

Asian history essay sample

[Parts of the World](#), [European Union](#)



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Q1.

Examine how and why Japan was able to shift from the Tokugawa to the Meiji era politically while launching an unprecedented leap into industrialization and even imperialism in little more than a generation.

The most important distinction to make between the Tokugawa and Meiji era from a political standpoint was the absence of the shogunate. Once Emperor Meiji took over, he claimed political power back to the throne and shut down the feudal system. This was done mainly to keep up with the industrialized, Western political system and economy that they had seen with their increased presence in Japan; seeing that imperial rule would be the only thing to get Japan up to that level, the Meiji Restoration began.

Industrialization was accelerated dramatically through reforms to the military and the construction of shipyards and factories, as the Japanese strove furiously to keep up with the rest of the world, American in particular.

Q2.

Examine the foreign policy challenges that ultimately overwhelmed the Qing Dynasty and weakened China reputation as a major nation, making its sovereignty theoretical.

China's foreign policy was always confrontational and arrogant, something that did not engender them to visiting ambassadors, a stance of isolationism which led others to distrust and dislike them. The kowtow was one concept that Western diplomats fought against, as they did not want to show fealty to the Chinese Emperor over their own kings. The Treaty of Nanjing was one of the first policies that showed just how weak and humiliated China could be – once the British defeated the Chinese in the First Opium War, China proved that it could be beaten. This showcased just how inadequate the Qing government was, leaving many people dissatisfied with their rule.

Q3.

Trace at length some of the cultural relationships in art, literature, and style of life between Japan and the West in the decades after the Meiji Restoration.

After the Meiji Restoration, the West continued to influence Japan not only in terms of military power and industrialization, but art as well. Western painting styles were found in the works of famous painters like Kobayashi Kikochiya. Furthermore, a new leftist movement was forming in Japan, with ideals of social welfare and male suffrage being demonstrated through peaceful protest. Literature also experienced substantial changes, such as the introduction of free verse poetry, Romanticism and Realism to the Japanese literary canon. Political radicalism also came in the form of the works of Ineko Sata, Takiji Kobayashi and others, writing about class warfare and advocating change in the system.