

In the first half of the seventeenth century, Japan, hitherto a powerful and absolutely not a backward nation, had been forced by shōgun's regulations into unnecessary isolation, which let her military power diminish and her people imprisoned in narrow area of its home islands. All opportunities for foreign expansion were missed; main reasons were ridiculous fear of the Tokugawa bakufu from Christianity, which were curiously not settled by extinction of main Christian bases in the Far East, and its selfish resolution not to allow changes in the balance of power among the bakufu and powerful daimyō from remote southwest regions of Japan. At the beginning of the second half of the XIX. century, Japan was a poor and underdeveloped country, almost entirely secluded from the outside world. Once great empire was an easy victim of "foreign barbarians", who handily forced signing of unequal treaties.

His Imperial Majesty thus reassumed a reign over a weak country which may be justly described as a semi-colony of foreign intruders. However, wise and resolute leadership of the Meiji government allowed Japan to become a "rich country with strong army", fully capable of revision not only of unequal treaties, but also of her entire international position.

Old and deep desire of Japanese society for active foreign policy in regard to Korea eventually persuaded reluctant Prince Itō's Government to start hostilities with China in July, 1894. Japanese Imperial Army and Combined Fleet quickly proved their supremacy over Chinese forces. Victorious Japan was, however, deprived by so-called Triple Intervention of her most valuable gain, Liao-tung Peninsula. Her answer was to strengthen her forces, spending huge war indemnity obtained on China.