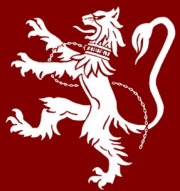




PEA  MUN

Chair:  
Jiro Mizuno

Co-Chair:  
Michael Bamah

# Historical Crisis Committee

## Meiji Cabinet, 1870

PEAMUN VIII  
October 30, 2016

## **Introduction from the Chair**

*Dear Delegates,*

Welcome to PEAMUN VIII! My name is Jiro Mizuno. I am a 4 year senior at Phillips Exeter Academy and will be the chair for this year's Historical Crisis Committee along with my friend, Michael Bamah. The topic for this year is the Meiji Cabinet, Kyoto 1870. We are both very excited to be able to chair a committee with such an interesting topic and look forward to seeing you debate passionately and diplomatically. We hope that with your endless enthusiasm and your intense participation, this year's conference will be a memorable, valuable, and not to mention, fun experience you will all remember for years.

In this committee, you will be focusing on the remarkable development of Japan from a backward feudal state, to a modern power capable to being equal with other Western powers. While the central topic of this debate will be centered upon the modernization of the nation, subtopics will such but not limited to: reforming the Shogunate into a modern government, reforming the feudal military into a respectable and strong force, strengthening the economy to bring prosperity to the Empire, and decide upon a foreign affairs plan to survive in the Age of Imperialism.

It is essential to explore alternate perspectives that are not necessarily grounded in Western culture, and attempt to understand them in this global world. We also believe it is vital for delegates to research the lengths at which nation-states will take to avoid foreign domination and survive. Nineteenth century Japan is a great place to start for such goals.

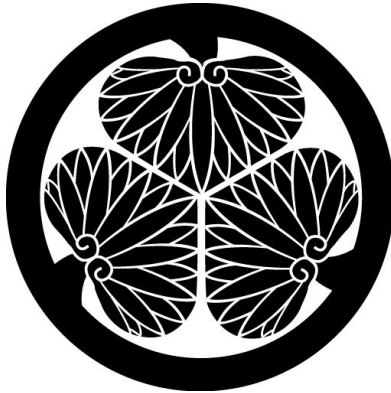
We hope PEAMUN will improve your abilities as a delegate, but also expand your perspectives even further and promote your development as a global citizen. If you have any questions, feel free to ask! Contact myself and Michael Bamah at: [jmizuno@exeter.edu](mailto:jmizuno@exeter.edu) and [mbamah@exeter.edu](mailto:mbamah@exeter.edu)

Thank you for your time and dedication. I wish you the best of luck and hope to see you at Exeter soon!

Sincerely,

Jiro Mizuno, Chair

## Historical Context



Since the Battle of Sekigahara in 1600, the Tokugawa family maintained a Shogunate from the city of Edo (later Tokyo).<sup>1</sup> A Shogunate was a feudal government led by the military representative of the Emperor: the Shogun. However in reality, the Emperor only served as a figurehead and all real power was held by the Shogunate.<sup>2</sup> Fearful of the possibility of expanding Western influence in the form of Christian missionaries, the Tokugawa Shogunate imposed a strict policy of closed borders, only allowing Chinese, Korean, and Dutch merchants to trade with Japan. And for two hundred years, Japan lived in blissful isolation. But everything changed when the United States appeared on an iron frigate.<sup>3</sup>

On July 8th, 1853, Commodore Perry of the United States Navy sailed into Edo Bay aboard the *Susquehanna*, shocking the entirety of Japan. Perry, on behalf of the US government, forced Japan to trade with the United States and opened a number of Japanese ports. Soon other foreign powers such as



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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.nakasendoway.com/the-story-of-the-b>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.pacificwar.org.au/foundationJapmilag>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.nippon.com/en/features/c00104/>

Britain, France, Russia, and the Netherlands forced Japan to sign their own Treaties of Amity and Commerce, or as it was known to most Japanese, the Unequal Treaties. Ordinary Japanese people suffered under harsh economic conditions under the oppressive treaties and the economy deteriorated. Unrest was universal and unprecedented.<sup>4</sup>



Listening to the suffering of his subjects, in 1863, Emperor Komei issued a decree for the first time in many centuries: “Expel the Barbarians.” And with that order, violence exploded. Screaming, “*Sonno-joi!* (Revere the Emperor, expel the barbarians!)” foreigners were cut down by rogue samurai in various ports and lords fired upon any passing foreign vessel in the seas. In response, unimpressed foreign powers quickly sent gunships to both bombard and occupy Japanese towns. The Shogunate was humiliated.<sup>5</sup>

Japan was powerless and needed to change. If it did not it was destined to face foreign domination. Observing the fatal weakness of the Shogunate, individual domains (feudal lordships under the rule of the Shogunate) began to conspire to transform Japan. Of the many, the most notable were the Satsuma and Choshu domains. Burying their centuries old feuds, they agreed to band together and stand against the weak Shogunate. By quickly taking in both Western weapons and tactics, they eventually built and boasted a westernized military. The Satsuma-Choshu rebels saw the Shogunate as weak and instead desired for a full restoration of Imperial powers to lead Japan. Tensions between the Tokugawa Shogunate and the

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<sup>4</sup> [http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/special/japan\\_1750\\_perry.htm](http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/special/japan_1750_perry.htm)

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.samurai-archives.com/snj.html>

Satsuma-Choshu alliance grew until on January 27, 1868, a full-blown battle erupted on the fields of Toba-Fushimi. The Boshin War had begun.



Empowered by their Westernized military, Satsuma-Choshu crushed the Shogunate forces and before long, even gained the honor of hoisting the Imperial flag, declaring themselves as the true representatives of the Emperor. Winning victory after victory, Tokugawa loyalists were chased up to the most Northern island of Hokkaido, where the loyalists tried to establish their own independent republic and failed. By the end of 1869, the 200 year long Tokugawa Shogunate was over. The Emperor was victorious and a new age awaited Japan. Will Japan rise to become Asia's first modern superpower? Or will they fall to colonization just like their Chinese counterparts? The future is up to you, delegates!<sup>6</sup>

### **Aim of the Conference**

As Japan emerges from its civil war it faces a new future. How can Japan reform its feudal government into a strong, modernized nation capable of resisting foreign colonization?

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<sup>6</sup> <http://asianhistory.about.com/od/japan/fl/The-Boshin-War-in-Japan-1868-69.htm>



Delegates are gathered in the Imperial Palace in Kyoto as the nation begins to stabilize in the aftermath of its civil war.

The Dais hopes that delegates will both research and think critically about the future of the nation and find new ideas on possible ways to modernize. There are countless aspects of modernization to be discussed within a limited timeframe, so the dais will limit most discussion to the formation of his Majesty's government. Technically, this resolution is NOT the Constitution of Japan and should be treated as such. Instead, it should be thought of as a provisional statement by the Meiji government in regards to the future and the basis for later Constitutions.



## Topics

### Governmental Reform:

The first topic on the list is the reform of the government from the fallen Shogunate to a modern form. Given the nature of the Restoration, it is **absolutely necessary** that the Emperor is the head of our state. Beyond that however, everything is possible. Delegates will decide what the future of Japan will be with the political nature of its government.

### Shogunate Structure:

The Shogunate is a form of feudal government ruled by the ruling class, aka the Samurai. They consisted of as much as 6-8% of the total population of Japan. In return for the right to rule and tax their inherited lands known as domains, Daimyos (Samurai lords) provided military support and homage to the Shogun.<sup>7</sup>

As delegates continue to ponder about the shape of the new government, it is especially important for them to realize that not everything is a clean, blank canvas. In total, more than 250 domains were ruled by various Daimyos with their own armies, with a good part of the many ruled by the many branches of the House of Tokugawa. Understandably, the Samurai will try to resist any form of change that will threaten their power and should be appeased or crushed in anyway possible to ensure the success of the new regime.

A previous government has existed and therefore any new government **must** address the reform or abolition of various functions of the former Shogunate.

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<sup>7</sup> <http://asianhistory.about.com/od/glossaryps/g/GlosShogun.htm>



### European Examples:

#### United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland:

The British Empire in this time period is one of the greatest, if not the ultimate, superpower of this era with one of largest empires in the world. It is a parliamentary constitutional monarchy. The British monarchs rule their kingdom as the heads of state and the parliament, split into the House of Lords and the House of Commons, holds most the legislative and executive powers. The members of the House of Lords are selected through hereditary appointment while the members of the House of Commons are elected by boroughs, or electoral administrative divisions. While the monarch technically holds executive power and Parliament holds legislative power, in practice, the parliamentary leader known as the Prime Minister and his cabinet advises the monarch to make executive decisions, effectively making the PM the executive power.<sup>8</sup>

Considering Japan position with its Emperor, the United Kingdom may be a favorable model for those wishing to embrace a representative democracy with highly limited monarchical powers. However, the United Kingdom model is also highly centralized and if pursued, requires the abolition of semi-independent domains into provinces directly controlled by the central government.

#### German Reich:

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[http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20121015000000/http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Governmentcitizensandrights/UKgovernment/Centralgovernmentandthemonarchy/DG\\_073438](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20121015000000/http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Governmentcitizensandrights/UKgovernment/Centralgovernmentandthemonarchy/DG_073438)

With the defeat of the Second French Empire in the Franco-Prussian War, Germany has become the emerging superpower on the Continent. The German Empire is a federal monarchy: a form of government where a single monarch heads over a federation of states. While in theory this means that Prussia and the various other German principalities are equals, in practice Prussia dominates the Empire. The legislative branch is split into the Bundesrat, a federal council made up of set numbers of representatives from each principality, and the Reichstag, a parliament elected directly by the people.<sup>9</sup> All laws must be approved by both houses to be made into formal law. Executive power is vested in the Kaiser, who was assisted by his chancellor, who acted as supreme commander of chief of all armed forces, the final arbiter of all foreign affairs decisions, and finally held the power to dissolve the Reichstag at any time.<sup>10</sup>

Overall, Germany's model is favorable to those that believe Imperial power should be concentrated to a select ruling class including the Emperor and his closest confidants, while also allowing some form of democracy to the common people. This form may also be favorable to those that believe that semi-independent domains should be federated instead of completely controlled by the central government.

### Russian Empire:

As the biggest land empire in the world, Russia is a power to be reckoned with in the East and should be considered as a possible option. Russia is an absolute monarchy ruled by the all powerful Tsar. All power is centered around the Tsar. Possessing far more power than constitutional monarchs, he is unbounded by any form of legislative counterforce, and even

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<sup>9</sup> [http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub\\_document.cfm?document\\_id=1826](http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=1826)

<sup>10</sup> [https://www.bundestag.de/htdocs\\_e/artandhistory/history/parliamentarism/empire](https://www.bundestag.de/htdocs_e/artandhistory/history/parliamentarism/empire)

holds religious sway. While a State Council exists, it is mostly comprised of people the Tsar trusts and primarily runs the day to day lawmaking in the empire. In theory, the Tsar acts as a father for all Russians and therefore knows the best path for its people. The nobility and the state bureaucracy is expected to carry out the will of the Tsar.<sup>11</sup>

Those who believe in the complete restoration of Imperial powers to the point where the Emperor holds all sway may consider this arrangement. Without the trappings of legislation and democracy, the Emperor may be able to enact all his reforms swiftly and quickly in favor of Japan's future. The centralized religious nature may also help shift loyalty from the shogun to the divine nature of the Emperor and secure the populace.

#### United States of America/French Third Republic:

Both the US and France in this era are republics with the ultimate, executive power being vested in the democratically elected Presidents. Legislative power is held by their respective congresses/parliaments. While delegates may choose to pursue such governmental forms, they should also be reminded that the Emperor **must** play a vital role in state affairs, ceremonial or not. It should also be noted that as Japan has a large existing ruling aristocracy (the Samurai), a democracy will be difficult to form in the midst of many who fear for their positions.

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<http://ic.galegroup.com/ic/whic/ReferenceDetailsPage/ReferenceDetailsWindow?zid=dcc9d0d206242325281cfeee7a64562f&action=2&catId=&documentId=GALE%7CCX3048600073&userGroupName=seat24826&jsid=887400bc157db40d4db452da4506fcb4>

## **Military Reform:**

To protect ourselves from foreign domination, we must have a strong military. If we do not modernize fast the West will crush Japan sooner or later. Delegates will need quickly figure out how to modernize the military fast enough and come up with possible steps and solutions necessary to create a new, modern army and navy.



## Shogunate Military/Samurai:

As the Shogunate is based upon feudal lord-vassal relations, the Shogunate is heavily decentralized with each domain having it's own army and levy. Samurai, the ruling class, especially dominated the military. Utilizing primarily bows, katanas, spears, and archaic matchlock guns, the Shogunate military was mostly obsolete. However, realizing its technological disparity, the Shogunate had attempted to modernize by calling in French military

instructors to help reform the army.<sup>12</sup> Another highly important aspect of the old Shogunate order was the exclusive right of the Samurai to bear arms. This aspect of the old shogunate could cause many problems in the process of reforming the military.<sup>13</sup>

#### Conscription vs Volunteer Army:

Manpower is essential in creating a strong army. But how will the Emperor acquire subjects ready to die for the Empire? Two choices are available for delegates to conceivably choose from. Conscription of anyone capable of military service, or a complete volunteer army available to anyone who wishes to join the military.

As the standard form of recruitment for most nations throughout this era, conscription allows the government to acquire a wide manpower pool from which the nation can pull men from in times of war. It could also have a humbling effect of uniformity within the various classes within Japan. However, it is also noted that such a military may also cause a dip in morale compared to volunteer militaries simply because of the involuntary aspect of conscription.

A volunteer military on the other hand allows soldiers to volunteer for service. While, in effect, a volunteer military causes higher morale in theory, it also results in a far smaller military compared to a conscripted army.

Delegates should think critically of Japan's position on both the domestic and foreign stage to decide effectively.

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<sup>12</sup> [http://www.liquisearch.com/french\\_military\\_mission\\_to\\_japan\\_1867%E2%80%931868/history](http://www.liquisearch.com/french_military_mission_to_japan_1867%E2%80%931868/history)

<sup>13</sup> <http://www-personal.umich.edu/~malokofs/SCA/Persona/History/samurai.html>

### Military Education/Industries:

Another vital part of the military is the question of how Japan can improve upon the quality of its military officers and its military capabilities. A soldier is only as good as the weapon he holds and the officer he is commanded by.

Japanese officers in both the Imperial Army and the Imperial Navy must be educated in modern western tactics, or risk killing thousands of brave Japanese men in pointless battles. To do so delegates will need to think of ways in which Japanese officers both now and in the future can be educated properly.

Various possible solutions include the following: founding military academies, hiring foreign military instructors, sending young Japanese men overseas to specific countries, asking for formal military assistance from Western nations, and even conducting war games with Western militaries. Delegates must do everything possible in order for Japan to be ready for any form of war.

While matchlocks guns, pre-rifling firearms, had been made in various parts of Japan since the Sengoku-era, Japan still lacks significant military industries for the creation of modern armies. Delegates must figure out how to supply Japan's brave soldiers with the finest equipment available. To achieve this end, delegates should be prepared to find ways to acquire such material. Both guns and ships are needed for the Army and Navy respectively. Possible solutions include relying purely on arms exports or using a significant part of Japan's budget to create Japan's own arms/shipbuilding industry.



## Economy:

As the ancient Confucian saying follows, “Enrich the country, strengthen the military.” Without a strong, industrialized economy, there can be no military. Japan must undergo its own industrial revolution and rapidly modernize its industries. While socialism seems to be gaining ground in Europe, for now Free Market Capitalism appears to be the better option for Japan to create a strong economy.



## Shogunate Economy:

Before the Boshin War, Japanese society was divided into four castes in increasing importance: Merchants, Craftsmen, Farmers, and finally Samurai.<sup>14</sup> While Samurai formed the ruling class, farmers were seen as a vital part of the nation as taxes and commerce was conducted via rice. Craftsmen were ranked third as they still produced goods into the economic system.

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<sup>14</sup> <http://asianhistory.about.com/od/japan/p/ShogJapanClass.htm>

Merchants were classified last, because they profited only from the transfer of goods around the country and never produced their own goods. However, due to the stable, peaceful rule of the previous Tokugawa Shogunate, trade within Japan boomed and so merchants grew wealthy forming powerful merchant guilds and rivaling some Samurai in wealth.<sup>15</sup> Overall, social mobility was highly limited during this time period. This issue should be addressed by delegates while reforming Japan for the future.<sup>16</sup>

#### Promoting the Industrial Revolution:

For Japan to become a strong nation capable of being equal with the West, it must have a strong economy. To promote an industrial revolution in the country, delegates must figure out how to energize the economy.

Possible solutions include the following: creating “model” factories for Japanese entrepreneurs to emulate, create a Central Bank capable of funding industries, hiring foreign specialists, and funding infrastructure across the country.

The government should also specify which industries will be focused upon by the government, as resources are always limited and delegates must prioritize. Possibilities include: mining, shipbuilding, steelmaking, textiles, arms, machines, agriculture, and chemicals.

Education for all citizens should also be considered to create a capable workforce.

#### Competition vs Monopolies:

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<sup>15</sup> <http://www.hierarchystructure.com/feudal-hierarchy-of-japan/>

<sup>16</sup> [http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/special/japan\\_1000ce\\_samurai.htm](http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/special/japan_1000ce_samurai.htm)

The Emperor's government should also choose between promoting monopolies or small businesses. While monopolies may be useful in solidifying our emerging industries into a few powerhouses, it can also crush competition that could cause stagnation in the long run. Historically, Japan promoted multiple *Zaibatsu* corporations that held significant sway over a majority of the national economy.<sup>17</sup> They were only broken up at the end of WWII when the occupying American government decided such massive corporations with influence would be inherently undemocratic. It is also important to remember that Japan at this current moment does not have a modern economy to regulate yet so it maybe advantageous to let conglomerates form and consume their competition. However, delegates should consider limiting such competition in interest of small businesses competing against each other to promote the entire economy as a whole.<sup>18</sup>

### **Foreign Affairs:**

Finally, it is crucial for delegates to consider the ever-shifting political landscape of the world in 1870, and consider where Japan stands in the midst of it all. It is the Age of Imperialism. Western empires stretch across the globe rapidly filling up the undiscovered parts of the world with flags and claimed lands. Having lost the Opium Wars, China is being sliced apart by many European nations including the following: Britain, France, Germany, and Russia. Who are Japan's friends and enemies and where does the Empire's future lie? These questions will be essential for the very survival of Japan.

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<sup>17</sup> <http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Zaibatsu>

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.campdenfb.com/article/japanese-zaibatsu>

Plans to ally and annex countries do not need to be announced publicly in the final document and can instead be included as secret protocols.

#### Alliances:

Japan cannot survive alone in the cutthroat world and therefore needs friends. Delegates should consider which nations would be most beneficial to Japan's national interests and suggest to deepen the friendship between the respective country's head of state and the Emperor. Please put into consideration each country's relation to Japan prior to the Restoration, its military power, and its territorial ambitions.

#### Imperialism:

It is the Age of Imperialism. Japan must decide whether to pursue conquest and colonization, or instead look inwards and promote our defenses. Delegates, you must consider this critical question and if imperialism is to be pursued, suggest possible annexation targets. Historically, Japan pursued a path of imperialism and warred with both China and Russia to prove its worth and succeeding in becoming the first modernized Asian power. While imperialism can be perceived as immoral, it is also vital to consider the Japan's position. If Japan cannot strengthen its position internationally, it will be subject to foreign influence. However it can also pursue peaceful coexistence at the cost of limited growth and power. The future is up to you delegates!