

16

Return to Roots



FIGURE 16-1 This 1875 woodblock print is from a series called “Famous Places in Tokyo: A Record of the Process of Reform” by Ando Hiroshige II or III. What things in this picture of Meiji Japan do you think reflect the influence of the West?

WORLDVIEW INQUIRY

In what ways can intercultural contact affect a culture's sense of identity?

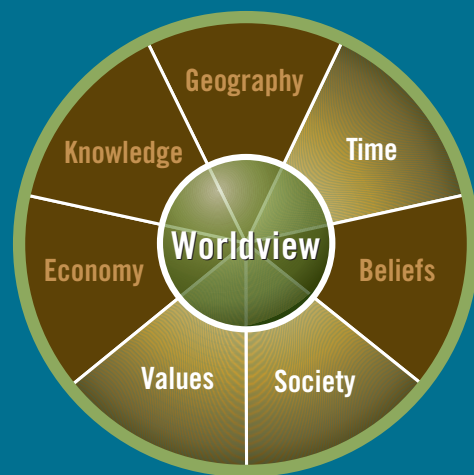
1870s. Hundreds of Western workers moved into specially designated areas of Yokohama, Nagasaki, Osaka, and Tokyo.

Japanese who visited Americans and other Westerners studied the construction of their houses and examined their furnishings—sofas, armchairs, mirrors, china, and cutlery. Then they would try to recreate a “Western room” in their own homes. They would hang a mirror on a wall and install a glass window pane or two in their paper sliding screens. In the middle of the room, on a patterned carpet laid over their straw floor mats, they would place a table with a tasselled tablecloth.

Once the renovations were complete, a Japanese homeowner might invite his friends for a visit. They would sit in his chairs, eat meat with knives and forks, and sip Western champagne instead of Japanese sake. Some guests might wear kimonos, the traditional dress worn for centuries in Japan; others might wear Western business suits.

To many Japanese, adopting Western ways and learning how to speak English were symbols of their becoming “modern.” Other Japanese, however, were concerned about “too much” Westernization.

Why do you think some Japanese people wanted to copy Western ways in their homes?



In This Chapter

You have seen how Japan went through many changes after the fall of the shogunate. The Japanese adapted Western ideas and technology and made changes to their government and economy. They wanted to strengthen Japan and gain recognition and respect from Western countries. How did Japanese people adjust to all these changes? Which of them were easy to accept and which were hard to fit into their traditional ways of thinking and living? What consequences did this Westernization have for Japan and the rest of the world?

Change and Resistance

In what ways did resistance to rapid change lead to a return to a traditional Japanese worldview?

What's in a **WORD**?

"Conservatives" prefer traditional or proven ways and values, and they may resist or oppose rapid change.

Think IT THROUGH

Some Americans mocked Japanese men for wearing "silk petticoats," or women's clothing. How might these attitudes affect the interaction between American and Japanese men?

Do you and your parents or grandparents always agree about new trends? Why do you think this is so? What tensions can disagreements about changes in society create? In Japanese society, many changes took place in a short space of time. To what extent do you think the pace of change can magnify tensions? Do you think that change might be easier for people to adjust to today than it was 100 or 150 years ago?

Many people of all social and economic classes in Meiji Japan were open to new ideas and ways. Wealthy people bought Western clothing and goods for their homes. Poor people who were not able to afford these "new things," also accepted Western ideas. For example, a group of farmers drew up a "village constitution" that was influenced by Western political ideas, including the expectation that people should participate directly in government. Other Japanese, however, were **conservative**, that is, more comfortable with traditional ways. There was conflict between those who favoured new ways and those who opposed change.

The March of Westernization

Many of the changes that took place in Japan can be put under the broad title of **Westernization**. This meant the adoption of Western ways and ideas. The motto of this movement was "Civilization and Enlightenment." The Meiji government officials and other reformers wanted to change the unequal treaties with the Western countries. They felt the way to do this was to win respect for Japan by showing that it was a modern, "civilized" country. They also believed that Westernization would also result in a Japan that was stronger and more competitive with the Western powers.

Cultural changes were easily seen in the port cities. Foreign books and magazines became available and in 1871, daily newspapers were launched. Newspapers were placed in public reading rooms so citizens could learn about changes in Japanese society. The newspapers also urged citizens to adopt the "new and improved" ideas.

Cultural Changes

Westerners of the mid-1800s who came to Japan were often not tolerant of Japanese customs. Japanese officials outlawed behaviour that was offensive to the foreigners:

- ◆ In warm weather, Japanese working men wore only loincloths. When a European woman complained about their lack of “respectable clothing,” the governor of Yokohama ordered all labourers and boatmen to “wear a shirt or tunic, properly closed.”
- ◆ In 1872, the Japanese government passed a law to prohibit tattooing, including that done by the Ainu.
- ◆ Public bathing, an essential Japanese ritual, shocked proper Victorians. Public baths were ordered to close or be modified.

What reactions do you think the Japanese might have had to these changes?

Imperial court etiquette, that is, proper behaviour, was also changed in an effort to Westernize. When court advisors realized that Western diplomats were not used to removing their shoes at an imperial audience, they replaced the woven *tatami* mats on the palace floor with carpets. The emperor learned to shake hands and, with great difficulty, to constantly smile. European-style food was served at the emperor’s receptions.



FIGURE 16-2 In Japan, tattooing was a traditional art form as shown in this 1868 series called “Suikoden, water margin” by Yoshitoshi. In the late 1800s, tattooing became popular among daring fashion leaders in England.



FIGURE 16-3 The English of the late 19th century were called “Victorians” after Queen Victoria who ruled from 1837 to 1901. During this time, people had a strong sense of which fashions, manners, and morals were correct and respectable. Who do you think influences these decisions in Canada today?

Japanese Social Customs Today

Would you be surprised if you were expected to take off your shoes when entering a Japanese home? Most Westerners who visit Japan today are aware that Japanese society has rules of behaviour that are different from their own. By knowing and following the rules of Japanese society to the best of their ability, Westerners know that their stay in Japan will be more pleasant and their business associations will be more successful.

The social customs of Japan today have been formed by such factors as the values, attitudes, traditions, history, and geography of the Japanese. Here are some tips for scholars going to stay in Japan.

- One of the first Japanese words you will hear in reference to you is “gaijin,” literally translated as “outside person.”
- First names are generally not used in Japan when addressing a person, except among very

close friends or by senior family members calling junior members.

- Hugging and kissing in public among friends and family—even after a long separation—is uncommon in Japan.
- When eating Japanese food, never stick your chopsticks into rice since it is associated with the rice bowl placed in the funeral altar.

Fulbright: Japan–U.S. Educational Commission.

Think IT THROUGH

1. Based on what you know about Japan, consider the possible origins of these social customs.
2. Which of the above would be the most difficult for you to accept based on your worldview?

Think IT THROUGH

The following is a poem written by Emperor Meiji. It is in the form of a traditional Japanese poem known as a *waka* or *tanka*.

For the times to come

And of meeting what must
be met

All of our people

Must be taught to walk
along

The path of sincerity

What aspects of the
Japanese worldview does
this poem express?

Western Dress

The government urged Japanese men to abandon their kimonos for trousers and suit coats. By the 1870s, all prominent Japanese men, including the emperor, wore their hair cut short; some grew beards and moustaches. The Japanese military were ordered to wear Western-style uniforms. The uniforms of police officers and train conductors were also changed to copy Western styles.

Emperor Meiji represented the coming together of the old and the new in Japan. Look back at the photograph of him on page 336. Emperor Meiji often wore this Western-style uniform, even after the fancy trim and gold epaulettes went out of style in the West. He adopted Western clothing, but kept to the samurai values of modesty and thrift. He didn't get new clothes or shoes when styles changed; he simply wore things until they fell apart. He ordered his doctors to try both Eastern and Western medicine when his children were ill. He was involved in matters of state as a Western prime minister would be, but he also dedicated time to poetry, as emperors before his time did.

Debating an Issue

What do you feel is the best way for a country to make sure its citizens feel they belong? Is it necessary for everyone to speak the same language and follow the same traditions? What about people who already practise the customs of another culture?

Debates are useful, not only to clarify your own ideas about an issue, but to take into account the arguments of other people. A **horseshoe debate** is one way for people to exchange ideas about an issue.

1. When presented with an issue, a group of people arrange themselves in a horseshoe: those who agree with the proposition stand on one side; those who disagree stand on the other; those who are undecided stand in between.
2. In turn, they explain why they are standing where they are.
3. Participants can change position if they are persuaded by another person's argument.

When presenting your position, use these tips:

- If necessary, research the issue.
- Start with a statement of your position, including why the issue is important.
- Present facts and opinions to support your position.
- Arrange your ideas in an effective order.
- Speak slowly and clearly, but with enough animation to engage your listeners.

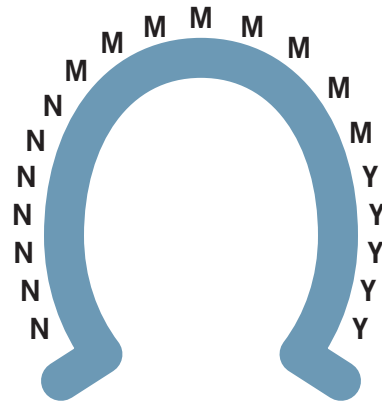


FIGURE 16-4 Participating in a horseshoe debate involves listening to other people's arguments, and possibly letting them change your mind.

Try It!

1. As a group, research the issue of assimilation. Is it in a country's best interest for all its citizens to follow the same customs, speak the same language, and practise the same religion?
2. Individually, formulate your position. Review Building Your Skills on page 264 to help draw conclusions about the issue.
3. Participate in a horseshoe debate. Students who are for assimilation stand on one side; students against stand on the other side. Students who are undecided stand in the middle.
4. Each student explains his or her position.
5. Students can change position during the debate if they are persuaded by another student's arguments. Students who change position must explain why they changed their mind.

FYI...

Some new ideas were very threatening to the Japanese sense of security and identity, such as suggestions that Japan should adopt English as its national language or that Japanese intermarry with Westerners in order to acquire their qualities.

Think IT THROUGH

What attitude toward the Japanese people is reflected in this quotation by Pierre Lotti? Identify the words and phrases on which you based your answer.

Backlash Against Westernization

Many Japanese people thought that their society was going too far in its Westernization, especially after the government built the Deer Cry Pavillion. It was a fancy European-style building in which Western visitors were entertained. In the Deer Cry Pavillion, buffet tables were laid out with imported European gourmet foods. Japanese gentleman puffed on Cuban cigars and played card games and billiards. French orchestras played operettas and German bands played polkas and waltzes.

Americans and Europeans mocked how quickly the Japanese took to Western clothes and customs. The French writer Pierre Lotti noted:

They dance quite properly, my Japanese in Parisian gowns. But one senses that it is something drilled into them that they perform like automatons, without any personal initiative.

Ian Burma, *Inventing Japan 1853-1964*.

Foreign diplomats were willing to eat and dance with the Japanese, but they were not willing to change the treaties that the Japanese felt were so unfair. The Japanese decided to close the Deer Cry Pavillion. A **backlash**, that is, a hostile reaction to a trend, was setting in against Westernization.

FIGURE 16-5 This woodblock print, *A concert of European music*, designed by Toyohara Chikanobu is dated 1889. It shows Japanese musicians performing at the Deer Cry Pavillion. How does their clothing fit in with the values of the creators of the pavillion?



SKILL POWER

Which of these statements is a fact and which is an opinion? How do you know?

- The Japanese felt that the treaties were unfair.
- The treaties were unfair.

When a classmate presents an opinion as if it were a fact during a horseshoe debate or class discussion, you can challenge them by asking questions such as: What is your source for this information? Can you give an example of that? Can you prove or verify that statement?

The Generations Divide

Many people in Meiji Japan were upset by changes that seemed to threaten long-held values and often caused conflicts between generations.

Eating Meat

Although most Japanese did not eat meat—strict Buddhism forbade killing and eating animals—the Meiji government encouraged it. A Japanese woman remembers her grandmother explaining

“Your honourable father has ordered his household to eat flesh The wise physician who follows the path of the Western barbarians has told him that the flesh of animals will bring strength to his weak body, and will make the children robust and clever like the people of the Western sea”

That evening, we ate solemn dinner with meat in our soup Grandmother did not join us. She always occupied the seat of honour, and the vacant place looked strange and lonely. That night I asked her why she had not come.

. . . She answered sadly. “It is more becoming for me to follow the path of our ancestors.”

My sister and I confided to each other that we liked the taste of meat. But neither of us mentioned this to anyone else; for we both loved grandmother, and we knew our disloyalty would sadden her heart.

**Sugimoto Etsu Inagaki,
A Daughter of a Samurai, 1966.**



FIGURE 16-6 About 4 percent of North Americans are vegetarian, but US surveys found that the number jumps to 10 percent in the 18–30 age group. Why do you think more young people are deciding not to eat meat?

Wearing the Topknot

For centuries, Japanese men had worn their long hair tied in topknots. With Westernization, topknots were seen as too primitive for the “new improved” Japan. The son of a samurai who wanted to study to be a doctor recalls how new hairstyle laws affected his future:

[T]he cutting of the topknot . . . was utterly abhorrent [disgusting] to every member of my family, although I myself did not feel strongly one way or the other. . . . I bowed to family pressure The [medical] school refused to accept students who persisted in the traditional style, and thus the whole future course of my life was influenced by so slight a matter as a bushy topknot.

Funakoshi Ginchin, Karate-Do, My Way of Life.

Think IT THROUGH

1. Find examples of traditional Japanese values and worldview in these two stories.
2. What pressures do young people have today to adopt certain hairstyles, fashions, or diets? What conflicts between generations sometimes result?



FIGURE 16-7 This engraving was done by Aime Humbert in 1863–1864. According to karate master, Funakoshi Ginchin: “In Okinawa, in particular, the topknot was considered a symbol . . . of manhood itself.” Do you think that people today are judged by their hairstyles? Explain.

Zoom In ➤ Japanese Influence on Western Art

While the Japanese were borrowing styles of dress and other customs from the West, Westerners were discovering Japanese art and design. When items such as fans, kites, combs, parasols, porcelain, and kimonos from Japan were displayed in London in 1854, people were amazed by their beauty. **Ukiyo-e**, the wood block prints from the floating world were especially popular. In 1885, a Japanese village complete with Japanese villagers was set up in Knightsbridge, a fashionable shopping area of London. People in North America and Europe began to decorate their homes in the Japanese style and to collect Japanese artwork and crafts. This fad for Japanese things became known as *Japonism*.

Western artists began to copy some of the Japanese techniques. The use of bold colours and unusual composition began to influence late 19th-century artists who were known as the Impressionists. *The Jack Pine*, one of the most famous paintings by Canadian painter Tom Thomson shows elements of Japanese artistic style.



FIGURE 16-8 Thomson painted *The Jack Pine* between 1916 and 1917. Look at the paintings on pages 268 and 301 and identify the Japanese influences you see in Thomson's painting.

- What aspects of the Japanese art that you have looked at in this unit do you find interesting or appealing?



FIGURE 16-9A & B

European painters were fascinated by the way human figures were depicted in Japanese art. What elements in the 1796 painting (right) known as *Oiran Hanzairu* by Japanese artist Utamaro are reflected in *The Letter* (1890–1891) painted by Mary Cassat (left)?

Returning to Old Values

Japanese society had gone through a period of rapid change. People had been made to feel embarrassed about their traditions and their lives were being altered by practices borrowed from the West. How do you think you might feel in their position?

The rapid changes involved in the Westernizing process had produced tensions in Japanese society. The Japanese were a proud and independent people and their traditions, customs, and beliefs were very important to them. Recognizing this, Japanese leaders decided that the pace of Westernization needed to be slowed down. It was time to adapt Western ways with Japanese ways. “Civilization and Enlightenment” was dropped for a new pro-Japan motto, “Western science, Japanese essence.”

Think IT THROUGH

What evidence do you see in Canada and other countries of people feeling uncomfortable with change and wanting to go back to traditions and practices from the past? What things from the past would you like to see brought back? How would these changes affect life in Canada today?

EXPLORING SOURCES

Losing Identity

The following poem is by Mi'kmaq poet Rita Joe. She has been much honoured—she has received both the Order of Canada and the National Aboriginal Achievement Award (Arts and Culture). As a child, she lived at Shubenacadie Residential School for four years.

- What does the title of the poem mean?
- What do you think Rita Joe means when she says “Your way is more powerful”?
- Rita Joe’s poem reflects the experiences of many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit children at residential schools. What connections can you make between her experiences and attitudes and those of the Japanese in the Meiji period? What connections can you make between her experience and that of the Ainu?
- “I want to put out positive images of Aboriginal people,” Rita Joe has said. “But everything I do is gentle persuasion. And that had more effect than a blockade or any other way - kindness, always.” To what extent do you think that “gentle persuasion” reflects the Canadian attitude toward problem solving?



I Lost My Talk

by Rita Joe

*I lost my talk
The talk you took away.
When I was a little girl
At Shubenacadie school.

You snatched it away:
I speak like you
I think like you
I create like you
The scrambled ballad about my world.

Two ways I talk
Both ways I say
Your way is more powerful.

So gently I offer my hand and ask,
Let me find my talk
So I can teach you about me.*

**Report of the Royal Commission on
Aboriginal People, 1996.**

FIGURE 16-10 Mi'kmaq poet Rita Joe



FIGURE 16-11 This torii gate is at the entrance of a Shinto shrine, which is now a UNESCO World Heritage site. At high tide, it appears to float. At low tide, you can walk to it. Why do you think the Japanese would choose a site like this for a Shinto shrine?

The Japanese leaders looked at the ideas or value systems that helped make Western countries strong and successful. They concluded that Western countries were unified because its peoples had a common religion—Christianity. They also observed that Westerners were loyal to their country and their elected leaders. However, the values underlying Christianity and democracy were unrelated to Japanese values. How could these ideas be adapted to the Japanese worldview?

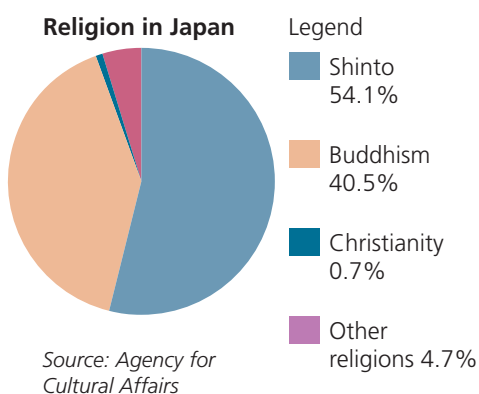
A State Religion and Emperor Worship

For centuries, both Shinto and Buddhism had been accepted religions in Japan, and many people followed a combination of both. Now Buddhism was discouraged. Shinto, the way of the gods, which was the traditional religion of Japan, was declared its official religion. And the emperor who previously had been revered, or highly respected, was given the status of a god.

Constitutional Government

Japan began to adapt its system of government to reflect a blend of old and new ways. Most Western countries had constitutions. A constitution describes the parts of the government and the powers given to each part, and often includes a bill of rights and freedoms. The Japanese wanted to design a constitution to reflect their distinct culture as well as incorporating the “best” elements of Western thinking about government. As a result, a constitutional study mission was sent abroad to do research. It decided that the Prussian constitutional model was the best.

SKILL POWER



The pie chart on the left records the religious affiliations reported by Japanese citizens in 2000. The total number of religious affiliations reported was 216 million. However, the total population of Japan when the survey was conducted, was 125 million.

1. What conclusions can you draw about people’s religious affiliations?
2. What connections can you make between the text and information on this pie chart?

FIGURE 16-12 Religion in Japan, 2000



FIGURE 16-13 This image of the presentation of the Japanese constitution in 1889 was done by Ginko Adachi in the late 19th century. What things in this picture reflect the rapid adoption of Western ideas?

In the new constitution the emperor’s powers were described as “sacred and inviolable,” that is, not to be challenged or dishonoured. Japanese citizens were granted freedom of speech and religion as well as rights to privacy, property, movement, and legal rights, among others. An Imperial Diet, or government, which consisted of a House of Peers (royalty or nobility) and a House of Representatives would be elected by the people.

As in the Edo period, the constitution supported a strong central government. Freedom of speech and freedom of the press lasted only a few years. Political parties were discouraged, in part, because having different political parties with different perspectives did not fit the Japanese worldview.

FYI...

Legal rights were extended only to Japanese men. Women could not own property, although there were some forward-minded men who did give their wives and daughters inheritances of their own.

Over to YOU

1. **a.** Using a two-column graphic organizer, show the differences between slow change and rapid change. Give examples from both the Edo and Meiji periods to illustrate your ideas. Develop a cause-and-effect chart to show the impact of rapid change on Japanese society.
- b.** In pairs, research a part of the world that is currently undergoing rapid change. Review the Building Your Skills on page 355 and plan a debate on whether rapid change (in the country you researched) is an advantage or a disadvantage for its people.
2. Some of the headings in this unit have been *A Changing Order*, *Change and Resistance*, and *Cracks in the Foundation*. Reflect on what happened in Renaissance Europe and to the Aztecs. Would these headings be appropriate for these societies? Create a Title page and Table of Contents for a book about how each of these cultures confronted change. Be sure you use key ideas from the cultures you studied.
3. Japan is said to have one foot in the past and one foot in the present. Create an illustration to show how the government of Meiji Japan exemplified this saying.
4. With a partner, create a skit based on the idea of “change and resistance” between a conservative store owner and a young person with various piercings and tattoos applying for a job.

Strong Army, Strong Country

What role did rapid change play in Japan becoming a military power with an expansionist worldview?

Do you look forward to being recognized as an adult? When do you think that the people around you will consider you an adult: when you go to university, have a job, get a driver's licence, move away from home? Countries can also be seen as growing into maturity. What changes do you think might it take for Japan to be seen as a strong, competitive nation in the eyes of the Western powers?

LINK UP

In Chapters 5 and 6, you saw that the Age of Discovery during the Renaissance led to European expansionism and imperialism. Between 1890 and 1910, there was again fierce competition among the Western powers for more colonies and power. ■

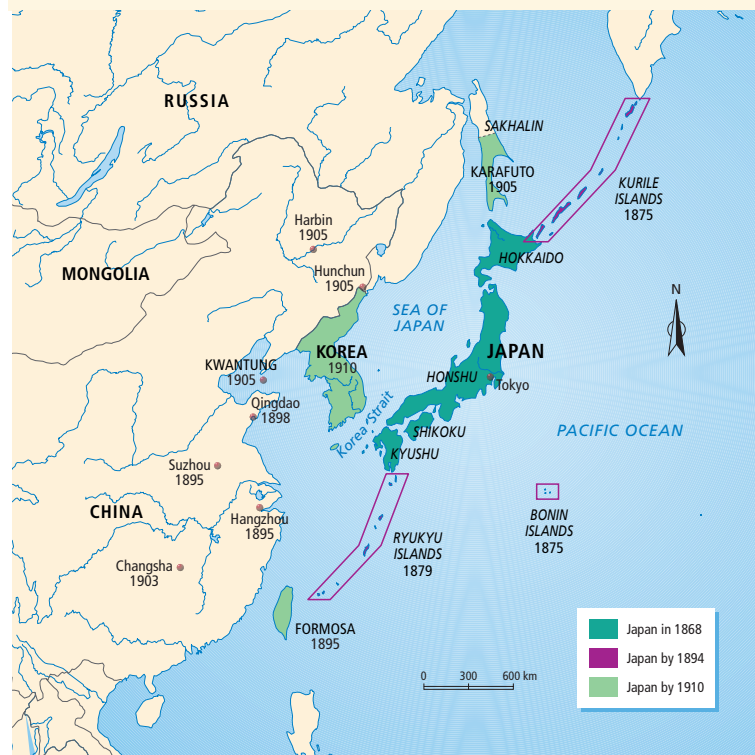
Lessons From the West

The Meiji leaders looked at the powerful countries of the West and saw three things that these countries had in common:

- ◆ control over foreign colonies or territories
- ◆ military power to defend these territories
- ◆ a strong and independent economy

What could Japan do to win respect and recognition from the West?

EXPLORING SOURCES



Japan Expands Its Territory

- Japan took over the Ryukyu, Bonin, and Kurile Islands. Based on the location of these islands, why might the government of Japan have wanted power over them?
- When Japan announced that it was taking over the Ryukyu Islands, their king begged the Chinese government for help. But the Chinese refused to get involved. Why do you think they might have made this decision?

FIGURE 16-14 This map shows the territory gained by Japan between 1894 and 1905. Estimate by how much Japan increased the territory it controlled.

The Japanese government began to take steps to strengthen its military. This would allow Japan to acquire territory and influence in Asia. Japan would also be able to protect itself against Western aggression as well as conflict with its closest neighbours, China and Russia. Yet another motto, “Wealthy Country, Strong Army” became the motto for this period in Japanese history.

The first step in Japan’s process of militarization was the Conscription Law of 1873. It required all males to serve in the military for three years and to do reserve duty for four more years. The second step was the takeover of several island territories.

Think IT THROUGH

Compare Japan’s attitude toward other countries in the Meiji period with that in the Edo period. How do you account for the differences?

FAST FORWARD

Is Hans Island Canadian or Danish?

Why have two countries been arguing over who owns a small, rocky island in the Arctic? Situated between Canada’s Ellesmere Island and Greenland, which is a territory of Denmark, Hans Island is a cause of dispute between these two countries.

Canada claims the island was discovered by the British and became part of Canada when the country became independent. However, Hans Island was not shown as a territory on a Canadian map until 1967. This came as a surprise to Denmark, who always considered the island as part of Greenland, and therefore Danish.

With Arctic ice melting, there is a chance that in the future Hans Island might be on a major shipping route between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. In addition, there is research being done to find out if there are reserves of oil or gas in the sea around the island.

In 2005, after a meeting between foreign affairs ministers, Canada and Denmark worked out a process for resolving the dispute.

Think IT THROUGH

1. Summarize the dispute between Canada and Denmark.
2. Investigate the current status of the Hans Island dispute. Visit the Government of Canada Web site or a search engine of your choice and conduct a web search, using the key term “Hans Island.” Has the dispute been resolved? How? If unresolved, what steps are being taken to promote resolution?



FIGURE 16-15 In July 2005, Canadian defence minister Bill Graham visited Hans Island and had Canadian soldiers place a Canadian flag there. Why do you think they did this even though the dispute had not yet been resolved?

War With China and Russia

As you read in the previous chapter, Western countries had grabbed a great deal of power in China through the “unequal treaties” they had forced on China’s leaders. As a result, China was so weakened that Japan feared it might collapse altogether. Japan was also worried about Russia, a Western country that was very close and had a lot of influence in China.

As you can see on the map in Figure 16-16, the closest country to Japan on the mainland is Korea; the distance between the two is less than 200 km. Korea was strategically important because it had borders with both China and Russia. When Japan became involved in wars with China and Russia, control over Korea was a central issue.

The Sino-Japanese War

The war between Japan and China was quick and decisive; Japan’s superior military strength led it to victory. In the peace treaty that followed, China gave up its claims to Korea and Japan won Taiwan and rights to China’s Liaotung Peninsula (northeast of Korea). Japan also demanded a large **indemnity**, that is, payment for its losses, and gained special economic rights in China.

The Japanese victory worried the Western powers. Russia, France and Germany stepped in and made changes in the peace treaty between Japan and China. They forced Japan to give up the Liaotung Peninsula, which Russia then promptly took over. They also forced China to give them special economic considerations.

Think IT THROUGH

What do you think might have been the Japanese reaction to the interference of the Western powers? Explain your thinking.



FIGURE 16-16 This image created by Toshihide between 1894–1895 shows the surrender of Chinese Admiral Ding Juchang after the fall of Weihaiwei. Following the surrender, the Admiral committed suicide by drinking a cup of poison. Compare his idea of honour and his behaviour with that of the 47 ronin you read about in Chapter 13.

Japan and China Today

Today, Japan and China are both powerful countries, but the past is still very much present in their relations with each other. What might Japanese history textbooks have to do with Japan getting a seat on the UN Security Council?

The Security Council is the most powerful body of the United Nations. Its primary responsibility is the maintenance of international peace and security. Any of the five permanent members, China, France, Russia, United States, and United Kingdom, can veto, that is, refuse to admit, any new members who want to join. Japan wants to join.

Textbooks and a UN Security Council Seat

Textbooks approved by the Japanese government have been criticized inside and outside Japan for their presentation of Japanese history.

A committee of Japanese historians and history educators:

The new Japanese history textbook Atarashii Rekishi Kyokasho is unfit as a teaching tool because it negates both the truth about Japan's record in colonialism and war and the values that will contribute to a just and peaceful Pacific and world community. Its chauvinistic history, in overemphasizing what its authors call the "bright side" of the nation and disregarding the "dark side," fundamentally distorts the history of Japan and Asia.

JCA-NET.

Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao:

The Chinese premier hinted that the textbook controversy would cause China to use its veto power to prevent Japan from joining the UN Security Council.

Only a country that respects history, takes responsibility for history and wins over the

trust of peoples in Asia and the world at large can take greater responsibilities in the international community.

PBS Newshour.

Conservative Japanese lawmaker Hirasawa Katsuei:

Hirasawa Katsuei answered the Chinese veto threat this way:

The problem is that [the] war is not over. The Korea peninsula is still divided. And China has become a big economic country but still they have lots of domestic problems. Chinese leaders are always wondering how to solve domestic problems. The best way is to blame Japan.

VOA News.

Think IT THROUGH

1. Examine the scholars' criticisms of the textbook. What do they object to?
2. The scholar's committee also wrote that textbooks "convey what we as a society choose to remember and represent as the core of civic knowledge. They convey to students ideas about local, national, and global citizenship, and thereby help to shape our future." If a textbook presents only what a society "chooses" to remember, what challenges does this view present for historians?
3. What reason is China giving for denying Japan a seat on the UN security council?
4. What was Hirasawa Katsuei's response to Chinese premier Wen Jiabao's comments?
5. Speculate about the historical relationship between China and Japan. If you were a historian, what might you need to do to ensure accuracy around historical events affecting both countries?

The Russo-Japanese War

How did the peace treaty after the Sino-Japanese War set the scene for further conflict between Japan and its neighbours? Japan continued to build its military strength in response to the humiliation it felt after Western interference with the treaty. It was paying close attention to Russian interest in Korea.

In 1904, the Japanese fleet launched a surprise attack on the Russian ships in Port Arthur on the disputed Liaotung Peninsula. War erupted shortly. After fierce fighting, Russia's efforts became seriously affected by the Russian Revolution, which broke out in 1905. Russia decided to enter into peace negotiations instead of continuing the war.

Five years after the end of the war, Japan annexed Korea with very little protest from Western countries. Japan had finally been recognized as an imperial power.



FIGURE 16-17 This poster advertised a performance put on by a travelling company in Australia. What aspects of this poster do you think are most surprising to people today? How does the poster show a bias in favour of the Russian side? How would you explain this?

FYI...

In 1941, Japan entered World War II with surprise attacks on British forces in Malaya and American forces in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

Over to YOU

- Gather evidence from this chapter to show that Japan had become an imperialist power. Using a web with “Japanese Empire” in the centre, present evidence of the ways it affected Japan’s interaction with other cultures.
 - Based on your web and Figure 16-16, create a map of Japan that shows Japan’s relationship with the different peoples of different areas.
 - Using a map of the world, show Canada’s relationships with other countries and cultures.
- Imagine that the United Nations is seeking information about how to deal with cultures that have been assimilated but want to return to their previous traditions. Reflect on the conditions facing First Nations in Canada and use electronic resources to research what the Ainu are doing. Prepare a brief speech to recommend that the United Nations take a certain course of action.

Into the Future

How do you feel about change in your life? Do you welcome it or does it make you uncomfortable? What are the positive and negative aspects of change? During the Meiji period, many people in Japan thought that their country was changing too quickly. For others, change was not complete enough, or fast enough, or the right type.

How did the Japanese maintain their sense of identity through the Meiji period and beyond?

Embracing Change

Some Japanese thinkers were not pleased when the process of adopting Western ways slowed down. They felt it was not enough to borrow technology or to copy military power. These people were disturbed that Japan's political and education system seemed to be returning their country to old, authoritarian ways. They argued that modern peace-loving civilizations became prosperous by giving their citizens freedoms, rights, and democracy. They criticized the Meiji regime for paying too much attention to the military and war. They worried that Japan was trying to become "a powerful state" rather than a "civilized society."

Think IT THROUGH

You have explored how a return to military values, such as discipline and loyalty, influenced the development of Japan during the Meiji period. What other Japanese values might have led to Japan following a different path?

Zoom In > Itagaki Taisuke

Itagaki Taisuke was a Japanese politician who was born a lord of the Kochi Clan during the Edo period. His career lasted from the end of the shogunate through the Meiji period. Itagaki joined the anti-shogunate forces and became a senior official during the Meiji Restoration.

Itagaki is an important figure in Japan because of his work to establish a popularly elected parliament. He felt that the Meiji leaders were not interested in promoting freedom and individual rights for Japanese citizens. He became the leader of the Freedom and People's Rights Movement, which encouraged the government to create the new constitution and the Diet (parliament). However, Itagaki believed that true democracy had not been established because only men who paid a high amount of taxes were given the right to vote. He helped form Japan's first political party, the Liberal Party. When he was attacked for his political beliefs by a man with a knife, he famously said "Itagaki may die, but liberty never!"



FIGURE 16-18 In 1953, Itagaki's picture was put on the 10 yen banknote. How does this reflect his importance to Japan?

- To what extent are Itagaki's values similar to those of Canadians today?

Most people wanted Japan to continue to adapt, borrowing useful ideas and practices from the West without violating Japan's sense of tradition. Here is a comment from an 1889 newspaper:

We recognize the excellence of Western civilization. We value the Western theories of rights, liberty and equality; and we respect Western philosophy and morals.... Above all, we esteem Western science, economics and industry. These, however, ought not to be adopted simply because they are Western; they ought to be adopted only if they can contribute to Japan's welfare.

End of an Era

When Emperor Meiji died in 1912, his leading general and the general's wife committed *junshi*, ritual suicide after the death of one's lord. Some Japanese praised the general's devotion and loyalty to the old values. Others felt his action, although sincere, belonged in past times, not in modern Japan.

FAST FORWARD

The End of Militarism

Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes.

In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency [warlike behaviour] of the state will not be recognized.



FIGURE 16-19 On September 2, 1945, Japanese officials signed the official Instrument of Surrender aboard the USS *Missouri*. Why do you think the Americans had them sign the document there?

This is Article 9, which was written into the 1947 constitution of Japan by American officials. Japan was to remain an unarmed nation that would never again pose a military threat.

However, the international situation changed quickly after the war. China and the Soviet Union—Western allies that had helped to defeat Japan—were quickly seen as America's enemies because of their communist leadership.

By the time Japan signed a peace treaty, it was considered by the US to be an ally and important to the defence of democracy world wide.

Think IT THROUGH

How was Japanese policy again influenced by American needs after World War II? What parallels can you draw to the situation with Commodore Perry a century earlier?

The 20th Century and Beyond

The militarization and imperialism that began during the Meiji era led Japan to its involvement in World War II and eventual defeat in 1945 with the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki (see page 225). In his book *A History of Japan*, historian Kenneth Henshall describes what happened next:

The term ‘miracle’ has been applied by westerners more than once to Japan’s modern history. It has been used to describe its achievements in Meiji, when in just half a century it developed from an obscure and isolated land of paddy fields to a major imperial power. It was used again just a few decades later, to describe the nation’s [Japan’s] even more rapid postwar [after WWII] rise from the ashes of defeat to become by some measures the wealthiest on the planet, and by any measures a huge economic superpower.

So how did this latest “miracle” come about? Henshall and others point to factors like the following to explain Japan’s economic success:

- ◆ the ability of the Japanese to learn from others and to adapt and improve these “borrowings”
- ◆ the importance of learning and education
- ◆ the Japanese desire to make their country powerful and respected in the world
- ◆ the willingness of the Japanese to work hard and make sacrifices for the greater good of the group and society in general

Japanese management practices were studied by other countries who were eager to copy their success. The strong Japanese economy led to prosperity and consumerism. By the late 60s the goal was a car, a colour TV and an air-conditioner in every Japanese home.

Think IT THROUGH

How did the attitudes and values of the Meiji era continue to influence the behaviour of the Japanese far into the 20th century?



FIGURE 16-20 *Manga* (“mun-guh”), Japanese comics, and *anime* (“uh-nee-may”), Japanese animation, have millions of devoted fans around the world. Are you or anyone you know fans? What is the appeal of these forms of popular culture?



FIGURE 16-21 These Japanese teenagers are known as “Harajuku girls.” They gather with their friends at a shopping and hangout area where what has been called “a strange mixture of Hello Kitty, hip-hop and the infamous British punk” style is popular. In what ways are Canadian teens similar to the Harajuku girls?

Japanese Youth Today

The younger generation who grew up in prosperous times has been accused of rejecting traditional Japanese values, of being absorbed in their own interests and peer groups, of identifying less with their community or society.

- ◆ Young people in Japan no longer expect to find “lifelong jobs” when they leave school. A growing number of them live at home with their parents.
- ◆ Many young people have become “freeters” with wild clothing and colourful hair who drift from one part-time job to another.
- ◆ There are a growing number of reports of problems such as violence, bullying, and absenteeism in Japanese schools.

Just as Japanese popular culture like *manga* and *anime* spread around the world, the youth of Japan are being influenced by foreign, mostly American, music and fashion. Hip hop music, for example, has become very popular. According to Vanessa Altman-Siegel who writes about Japanese youth culture, “The exposure to Afro-American culture has prompted young Japanese to explore injustice within their own society. Discrimination against minority groups like the Ainu [sic]...and Koreans living in Japan, have [sic] recently be acknowledged...” Some people, however, complain that young hip hop fans are simply copying a foreign culture and have lost their Japanese identity.

Over to YOU

- a. In a small group, brainstorm the ways people show their identity. Find evidence in this chapter that the Japanese identity combines old traditions with new influences. Using a medium of your choice, collaborate to create an illustration of your concept of the Japanese identity.
 - b. Using the same medium, create an illustration of the Canadian identity. Give a short class presentation explaining your illustrations, and pointing out the similarities and differences.
2. “Change itself is a tradition in Japan.” What do you think this means? Find three examples and write a paragraph to explain.
- a. Discuss circumstances when people might be forced to conceal their identity. Why might they need to do this? How do you think it would feel? Would the outward appearance of change necessarily reflect real change?
 - b. Create a role-play to show how people have been forced to change their identities and how they feel about it.
4. Do you think the differences between the young and old in Japan are the same as in Canada? Discuss in small groups and report to a class discussion.

Explore the Big Ideas

1. a. Complete the organizer below to help you identify the results of intercultural contact between Meiji Japan and the West.

| How did the Japanese react and respond to . . . | Result |
|---|--------|
| 1. Western customs, rituals, and styles? | |
| 2. Western religious frameworks and beliefs? | |
| 3. Western forms of government? | |
| 4. Western technology, including military technology? | |

- b. Write a paragraph answering this question: What does Japan's experience tell us about the ways intercultural contact affects a culture's sense of identity?

2. Suggest five items representing the Edo period and five items representing the Meiji period that you would put in a museum exhibit representing Japan. Compare these suggestions with the list you made in Chapter 1 for the Middle Ages. Explain the significance of each artifact in telling people about change and the Japanese culture.

3. a. Find and consider three mottos about cultural change from this chapter.

- b. Select three distinct time periods in your life and make up a motto for each of them. These mottos should reflect

your changing worldview. Use appropriate technology to present your ideas.

4. Arrange to interview seniors in your community. The focus of your interview should be the changes they have noticed during their lifetime and how they responded to the change. (See Skill Power, interviewing tips on page 345.)

5. a. Write a brief newspaper editorial from the perspective of a Japanese person who does not like the changes occurring during the Meiji period.

- b. Write a brief newspaper editorial from the perspective of a Japanese person who likes the changes occurring during the Meiji period.

- c. Write a fair-minded account of the changes during this period. A fair-minded account gives fair consideration to alternative positions. It tries to avoid biases.

6. "Civilization and Enlightenment," "Western science, Japanese essence," "Wealthy Country, Strong Army" were three mottos that were adopted by Japan. Create a motto for Canada.

As the minister of foreign affairs, it is your job to make a presentation to the prime minister of Canada. Your task is to provide advice on this question: ***Should Canada adopt a foreign policy of isolationism or a policy of rapid adaptive response?***

In your presentation you need to provide sufficient detail so the prime minister can consider both options and make an informed decision. Your presentation is to be based on the experience of Japan with each of the two policy options. You will need to include a visual.

Step One

Use the example of Japan during the Edo period to illustrate what it means to take an isolationist position. Evaluate the impact of Japan's choice of pursuing an isolationist policy using at least three elements of the worldviews icon.

Step Two

Use the example of Japan during the Meiji period to illustrate the impacts of pursuing a policy of rapid adaptive response. Use the same elements of the worldview icon in your evaluation that you used in Step One.

A comparison chart of the two positions of isolationism and rapid adaptive response would be a way of providing illustrative examples of the two responses for the prime minister.

Step Three

Based on the two experiences from Japan's history, make a recommendation to the prime minister of Canada whether Canada should adopt an isolationist policy, or a policy of rapid adaptation, which would mean engagement and open interaction with other countries. Your recommendation can take the form of an oral report or a one-page written report.

You need to provide sufficient detail to state why the recommendation is the best position Canada should take on the issue. The prime minister must be confident that the policy chosen is based on a thorough examination of the issue.

As the minister of foreign affairs you need to be prepared to debate the issue in the House of Commons.



Which foreign policy is best for Canada: isolationism, or rapid adaptive response?