

## 6.21 Meiji Restoration in Images

**Sources:** <https://www.history.com/topics/japan/meiji-restoration>; <https://www.japanhouselondon.uk/whats-on/the-meiji-restoration-from-the-british-perspective/>

**Background:** European imperialism in the mid-nineteenth century, especially completion of British colonization of India, the division of South East Asia among European powers, and the creation of spheres of influence and control in China, left Japan with little choice but to rapidly modernize industrially, militarily, and culturally. In 1868, two powerful Japanese clans declared an “imperial restoration” in the name of Emperor Meiji, who was only 14-years-old. Under the guise of the Meiji Restoration, Japan underwent major social, political and economic changes including the abolition of the feudal system, the formation of a modern government and military, and the opening the country to trade with Western nations. By 1905 Japan was able to defeat Russia in the Russo-Japanese War and gain military ascendancy in the Asian North Pacific.

**Instructions:** The transformation of Japan can be seen in Japanese paintings from the period. Examine each of the images. Write a description of what you see and hypothesize how the image reflects an economic, political, military, or cultural change in Japanese society during the Meiji period (1868-1912).





