The U.S. agreed to the **reversion of Okinawa** on the condition that American military bases there would remain operative (the U.S. would maintain base rights, but would not be permitted to store nuclear weapons there). Reversion took effect in May 1972.

In the 1970s, U.S. President Nixon approached the PRC (People's Republic of China). On his agenda, among other matters, was containment of the Soviet Union which supported North Vietnam. After his visit, relations between the two nations moved toward normalization. Encouraged by this progress, Prime Minister Tanaka Kakuei visited China in September 1972. While there, he signed the Japan-PRC Joint Statement, which laid the foundation for the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. But another outcome of the rapprochement between Japan and the PRC was the severing of diplomatic ties with the Republic of China on Taiwan. Later, in 1978,

the **Japan-PRC Treaty of Peace and Friendship** was concluded.

82 The World after the Collapse of Communism and Japan's Role

How did the disintegration of the communist camp in the 1990s proceed?

The Destruction of the Berlin Wall

After American troops were withdrawn from Vietnam, the U.S.S.R. augmented its military strength and boosted support to communist forces in other countries. In 1979, Soviet troops invaded Afghanistan. U.S. President Reagan embarked on an arms expansion race with the Soviet Union in 1981. The U.S.S.R., in a vain effort to compete with the U.S., gradually bankrupted its economy.

The Gorbachev administration, which took office in 1985, endeavored to rebuild Soviet society by introducing a market economy and encouraging more freedom of information. But Gorbachev's reforms backfired, causing domestic chaos and encouraging liberation movements in Eastern Europe. In 1989, the Berlin Wall was destroyed, and East Germany reunited West Germany the following year.

The Cold War Ends

The U.S.S.R. bowed out of the arms race with the U.S., and in 1989, Reagan and Gorbachev announced that the Cold War was over. The Soviet Communist Party halted its activities, and in 1991, the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) was formed, marking the demise of the Soviet Union. In Eastern Europe, one communist government after another collapsed; the Warsaw Pact was dissolved.

With the collapse of the communist camp, the 70-year-long communist experiment came to a close. The lesson learned was that communist regimes can neither provide comfortable, stable lives for the people they rule, nor guarantee them political rights, such as freedom of speech.

Showa Era Gives Way to the Heisei Era

When Emperor Showa died on January 7, 1989, the curtain came down on the tumultuous Showa era which had lasted for more than 60 years. Crown Prince Akihito succeeded to the throne, and with his reign began a new era, named "Heisei."

Japan's Role in the International Community

In August 1990, Iraqi troops stormed into Kuwait. A multinational force (consisting mainly of Americans) fought the Iraqis and drove them out of Kuwait in January 1991 (the **Gulf War**). Japan was not able to participate in the military action due to restrictions imposed by its Constitution. Although the Japanese government made an enormous contribution in the form of financial aid, its

efforts were not appreciated internationally. In Japan, earnest debates ensued over what sort of contribution Japan should make to the international community.

With the disintegration of the communist camp, the danger of global war subsided. But communism is still alive in some nations, and it seems unlikely that regional conflicts stemming from ethnic and religious animosity will cease. For the Japanese, one question remains: How can Japan, with its unique culture and traditions, contribute to world peace and prosperity, while preserving national security?

<Portraits from Japanese History>

Emperor Showa

A Compassionate Nature

Born on April 29, 1901, Emperor Showa was the first child of the crown prince (later Emperor Taisho). The little prince was given the name “Hirohito,” but during his childhood, he was called “Prince Michi.” Personality traits like sincerity and honesty were noticeable at an early age.

In November 1931 (after he became emperor), Emperor Showa was returning to Tokyo from Kagoshima, Kyushu, on board a battleship. One of his attendants noticed that he was waving his hand toward the sea in the dark of night. When the puzzled attendant gazed out in the distance, he saw a line of bonfires on the coast of the Satsuma Peninsula. The fires were built by local residents who had come out to greet the Emperor, and it was to them that Emperor Showa was waving.

Emperor Showa and the Showa Era

At the time of Emperor Showa’s coronation, Japan was facing a huge crisis. Emperor Showa sincerely desired friendly relations with all the world’s nations, but the trends of the times were moving against his wishes. Still, Emperor Showa fulfilled the duties of a constitutional monarch in an admirable manner, accepting the decisions made by government and military leaders even when he disagreed with them.

However, on each of two occasions when Emperor Showa did articulate his opinions, and explicitly so, he helped his nation weather a crisis. The first time was in the aftermath of the February 26 Incident (1936), and the second, toward the end of World War II (August 1945). His actions on those occasions were truly those of a conscientious monarch.

Always One with His People

Soon after the war ended, a meeting between Emperor Showa and General MacArthur was arranged. MacArthur assumed that the Emperor was going to beg for his life. But on the contrary, what Emperor Showa said was: “I come to you, General MacArthur, to offer myself to the judgment of the powers you represent as the one to bear sole responsibility for every political and military

decision made and action taken by my people in the conduct of the war.”

MacArthur later wrote in *Reminiscences* (his memoirs): “This courageous assumption of a responsibility implicit with death, a responsibility clearly belied by facts of which I was fully aware, moved me to the very marrow of my bones.”

After Japan’s defeat, Emperor Showa toured the various regions of Japan, offering words of friendly encouragement to the people who were working so hard to rebuild their nation. Throughout the tumultuous Showa era, the Emperor was always one with his people.

Putting Your Study of History into Perspective

Learning from Foreign Cultures without Losing Our Identity

Having completed this course in Japanese history, you have discovered how modest the Japanese were, and how eager they were to learn from other civilizations. We have spared no pains in our efforts to understand the cultures of more advanced nations.

Exchange students to China during the Sui and Tang dynasties braved real danger, traveling in wooden ships tossed by the rough seas. They spent long periods of time studying there. More than a few died in China, or were killed on their way back to Japan when storms destroyed their ships. When the Meiji era dawned, exchange students sailed to Europe with a mission — the study of Western civilization. There were no airplanes at that time, and the Pacific crossing took at least a month.

As you explore the culture of each period of history, you will notice that although the Japanese have attempted to learn as much as they could from other nations, we have never lost our cultural identity. All our cultures, from the Asuka era through the Edo era, have universal appeal, but are still uniquely Japanese.

Two Reasons for Our Loss of Direction

However, the situation changed during the past 50 years or so, for the following reasons. The Japanese were intent on achieving equal status with, or even overtaking, foreign civilizations. Our mission was perfectly clear, and there was never a moment of hesitation. Now we have accomplished that goal we set in the modern era, and we stand abreast of the U.S. and the nations of Europe. Now that we have no ideal — no nation to set our sights on — we are on the verge of losing our direction.

But there is another reason that is just as important. For a long time, Japan was one of the few nations whose soil had not been trampled by foreign troops. Then came defeat in the Greater East Asian War (the Pacific War), and everything changed.

Indiscriminate aerial bombing of Japanese cities claimed 500,000 lives, and then the atomic bombs were dropped. The ensuing Allied occupation made drastic alterations to Japan's institutions. During the postwar period, the Japanese accomplished an economic recovery that required strenuous effort. Although Japan is now one of the world's economic superpowers, we still seem to lack confidence. The wounds of defeat have yet to heal.

The Significance of Studying Our History and Traditions

We must continue to learn, with humility, from other nations. But we must not forget that by blithely placing foreign nations on a pedestal, we risk turning into a spineless nation with no spirit of independence.

A strong sense of self-awareness is more important than anything else. Without that, we cannot possibly study foreign history or cultures. The road to self-awareness begins with a thorough knowledge of our country's history and culture. That is our parting message to the readers of the *New History Textbook*.