

The Meiji Restoration



The Tokugawa Shogun had single-handedly ruled Japan for over 250 years. However, Japan's contact with the West sparked a radical uprising in the Japanese government and society. Unhappy politicians blamed the government in power – the Tokugawa Shogun for Japan's military weakness.

In 1868, a small group of middle level samurai supported the Emperor's return to true power in Japan. The Shogun's government was removed and the young Meiji Emperor created a new Western style government in Japan.

The Japanese (Meiji) Constitution ~ 1889

The Empire of Japan shall be ruled over by the Emperor.

The person of the Emperor is sacred and can never be dishonored.

The Emperor has the power to make laws within the Japanese Parliament

The Emperor declares war, makes peace, and concludes treaties.

No Japanese subject person shall be arrested, detained, tried, or punished, except according to law.

Japanese subjects shall enjoy freedom of religious beliefs.

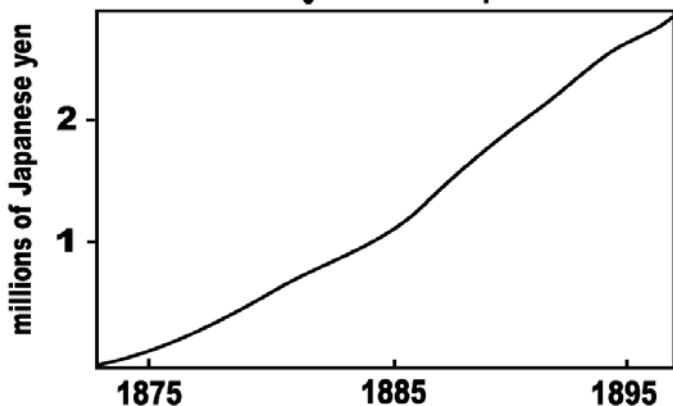
Japanese subjects shall enjoy freedom of speech, writing, publication, public meeting, and associations.

How has the role (the position) of the Japanese Emperor changed as a result of the new Meiji Constitution?

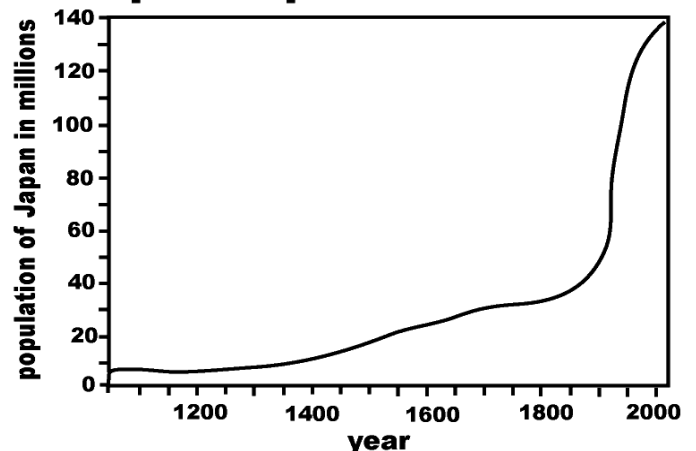
Technology & Industrialization

TASK: Use the two charts to answer the questions. Be sure to give specific data in your answers (*numbers*)

Investment in Agriculture in Japan 1875-1895



Japan Population Timeline



Describe the change in agriculture (farming) that occurred between 1875-1895.

When did Japan's population begin to increase? (what year?) Why do you think this change occurred?

Social Reform

A renowned Japanese author, Bunroku Shishi recalled in 1967 his experiences as a boy growing up during the Meiji era:

..The rapid spread of Western civilization, and the enlightenment [that occurred in Japan], made the Meiji era an exciting time period. Nights became bright with gas and electric [lights]. Diseases could now be cured due too improved medical science. Travel became much easier with the introduction of railways and tram-cars.

My sister and I wore Western clothes. They were made by a tailor who catered to foreign customers. I was made to wear a high, stiff collar and broad "Bohemian" tie with my suits and suffered much embarrassment when other children made fun at me.

Vehicles rumbling through the often unpaved streets of Meiji times were also interesting. Horse-drawn carriages were replaced by electric trolleys. They had much the same shape as the horse-drawn vehicles, but we couldn't figure out where their power came from.

Amazement. There was a lot of that in Japan for those of us who shared the fantastic Era of Meiji.



List the social changes have occurred in Japan:

The Satsuma Rebellion

The sudden changes of the Meiji Restoration came as a shock to many Japanese. The powerful politicians who overthrew the Tokugawa Shogun wanted to completely Westernize Japan. But the Samurai, a traditional warrior class were still hanging on to the old traditions.

Saigo Takamori was one such Samurai who refused to adopt the new ways of the Meiji Restoration. He gathered an army of about 40,000 men and waged a rebellion against the new Japanese Imperial army. This resistance movement is known as the **Satsuma Rebellion** of 1877.



Saigo Takamori ↑ prepares his troops for battle

Watch the film and answer the questions below:

1. In the battle scene, how were the last Samurai's defeated?

2. Even though they are on opposite sides, why do you think the soldiers bow after the last Samurai dies?

3. *How does the Emperor feel about the changes that have occurred in Japan?
