

11 . Paths to Modernisation

1. What were the major developments before the Meiji restoration that made it possible for Japan to modernize rapidly?

Answer:

Major developments were:

1. Peasantry was disarmed and only the samurai class could carry swords. This ended frequent wars and stabilized peace.
2. Population growth boosted commercial economy, and use of money created financial and credit systems.
3. Land was surveyed and owners were asked to pay regular tax.
4. Paying for imports with gold and silver was stopped. Silk industry had achieved an extraordinary growth.
5. Cultural growth- new reading habit, study of ancient Japanese literature, and patronization of art and theatre by merchants- was another major development.

2. Discuss how daily life was transformed as Japan developed.

Answer:

1. Japan's transformation into a modern society changed everyday life drastically.
2. Patriarchal household system disappeared. People became affluent, and nuclear family system emerged.
3. In nuclear families, husband and wife lived as breadwinner and homemaker.
4. Their lifestyle in turn generated demands for new types of domestic goods, new types of family entertainments, and new forms of housing.

3. How did the Qing dynasty try and meet the challenge posed by the Western powers?

Answer:

To meet the challenge posed by the Western powers, Qing reformers initiated policies to build a modern administrative system, a new army and an educational system.

1. They set up local assemblies to establish constitutional government.
2. To teach the masses about destructive consequences of the western domination, they highlighted negative examples of colonized countries such as the partition of Poland, and participation of Indians in the British army that fought wars against China.
3. They felt that traditional ways of thinking influenced by Confucianism was a major barrier to new ideas and institutions.
4. To train people in modern subjects, students were sent to study in Japan, Britain and France; they brought back many innovative ideas.
5. Chinese thinkers borrowed Japanese translations of European political ideas such as justice, rights and revolution.

4. What were Sun Yat-sen's Three Principles?

Answer:

The followings were Sun Yat-sen's Three Principles (*San min chui*):

1. Nationalism- spreading nationalism to overthrow the Manchu rulers (a foreign dynasty) and other foreign imperialists
2. Democracy - establishing democratic government
3. Socialism - regulating capital and equalizing landholdings

Answer in a short essay

5. Did Japan's policy of rapid industrialization lead to wars with its neighbours and destruction of the environment?

Answer:

1. Japan's policy of rapid industrialization led to wars with its neighbours and destruction of the environment.
2. To accumulate more raw materials, Japan had to occupy new colonies and exploit resources, and its territorial domination put it in collision with the local people.
3. The rapid and unregulated growth of industry and the demand for natural resources such as timber led to environmental destruction.

6. Do you think that Mao Zedong and the Communist Party of China were successful in liberating China and laying the basis for its current success?

Answer:

1. Mao Zedong and the Communist Party of China were successful in liberating China from colonial domination and established the Peoples Republic of China in 1949.
2. The Communist Party also laid a strong foundation for the future development of China, and to some extent, it could be attributed to its current success.
3. Vital economic resources were put under government control, and private ownership of natural resources was gradually ended.
4. The Great Leap Forward (1958) boosted the country's industrial growth.
5. Establishment of people's communes enabled the masses to participate in a 'collective and cooperative production' system. It ended exploitation of man by man.
6. With the launch of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in 1965, the Red Guards (students and professionals) campaigned against old cultural practices, irrational customs and traditional habits.
7. The 'Fifth Modernisation' from 1978 proclaimed the importance of Democracy if other Four defence) had to be achieved.
8. However, the current system in China has been lapsing into an authoritarian political system and has emerged as a strong nee-liberal capitalist state.

9. Critics argue that China is witnessing tremendous socio-economic inequalities due to market economy, and it has intensified social tensions there.