

## The Changing Attitude towards Foreigners

The forces that overthrew the Shogunate had long been associated with the slogan "Expel the Barbarians" and it might have been expected that with their victory, anti-foreign sentiment would become more serious and widespread. There were, of course, still a few isolated instances of anti-foreign agitation before Japan finally settled down to the task of modernization, but prompt and drastic punishment was given by the new government to those guilty of attacks on foreigners. It was no part of the policy of the new men who ruled Japan to antagonize, much less drive away the barbarians. They realized that to achieve a position of power in the world, their country would have to be modernized. With all speed, it would have to catch up with the technologically advanced nations of the West.

But modernization could never be accomplished without Western help and advice. A number of foreign technicians had already been employed both by the Shogunate and by certain feudal lords before 1868. But after that year, there were many more of them - British, American, French, German and Dutch - engaged by the Japanese government as pilots, railways and marine engineers, financial and legal advisers, agricultural experts, university and school teachers, military and naval instructors and at the same time, Japanese were sent abroad to learn from the West. But among the Japanese, there has never been the scornful indifference that has often characterized the Chinese attitude towards foreigners. The Japanese have never been too proud to learn. It appeared therefore strange reversal of the whole situation for the anti-foreign monarchical party and, in effect, became pro-foreign almost overnight. In April 1869 the Emperor and his court left Kyoto to take up residence in Edo which was renamed Tokyo or Eastern Capital, had remained the imperial and administration center of Japan ever since.

The new era had a new slogan: Civilization and Enlightenment. It meant, in a superficial way, the love of all things western--from beer to bustles to beef. It also meant something more profound - a new sense that with the Samurai gone, all would be equal under the rule of the emperor. Such was the notion of Fukuzawa Yukichi. Fukuzawa had traveled overseas and he, more than any other, popularized western ideas. His first book, which described his travels in the west, was a run-away best seller, teaching Japanese how to eat and dress western style. Fukuzawa was fascinated by western time keeping. To a country that still kept time by the sun, the clock was a powerful symbol of modernization. His later books brought European and American ideas into Japanese homes.



Fukuzawa became a kind of prophet for Meiji's modern age. Fukuzawa became a national hero, and is still a national hero. Fukuzawa is on the Japanese currency. He is the national representative of the spirit of Meiji in its early commitment to progress on the national level and success on the individual level.

Fukuzawa inspired a generation of youth with a slogan that propelled Japan's progress. "Heaven," he said, "creates no man above or below another man." Samurai were ordered to hand in their swords and have their topknots cut off. Japan's last Shogun voluntarily submitted to a new barber and wardrobe. Throughout the land, hair cutting became big business and Fukuzawa himself was eagerly transformed from Samurai to gentleman. A popular song of the period rang out, "If you slap a barbered head, it sounds back civilization and enlightenment." Some Japanese wanted to abolish the Japanese language in favor of English. Others proposed inter-marriage with westerners as a way of improving Japan's racial stock. For many citizens, this era meant the beginning of electricity. But it was the explosion of wheels in Japan that truly marked the Meiji transformation. The invention of the rickshaw was as momentous in Japan as the coming of the Model T Ford forty years later. Then came the horse-drawn trolleys and, after that, perhaps the most important of all Meiji machines--the train; a great symbol of Japan's modernization.

