In This Issue

Editor’s Note

Letter From the Executive Director

Minutes of the WHA Business and Executive Council Meetings, January 2-3, 2009

List of WHA Affiliates

WHB Focus Issue & Teaching Forum,  Guest Editor - Dorothea A. L. Martin, Appalachian State University

East-West Stimulus and Response: The [Cotton] Fabric of the Modern World
   by Dorothea A. L. Martin, Appalachian State University

Motivations for the “Westernization” of Meiji Japan: A Sin of Omission in World History Survey Textbooks
   by Masako Racel, Kennesaw State University

Chinese Intellectuals’ Ordeal: The Anti-Rightist Campaign of 1957 Revisited
   by Peng Deng, High Point University

Southeast Asia in World History
   by Paul A. Rodell, Georgia Southern University

Family Law as Metaphor in Colonial Politics: A Helpful Tool in World Historical Analysis
   by Pamela McVay, Ursuline College

Architecture and Visual Literacy: Reading the Indian Colonial Built Environment
   by David A. Johnson, Appalachian State University, and Nicole F. Gilbertson, University of California Irvine

Central Eurasia in World History: An Annotated Resource Guide
   by R. Charles Weller, Asia Research Associates

Teaching World History in an Indian Classroom
   by James Geddes, Woodstock School (Uttarakhand, India)

The Kushans in World History
   by Craig Benjamin, Grand Valley State University

Book Reviews, Book Review Coordinator - Peter Dykema, Arkansas Tech University
years from 1979 to the present is the subject of much debate. For purposes of this paper, however, suffice it to say that the recent steady double-digit growth of China's manufacturing sectors may have again reached the levels where they can command the resources, both materials and labor, to be acknowledged as the global workshop. Cotton textiles once more play a significant role in this process. As those of us in the American South are very aware, the demand for cheap cotton textiles has been quickly responded to first by China and to a lesser extent India. Cheaper labor, fewer safety regulations, government support, and even cheaper energy cost have made factories in Asia today the largest producers and consumers of cotton staple and textiles. Wal-Mart alone weighs in as China's largest single buyer, out pacing several other nations or regions of the world. In 2008, "China, India, Pakistan, Turkey the USA and Brazil lead the world in both the production and consumption of cotton." The USA, as did India in the 19th century, now exports more cotton staple than is used in its domestic production, a clear reflection of the reality of the transfer of textile production.

In spite of a slowing global economy, India is projected to increase both its output and consumption of cotton over the next year while China will remain the largest consumer of this resource at 51 million bales [of the 86.2 million bales consumed by Asia's four main textile producers]. Faced with an economic downturn and fewer exports, China has begun refocusing attention on expanding its domestic market growth and infrastructure developments.

Many have raised the issues of the sustainability of this level of growth, speculating that there will not be enough resources to go around – especially energy resources – to reproduce the industrial revolution in Asia with its large population. But, this might be the opportunity for Asia's new leaders to respond with innovation in the area of renewable and "green" energy technology. Others point out that "historically, rapid internal economic growth has propelled states to redefine and expand...more robust military capabilities to pursue and defend" their global interest. It is this similarity to other historical periods that is at the root of the China bashing – have not other global economic powers also secured their place through force of both money and arms? But nationalism in the world of the 21st century is not the same as that of the earlier periods and China's and India's internal circumstances are unique to their own historical realities. Writing in the New York Times Jan. 1, 2009, Gurcharan Das pointed out that "[B]oth the Chinese and the Indians are convinced that their prosperity will only increase in the 21st century. In China it will be induced by the state; in India’s case, it may well happen despite the state. Indians expect to continue their relentless march toward a modern, democratic, market-based future... Indians are painfully aware that they must reform their government bureaucracy, police and judiciary – institutions, paradoxically, they were so proud of a generation ago. When that happens, India may become formidable, a thought that undoubtedly worries China’s leaders."

As both these countries move to more sophisticated high tech and service industries, however, modern production of cotton textiles is moving to other parts of Asia with more products either being produced or assembled in Vietnam, Cambodia, etc. Can this again be the leading industry to create modernity with rising per capita incomes, greater urbanization, and a more highly skilled work force? Will economic control in the 21st century, once again in the hands of Asian actors, help spread textile activity to these areas to exploit lower labor cost and safety standards and evade environmental regulation? One can hope that new international institutions such as the WTO and reevaluation of the post World War II Bretton Woods system of international oversight of global monetary funds could exert some control or guidance over the process using diplomacy rather than force of arms used in the 19th and 20th centuries by the West to secure its economic dominance.

ENDNOTES
10 R=1&th&emc=rh

Motivations for the “Westernization” of Meiji Japan: A Sin of Omission in World History Survey Textbooks

Masako N. Racel
Kennesaw State University
In the periodization of Japanese history, Japanese and Western historians alike generally identify the Meiji era (1868-1912) as the beginning of modern or “Westernized” Japan; while its immediate predecessor, the Tokugawa era (1603-1868), is typically depicted as a feudal age. This perception is reinforced by the treatment of Japanese history found in most college-survey world history textbooks. According to these texts, Tokugawa Japan was populated by a Shogun, Daimyo, and samurai wearing kimonos, sporting topknots, and carrying swords. In stark contrast, Meiji era Japan is represented by images of modernization punctuated with the Japanese adoption of Western dress, architecture, and technology. Modern Japan is often presented as a success story whereby it fended off Western imperialism by modernizing and “Westernizing” itself to become “the only non-Western nation to successfully industrialize and achieve a Western standard of living before World War II.”

Phillip Adler in his World Civilizations (5th edition) states: Japan seems on the brink of being reduced to yet another helpless victim of Western imperialism, but at this point, a decisive difference emerged. Some of the daimyo and samurai faced the causes and consequences of Japanese impotence squarely: they decided to imitate the West as rapidly as possible. . . .

. . . one major reform after another came out of the imperial capital in Tokyo (formerly Edo). All were modeled on the West. . . . [T]hey systematically carried out reforms, even at the expense of cherished tradition.

By definition, survey textbooks must condense complex historical processes into simple and accessible forms, but such simplifications may lead students to think that Japan’s rise as a world power was accomplished by “imitating” “superior” Western civilization and abandoning the traditional way of life. What most textbooks fail to address are 1) the Meiji government’s reliance on traditional elements to pursue its Westernization policies, and 2) the motives behind adopting Western institutions and technologies. By understanding these two items, one can approach Meiji Japan as more than a case of Western “imitation.” Indeed, teachers can use the story of Meiji Japan to explore the meanings of “Westernization” and illustrate an important historical process whereby foreign and tradition—
The Meaning of the “Meiji Restoration” - In Western studies, the dissolution of the Tokugawa Shogunate and the establishment of the Meiji regime in 1868 is known as “the Meiji Restoration.” Interestingly, there is no exact equivalent term in Japanese for “the Meiji Restoration,” even though this is normally the translation applied to the Japanese identification, Meiji Ishin. For Japanese, this term (Meiji is the reign name, while Ishin means “complete renewal”) implies a sense of revolutionary change that swept across the country. Indeed, specialists debate over whether to call it the Meiji Revolution or the Meiji Restoration.

The term “restoration” is still a useful one in a sense that the authority of the Emperor was “restored” and played a central role in promulgating the reforms. Yet, curiously, many textbooks do not place much emphasis on the role of the Emperor or related institutions in their coverage of the Meiji era. This may be ascribed to the fact that the Meiji system is more accurately defined as an oligarchy, whereby the handful of leaders who formulated the reforms were the real administrators of the state. Emperor Mutsuhito, posthumously known as the Meiji Emperor, was an inexperienced, sixteen-year old ruler at the time of the Restoration, making it unlikely that he was the source of new ideas and reforms coming out of the imperial capital. Instead, it is more likely that the invocation of the Emperor’s name provided the Meiji oligarchs with the necessary aura of legitimacy in inaugurating and implementing reforms, and supplied the focal point for the formation of nationalism.

The use of tradition, especially Shinto elements, for modernizing purposes is illustrated by the famous Five Article Charter Oath (1868), which marked the beginning of the Meiji era. These were presented at the Imperial palace by the Emperor as an oath to the gods of heaven and earth. According to Shinto mythology, the Emperor descended from the sun goddess, Amaterasu, and therefore, his role included being the chief priest of the Shinto religion. The Charter Oath unequivocally declared that “[e]vil customs of the past shall be broken off” and “[k]nowledge shall be sought throughout the world so as to strengthen the foundation of imperial rule.” Those who attended the ceremony, including daimyo, nobles and even the shogun’s retainers, all signed the oath, thereby switching their allegiance from their previous feudal lords to the Emperor.

The early Meiji period is noted for the “invention of traditions.” The formation and propagation of a new nationalistic form of State Shinto was started during the Meiji era. Because Japanese forms of Shinto and Buddhism shared a long and commingled history, the Meiji government issued a decree (1868) to separate the two almost indistinguishable religions in an effort to elevate Shinto, especially its elements of Emperor Worship, above Buddhism in order to promote their Emperor-centric ideology. Known as the Great Promulgation Campaign, the early Meiji government promoted the “Great Teachings” of Shinto (i.e. imperial mythology) between 1870 and 1884. Though the campaign was not particularly successful at this stage, it demonstrates the early Meiji government’s attempt to invoke traditional Japanese elements to create a sense of national unity while pursuing “Westernization” policies.

Motives for the Meiji Reforms - As most textbooks point out, the series of reforms initiated by the Meiji government were truly comprehensive and mostly modeled on the West. However, many textbooks do not discuss Japan’s motivation in its drive toward “Westernization.” The spectacular rise of Japan to world-power status in the twentieth century blinds most observers from recognizing that, in the latter half of the nineteenth century, Japan held only a semi-colonial status similar to many other areas before they fell completely under colonial control.

Following the arrival of Commodore Matthew Perry (1794-1858), Japan’s isolationist policies ended in 1854 through coerced “friendship” treaties with the United States, Great Britain, France, Russia and the Netherlands. In July 1858, the U.S. Consul General, Townsend Harris, persuaded Japan to sign a so-called “unequal” treaty, which was characterized by 1) lack of tariff autonomy and 2) granting of extraterritorial rights to foreign citizens. Harris secured the treaty with Japan by appealing to the Japanese fear of British imperialist designs and by promising not to sell opium in Japan. Since the 1854 treaties granted most favored nation status to the countries involved, all the concessions made on the later treaties were extended to all the signatories of the previous treaties.

The lack of tariff autonomy and granting of extraterritoriality to foreign citizens meant Japan lost full sovereignty. The unequal treaties set low tariff rates without a provision for the possibility of adjustments. After the signing of these treaties, foreign made goods, most notably cotton products from Great Britain, flooded the Japanese market. Since Japan lost its ability to adjust tariffs as needed, the native cotton textile industry, which had provided commoners clothing for centuries, appeared to be on the verge of extinction due to its inability to compete with cheap machine-made foreign goods. On the other hand, Westerners saw Japan (as well as China) as a supplier of cheap but high quality raw silk (silk thread). During the late Tokugawa and early Meiji era, Japan, like many other nations affected by imperialism, appeared to be turning into an exporter of raw materials while serving as a market for Western manufactured goods. Japanese leaders saw the protective tariffs as the key to the Western power’s economic prosperity and found it unfair that the Western powers enjoyed such economic protection while making it extremely difficult for Japan to foster its own fledgling industries.

Additionally, these commercial treaties resulted in a gold drain and hyperinflation that characterized the late Tokugawa era and early Meiji era. The treaties furnished foreigners “with Japanese coin in exchange for theirs, equal weights,” and allowed “coins of all description (with the exception of Japanese copper coin) . . . [to] be exported from Japan.” Since the Japanese exchanged gold and silver at ratio of one to five while the rest of the word exchanged one to fifteen, the foreigners were able to make handsome profits just by exchanging coins. This caused a serious drain on Japanese gold reserves. The Shogunate’s attempts to mitigate this issue only made the situation worse by generating hyperinflation. The high demand for Japanese silk in foreign markets also exacerbated the ongoing inflation.

Granting of extraterritoriality to foreign citizens meant that foreigners were to be tried under their own law (usually in an embassy court) rather than by the law of land. The Westerners oftentimes abused these privileges and acted like colonial masters, since the foreign courts at the treaty ports tended to favor their own countrymen, while underplaying Japanese claims. Fukuzawa Yukichi (1835-1901), generally known as the foremost Japanese advocate of Westernization, wrote in 1875:

Those who haughtily ride about on horses or in carriages, scattering everyone in their way, are almost all
Patterns of Meiji Westernization - For the general population, Westernization meant the adoption of “Western” food (such as beef, milk, bread, and beer) as well as attire and appearance, including what the Japanese called zangiri-atama, a short loose haircut which was considered the very symbol of civilization. For Meiji leaders, Westernization was a necessity for the revision of the unequal treaties and for the very survival of Japan. The reforms worked to give the appearance of Western society by recognizing the equality of all people and abolishing the feudal class system that divided people into warriors, farmers, artisans, and merchants. This elimination of the class system also had the practical effect of enlarging the pool of potential soldiers and helped to strengthen the country. Western style education, police, legal and banking systems were all introduced during the Meiji era. The Meiji government also projected its new modern appearance by establishing both a constitution (1889) and a bicameral parliament called the Diet (1890).

Certainly, these reforms were modeled on the West; but, the West was never perceived as a single monolithic entity by Japanese leaders and intellectuals. The Japanese government sent officials and students to the United States and several European countries. Various different political, social, economic, and educational models were carefully examined and, after careful comparison, those appearing to be best suited to Japanese society were adopted. The Japanese government also hired many foreign experts as advisers with an estimated 3000 foreigners hired between 1858 and 1890. The foreign advisors helped to “expel” their fellow imperialists by training Japanese leaders to take their place.

The fad for things Western was strongest during the 1870s and early 1880s. Starting around the mid 1880s, however, there developed some conservative tendencies that began emphasizing Japanese or “Eastern” traditions. What resulted was a blending of Western and Eastern traditions. One of the best examples of this trend can be found in the area of education. When the Meiji government introduced a modern education system in 1872, the basic structure of education was based on the French model with a curriculum heavily influenced by the United States. In the 1880s, conservative elements in the government exerted their influence and added Shinto and Confucian based morals to the compulsory education curriculum. In 1890, the “Imperial Rescript on Education” (that is, the Emperor’s words to students) was issued and became the basic moral guideline until the end of the WWII. This imperial rescript clearly contained elements of State Shinto, stating: “Our Imperial Ancestors have founded Our Empire on a basis broad and everlasting” and “should emergency arise, offer yourselves courageously to the State; and thus guard and maintain the prosperity of Our Imperial Throne coeval with heaven and earth.” It also emphasized the Confucian virtues of filial piety, loyalty, faithfulness, etc. What began to emerge was a Western-style education system with a uniquely Japanese twist.

The Meiji Constitution of 1889 was based on the German constitution’s grant of significant powers to the Kaiser rather than the British model of a limited monarchy. It too provides an example of how the Japanese combined traditional and foreign cultures. The constitution declared that the “sacred and inviolable” Emperor came from “a line of Emperors unbroken for ages eternal.” To the Emperor, it granted sovereignty, referring to the Japanese people as “subjects” rather than “citizens.” For the Japanese people, the constitution guaranteed freedoms “within the limits of the law.” For example, Japanese subjects were granted freedom of religion “within limits not prejudicial to peace and order, and not antagonistic to their duties as subjects.” With State Shinto firmly established from the 1930s until the end of World War II, this meant serious limitations on religious freedom for those who refused to revere the Emperor as god-king on earth. While the constitution was technically based on a Western model, what the Meiji leaders had chosen was to combine an autocratic constitution of the German Second Reich with Shinto to create an Emperor-centric system.

Removal of Unequal Treaties - Shortly before the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in 1894, Japan, having instituted various Western law codes culminating in a Western-style constitution, was able to negotiate to remove extraterritoriality. Japan gained control over its own tariff rates in 1911, shortly after its annexation of Korea. Indeed, as early as 1876, Japan had secured its own unequal commercial treaty with Korea, while working to remove the unequal treaties imposed on itself by Western powers. By so doing, Japan tried to bring Korea, a tributary state to China, into its own sphere of influence. Okakura Kakuzo explained the rationale in 1904, writing that “[a]ny hostile power in occupation of the peninsula might easily throw an army into Japan, for Korea lies like a dagger ever pointed toward the very heart of Japan.” Both the Sino-Japanese (1894-1895) and Russo-Japanese (1904-1905) Wars were fought in order to gain control over Korea and its vicinity. Thus, it may be said that Japan regained full sovereignty through international affairs, at the expense of Korea, rather than other aspects identified with the West or “civilization.”

Conclusion - Instructors of World History can use Meiji Japan as an opportunity to explore the meaning of the term, Westernization. Simplified treatment of the era may lead students to believe Westernization to be the abandonment of old traditions in favor of new and superior cultures without consideration of other causal factors. The case of Meiji Japan illustrates otherwise by illu-
minating a common world historical process where cross-cultural encounters result in an amalgamation of foreign ideas with traditional elements.

By exploring the true Japanese rational for Westernization, students will be exposed to the often overlooked perspective that Westernization does not mean blind imitation. The Westernization of Japan was motivated by the Meiji government’s desire to establish an equality with the West that would free the nation from its semi-colonial status. The Meiji leaders sought to recover full autonomy by hiring Western consultants, sending students and officials overseas for study, instituting Western institutions and adopting a “civilized” or Western outward appearance. Numerous primary sources available in English, such as the Charter Oath, the Meiji Constitution, and the works of Fukuzawa Yūkichi illustrate how the pursuit of Westernization in Japan was not out of a desire to become like the Westerners as much as it was a means to recover the absolute sovereignty lost between 1858 and 1911.

ENDNOTES


2. Lockard, 703.

3. Adler, 606. In somewhat contradictory manner, Adler also states “the ancient regime and the traditional values of the people were held in high esteem,” and “reformers supported the Shinto faith.” See Adler, 607.


5. This is a process not known in world history. Ancient Romans borrowed from the Ancient Greeks, and created a Greco-Roman hybrid civilization that remained fundamentally Roman. Japan in the seventh and eighth centuries borrowed generously from China during its extended Taika Reform, and created a hybrid civilization that remained fundamentally Japanese.

6. Japanese historians have used three terms to explain the process of the “Meiji Restoration.” The Taifu Hōkan of October, 1867 refers to Shogun’s returning sovereignty to the Emperor. The Ōtō Fukuō of December, 1867, refers to “restoration of the imperial rule.” The Meiji Ishin is applied to after the establishment of the new government in 1868.


11. Prior to the Meiji Era, the central focus of Shinto was not Emperor Worship; instead it was an informal system of beliefs in indigenous deities and spirits, including those of nature, one’s own ancestors and the Imperial family.


13. China had been forced by the British to sign the Treaty of Tianjin, legalizing the opium trade, in June, 1858. Since the United States signed the treaty prohibiting the opium trade first, all other nations, including Great Britain, signed essentially the same treaty due to most favored nation status. Pye, 65; Marius B. Jansen: “The Meiji Restoration,” in Marius B. Jansen, ed., The Emergence of Meiji Japan (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 152.

14. Hane, 69-70, 142-144; Morris-Suzuki, 86-88. Raw silk continued to be Japan’s leading export goods until 1930s. During the early Meiji era, cotton textile products constituted as much as 36 percent of all money spent on foreign imports. In 1878, alarmed by Japan’s dependency on foreign cotton goods, the Meiji government encouraged development of a domestic cotton industry by importing machinery and creating model factories. Japan’s cotton textile production capacity increased in the 1890s and 1890s. From 1896, Japan exported cotton goods overseas with exponential growth occurring during WWI. By the middle of the twentieth century, cotton had become Japan’s leading export commodity. Through investment in the cotton textile industry, Japan avoided many of the issues inherent to economic and political imperialism as typified by the experiences of colonies such as India and Egypt.


18. Fukuzawa Yukichi, An Outline of a Theory of Civilization (1875). Translated by David A. Dilworth and G Carmen Harstfluent figure who published numerous books and pamphlets, founded Keio University, and started a newspaper. Jiji Shinpō, but, he was not a Meiji government official.


20. Edgar, 790.


22. Pye, 70.

23. Pye, 84-101; Pyle, 77-80. For example, the army was based on the German model while the navy was based on the British model. Legal and police systems reflected the French type, while financial institutions combined the American (Federal Reserve), British (Postal Savings System) and Belgian (Bank of Japan) models.

24. Before the establishment of the Meiji regime, a popular slogan called for “Expel the Barbarians.” During the Meiji era, the Westerners were no longer considered “barbarians,” but the Meiji reforms essentially aimed for the same goal of ridding Japan of foreign presence.


28. Okakura Kakuzō, The Awakening of Japan (New York: Century Co, 1904), 208. This phrase, “A Dagger Pointed at the Heart of Japan” was supposedly coined by a Prussian military advisor to the Meiji government and popularized by Yasujiro Akitomo (Prime Minister from December 24, 1889, to May 6, 1891, and November 8, 1898, to October 19, 1900).

Chinese Intellectuals’ Ordeal: The Anti-Rightist Campaign of 1957 Revisited

Peng Deng

High Point University

In the summer of 1957, a political storm swept across urban China. In the so-called Anti-Rightist Campaign, more than 550,000 Chinese citizens became targets of a state-sponsored inquisition. For criticizing the Communist Party and the government, these people received the label “Rightists” and consequently paid a heavy price. The so-called Anti-Rightist Campaign of 1957 was a pivotal event in the history of the People’s Republic of China. It was also a watershed event in the history of the Chinese Communist Movement. Fifty-one years later, students of modern Chinese history are still asking questions about the savage persecution of Chinese intellectuals in that fateful year.

From Rectification to Persecution - At first sight, the Anti-Rightist Campaign of 1957 seems to have resulted from an effort of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), especially its Chairman Mao Zedong, to invite constructive criticism from the country’s intellectuals. A close examination of the events in 1957 reveals, however, that this massive inquisition not only stemmed from the fast-changing political situation in China and the rest of the world, but from the complex dynamics of the Chinese revolution.

In April 1956, at a meeting of top communist officials, Mao announced a seemingly liberal policy toward China’s intellectuals. In his speech, Mao described the relationship between the CCP and intellectuals as one of “long-term coexistence” and “mutual supervision.” Such a gesture was probably motivated by Mao’s desire for greater political control, especially to secure the allegiance of the country’s educated population. Mao’s words sounded both comforting and encouraging to Chinese intellectuals who, after having experienced the political regimentation of the early 1950s, took Mao’s words as a sign of some political relaxation.

In early 1957, Mao began talking about a rectification campaign that would let “a hundred flowers blossom,” meaning that it would open a door for intellectual debate and even criticism of the Communist Party and the government. There is evidence that the origins of the rectification campaign lay in Mao’s displeasure about the growing bureaucratic tendency in the new government and resistance among the top CCP leaders to his overzealous plan for rapid economic growth and social transformation. The proposed rectification was in effect Mao’s tactic for regaining control over the decision-making process in the government. At several meetings of CCP leaders, he urged his colleagues to embrace criticism from outside the party and named bureaucr-