

The Strategies The Meiji Government Used to Achieve Economic Development?

The Meiji government during the 1880's created both an institutional and constitution structure that allowed Japan in the coming decades to be a stable and industrializing country. Two major policies and strategies that reinforced stability and economic modernization in Japan were the creation of a national public education system and the ratification of the Meiji constitution. Both these aided in stability and thus economic growth.

The creation of a national education system aided in creating stability because it indoctrinated youth in the ideas of loyalty, patriotism, and obedience. Japan's education system at first stressed free thought and the ideas of individual's exploration of knowledge but by 1890 the education system of Japan became a tool for indoctrination into what Peter Duus calls "a kind of civil religion" with the Imperial Rescript on Education. This Rescript stressed two things. First, it stressed loyalty to the emperor and to a lesser extent to the state. In every classroom a picture of the emperor was placed. Second, the education system stressed self sacrifice to the state and family. Filial piety was taught in schools and applied not only to the family but also to the national family which included father, teacher, official and employer. The Japanese education system also created a system of technical schools and universities both public and private that educated a growing class of Japanese on how to use new western machinery, administrate government and run private industries. The Japanese education system following the Rescript on Education served primarily to teach people what to think and not how to think; and as Edwin Reischauer stated, "Japan pioneered in the modern totalitarian technique of using the educational system for indoctrination and was in fact decades ahead of countries like Germany in perfecting these techniques." Japan's education system was a tool in creating for Japan a reliable citizenry who respected the government and had the knowledge to act as "technically efficient clogs" in the new industries and administration that an industrializing state created.

The ratification of the Meiji constitution drafted in the summer of 1887 and signed into law in 1889 helped create a stable constitutional order in Japan. The constitution was a gift of the emperor to the people and was made up of a complicated set of checks and balances between the emperor, his cabinet, and the Diet. The constitution although it granted voting rights to only one percent of the population in Japan was well received by the people and played a critical role in lending legitimacy to the oligarchy (Genro) who ran the government. Before the constitution the Genro had little basis in theory for their continued rule other than they spoke for the emperor. But the constitution with its elections and bicameral diet lender legitimacy to the rule of the oligarchy. The constitution also brought Japan at least in the minds of the oligarchy to parity with western political institutions. Indeed, the ruling group in Japan passed the constitution through not because of popular pressure but because they thought a constitution and parliamentary government was a necessary part of the political machinery that helped make western powers strong. In the long term the parliamentary government of Japan and its constitution provided a stable government with its mix of oligarchy, monarchy, and a little democracy for the wealthy. It ensured investors and the

Zaibutsu a say in government and promoted growth by creating a stabile government that was critical to ensuring investors will put capital in businesses. Both the new education and governmental structure of Japan passed in the 1880's and 1890's was essential to Japanese stability and economic and industrial growth.