Lesson 10

Question for the Lesson/What you need to know in this lesson:

What was Japanese feudal system like before modernisation like?

What were the reasons for the Meiji restoration?

What was Japanese modernisation process like?

How was Meiji restoration (Japan's modernization) different or similar to that of China?

What were the impact of Meiji restoration?

IB Questions

Impact of Meiji Restoration on Japan

1. Analyse the role of the Zaibatsu in Japan's industrialization between 1868 and 1912. (N05, Q10)

2. Assess the role of the genro in Meiji Japan, 1868 to 1912. (M07, Q8)

3. Evaluate whether Japan became a modernized nations during the Meiji period (1868-1912). (M14)

4. "During the Meiji period, Japan changed its clothes but not its soul." To what extent is this an accurate assessment of the modernization of the country over that period? (N13)

5. To what extent had the changes introduced under the Meiji Restoration(1868) transformed Japan by 1890? (M04, Q8)

6. To what extent had the changes introduced under the Meiji Restoration (1868) transformed Japan by 1890? (N08, Q9)

7. To what extent did the changes brought in during the first twenty years of the Meiji Restoration (1868 to 1889) constitute a revolution? (N03, Q7)

8. The Meiji Restoration (1868) was not just a political change, but a real cultural revolution.' To what extent do you agree with this statement? (N10, Q7)

9. To what extent did Japanese government and society change in the years 1895 to 1912? (M03, Q9)

10. “Land tax and military reform destroyed feudal Japan.” To what extent do you agree with this assessment of the effects of these early Meiji reforms between 1869 and 1912? (M05, Q9)

11. To what extent were changes in Japanese society between 1868 and 1889 reflected in the Meiji Constitution? (M06, Q8)

12. “During the Meiji period, Japan changed its clothes but not its soul.” Is this a fair statement of the modernization and westernization which took place over that period? (N06, Q9)

13. “By 1890 Japan had been transformed by the changes introduced under the Meiji Restoration.” How far do you agree with this statement? (N07, Q8)

14. “Between 1894 and 1905, Japan emerged as the most powerful military presence in North East Asia.” To what extent do you agree with this statement? (M09, Q10)

15. To what extent by 1890 had the Meiji restoration in Japan created a modern late 19th century state? (N09 Q4)

16. To what extent was the reign of Emperor Meiji in Japan (1868 – 1912) a period of “conservative revolution”? (N04, Q8)

17. To what extent had Japan become industrialized by 1912, the end of the Meiji period? (M08, Q8)

18. Account for the rise of Japan to international importance in the region between 1855 and 1905. (N08, Q11)

The Making of Modern Japan

The abolition of the Tokugawa Shogunate which paved the way for the restoration of power to the Emperor.

However, the restoration of the Emperor did not lead at once to a sharp break with what the Tokugawa Bakufu had done.

A. Early Stages of Modernization: Fostering Civilization and Enlightenment

Any reforms of political and economic changes had to wait the further consolidation of power and the closing of the revolutionary movement. **In the meantime, the Meiji leaders could hope to foster Civilization and Enlightenment by promoting western ways of thought and introducing examples of material culture.**

Fashion

By embracing both Western technology and some elements of Western culture, if only for a short period of time, the Japanese government sought to impress Western countries, to extricate themselves from unequal trade treaties and avoid colonization. One of the most outward, and some might say contrived, examples of this effort, was the clothing of the Meiji era which used Victorian fashions to promote the governments political and social agenda. By adopting Western dress, the Japanese sought to illustrate their modernity.

Western-inspired dress, food, and architecture was encouraged by the Meiji government.. During the Tokugawa Shogunate, only nobles and members of the military class were permitted to wear luxurious, patterned silks, satins, and elaborate brocades and to adorn themselves with fancy sashes. With the abolition of the laws by the Restoration government, the Japanese were free to wear whatever they pleased.

Victorian fashions and the new kimono were knowingly used by the Meiji government as agents of social and political changes. In the case of Meiji Japan it is useful to begin with the emperor who endorsed and wore the new fashions. In 1872 Emperor Meiji (November 3rd, 1852 – July 30th, 1912) cut off his topknot and the next year he began wearing Western style clothing. After the Emperor appeared in Western dress, government officials and the **educated elite began wearing Western-style clothing in public. In 1871, the Emperor issued a mandate requiring high officials to wear Western clothes during business hours or when at official functions**. In November of 1886, the empress wore Western style clothing for the emperor's birthday celebration and a command performance of a visiting Italian Circus. She too issued a proclamation (January 17th, 1887) justifying her change and instructing the ladies of the court to follow her example. Shortly afterwards, fashion conscious women also began wear Western dresses in public, following the example

of the Empress. The military outfitted its new conscript army in Western-style uniforms, and the emperor and his officials adopted foreign dress for public ceremonies. Before long, many ordinary Japanese in the country's urban centers began to show a preference for Western garments, although some devised curious combination, such as wearing kimono over trousers.

However, while numerous wood block prints were made of these ladies in Western dress there is little evidence that it spread past court circles to the general population. Most of the commoners in Japan mainly wore traditional Japanese clothing, with a Western accessory, such as men wearing the traditional kimono, but cutting their hair in a Western fashion and wearing a bowler hat. Also, they might adopt a Western umbrella or hair style as both photographs and woodblock prints illustrate, a complete Victorian gown was less likely. The popularity of Western fashions was a short lived trend, from 1887 to 1890.

There was criticism against westernization. The social reformer Miyake Setsurei questioned the wisdom of Western dress for the "bent posture" of the Japanese. He also believed that the ill fitted clothes invited the contempt of Westerners and that Westerners might inwardly mock them for unseemly imitation. Miyake was not opposed to the adoption of Western things but believed it should be done with forethought. Miyake was not alone in his concerns; artists, writers and even some supporters of the Meiji government voiced their concerns. Gradually, the Japanese came to realize that they were able to find a true sense of pride and nationalism in their traditional dress - the kimono.

B. Political Changes

The Meiji Leadership

The Government that took office and ushered in the Restoration of the Meiji Emperor was composed of about one hundred members of the four western clans (Satsuma, Choshu, Tosa and Hizen).

Kido Koin, Ito Hirobumi, Saigo Takamori and Okubo Toshimichi were samurai of middle ranks, held office in their own domains, and most of them came from relatively humble birth and had few emotional commitments to the ancient regime. These samurai-bureaucrats were resourceful and gifted leaders who pursued the path of internal reconstruction in the face opposition from even members of their own class. They were united about their ultimate aims which was to strengthen Japan and raise to a level of equality with the West. They were very pragmatic but were not blind followers of the West.

The Charter Oath

The young Emperor Mutsuhito took his oath on 6 April 1868 and the Charter Oath was a declaration that outlined the principles on which the future government of the country was to be conducted.

a) Deliberative assemblies shall be widely convoked and all matters of state shall be decided by public discussion
b) All classes high and low shall unite in vigorously promoting the economy and welfare of the nation
c) Civil and military officials shall be of one mind and all the common people shall be allowed to fulfil their aspirations, so that there may be no discontent among them
d) Base customs of the past shall be abandoned and all actions shall conform to the principles of international justice
e) Knowledge shall be sought among the nations of the world and in this way the foundation of the Imperial polity shall be strengthened

Significance of this Charter Oath

Kido Takayoshi and the other young revolutionaries who drafted the Charter Oath on behalf of the emperor did so with urgent, pragmatic goals in mind. In spring of 1868 the new government was more a dream than a reality. Imperial armies were still fighting their way to Edo and civil war with the northern domains threatened to divide the country, the fledging regime had no treasury and was spending money faster than it could take in revenues and the Western powers had made it clear that they expected the new leadership to put a permanent end to anti-foreignism and to provide political stability. Against this backdrop, the framers of the Charter Oath addressed their immediate problems.

The first clause made an appeal for national unity by suggesting that the small clique of revolutionaries would not monopolize decision making but would include other influential persons and agencies in policy formulation.

The next two articles expanded upon that overture by offering people to “fulfil their aspirations,” while the final two assertions signalled to foreign observers that Japan would become a stable, responsible member of the international community. Scholars were being encouraged to go abroad to seek knowledge and this was a complete reversal of the seclusion policy of the Tokugawa.

The aim of the new Meiji regime was to safeguard Japan’s national sovereignty and prevent further encroachment. The regime wanted Japan to become great and respected country, equal to the most advanced nations on the face of the globe.

Those overarching motives of national independence and future greatness inspired a host of complementary missions: to revise the unequal treaties and remove Japan

from semi-colonial status, to foster national unity and to sweep away the problems of the past in order to build strength and wealth.

That accumulation of goals gave new meaning to the promises expressed in the Charter Oath and by the time the Meiji period turned 3 decades old, Japan's leaders had acted to create a constitutional polity and convoke a national assembly, to industrialize and inculcate capitalism, and to reorganize the country's social structure.

Creating a Centralized Polity (political structure)

Not long after announcing the Charter Oath, the loyalists arranged to promulgate the Constitution of 1868, which vested all authority in the Grand Council of State. It served as the chief policy-making and administrative organ of Japan's early imperial state. It was created with six ministries under it. The top posts were held by court nobles or daimyo which were largely symbolic. The revolutionaries from Satsuma and Choshu, in league with their radical allied at court, moved to claim a monopoly over the important positions within the agency.

During the late 1860s and 1870s such men as Iwakura Tomomi, Okubo Toshimichi, Kido Takayoshi, Ito Hirobumi and Yamagata Aritomo were seldom far from the centre of action. The ministers and councillors met frequently, reached collective decisions about all major state policies and issued decrees and orders upon imperial ratification. The Grand Council proved to be very efficient form of revolutionary government. It wore the badge of tradition while permitting a small number of men to hoard power, argue out their decisions with dispatch, and then implement policies through their own ministries. Perhaps for this reason, it remained the central executive organ of the new regime until the inauguration of the modern cabinet in the middle of the 1880s.

The centralization of power

Feudalism was destroyed in favour of a strongly centralized state. The men at the revolutionary centre sought to extend their authority over the nearly 280 still-independent daimyo domains. Ito and Kido were among the first to suggest that replacing the old domains with a new system of modern prefectures controlled directly by the Grand Council of State could achieve a permanent solution to the problem of political fragmentation.

In 1868, the first step to crack the feudal structure was taken when Imperial officials were appointed to every fief. In 1869, the four leaders of the western clans (Satsuma, Choshu, Tosa and Hizen) formally surrendered their feudal rights and privileges; their domains were being returned to the Emperor. This was quickly followed by other domains.

By 1871 Kido, Okubo and their colleagues in the Dajokan were prepared to proceed with the final abolition of the domains. That summer the emperor did away with the domains in a simply worded edict and created in their place, initially, 302 (later reduced to 48) prefectures and three administrative cities, each under the jurisdiction of a new governor. The prefectures were divided into districts, the districts were further subdivided into villages and city wards. The officials came under the Home Ministry and were appointed based on examinations**. Centralization of authority was necessary if Japan was to survive as a unified country.**

Constitutional Developments

The chief architect of the Meiji Constitution was Ito working together with other Meiji leaders. They were convinced of the practical utility of constitutionalism and representative government and achieve attributes of western political culture and become in the eyes of the West a nation governed in accordance with rational laws, which was seen as essential to revise the unequal treaties.

Working constitution was also seen as important for Japan to be unified internally and not be at risk of falling prey to foreign intervention.

As proponents of Civilization and Enlightenment the Meiji leaders welcomed the advent of a constitution and representative government but they did not wish to mimic blindly European examples but rather intended to select foreign institutions that were best suited to Japan's needs and then adopt those arrangements so that they both fitted the Japanese historical experience and contributed to the goals of future reform. Consequently, in the political debates of the late 1870s, the members of the inner circle favoured retaining a prominent role for the imperial institution and drawing strict limits around the influence of any future legislative. For them, the throne – the keystone of the Japanese state since its inception in the 7th century could serve as an anchor of continuity in a sea of change, and they adamantly insisted that the emperor must remain as Japan's sovereign, as the primary source of all political authority and legitimacy.

Inspired by rhetoric about Civilization and Enlightenment in the 1870s, many private individuals in Japan agreed with the Meiji leaders that representative institutions would open up a new and brighter future for Japan, but they embraced more liberal views about constitutionalism and wished to proceed faster than did Ito and his successes. In the middle of the 1870s intellectuals, urbanites, and villagers began to voice their own demands for freedom and popular rights. As enthusiasm for a Popular Rights Movement swelled, growing numbers of ordinary Japanese joined political societies that sprang up in small towns and villages across the country. Incredibly, by the end of the decade one thousand such organizations were meeting up on a regular basis and they brought together merchants, artisans, laborers and farmers to listen to orators and to discuss major issues of the day.

The Meiji government attempted to ride out the growing storm by proposing timely concessions, tempered with repressive laws and ordinances. The government's preemptory tactics, however, failed to contain the nationwide petition movement and matters came to a head during the Crisis of 1881. There were radical demands, in contrast with the Meiji oligarchs, for a constitutional scheme that delegated primary political authority to a popularly elected national assembly and to cabinets organized by the majority party in the legislature. There was a call for immediate elections. Caught in a maelstrom of criticism, in Oct 1881 Ito and his fellow councillors sought to assuage public opinion by arranging for an imperial rescript declaring: "We shall summon representatives and open a national assembly in the 23rd year of Meiji (1890)."

The Constitution

Prussia served to be the most appropriate constitutional model. The throne was to have the right to appoint all state ministers and senior officials, provided for a cabinet that would be independent from the parliament, and short-circuited parliamentary control over the government's fisc by stipulating that the budget of the previous year would remain in effect if the legislature did not approve a new one.

With this outline as the framework, Ito in 1884 began to implement several structural reforms designed to prepare the way for constitutional regime: naming a peerage to populate an upper house in the legislature, shaping a modern cabinet and bureaucracy and putting the final touches to the reform of local government and putting the final touches to the reform of local government that had begun with the creation of prefectures in 1871. The Peerage Act did away with the social distinctions created in 1869 and conferred new noble status upon 508 family heads. Ito reformed the executive branch of the government, creating a modern cabinet system. In Dec 1885, the Grand State Council passed out of existence, replaced by a cabinet composed of a Prime Minister and several additional ministers who presided over individual bureaucratic departments. It was the prime minister's responsibility to coordinate the formulation of governmental policies, sign all laws and ordinances and oversee the activities of the other Cabinet members, even though in theory they were directly accountable to the emperor, who officially appointed them. At the same time, new regulations detailed how particular ministries were to conduct their affairs and stipulated that they be staffed with "men of talent."

Most western observers were quick to praise Japan's new cabinet system for embodying the most respected contemporary conceptions of a modern bureaucracy, with offices defined by specific function and all officeholders below the level of minister chosen on the basis of civil service examinations and professionally trained within their branches of service.

Concerned with the system of prefectural government, a new set of ordinances were issued that replaced the old magistrate –city elder/village headmen linkage with a more comprehensively organized structure that held prefectural, town and village

governments more accountable to central authority. On one hand, the new laws nurtured popular loyalty by allowing the local citizenry to elect some of its own officials but on the other hand, in exchange for such involvement in the political process, absolute obedience from below and each administrative level was subject to the supervision of the next higher layer of officialdom. And at the top of the Apex was the Home Ministry with broad powers to design policy and delegate duties to ensure central authority.

As the emperor was to be the nucleus for a political orthodoxy and constitute the heart of the new political system, the emperor was sent off by the Meiji leadership to visit the hinterland of the country so that all the people of the nation will turn their eyes and see the greatness of the emperor, as the Shogun had overshadowed the emperor during the Tokugawa regime and the imperial will was as yet unknown in the remote and distant parts of the realm. It was an opportunity of displaying direct imperial rule in the flesh, thus dispelling misgivings about proposals for a constitutional monarchy.

The final document placed considerable powers in the hands of state ministers, but the Meiji leaders made it clear that the first principle of the constitution was the respect for the sovereign rights of the emperor. The Meiji leaders were conscious about not merely imitating the western models and kept in consideration the historical peculiarities of their country. Foreign models were useful but Ito was determined that Japan's quest for political modernity proceed on its own terms and in a manner congruent with the most hallowed traditions of its past.

The symbolism of the imperial presence appealed even to the most ardent sympathizers of a more radical and liberal type of political modernization. During the 1880s nearly all the regime's foes came to accept the basic premise of imperial constitutionalism.

Chapter 1 concerned the Emperor. It established the central role and rights of the Emperor in the new political system and specified the Monarch's duties. Chapter 2 looked into the rights and duties of subjects. The two chief duties were to pay taxes and to serve in the army when called upon and the rights included freedom of religion, liberty of speech, writing, publication, public meetings and associations but all within the limits of the law and not antagonistic to their duties as subjects and the rights can be abrogated in times of national emergencies to maintain the existence of the state.

The next several chapters established a bicameral legislature and outlined the duties of ministers of state and the Privy Council. Both ministers and councillors were to provide advice to the throne and in another check on imperial power, no law, ordinance or rescript could take effect unless counter-signed by the appropriate minister. The newly enfranchised Imperial Diet consisted of the House of Peeers, composed of nobles and imperial family members appointed by the emperor and a

House of Representatives elected by the people. The constitution also empowered the Diet to vote on annual budget but that right was limited to ensure that the popularly elected diet does not jeopardize national security by trimming appropriations for the armed forces.

The constitution established mechanism for sharing power with elected representatives of the national citizenry but at the same time it drew boundaries around the exercise of the legislative initiative, reserved sovereignty for the emperor, and delegated political authority to state ministers appointed by the throne.

The promulgation of the constitution also fulfilled the ambition of gaining acceptance into the comity of the world's advanced nations. The Meiji leadership had been determined to build internal strength and foster national unity so that they could go forward with the task of creating a modern, powerful country, worthy of respect in the eyes of the West in order to maintain its national independence, revise the humiliating unequal treaties and preserve the nation's rights and advantages among the powers. **The constitution earned Japan international respect that it sought and attained great power status.**

Political Parties

The convocation of the First Diet in November 1890 to mark the dawn of a new era in Japanese politics. The battle for control of the nation's political destiny began in earnest on July 1, 1890, when Japanese voters went to the polls for the first time to elect 300 men to serve in the House of Representatives. The results heartened supporters of the "popular parties," for politicians associated with Okuma's Progressive Party and Itagaki's Liberal Party together captured a majority of 171 seats. The aims of these parties had been to promote the introduction of constitutional and representative government in Japan, the attainment of equality with other nations and achievement of national progress.

In the very first Diet, representatives called for an 11% reduction in the budget submitted by the Cabinet, and they made similar demand in nearly every subsequent Diet session. Hence, there were constant conflict between the Diet and the cabinet over budgetary matters. The bitter parliamentary struggles of the early 1890s fed the anti-party biases as they were felt to be behaving in divisive ways that made it impossible for the Prime Minister and the Cabinet to rule effectively. But the Meiji oligarchs had to rethink their attitudes towards political parties. For one thing, in election after election voters returned a majority of party members to the lower house. Philosophical concerns also carried some weight. Despite their deep antipathy for party politicians, ultimately the oligarchs did not want to derail the experiment with constitutional, parliamentary government.

Hence, Ito believed that the time had arrived for him to form his own political party. In addition to having a supportive organized cabinet, to be truly effectual a prime minister needed to earn the goodwill of the House of Representative. Ideally, a pro-

government party sympathetic to the oligarchs could control the House, assure that the Diet answered to national rather than partisan interests, and provide responsible politicians to serve in a national unity cabinet. He formed the Seiyukai party and it soon claimed a place for itself on the national political stage. From 1908 to 1915 the Seiyukai held an absolute majority of seats in the lower house.

Such an experiment helped to stabilize the political system and also helped in the realization of party government in Japan.

C. Economic Reforms

Aims of Economic Reforms

The immutable axiom “Prosperous Nation, Strong Military” echoed its way through the early Meiji period, defining the goals of large scale economic development. By undertaking industrialization at the same time that they were scouting out a path towards constitutionalism, the Meiji oligarchs expected to see all manner of benefits billow forth from the smoke-stacks of economic progress. Wealth could earn respect in the eyes if the West and provide a foundation of national strength so that the newly modernizing nation could escape the predatory threat of Western imperialism. The new government, thus, depended on the Ministry of Public Works and the Home Ministry, established in 1870 and 1873 respectively, to import technology from abroad and organize the manufacturing effort at home. Soon another slogan, “Increase production, Promote Production” crowded its way into the Meiji lexicon.

The determination to Increase Production, Promote Industry also offered a solution to forbidding domestic problems that threatened to abort the Meiji experiment. The commercial treaties of 1858 and 1866 had imposed unfair tariff and exchange rates upon Japan. The unhappy result was a sudden spurt of imports and an extraordinary outflow of specie, which brought severe inflation and endangered many forms of domestic handicraft production and processing. Fearful throughput the 1870s and 1880s about the consequences that might befall the regime should it be unable to win the allegiance of the common people of the Japan, the oligarchs were determined to improve prospects of long-term political stability and earn acceptance for the new constitutional polity by overcoming the economic dislocations that accompanied the opening up of the country and by creating the basis for future prosperity.

Japan’s economic prospects in the early Meiji period appeared dismal as superior Western products flooded the island country. Machine-made products cotton from abroad was stronger and cheaper than material woven at home on handlooms, kerosene outsold the more expensive and less efficient traditional lamp oils, Chinese sugar somehow tasted sweeter than the domestic variety, and imported woollen quickly became prized for their warmth and reasonable price. The value of Japan’s exports trailed imports for twelve of the fourteen years between 1868 and 1881. Unless Japan could construct its domestic economy, develop import substitutes and

balance its foreign trade accounts, the country will be destroyed. Specie (money) and the strength of the nation will be swept away.

The Reforms

(i) State Intervention

Modern Communication Systems
The Meiji leaders decided that Japan needed a government-operated postal service to make communication in the land simple and easy and it also became a centre-piece of Japan's modernistic communication systems. The government instructed officials in towns to open post offices in early 1871. By 1890, there were more than five thousand post-offices and they handled nearly 225 million pieces of mail and processed almost 75 million money orders.

Railway systems
The Meiji leaders contemplated the construction of railroads not just as an adjunct to their postal operations but also as vital to the overall development of industry and strategically necessary to Japan's defensive needs. Aware of the enormous capital requirements of railroad construction, the government concluded that it, not provate enterprise would have to take the initiative.

In late 1869, the Japanese leadership formally decided that the first two routes would run between the Shinbashi section of Tokyo and Yokohama, the bustling new port that served the capital, and between Osake and Kobe, the leading commercial centre and new entrepot of western Japan respectively. The railroads symbolized the hallmark of progress and civilization. By 1874, trains began to carry passengers and freight between Osake and Kobe. In 1877, service was extended from Osaka to Kyoto and in 1899 Japan celebrated the completion of the Tokaido trunk line and people could whiz past the old post towns, completing their trval between the major cities of eastern and western Japan in less than a day.

National Currency and Banking system
To support the modern economic development when it created a national currency and began to put together an integrated banking system. The new currency Regulation of 1871 established the yen as Japan's unit of currency, replacing the confusing welter of coins and nearly sixteen hundred kinds of paper notes that circulated during the late Tokugawa period. In 1872, the National Bank Ordinance authorized the founding of so-called national banks to facilitate the accumulation of mercantile capital of for industrialization and to promote the orderly development of the currency system. By the end of the decade more than 150 national banks had opened their doors for business.

Strategic and Military Enterprises
Even as they were laying down the infrastructure for modern economic development, the Meiji leaders began to operate strategic and military enterprises directly. The

young leaders who staffed the Public Works and Home Ministry, which controlled the shipyards that were already built during the Tokugawa period, were quick to grasp how technologies developed for military might have other useful applications. Consequently, the shipyards not only constructed cargo vessels and warships for Japan's new navy but also contained machine tool and other factories whose output contributed to the civilian sector of the economy.

Established Model Factories

The government also established model factories and managed certain civilians businesses in the hope of stimulating private enterprise. The planners within Home and Public Works ministries had several ancillary purposes in mind: to create employment opportunities and encourage commercial development in economically backward regions, to demonstrate the efficacy of modern technology and to build up light industries whose products could compete with foreign goods, thus leading to import substitution and a righting of Japan's chronic trade deficits. Perhaps, the most highly coordinated effort in that regard was Hokkaido Colonization Office, which promoted sake brewing, founded a sugar refinery, opened flour mills, and oversaw the construction of fish canneries as part of the Meiji government's efforts to settle and develop that northern island.

Limitation of State Intervention

Unfortunately for the Meiji oligarchs, not all efforts to Increase Production, Promote Industry went smoothly. Despite all the efforts, few-government operated businesses lived up to expectations. The Hokkaido Colonization Office struggled mightily but accomplishments came slowly as few migrants wished to test the rigours of developing Western-style agriculture and business enterprises on Japan's northern frontier (although eventually there was a sharp increase in the population by 1881 and agricultural acreage increased more than ten-folds amd the agricultural yield rose by 16 times between 1890 and 1920). Railroad development was also a disappointment. Nothing remotely matched the steam locomotive as an unmistakable sign of modernity and progress, yet some members of the Meiji inner circle opposed railroad expansion on the ground that the young government had better uses for its scarce financial resources such as on military power. Ironically, military officials came fully to appreciate the strategic value of railroads as a means of rapidly deploying troops by 1871. Still by 1880 Japan had less than one hundred miles of track.

Inflation added to the government's woes in the late 1870. There was also deficit spending. Demands on the government fisc had been extremely heavy in the 1870s as the oligarch simultaneously allocated funds to suppress internal revolts, commute samurai pensions, subsidize government-owned enterprises and model factories, invest in the infrastructure and modernize the army and navy.

Measures taken to address limitations

Under the leadership of Matsukata Masayoshi, Finance Minister from 1881, the problems were addressed. He acted decisively to attack inflation, create a stable currency and encourage laissez-faire capitalism so that the government could retire from the costly business of directly promoting industry. Between 1881 and 1885 he slashed administrative expenditures, increased indirect taxes and placed many government enterprises on the sales block. Those actions produced a budget surplus, which was used to buy up notes previously issued by the national banks and also transformed national banks into ordinary commercial banks and in 1882 chartered the Bank of Japan as a central bank with a monopoly over the issuance of paper currency to find a permanent solution to the currency problem of flood tide of currency not backed by reserves.

From a longer range perspective, however, Matsukata resurrected the Meiji economic dream. As dreadful as his policies were for a significant proportion of the farming population, his financial retrenchment whipped inflation, stabilized process, balanced the budget, and righted tax revenues. His banking initiatives added to the government's growing stock of successes in creating an infrastructure that would support further development. The reform program reoriented the government's industrial policy, turning the emphasis away from direct state ownership of enterprises and towards an approach that favoured the kind of laissez faire orthodoxy popular in the industrially advanced nations in Western Europe. His reforms were aimed at leaving concerns of business and trade to be conducted and developed by the individual efforts and enterprise. **The Meiji government were to rely chiefly on the private sector to lead Japan's quest for industrialization, providing assistance where they could to create a favourable institutional setting and to nurture an environment supportive of the growth of private enterprise.**

(ii) Growth of Light Industry and Private Entrepreneurs

Even before the reforms came along, efforts of ordinary men and women began to exert a significant impact on the growth of the Japanese economy. Budding entrepreneurs could be found scattered across the Japanese archipelago, in all the cities, towns and villages, where **the collective memory of the problems of the late Tokugawa era – the recollection of failed reforms, unjustly high grain process and contentious disagreements on how to promote commercial development – provided a compelling reason to pursue with vigour the new opportunities of the early Meiji period.**

Some enterprising merchants succeeded by focusing their efforts on improving the quality and marketability of traditional products and handicrafts. In the old castle of Kanazawa, to take one example, the abolition of domains in 1871 removed the traditional barriers to inter-regional trade and gave local producers of gold and silver leaf fresh opportunities to compete in national and even international markets. After the Meiji regime dissolved old trade associations and their

monopolies, Kanazawa's leaf trade picked up immediately, with nearly 1500 people engaged in the craft by the year 1880. Besides the quality and cost competitiveness of the Kanazawa product, freer access to markets led to expansion of trade. Most of the leaf fashioned in 1870s and 1880s was sold in Kyoto and Nagoya and after WW1 Kanazawa's manufactures displaced Germany's to capture nearly 90% of the world market.

Many Japanese in the 1870s and 1880s tried to manufacture for themselves replicas of the intriguing new consumer goods being introduced from the West. Tokyo entrepreneurs founded the Seiko watch and Shiseido cosmetic firms, while in Osaka several men simultaneously pioneered the manufacture of buttons since imported buttons were expensive, the Osaka producers experimented with using traditional methods to manufacture buttons from local supplies of oyster, abalone and conch shells. **Thorough technological adaptations, as importing foreign machinery was expensive,** the number of petty manufacturer increased and by 1896 Japan was able to export nearly 175000 yen of shell buttons, about 6 times the value of imported buttons.

In similar fashions, other persons of ingenuity and ambition founded domestic workshops and labour-intensive small-scale enterprises that out such new consumer products as toys, clocks, cutler, bicycles, tin boxes and many more, thus helping Japan actualize the transition from an agrarian to a manufacturing economy.

(iii) Industrial Development

Cotton spinning and weaving emerged as Japan's leading source of manufacturing growth. At the time of the Meiji Restoration there was a single cotton mill in Japan. **By the end of the century, dozens of privately owned mills operated almost around the clock, production topped 250 million pounds, and cotton thread and cloth represented nearly 25% of the value of the country's total manufacturing output.**

The rapid expansion of the cotton industry profoundly affected the structure of Japan's trade relations. In the early 1870s the country exported raw materials and relied heavily on imports for manufactured goods, about half of which were textiles. Three decades later, the situation was reversed. **At the beginning of the 20th century Japan imported substantial amounts of raw materials and exported mostly manufactured goods, especially reeled silk and factory-produced cotton thread and cloth. Equally important, the policy of import substitution had succeeded as the quantity of imported textiles fell to an insubstantial. Japan's manufacturers and mill hands clothed Japan.**

Many of Japan's textile firms such as Toyobo achieved international competitiveness not only because entrepreneurs such as Shibusawa were adept at raising capital, but also because Japanese people made a series of important technological adaptations and innovations in the 1880s and 1890s.

Japan relied on the West as the source of technological knowledge. But the Japanese were not mere copycats. The wholesale technological importation of proved, affordable technology suggested itself as the fastest way to catch up with the industrialized West at the end of the 19th century. Moreover, out of emulation came innovation; Japanese textiles producers tinkered with the models they acquired from abroad, adapting them to conditions at home and putting their constituent elements together in novel ways that sometimes produced manufacturing process that are more efficient than the foreign originals. Shibusawa, for instance, cut costs by importing raw cotton from China and by locating his first mill in Osaka, traditional centre of the cotton trade and a source of ample labour. Shibusawa was also one of the first producers in Japan to switch from mule spinning, the dominant British technology, to ring spinning, which was faster.

Japan's early industrialists took great pride in building manufacturing enterprises that were as efficient and competitive as their Western counter-parts, but Shibusawa and the other frequently deprecated their achievements as nothing more than unselfish and loyal service to the state. To some extent, such a business ideology was patently self-serving, designed to parry questions about the accumulation of personal fortunes vast beyond the ken of most ordinary Japanese. Seen in a different light, however, a rhetoric that stressed the selflessness and patriotic virtue of businessmen was perhaps inevitable in the closing decades of the 19th century, when the state was doing so much to forge a creed of civic morality and when talk of "national essence" and "national citizens" filled the air.

(iv) Zaibatsu, Big Business, Heavy Industry

The Meiji government forced weak companies to merge with the stronger ones in the 1880s to form large cartels. Mitsui, Mitsubihsi, Sumitomo and Yasuda are four such great zaibatsu. Each conglomerate consisted of far-flung network of legally distinct companies and subsidiaries. Within each zaibatsu, individual firm engaged in their own specialized business and hence these zaibatsu covered a wide variety of fields but they were interlocked by personal, historical relationships, common ownership, collective goals set by a centralized advisory committee and access to shared pool of capital and technology. The strength of these zaibatsu also lied on the fact that they controlled their own financial institutions, which provided it sound basis for long rage corporate planning and finance and they had the benefit of being supported by government favours and patronage. All these helped the big four to dominate the modern economy – that is heavy industries such as mining, shipbuilding, and the manufacture of machinery, metals and chemicals.

Many other big businesses remained separate from the Zaibatsu. In the 1880 and 1890s many private railway companies came into being as freestanding enterprises. The creation of privately owned railroads dates to Matsukata's appointment as the Finance Minister. He dropped the government's program of state construction and management of the rails and inaugurated a policy of encouraging private railway development through subsidies and other forms of public assistance. The first beneficiaries of the shift were a group of investors who founded the Nippon Railway in 1881 and received official approval to construct trunk lines emanating outward

from Tokyo. The oligarchs did more than just hand over a charter to the new enterprise. To ensure that the Nippon Railway could raise enough capital and set a successful precedent for future private ventures, the government guaranteed shareholders an annual return of 8 percent on capital, lent land to the company, waived taxes on company owned real estate, and even surveyed and constructed the trunk line that ran north from Tokyo to Aomori. When Nippon railway's profits exceeded expectations in 1884, an investment mania swept Japan and between 1885 and 1892 more than 50 groups applied to establish private rail companies. The government issued charters to 14 of them. The results were dramatic. By 1890, private railroad companies controlled more miles of lines than the government railway and by the time government decided to nationalize the rails in 1907, in the aftermath of a war with Russia, the nearly 5000 miles of track laid down by private lines spanned all of Japan's major islands. And by 1890 the ridership on rails hit 23 million and rose to 114 million a decade later.

(v) Agricultural Reforms

For the Meiji period taken as a whole, the productivity per unit of cultivated rice paddy increased approximately 1.7% annually. In the 1880s agricultural acreage increased by 7% and average yield per acre by 21% and there were surplus of food which was exported in 1890, despite the rise in population.

That extraordinary performance resulted neither from the reorganization of the agrarian economy nor from an expansion of cultivated area. Rather, the farm family remained the typical unit of production, as it was in the Tokugawa period, and most family continued to maintain small holdings that they could till mostly with their own labour**. It was the introduction of new ways of disseminating knowledge that led to the increase in production**. During the Tokugawa period individual farmers in scattered villages had experimented with innovative agricultural methods, but the knowledge spread very slowly**. The strong commitment to growth and change during Meiji, brought forth a system of paid itinerant agriculture lectures, the formations of agricultural discussion groups, and the organization of seed exchange societies all of which helped to broadcast information about crops varieties, fertilizers, farming techniques and animal husbandry more rapidly and widely than before so that farm families could make more productive use of existing land and labour.**

The pace of innovation also accelerated in the early Meiji period as farmers expanded the stock of traditional knowledge such as farmers breeding new strains of rice that yielded greater quantities of grain per plant such as the Shinriki (The Power of the Gods). The consequences of the increased productivity of the early Meiji period were manifold, as the average growth rate in grain production substantially outpaced the population growth. Meiji farm families fed their country. Increased domestic productivity also had the happy result of keeping to a minimum the need to expend valuable specie importing foodstuffs; indeed the rural sector generated significant amounts of export income. The farm families enjoyed higher income due

to the steady increase in the agricultural output during the Meiji era. Many rural families used their extra cash to advance their standard of living and domestic demand for new consumer products became a key factor stimulating the growth of light industries.

Overall Outcome of Economic Reforms

(i) Positive Outcomes

By the time the first Diet convened in 1890, the Japanese had surmounted most of the early economic problems, and the country was well on its way to joining the ranks of the world's industrial powers. Japan transformed from a predominantly agrarian to a thriving manufacturing economy. While the Meiji oligarchs played a key role for engineering the institutional changes that created the favourable conditions for accelerating economic growth but the transition of Japan's economy could never have taken place with the entrepreneurial inventiveness of untold scores of the nation's ordinary men and women.

That economic progress, however, did not come without a price. Prosperity flowed across Japan in the last half of the 19th century and most people were better fed and housed at the end of the Meiji period than their ancestors had been in the 1860s.

But not everyone received an equal share of the benefits that accompanied an expanding economy, and some lost their health and even their lives as they struggled both to get ahead and to help their country. Tens of thousands of individuals feel victimised by economic modernity.

The Tokugawa legacy had a significant impact on the modernization of Japan's economy. The growth of handicrafts, proto-industrialization, and the development of cash crops as well as banking services in the 18th and early 19th centuries provided a storehouse of knowledge, skills and organizational experience and rural-based manufactures after the restoration. The Tokugawa heritage provided a fertile seedbed hospitable to commercial growth but government officials and private businesspeople in the Meiji era carried out other necessary tasks: importing the seedlings of industrial capitalism from the West, transplanting modern production techniques into Japanese soil, and tending to the flowering of modern economic growth. The Meiji government also build infrastructures for factories and railways and made decisions to foster key enterprises such as shipping and railroads by grating them profit guarantees.

The Tokugawa shoguns had seen some advantages to commercial development as long as they closely regulate it and keep it from upsetting the political status quo. In contrast, the Meiji leadership saw economic growth as a means of solving the financial problems that had accumulated in the latter part of the Tokugawa period and as a way to preserve Japan's autonomy against a potentially dangerous West. The leaders were united in agreeing that modern economic growth had to be adopted as a national goal. The consensus on a national level then helped to

galvanize the entrepreneurial energies of individual men and women across Japan, who in any case were also driven by their own vision of a more bountiful economic future. Matsukata's deflationary reforms, created the stability that made sustainable growth possible, smoothed the way for those businesspeople but in the end individual initiative of Japan's entrepreneurs breathed life into the Meiji economic dream.

(ii) Negative Outcomes

Mass of unsung workers, who toiled in conditions that wrecked their health and shortened their lives, and from ordinary families who had to drink poisoned water and eat food grown on polluted land.

Plight of Factory Workers

The industrialization of the Meiji created a new class of factory workers, many of whom experienced harsh conditions. To be certain, even at the end of the 19th century, factory labourers remained a relatively small proportion of Japan's total workforce as nearly two-thirds of all gainfully employed persons still made a living in agriculture. Nevertheless, the number of factory workers rose dramatically from a few thousand in 1870s to nearly 300000 in 1892 to somewhat more than 400000 in the late 1890s. As Japan faced the new century, the proletariat developed its own nascent working-class mentality, challenged management's conceptions about the nature of employer-worker relations, and added a new way of life to Japan's already complex social milieu.

The female textile workers represented the prototypical factory hand during Japan's initial stages of industrialization. At the turn of the century nearly 60% of all industrial workers found employment in silk filatures and cotton mills and well over 80% of them were women. Many of these women were recruited from economically depressed rural areas in the 1880s and 1890s. Once on the job, the female worker earned very little and working conditions in the mills and filatures were harsh. Most workers had only a couple of days off each month. 12 hour shifts were the rule in the cotton mills, such as at Shibusawa where the owners run their expensive machinery around the clock. In silk filatures too conditions were harsh where work starts at daybreak and ends at night and the working hours can go as high up as 17 or 18 hours per day. The work floor was filled with discomfort and peril. The work floor was crowded, noisy, and hot; temperatures often reached one hundred degrees in summer and girls collapsed on the shop floor. In the ill-ventilated factories, fine silk floss and cotton fluff filled the air, got into eyes, mouths and ears. The male foremen were nasty and often beat the slower than average worker. In their haste factory girls lost their hands and feet tangled up in the machinery. By century's end the loss of a finger or toe was so common that many company doctors stopped noting such accident on injury reports. Some supervisors were sexual predators who used intimidation to get their way with the vulnerable and brutally raped others. Many factories dormitories were prisonlike structures, surrounded by 8 foot fences topped

with broken glass and sharpened bamboo spears to keep the girls from running away. Despite this, it was remarkable that some 20% of the female workers at Osaka Spinning Mill and 40% of the Mie Spinning Company left work in 1898 and at both plants only 25% of the young women served the entire contract period during the late 1890s.

Quarters were cramped and for living and sleeping space, each worker had to make to with less than one standard tatami mat of approximately six feet by three feet. Basic diet of grains, tofu, beans, dried sardines and seaweed dishes and the servings often were insubstantial according to one government report. Among those female workers who stayed, high incidences of diseases such as bronchitis, pneumonia and trachoma induced blindness were common. In all the death rate for mill girls stood at more than double the national average for 16 to 20 year old females.

Out of the hardships of the 1880s and 1890s emerged the beginning of new working class attitudes. In 1886 the girl workers at Amamiya translated that kind of rage into direct action by launching Japan's first industrial strike. That event at Amamiya inspired operatives at other textile factories to take action. In 1899 young women at the Tenma Cotton Spinning Company in Osaka went out on strike to get higher wages.

Men constituted less than 50% of the total number of factory hands in 1880s and 1890s, but they enjoyed higher salary and prominence as they had expertise which were in high demand and were concentrated in modern factories that specialized in metalworking, shipbuilding and the manufacture of machine tools, munitions and chemicals. These factories usually hired men who were carpenters, smiths and traditional artisans who could master the new technology quickly. Male industrial workers tended to change their jobs frequently especially of the workers equipped themselves with range of new talents and demand higher wages as well. Like the women, however, the men too spent their days on shop floors that were dirty, dark and dangerous. Men walked off the job to lobby for human treatment by the owners. When machinists at the Nippon Railway Company initiated a job action in 1899 for instance, they pressed management for improved standing within the enterprise. Specifically, the negotiated for new job titles that connoted greater respect, treatment equal to that accorded workers of higher ranks.

Social Reforms

(i) Educational Reforms

In 1871 Ministry of Education was established and assigned it the responsibility of designing a nation-wide system of compulsory education.

Aims: Japan could not achieve Civilization and Enlightenment without an educated citizenry, believed that merit-based education was necessary to train capable national leaders for the future, universal education would give all Japanese the skills necessary to enhance their economic prospects and thus build a strong nation. The importance of teaching traditional values were also seen as important to cultivate dutiful citizenry that would support the constitution and the government and encourage the people of Japan to be unquestionably loyal to emperor and the nation.

Under its initial attempt, the Education Order promulgated by the Grand Council of State, Japan was divided into 53760 primary and 256 middle school districts, called for the establishment of 8 universities and mandated 4 years of compulsory education for every child. Ministry of education officials worked energetically to get the new system running in the early 1870s and by the middle of the decade several hundred thousand youngsters were attending elementary and middle schools. The Meiji government constructed many new schools and began to train teachers. The fact that generations of samurai and commoner families had recognized schooling as part of their daily routine inclined many to accept the new educational directives.

However, there were problems. As late as 1880 only 60% of school-age boys and 20% of girls attended elementary schools, a level higher than a generation earlier. Samurai offspring and city children were more likely to complete the four years of compulsory education than were village children. There were also enormous disparities that characterized the educational experience. Depending on which school the students attended they studied different materials. The Ministry of Education also disseminated new translations of Western works of history, science and philosophy, which were criticized by Confucian traditionalist as a misguided effort to convert Japanese into painted replicas of Europeans and Americans.

Hence, during the 1880s the Ministry of Education engineered a number of adjustments intended to make schooling more responsive to national goals. The school system was reorganized to sort out students more efficiently according to ability and to place them that led to appropriate future careers. Graduates from primary school with the inclination for further study advanced to middle school, where for 5 years they studied ethics and learned skills to prepare them for careers as low-level managers, plant foremen and so forth. More promising graduates of middle schools who passed arduous examination could win admission to one of the newly created three year higher schools to be cultivated into bureaucrats, businessmen, top management, scholars and as experts in arts and sciences.

The Ministry also began to make good the earlier intention to establish national universities to educate the most elite level of scholars, bureaucrats and business leaders. Beginning with Tokyo University in 1877, the government eventually founded imperial universities in Kyoto (1897), Kyushu (1910), Hokkaido (1919) and more.

During the 1880s, the Ministry also took steps to ensure itself greater control over the curriculum taught in the nation's public schools. In 1886 it decreed that elementary school students received instruction in arithmetic, reading and writing, composition and physical education and later in 1907 science, geography and Japanese history was added on. School day was centered on ethic courses that celebrated patriotic sentiments and a traditionally orientated civic morality. As the government officials gained the authority to determine what materials would be used in every classroom the Ministry issued a list of texts it considered acceptable and in 1903 the ministry stipulated that all elementary schools had to adopt identical texts, which it compiled and distributed, resulting in boys and girls in every town and village learned exactly the same story about Japan's past to learn about Japanese values and mores.

By the end of Meiji era elementary school attendance for both boys and girls were approaching 100 percent, as people realized that education was a ladder one could climb to better jobs and more comfortable lifestyles. Most observers also conclude that the ethic-based curriculum was one factor that gave rise to patriotic citizenry. Many credited the education system with producing literate young people who had requisite skills demanded by the new emerging industrial society (especially after track leading from primary school to technical and vocational middle schools) and few would disagree that the higher schools and universities turned out an elite of rigorously trained professional bureaucrats, scholars and businessmen.

Criticism included gender inequities built into the educational structure. From their inception primary schools had been coeducational but the middle and higher schools tracks created in the mid-1880s admitted only males. Dissatisfied, women began to show up at the door of private schools, many run by Christian missionaries. By 1889 some twenty private secondary schools, as well as 8 public institutions opened by the governments, enrolled a total of more than 3000 young women who wished to receive more than an elementary education. A decade later the Ministry responded to the growing demand for a woman's track by formulating a plan to establish a girl's high school in each prefecture which provided 4 to 6 years of study to young women who had completed primary school. The courses were designed to train the students to be model wives and mothers. Many women who saw themselves as future homemakers expressed satisfaction with the education they received at the new secondary schools. But there were other women who wanted to be educated for women to have careers outside the home as well as within it and wanted the same education as men so that both genders can play similar roles in society. Such issue could not be solved within the Meiji period itself.

(ii) Family Reforms

With the country being buffeted by every variety of political and economic change, the government turned its attention to drafting a new civil code to cover family relationships, property rights, contracts, commercial transactions and so forth. Such a codification was seen as necessary in light of the enormous changes taking place within Japan but the officials were also responding to stern statements from Western nations that Japan must adopt a body of civil law acceptable to them before moving forward with treaty revision.

In 1890, the Meiji regime promulgated a legal code modelled on the French precedents. But sharp controversies broke out as jurist felt that the new code adhered too closely to French model. The code dealing with "Family" was seen to be destroying traditional values of loyalty and filial piety. It was felt that a legal foundation should be created for the old *ie* system and the tradition of strong patriarchal authority and the practice of primogeniture that prevailed among samurai households in the early modern era.

Consequently, the revised Civil Code, which became law in July 1898, made the household a corporate entity, instead of individuals taking the place as the unit of society, which was seen to be the case that was becoming in Japan during the closing decades of the 19th century. It also mandated that the position of household head pass to the eldest son and vested enormous powers in the modern father; he alone chose the place of residence, managed all household property and business affairs, determined the disposition of family assets, and had the authority to approve or disallow the marriages of is children.

As part of their attempt to carry out what many called the samurai-ization of the family, the authors of the Meiji Civil Code subordinated women to the male head of household. The primary obligation of a wife, as outlined by the code, was to provide the *ie* with a male heir and the household with additional labour. Once married, the women would not be able to testify in courts of law, bring a legal action without a husband's permission, transact business without his consent or initiate a divorce.

However, while the authors of the Meiji code intended the 1898 Civil Code to stand absolute as the final statement about the family and gender roles, but it did not. The effort to implement social legislation at the end of the 19th century, instead generated vigorous discussion on domesticity. Apart from ideas like *ryosai kenbo* (good wife, wise mother), which as elements of Western thinking as well Japanese notions of womanhood, where a good wife and wise mother would remain in the private sphere, but she would be accorded a respected role within the household as the moral foundation of the family, the person responsible for properly raising a d educating the children, and a loyal better half who would support her husband as he advanced his career in the public sphere, other fresh voices joined the debate about the state's role in determining family and gender relations. Increasingly, Japanese women themselves entered the contest to define femininity as women graduates from

women's secondary school, founded to train the good wives ad wise mothers, proceeded to raise questions about what constituted an ideal family.

(iii) Abolition of feudal privileges

By 1871 the Confucian social hierarchy was ended and there was full legal equality. This was to encourage a meritocratic society and harness individual talents. People were allowed to change their residence and occupation. In 1876 the Samurai were ordered to stop wearing their swords. The Samurai stipends were turned into bonds and this reduced the government's budget by 30%. The government tried to settle the samurai on new lands or absorb them into the government, military and the new industries. A Samurai rebellion against the Meiji government in 1877 was defeated by the new conscript army backed by better weapons and logistics. This marked the end of the samurai and samurai threat to the Meiji government.

(iv) Religion

As part of its attempt to inculcate loyalty to the emperor and thus draw a mantle of legitimacy around itself, the new Meiji government embarked on a policy to place Shinto at the centre of the nation's religious life. Before 1868, Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples coexisted side by side, it was the Heavenly Sovereign in Kyoto who conducted prescribed rituals that reaffirmed his ancestry and gave symbolic meaning to the Shogunate's claim to rule in his name, while for most ordinary peoples Shinto meant simply worshipping local kami during festivals at village and neighbourhood shrines.

But the Meiji government would elevate Shinto and by drawing all Japanese into Shinto religious practices made clear the importance of the emperor and Shino divinities to the nation's religious and political well-being. The Meiji leaders arranged the 75 thousand shrines in Japan in 1868 into a single national hierarchy, thus creating Shinto's first comprehensive organization structure. The imperial and national shrines received generous financial support, and their priests enjoyed status of national civil servants and the government ordered each household to affiliate with a shrine, thus making shrine membership universal and obligatory for the first time. Meiji leaders altered the character of ritual life when they introduced a series of celebrations that were to be led by the emperor and observed at shrines nationwide.

Proponents of Shinto had to contend with a revival of Christianity during the Meiji period. Catholic priests visited Edo and Yokohama as soon as those cities were officially opened to foreign residents in 1859. Representatives of 3 Protestant Churches also arrived in Japan in 1859 and evangelists from several denominations followed soon thereafter. The Meiji regime lifted the old prohibitions on Christianity in Feb 1873 and the missionaries began to search for converts. However, the proselytizers faced an uphill task to win religious hearts. Most government officials maintained a cool attitude toward foreign creeds as reflected in the 1889 constitution, which provided that Japanese could enjoy religious freedom only within limits not prejudicial to peace and order, and not antagonistic to their duties as subjects. By

the end of the century somewhat less than 1% of all Japanese professed to be Christians.

But Christianity still persevered in the country. Missionary efforts to found orphanages, hospitals and leprosarium attracted to the faith reformers who were concerned about prostitution, poverty and other social problems. In addition, various churches opened women's secondary schools in the 1870s and 1880s, when the government was reluctant to do so. Christians also established some of Japan's leading private colleges, including the Meiji School for Women.

Nonetheless, the privileging of Shinto and the reorientation of Shrine life toward a national focus profoundly changed the nature of Japanese religiosity. As the 19th century approached its conclusion, more Japanese than ever were aware of the nuances of Shinto doctrines and the liturgy of all shrines across the country pulsated according to a single plan. The labelling of Shinto as state ideology and religious belief, relegated Buddhism and Christianity to the rear pews and set the stage for an expansion of relations between organized religion and the state in the first half of the 20th century by opening up the possibility that religious doctrine and state ideology could work in tandem and persuade the people to obey government directives and policy.

Military reforms

In 1871 an imperial Army and Navy was formed and trained on Western lines; recruited from all social classes. In 1872 the army and navy ministries were created to ensure centralized control. In January 1873 conscription was introduced and men regardless of social background had to serve 3 years of active military service. By 1883 the full time army was 73000 and wartime strength was 200 000 more, developing a capacity to operate overseas. By 1894 the army was equipped with Japanese made weapons and artillery. A naval officer's training school was introduced in 1888. All were equipped by 1894 with modern rifles and artillery, mostly of Japanese manufacture. In 1894 it had 24 modern warships and 24 torpedo boats but was considered small by western standards.

The military had a high prestige as the emperor became its commander in chief. Yamagata introduced a German general staff system under the chief of staff who was independent of the minister and the civilian government. The military was under the direct command of the emperor and had the right of direct access to the emperor. This encouraged the undermining of democratic government as the military saw itself as being above politics and this meant that the Cabinet could be forced out of office by the military if they had strong objection to its policies. As a result, the democratic government will have no control over the military's expansionist policies.

How much was achieved from this debate?

Japan's top court upholds same-name rule for married couples, overturns remarriage moratorium for women

by Tomohiro Osaki Staff Writer

The Supreme Court on Wednesday upheld the constitutionality of a controversial Civil Code provision requiring married couples to use the same surname in official matters. The decision was a blow to campaigners who sued the state, asking the nation's highest court to declare the rule unconstitutional.

The matter is contentious in Japan, with opponents calling it an infringement of women's fundamental rights and conservatives regarding shared names as a central pillar of the family unit. The top court did, however, declare that a law prohibiting

female divorcees from remarrying within six months of their divorce is unconstitutional.

In response to the ruling on the ban on remarriage, Justice Minister Mitsuhide Iwaki responded Wednesday evening by pledging a swift legal revision. Noting the ruling suggested the ban be shortened to 100 days, the ministry issued a notice to its regional bureaus nationwide that women wishing to remarry 100 days after a divorce should be allowed to do so even before any legal revision takes place, Iwaki said. Both rulings relate to family laws dating from the Meiji Era (1868-1912). Campaigners who brought the pair of lawsuits alleged discrimination against women.

One suit, filed in 2011, involved a statute requiring Japanese spouses to choose which single family name — the husband's or the wife's — to adopt in legally registering their marriage. The plaintiffs argued this amounts to gender discrimination because being forced to choose a single surname infringes on personal dignity and the freedom to marry. Presiding Justice Itsuro Terada said sharing a single family name is a system "deeply rooted in our society" and is meaningful in that it "enables people to identify themselves as part of a family in the eyes of others."

Although admitting that being pressured to forfeit a maiden name often works to women's disadvantage professionally — and may even trigger an identity crisis — Terada said such hardships can be mitigated, since women are free to use their maiden names in daily life.

However, campaigners cite inconveniences in the workplace as a significant reason for their opposition to the rule. Some say when a woman known professionally by her maiden name has to adopt a new one it creates major complications.

Meanwhile, the top court similarly rejected the plaintiffs' appeal for a combined ¥6 million in compensation. Noting that the law gives couples the freedom to decide which surname to adopt, Terada said it is not discriminatory in itself. However, studies in the past 40 years show more than 96 percent of Japanese couples have opted for the husband's name. Some of the plaintiffs reported emotional distress in the form of depression and difficulty sleeping.

Coming at a time when the global trend is increasingly toward allowing the use of separate names, the ruling is "anachronistic," said Masayuki Tanamura, a professor of family law at Waseda University. "The ruling will not encourage women to remain in the workforce after marriage and childbirth," Tanamura said. "As the circumstances surrounding a family and public perceptions of it are evolving, the

Civil Code provision, based on an outdated view of the family, must be changed." He added that the Diet should not take the ruling as an excuse for inaction, but should promptly revise the law.

Waseda Law School professor Mutsuko Asakura also lambasted the ruling. Noting only three female judges on the 15-member Grand Bench of the top court that examined the case, she said the ruling underscored the gross lack of understanding by male judges toward inconveniences long imposed on women. It even risks further cementing the international community's perception of Japan as a country "intolerant of diversity" and "insensitive to human rights," she said.

Meanwhile, in response to a lawsuit filed by a 30-something female divorcee from Okayama Prefecture, the top court recognized the unconstitutionality of a separate statute prohibiting women from remarrying within six months of their divorce. The court, however, rejected the woman's appeal for ¥1.65 million in compensation for emotional distress. Critics call the measure outdated in an era of early pregnancy detection and of DNA sequencing, which can identify paternity to a degree of accuracy unthinkable a century ago. Terada said the ban represents an "excessive restriction" on women's freedom of marriage.

Yet reducing the ban to 100 days would pose no constitutional problem, he said in reference to a related clause that says a child born within the first 300 days after a divorce is legally a descendant of the former husband, while a child born at least 200 days after the second marriage is deemed to be that of a new partner.

Debate over whether to revamp the Civil Code, which dates from the Meiji Era, flared up in the 1990s following Japan's ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women in 1985. In response to public calls for change, a legislative panel of the Justice Ministry proposed amendments in 1996 to legalize having separate surnames and to shorten the six-month ban on remarriage. It provoked fierce opposition from conservative lawmakers, and the proposals were shelved, defeating what would have been the biggest postwar overhaul of family laws.

Even today, resistance to the idea of spouses retaining separate names remains particularly strong among lawmakers within the ruling Liberal Democratic Party. Despite Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's push for "womenomics," or the greater inclusion of women in society and economic life, the party opposes allowing separate surnames on the grounds that it would destroy "the sense of family unity."

Public opinion is divided, too. A survey conducted by the Cabinet Office in 2012 showed that respondents were split, with 35.5 percent in favor of allowing separate surnames and 36.4 percent against. A survey conducted by public broadcaster NHK last month also showed that 46 percent of respondents support the idea, while 50 percent oppose it. The U.N. Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women has repeatedly urged the government to take “immediate action” to amend the law.

http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2015/12/16/national/crime-legal/japans-top-court-strikes-rules-divorcee-remarriage/#.Vn9irZXlrIV