

# L8 & L9: The Japanese Exception

## Agenda

### Objective:

To understand...

1. European involvement in Japan.
2. How Japan resisted imperialism
3. How Japan became an imperial power.

### Schedule:

1. Lecture, Film, and Discussion

## Homework:

1. Read literary selections critiquing imperialism Due L10 (Wed 12/18)
2. Unit Test Thursday 12/19
3. Rough Draft Due Fri 12/20

# Brainstorm!

- What do you remember about Japan before the 1800s?





# Brainstorm!

- What do you know about Japan today?



# Our Question

- How does Japan move from an agricultural and traditional society in the early 1800s to the fully modern society that we know today, and what is the role of imperialism in this process?



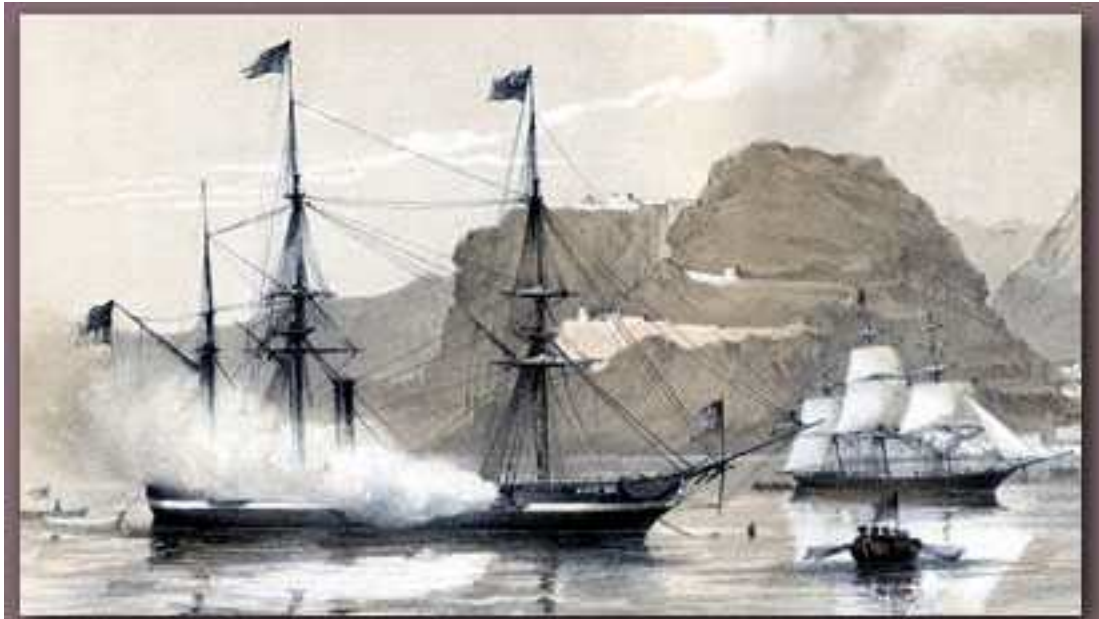


# Commodore Perry and the Opening of Japan

- First real contact with the West comes in 1853 when U.S. President Millard Fillmore sends Commodore Matthew Perry to Tokyo to demand a treaty permitting trade.
- Commodore Perry was permitted by the President to enforce his demands using the military.



# American Perspective of Perry's Arrival





# Japanese Perspective of Perry's Arrival





# The Opening of Japan (Bakumatsu)

- When Perry arrives on the shores of Japan, the Japanese call his ships “black ships of evil appearance.”
- Japan’s initial response is one of xenophobia.
  - Japanese shoguns initially refuse trade, want nothing to do with the West
- To show their willingness to use force to get their demands met, the United States fire warning cannon shots.



# The Opening of Japan (Bakumatsu)



- These warning shots, cause the shoguns to rethink the government's response.
- The shogun, without the emperor's approval, sign an agreement with Perry opening up Japan to trade.
- In Japanese this is called Bakumatsu, or “end of the curtain”

# The Opening of Japan (Bakumatsu)

- Some members of the samurai class, the Shishi, are angry at the shogun's actions and that they did not get the consent of the Emperor to sign the treaty.
- They believe that Japan is sacred, that the emperor is a god, and that they must expel the barbarians.



Image expressing the “Expel the Barbarians” sentiment



# The Opening of Japan (Bakumatsu)

- The Shishi begin to murder foreigners.
- The response from the west is to fire cannons at the Japanese people.
- This brutality, defeats the Shishi cause.
- Japan becomes fully open to Western trade.



# The Opening of Japan (Bakumatsu)

- So far, how would you describe Japanese resistance to imperialism?
- What similarities might it share with other acts of resistance?
- Why is it not successful?





# Japan: Now What?

- What should Japan do now?
- Given what we have seen in our case studies so far, and given the particular situation in Japan, what plan would you propose for Japan to resist the West?





# New Forces of Resistance

- Some members of the samurai class begin to realize that if they wish to resist the west, they must westernize. If they wish to drive out the barbarians, they must adopt the methods of the barbarians.
- They learn this from the Chinese experience
- These men travel abroad and begin to learn Western culture, customs, government, and technology



Members of the first Japanese Embassy  
to Europe

# Japan Erupts into Civil War



Allegory of the new fighting the old

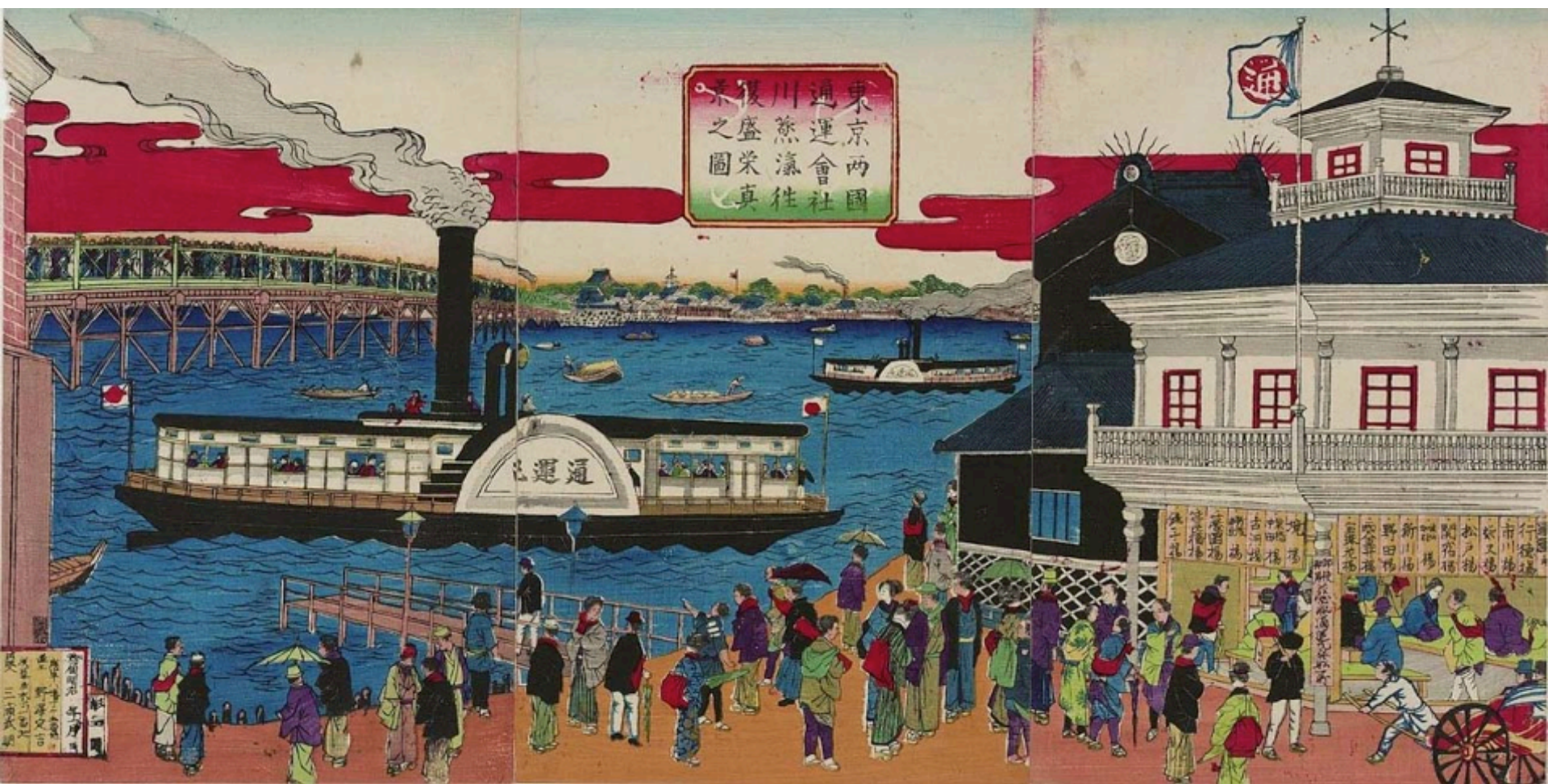
- When they return they launch a civil war against the ruling Tokugawa Shogunate.
- Armed with Western technology, they take down the government.
- They put up a new emperor, a 16 year old who they call Meiji, meaning enlightened ruler.

# Meiji Restoration

- Over the next 40 years this new government leads Japan from a country of peasant rice farms to a major economic powerhouse that stands on equal footing.
- They do this through a process of Westernization called the Meiji Restoration (1868-1908)
- In 1868 Japan finds itself attempting to resist imperialism by building an entirely new government, society, and economy but on Western models.
- Film Clip: *The Pacific Century*
  - From [www.pacificcentury.org](http://www.pacificcentury.org)  
Segment 3 (3:18 to end),  
Segment 4 (all), and  
Segment 5 (all)

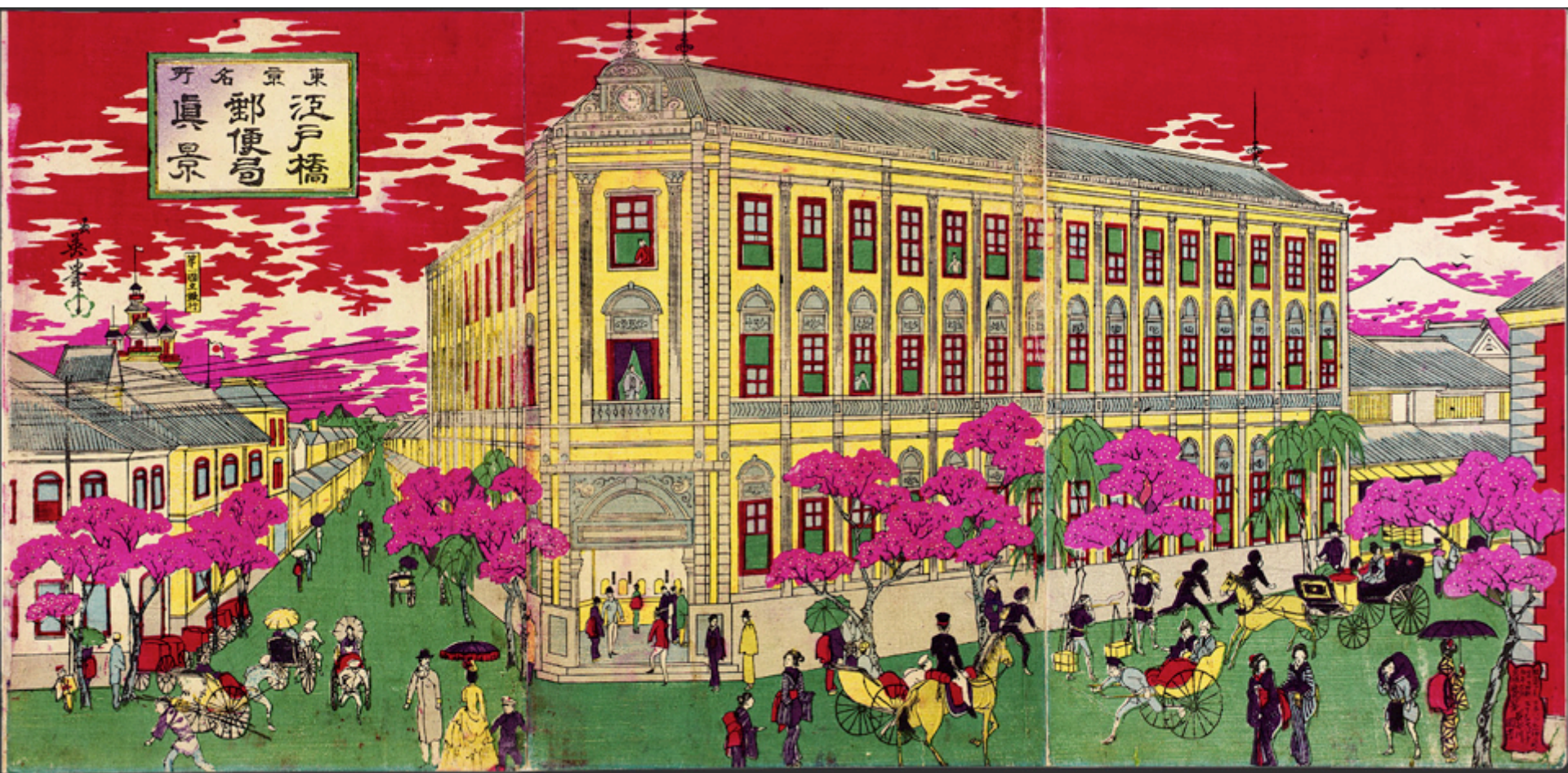








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# The Meiji Restoration: Discussion

- How is the Meiji restoration an act of resistance?
- How does it represent a “lesson learned” from China?
- What is the significance of the Satsuma Rebellion?
- Where do you see the pairing of anti-government and anti-imperialist sentiments in Japan (like in China)? What is the effect of this?
- How was anti-imperialism in Japan linked with nation-state building?
- What are the benefits of the Meiji Restoration?
- What are the costs of the Meiji Restoration?



# Meiji Restoration and Japanese Foreign Policy

- Given what you know about Japan and given what you know about the state of the world between 1870 and 1914, if Japan is trying to Westernize and become a major world power, what should it do in the international arena? In short, what Japan's foreign policy be?



# Japanese Imperialism

- Leaders of the Meiji espoused the idea of “line of advantage.”
  - Japan would be vulnerable to aggressive Western imperialism unless it acquired territories around Japan to act as buffer states to real foreign attacks.
- The idea justifies Japanese imperialism
- Belief in “line of advantage” leads Japan to two imperialist wars:
  - Sino-Japanese War
  - Russo-Japanese War



# Sino-Japanese War 1894-1895

- In 1894, Japan invades Korea
- This sparks a war with China
- Japan's technological advancement allows for any easy defeat of China.
- While for centuries Japan had looked to China as a model of civilization, Japan now saw China as weak and began to look down on the nation.
- As a result of the war, Japan gets possession of:
  - Korea
  - Taiwan
  - Manchuria
  - As well as a sphere of influence in China





# Russo-Japanese War 1904-1905

- Japan launches a surprise attack on Russia after Russia stirs up tensions over Japan's possession in Manchuria
- Japan defeats Russia.
- This shocks the West. Why?







# Aftermath of the Wars

- Japan's victories in the war are key turning points in Japanese history.
- The demonstrate that:
  - Japan has fully Westernized.
  - Japan is militarily equal to the West
  - Japan has successfully resisted European imperialism
  - Japan is a major imperial power in the East.





# Japan Emerges as a World Power

- By 1912, Japan has become a major world power.
- This stirs up a broader sense of nationalism in Asia.
  - Asian nations look to Japan and see the possibility of Asian ascension in the world.
  - Japan is a nation to be admired
- However, Japan does not view itself as a leader of a pan-Asian movement. Instead, it wants to become the ruler of Asia.

