

The rise of japan essay sample



The reason why Japan was able to modernize its industry, military and government to the point where they were able to compete with the west, while the rest of Asia lagged behind was due to the fact that they were flexible. They realized that in order to become more powerful than the west they needed to modernize and get their technology, industry, military and government up to date so they could improve and become more advanced than the other world powers. They knew that if they continued living as they were (under their strict and ancient ways of life and traditions) they were not going to become anything significant, but instead end up defeated and ruled by the west (who they despised).

Japan had an emperor and they had the same values as the Chinese, they too believed in Confucianism. It became evident to the Japanese that if they had the same beliefs, values and way of life as the Chinese, they would end up in the same boat as them and never be a world power. This recognition of what they had to change led to new developments. They changed the system of government from the Tokugawa Bakafu having complete political power to a small group of Nobles and former samurai.

In 1853 Japan was a feudal country. The stage of development they were at was that of the renaissance period in Europe, which meant they were approximately 600 years behind the west. Japan's determination to succeed and become superior and powerful was so strong that in only 40 years, they were on the same level as the west.

Japan decided to negotiate with the west. They knew that if they did not negotiate they would not be able to rise and meet their goals of becoming a

world power. However, by doing so they lost extraterritoriality and the right to Tariffs. In the 1860's Japan bought arms from the west, this was a big deal because it meant that not only was the west willing to sell arms to Japan, but Japan faced the fact that they needed help and got it from the west. Mr. Heizeberg quoted that " Japan liked the West only to get rid of the West." Their complete and utter hatred toward the west was so strong that they learnt from them and used their ideas to later defeat them. On the third of January 1868 the Tokugawa family was defeated and the emperor was put in power once more. The time when Emperor Mutsuhito gets put in power (1868-1912) is known as the Meiji Restoration.

This causes the country to change completely, both governmentally and socially. This period was not quite a revolution because a new system was not put in place. In 1868 the imperial Charter Oath took place. This was an oath that the country would modernize and ultimately copy the west. So as supposed to Japan being Zenophobic they were becoming Zenophelic which was extremely dramatic. They adopt many Western things such as: Their music; culture; taste; automobiles; and lifestyle. Japan became a fan of " fads". They devoted almost all their time to copying the West. In 1869 they modeled their navy after Britain's. That same year they built a telegraph and in 1872 they developed a postal system to that of the British. They Copied France with four major things: Their Army (1869); Their Primary School System (1872); Their police force (1874); and finally their Judicial system (1872). They copied the U. S. with their primary school system as well (1879), their National banking System (1812) and their Sapporo Agricultural College dedicated to science and farming (1879). Japan then copied the

Germans Army (1878) and the Belgium Banking System (1882). Japan needed a lot of agricultural technology for they had little land and a growing population so they needed to be as efficient as possible.

Japan copied all of the West's good ideas and advanced technologicly and at one stage was looked at as an equal. The way I see this situation is every one country or empire was building a ladder of power, all using their own ideas and some aiming to go in different directions. The West's ladder was aimed at power whereas say, China's was not. Japan saw that their ladder wasn't working or going in the direction they wanted so they looked to see whose was the closest to power and climbed theirs. The tallest ladder being the West's. So Japan skipped all the trial and error of finding the biggest and the best and built each rung from their observations of what worked for the west. Using strategies for development that have not been developed in the environment within which they are being used means that they are not in a direct relationship to the culture of that environment which could create in itself a disconnection between the people and their government or ruling body. Japan was willing to compromise its peoples way of life in order to fulfil its own ambitions.

The unfolding of events that lead to these developments were the result of an intention of the Japanese to become a world power which eventually ended in war. The reason japan was able to compete with the west was because it recognized that western influences were slowly spreading around the globe and it chose to prepare itself to be able to compete with the West instead of those influences being out of their control. Ultimately Japan had to compromise the quality of life it was trying to protect.