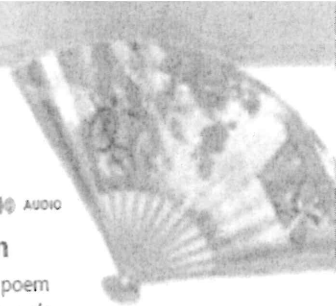




Emperor Meiji

A traditional Japanese fan



WITNESS HISTORY AUDIO

Changes for Japan

The emperor Meiji wrote a poem to provide inspiration for Japan's efforts to become a modern country in the late 1800s:

“May our country,
Taking what is good,
and rejecting what is bad,
Be not inferior
To any other.”

Focus Question How did Japan become a modern industrial power, and what did it do with its new strength?

Japan Modernizes

Objectives

- Explain how problems in Japanese society and the opening of Japan to other countries led to the Meiji Restoration.
- Describe the main reforms under the Meiji government.
- Analyze the factors contributing to Japan's drive for empire.

In 1853, the United States displayed its new military might, sending a naval force to make Japan open its ports to trade. Japanese leaders debated how to respond. While some resisted giving up their 215-year-old policy of seclusion, others felt that it would be wiser for Japan to learn from the foreigners.

In the end, Japan chose to abandon its centuries of isolation. The country swiftly transformed itself into a modern industrial power and then set out on its own imperialist path.

Terms, People, and Places

Matthew Perry	zaibatsu
Tokyo	homogeneous society
Meiji Restoration	First Sino-Japanese War
Diet	Russo-Japanese War

Note Taking

Reading Skill: Identify Causes and Effects
As you read this section, identify the causes and effects of the Meiji Restoration in a chart like the one below.

Causes	Meiji Restoration	Effects
• • •	• •	• • •

Discontent in Tokugawa Japan

In the early 1600s, Japan was still ruled by shoguns, or supreme military dictators. Although emperors still lived in the ceremonial capital of Kyoto, the shoguns held the real power in Edo. Daimyo, or landholding warrior lords, helped the shoguns control Japan. In 1603, a new family, the Tokugawas, seized power. The Tokugawa shoguns reimposed centralized feudalism, closed Japan to foreigners, and forbade Japanese people to travel overseas. The nation's only window on the world was through Nagasaki, where the Dutch were allowed very limited trade.

For more than 200 years, Japan developed in isolation. Internal commerce expanded, agricultural production grew, and bustling cities sprang up. However, these economic changes strained Japanese society. Many daimyo suffered financial hardship. They needed money in a commercial economy, but a daimyo's wealth was in land rather than cash. Lesser samurai were unhappy, too, because they lacked the money to live as well as urban merchants.

Merchants in turn resented their place at the bottom of the social ladder. No matter how rich they were, they had no political power. Peasants, meanwhile, suffered under heavy taxes.

The government responded by trying to revive old ways, emphasizing farming over commerce and praising traditional values. These efforts had scant success. By the 1800s, shoguns were no longer strong leaders, and corruption was common. Discontent simmered throughout Japan.

Vocabulary Builder

emphasizing—(EM fuh syz ing) *vt.*
stressing

- ✓ **Checkpoint** By the mid-1800s, why did so many groups of people in Japan feel discontented?

Japan Opens Up

While the shoguns faced troubles at home, disturbing news of the British victory over China in the Opium War and the way in which imperialists had forced China to sign unequal treaties reached Japan. Surely, Japanese officials reasoned, it would not be long before Western powers turned towards Japan.

External Pressure and Internal Revolt The officials' fears were correct. In July 1853, a fleet of well-armed American ships commanded by Commodore Matthew Perry sailed into lower Tokyo Bay. Perry carried a letter from Millard Fillmore, the President of the United States. The letter demanded that Japan open its ports to diplomatic and commercial exchange.

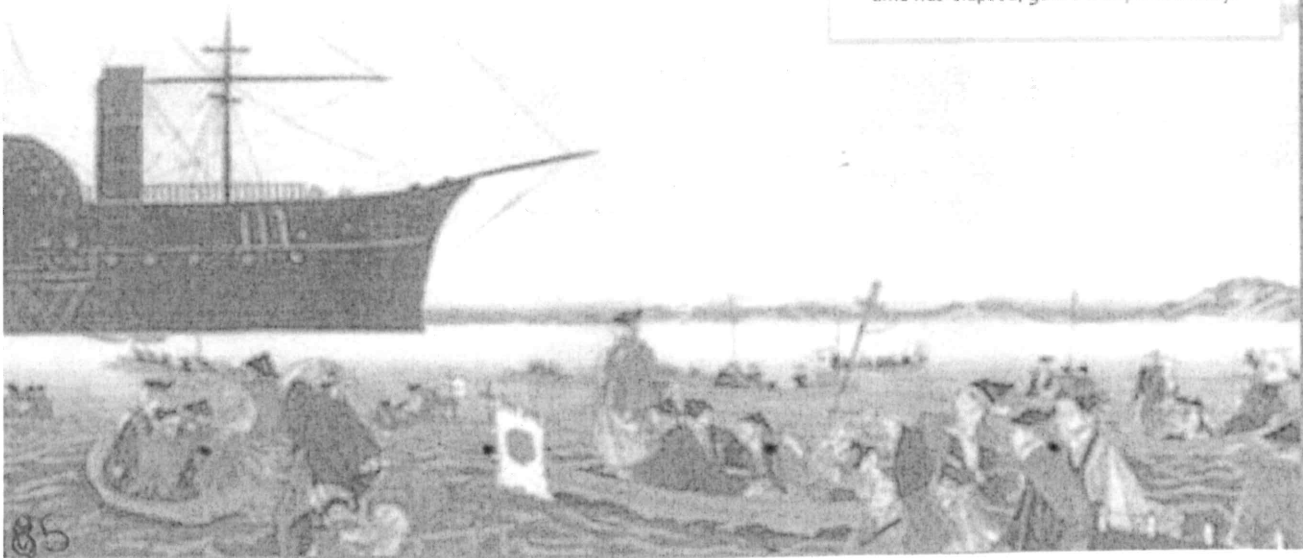
The shogun's advisors debated what to do. Japan did not have the ability to defend itself against the powerful United States Navy. In the Treaty of Kanagawa in 1854, the shogun Iesada agreed to open two Japanese ports to American ships, though not for trade.

The United States soon won trading and other rights, including extraterritoriality and low taxes on American imports. European nations demanded and won similar rights. Like the Chinese, the Japanese felt humiliated by the terms of these unequal treaties. Some bitterly criticized the shogun for not taking a strong stand against the foreigners.

In the Japanese woodblock print below, Japanese boats go out to meet one of Commodore Matthew Perry's ships in Tokyo Bay. In response to Perry's expedition, the Japanese statesman Lord Ii considered Japan's strategy toward contact with foreign powers:

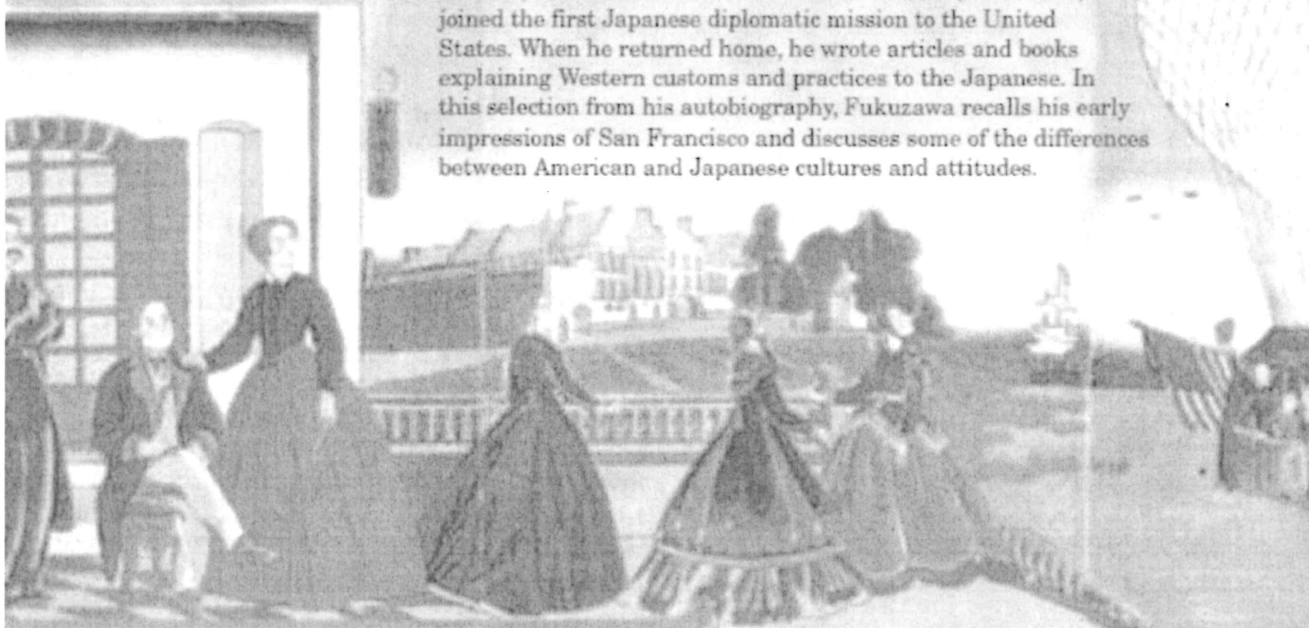
Primary Source

“There is a saying that when one is besieged in a castle, to raise the drawbridge is to imprison oneself. . . . Even though the Shogun's ancestors set up seclusion laws, they left the Dutch and Chinese to act as a bridge. . . . Might this bridge not now be of advantage to us in handling foreign affairs, providing us with the means whereby we may for a time avert the outbreak of hostilities and then, after some time has elapsed, gain a complete victory?”



Japanese Diplomat Fukuzawa Yukichi Visits America

In 1860, writer and educator Fukuzawa Yukichi (1835–1901) joined the first Japanese diplomatic mission to the United States. When he returned home, he wrote articles and books explaining Western customs and practices to the Japanese. In this selection from his autobiography, Fukuzawa recalls his early impressions of San Francisco and discusses some of the differences between American and Japanese cultures and attitudes.



Foreign pressure deepened the social and economic unrest. In 1867, discontented daimyo and samurai led a revolt that unseated the shogun and “restored” the 15-year-old emperor Mutsuhito to power. When he was crowned emperor, Mutsuhito took the name Meiji (MAY jee), which means “enlightened rule.” He moved from the old imperial capital in Kyoto to the shogun’s palace in Edo, which was renamed Tokyo, or “eastern capital.”

The Meiji Restoration The young emperor began a long reign known as the *Meiji Restoration*. This period, which lasted from 1868 to 1912, was a major turning point in Japanese history. The Meiji reformers, who ruled in the emperor’s name, were determined to strengthen Japan. Their goal was summarized in their motto, “A rich country, a strong military.” The emperor supported and embodied the reforms.

The new leaders set out to study Western ways, adapt them to Japanese needs, and thereby keep Japan from having to give in to Western demands. In 1871, members of the government traveled overseas to learn about Western governments, economies, technology, and customs. The government brought experts from Western countries to Japan and sent young samurai to study abroad, furthering Japan’s knowledge of Western industrial techniques.

✓ **Checkpoint** How did Japan react when it was forced to accept unequal treaties?

Vocabulary Bullder
thereby—(THEHR by) adv. by that means, because of that

“All of us wore the usual pair of swords at our sides and the [rope] sandals. So attired, we were taken to the modern hotel. There we noticed, covering the interior, the valuable carpets which in Japan only the more wealthy could buy from importers’ shops at so much a square inch to make purses and tobacco pouches with. Here the carpet was laid over an entire room—something quite astounding—[and] upon this costly fabric walked our hosts wearing the shoes with which they had come in from the streets!”

“One evening our hosts said that some ladies and gentlemen were having a dancing party and that they would be glad to have us attend it. We went. To our dismay we could not make out what they were doing. The ladies and gentlemen seemed to be hopping about the room together. As funny as it was, we knew it would be rude to laugh, and we controlled our expressions with difficulty as the dancing went on. These were but a few of the instances of our bewilderment at the strange customs of American society.”

From The Autobiography of Fukuzawa Yukichi

自立精神

◀ An American scene by a Japanese artist

▲ Calligraphy by Fukuzawa, which means “a spirit of independence and self-respect”



◀ Fukuzawa Yukichi

Thinking Critically

1. **Make Inferences** Why is Fukuzawa amazed that people in America walk on carpeting with their shoes on?
2. **Identify Point of View** What opinion do you think Fukuzawa has of American culture?

The Meiji Transformation

The Meiji reformers faced an enormous task. They were committed to replacing the rigid feudal order with a completely new political and social system and to building a modern industrial economy. Change did not come easily. In the end, however, Japan adapted foreign ideas with great speed and success.

A Modern Government The reformers wanted to create a strong central government, equal to those of Western powers. After studying various European governments, they adapted the German model. In 1889, the emperor issued the Meiji constitution. It set forth the principle that all citizens were equal before the law. Like the German system, however, it gave the emperor autocratic, or absolute, power. A legislature, or Diet, was formed, made up of one elected house and one house appointed by the emperor. Additionally, voting rights were sharply limited.

Japan then established a Western-style bureaucracy with separate departments to supervise finance, the army, the navy, and education. To strengthen the military, it turned to Western technology and ended the special privilege of samurai. In the past, samurai alone were warriors. In modern Japan, as in the West, all men were subject to military service.



Investment in Meiji Japan

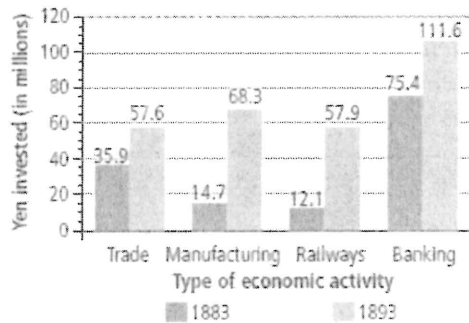


Chart Skills Japanese women (above) work in a silk manufacturing factory in the 1890s. How does the graph reflect the Meiji reformers' drive to industrialize Japan?

SOURCE: S. Uehara, *The Industry and Trade of Japan*

Industrialization Meiji leaders made the economy a major priority. They encouraged Japan's businesses to adopt Western methods. They set up a modern banking system, built railroads, improved ports, and organized a telegraph and postal system.

To get industries started, the government typically built factories and then sold them to wealthy business families who developed them further. With such support, business dynasties like the Kawasaki family soon ruled over industrial empires. These powerful banking and industrial families were known as *zaibatsu* (zy baht soo).

By the 1890s, industry was booming. With modern machines, silk manufacturing soared. Shipyards, copper and coal mining, and steel making also helped make Japan an industrial powerhouse. As in other industrial countries, the population grew rapidly, and many peasants flocked to the growing cities for work.

Changes in Society The constitution ended legal distinctions between classes, thus allowing more people to become involved in nation building. The government set up schools and a university. It hired Westerners to teach the new generation how to use modern technology.

Despite the reforms, class distinctions survived in Japan as they did in the West. Also, although literacy increased and some women gained an education, women in general were still assigned a secondary role in society. The reform of the Japanese family system, and women's position in it, became the topic of major debates in the 1870s. Although the government agreed to some increases in education for women, it dealt harshly with other attempts at change. After 1898, Japanese women were forbidden any political participation and legally were lumped together with minors.

An Amazing Success Japan modernized with amazing speed during the Meiji period. Its success was due to a number of causes. Japan had a strong sense of identity, partly because it had a *homogeneous society*—that is, its people shared a common culture and language. Economic growth during Tokugawa times had set Japan on the road to development. Japan also had experience in learning and adapting ideas from foreign nations, such as China.

Ten years later, Japan successfully challenged Russia, its other rival for power in Korea and Manchuria. During the Russo-Japanese War, Japan's armies defeated Russian troops in Manchuria, and its navy destroyed almost an entire Russian fleet. For the first time in modern history, an Asian power humbled a European nation. In the 1905 Treaty of Portsmouth, Japan gained control of Korea as well as rights in parts of Manchuria.

The Japanese in Korea

In this illustration, Japanese soldiers march into Seoul, Korea's capital city. Japan controlled Korea from 1905 until 1945.



Japan Rules Korea Japan made Korea a protectorate. In 1910, it annexed Korea outright, absorbing the kingdom into the Japanese empire. Japan ruled Korea for 35 years. Like Western imperialists, the Japanese set out to modernize their newly acquired territory. They built factories, railroads, and communications systems. Development, however, generally benefited Japan. Under Japanese rule, Koreans produced more rice than ever before, but most of it went to Japan.

The Japanese were as unpopular in Korea as Western imperialists were elsewhere. They imposed harsh rule on their colony and deliberately set out to erase the Korean language and identity. Repression bred resentment. And resentment, in turn, nourished a Korean nationalist movement.

Nine years after annexation, a nonviolent protest against the Japanese began on March 1, 1919, and soon spread throughout Korea. The Japanese crushed the uprising and massacred many Koreans. The violence did not discourage people who worked to end Japanese rule. Instead, the March First Movement became a rallying symbol for Korean nationalists.

The Koreans would have to wait many years for freedom. Japan continued to expand in East Asia during the years that followed, seeking natural resources and territory. By the early 1900s, Japan was the strongest power in Asia.

- ✓ **Checkpoint** How did industrialization help start Japan on an imperialist course?

Progress Monitoring Online

For: Self-quiz with vocabulary practice
Web Code: naa-2511

1 Assessment

Terms, People, and Places

- Place each of the terms listed at the beginning of the section into one of the following categories: politics, culture, or economics. Write a sentence for each term explaining your choice.

Note Taking

- Reading Strategy: Identify Causes and Effects** Use your completed chart to answer the section Focus Question: How did Japan become a modern industrial power, and what did it do with its new strength?

Comprehension and Critical Thinking

- Identify Central Issues** What problems weakened shogun rule in Japan in the mid-1800s?
- Recognize Causes** What caused Japan to end over 200 years of seclusion?
- Draw Conclusions** List three ways in which Japan modernized. Explain how each of these actions helped strengthen Japan so it could resist Western pressure.
- Connect to Geography** Why was control of Korea desirable to both China and Japan?

Writing About History

- Quick Write: Choose a Topic** When you write for assessment, you may occasionally be given a choice of topics. In that case, quickly jot down notes you could use to answer each prompt. Then, choose the prompt you know the most about. Practice this process using the two sample prompts below. Jot down notes about each prompt, choose one, and then write a sentence explaining why you chose that prompt.
- Explain how Japan modernized under the Meiji reformers.
 - Summarize how and why Korea became a Japanese colony.