

## IV

### ESTABLISHMENT OF THE MEIJI GOVERNMENT, 1868

#### A. Imperial Proclamation of the Restoration, January 3, 1868.

TOKUGAWA Yoshinobu has asked that the administrative authority which had long been commissioned be restored and wishes to resign from the office of *Shogun*. His proposal is now accepted. Since the year of Water-Ox [1853] the country has been threatened by incomparable dangers, with which, as is well known, the late Emperor had seriously occupied himself. An imperial decision has now been made to recover political authority with a view to regaining national dignity. Henceforward, the offices of *Sessho*, *Kanpaku* and *Shogun* are to be abolished and the three offices of *Sosai*, *Gijo* and *Sanyo* are to be established; through these three offices all administrative affairs shall be dealt with. Everything shall be decided through the reasonable deliberation of the people, without any distinction between civil and military officers, between nobles and common people.

It is the will of His Imperial Majesty to share happiness with the people of the empire; everybody should try to get rid of the long-ingrained evil habit of idleness and to serve his country with fidelity and sincerity.

1. The liaison offices between the Imperial Court and

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the *Bakufu*, such as the *Nairan*, *Chokumon*, *Kokuji Goyogakari*, *Giso*, *Buke Denso*, *Shugoshoku*, and *Shoshidai*, are all to be abolished.

2. The list of members of the three offices :

Sosai (President)	Prince Arisugawa-no-miya Taruhito
<i>Gijo</i> (Councillor)	Prince Ninnaji-no-miya Sumihito
	Prince Yamashina-no-miya Akira
	<i>Saki-no-Dainagon</i> Nakayama Tada-yoshi
	<i>Saki-no-Dainagon</i> Oogimachi Sanjo
	Saneyoshi
	<i>Chunagon</i> Nakamikado Tsuneyuki
	Owari <i>Dainagon</i> Tokugawa Yoshi-katsu
	Echizen <i>Saisho</i> Matsudaira Yoshinaga
	Aki <i>Shosho</i> Asano Shigekoto
	Tosa <i>Saki-no-Shosho</i> Yamanouchi To- yonobu
	Satsuma <i>Shosho</i> Shimazu Shigehisa
<i>Sanyo</i> (Adviser)	<i>Saisho</i> Ohara Shigenori
	<i>U-Daiben</i> <i>Saisho</i> Made-no-koji Hiro- fusa
	<i>Sanmi</i> Hase Nobuatsu
	<i>Saki-no-Chujo</i> Iwakura Tomomi
	<i>Shosho</i> Hashimoto Saneyoshi
	Three members from the Owari, Echizen, Aki, Tosa and Satsuma Clans respectively.

3. *Dajokan* (Council of Ministers) and other officers are to be organized in due course.

4. The imperial court ceremony is to be improved from time to time ; but the office of *Sessho* and other subordinate functions are first to be abolished.

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5. The evil customs from old times are to be shaken off and a channel for public opinion is first to be opened. Regardless of his rank, anyone may present his opinion, and without hesitation. As it is urgently necessary to recruit men of ability, it is requested that candidates be nominated.

6. Recently the prices of everything have been rising tremendously and it is impossible to check them. The rich accumulate more and more wealth, while the poor daily face hardships. Though this is due to the misconduct of the [former] government, now, at the beginning of the Restoration, His Imperial Majesty is greatly concerned. Anyone may suggest adequate countermeasures to relieve the distress.

7. Princess Kazu-no-miya went to the Kanto district [i.e. Edo] to get married to the late *Shogun* [Tokugawa Iemochi]. This was arranged by the late Emperor on condition that the *Bakufu* put into execution the ~~expel-the-barbarian~~ policy. It turned out, however, to be a plot [on the side of the *Bakufu*] by malicious officials. Moreover, the late *Shogun* has passed away. The Princess will be called back as soon as possible. A *kuge* will be sent to Edo to accompany her to Kyoto.

The above items have been confirmed and declared together as a single decree.

### **B. Imperial Rescript Addressed to Foreign Representatives on the Restoration, February 3, 1868.**

THE Emperor of Japan announces to the sovereigns of all foreign nations and to their subjects, that permission has been granted to the *Shogun* Tokugawa Yoshinobu to return the governing power in accordance with his own request.

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Henceforward we shall exercise supreme authority both in the internal and external affairs of the country. Consequently the title of Emperor should be substituted for that of Tycoon, which has been hitherto employed in the treaties. Officers are being appointed by us to conduct foreign **affairs**. It is desirable that the representatives of all the treaty powers should recognize this announcement.

(L. S.) Mutsuhito.

(Legend seal of Great Japan).

Adams : *History of Japan*, II, 105.

### **C. Imperial Rescript on the Opening of Foreign Intercourse, February 19, 1868.**

SINCE the time that the late Emperor [Komei] occupied himself seriously with foreign affairs, the *Bakufu*, by a long series of errors, has brought us to the present state, and the country has undergone a great change, which has indeed come about unavoidably.

It has been definitely resolved, after a court council, to have treaties of amity [with foreign powers]. The imperial will is, therefore, that high and low join in unison and abstain from doubting that our **defences** be made so thorough that the national glory may shine abroad amongst all nations, and that the spirit of the late Emperor be satisfied. Therefore let all, from the *daimyo* down to the *samurai* and common people, bearing this in mind, exert themselves with the utmost diligence.

Note : The treaties hitherto concluded by the *Bakufu* contain faults. These shall be remedied after a free and open discussion of the merits of the different questions. And

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intercourse with foreign countries shall be carried on in accordance with the public law of the whole world. Bear this, therefore, in mind.

Adams : *History of Japan*, II, 107-108.

### **D. Government Notice on the Opening of Foreign Intercourse, March 10, 1868.**

**INTERCOURSE** with foreign countries commencing in the reigns of Sujin and Chuai [97 B.C.–30 B.C. and 192 A.D.–200 A.D.] flourished more and more year after year. Many foreigners of near and distant countries became naturalized and tribute was paid. Subsequently envoys passed constantly between this country and China or went to reside there, and our mutual relations became naturally friendly. At that time no great advance in the art of navigation had been made, and our intercourse was restricted to Korea, China and other adjacent countries. To say nothing of Western nations, the position of India even was not clearly defined. But of late years, as the Japanese nation is aware, the art of navigation has been brought to perfection, and the most distant countries have been brought into closest intercourse.

The stipulations of the treaties, which the imperial government has become responsible for by what may be called an error in judgment of the *Bakufu*, may be reformed if found to be hurtful, but the public laws observed by all nations forbid wanton disturbance of those arrangements as a whole, and it would be a great misfortune for the Imperial Court to break faith with foreign nations by now altering those engagements. The imperial government feels itself therefore compelled to

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entertain amicable relations under the treaties concluded by the *Bakufu*.

This having been already notified to foreign nations, it becomes also necessary to adopt such measures as the ancient constitution of the empire and the public law of the world may conjointly suggest. Consequently it has been decreed that the foreign representatives should enter Kyoto and attend at Court, the memorial of Echizen Saisho\* [Matsudaira Yoshinaga] and the others being adopted as a basis, and a mean between the good customs of ancient times, and the practice of international intercourse in modern ages being arrived at after open discussion by the officers of the Court and the clans.

“ Punishment and warning ” is a just principle of great antiquity, and it may happen that unavoidable wars may arise amongst different countries on account of wrongs committed, in spite of the bonds of friendship which exist. Such examples are numerous, and we must make up our minds to be ready for defensive and offensive wars, but in spite of this, amicable relations between this empire and foreign countries commenced under the last reign by the imperial consent being given to the opening of the ports. At that time the *Bakufu*, having been entrusted with the governing power, all matters concerning foreign intercourse were dealt with by it, but a reformation having been effected by which the monarchical form of government is restored and power is vested in the Imperial Court, it follows as a matter of course that foreign affairs should be managed by the imperial government.

At present in this new state of things, the *Sosai* and other

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\* See Appendix to this chapter, pp. 76-79.

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officers are responsible for every measure, and it is our desire to fill our high offices as worthily as our limited capacities will enable us. In a time of great and extraordinary difficulty, we have humbly and diligently considered the question, and it has been so decided, on our reporting to His Majesty the fair and open opinion of the empire.

In the present and undecided state of our internal affairs, we have this important question of foreign relations to deal with. We desire therefore that the whole empire uniting its strength will serve the sovereign diligently, and argue with us clearly and advise us stringently and without hesitation, not only upon foreign affairs, but also on all other public business as well. What is of most importance is that people will open their eyes to the present state of affairs and rid themselves of degenerate old habits ; will cause the imperial virtues to shine forth to all nations and render the empire as firm as a rock, and thus please the spirits of departed sages now in Heaven. Let high and low respectfully observe these words.

The three officers of the *Dajo-kan*.

Black : *Young Japan*, II, 181-183.

#### E. Imperial Oath on the Five Principles, March 14, 1868.

THE practice of discussion and debate shall be universally adopted, and all measures shall be decided by public argument.

High and low shall be of one mind, and social order shall thereby be perfectly maintained.

It is necessary that the civil and military powers be con-

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centrated in a single whole, the rights of all classes be assured, and the national mind be completely satisfied.

The uncivilized customs of former times shall be broken through, and the impartiality and justice displayed in the workings of nature be adopted as a basis of action.

Intellect and learning shall be sought for throughout the world, in order to establish the foundations of the Empire.

#### F. Imperial Rescript to the *Daimyo*, March 21, 1868.

WE have just succeeded to the imperial throne, and the empire is now undergoing a thorough reformation. We ourselves exercise supreme and sole decision in both civil and military matters. The national dignity and happiness depend upon Our fulfilling the duties of Our high office, and We are constantly and unrestingly applying Our thoughts to this subject.

Unworthy as We are for the task, We desire to continue the work begun by Our wise ancestors, and to carry out the policy bequeathed to Us by the late Emperor by giving peace to the clans and the people at home, and abroad by making the national glory to shine beyond the seas. Because Tokugawa Yoshinobu harboured lawless schemes, the empire has fallen to pieces, and the result has been civil war, inflicting the greatest injuries upon the people. We have therefore been compelled to resolve on taking the field in person against him.

As has already been notified, the existence of relations with foreign countries involves very important questions. We are willing therefore for the sake of the people of the empire to brave the perils of the deep and to undergo the greatest