

Japanese History
Preliminary Examination
February 2008

Part I. Write an essay on one of the following:

1. How has Michel Foucault's scholarship affected (or, depending on your point of view, infected) recent scholarship on Japanese history.
2. You are preparing a lecture about the transition from the Edo period to Meiji for an undergraduate course on modern Japan. Briefly outline the narrative that you would develop for this lecture, and select a few readings from your reading list to assign to students. Justify your selection of readings by briefly reviewing the works that you assign, discussing their strengths and weakness. Be sure to indicate where you begin your 'modern' survey, and where this lecture fits into the larger structure of your course.
3. Propose periodization scheme for early modern and modern Japanese history, and justify your scheme with reference to specific works on the period (you may, of course, wish to use your periodization scheme to challenge recent scholarship). Be sure to specify the assumptions and criteria underlying your scheme.

Part II. Write an essay on one of the following:

4. Defend or refute the following statement: 'In the case of Japan, it is impossible to disentangle the study of modernization in general from that of colonization.'
5. Defend or refute the following statement: 'Japan in the 1930s and 1940s was ruled by a fascist state.'
6. Defend or refute the following statement: 'Political power in the Tokugawa order was a samurai monopoly.'
7. Assess the scholarship on (A) sexuality and gender, or (b) *mibun* in early modern (or modern) Japan.

Part III. Wild Card: Select an additional question from the above, and write an essay in response.

Department of History
Japanese History Preliminary Examination
September 2005

Write on one question from each group, a total of three (3) essays. Be sure to support your arguments with specific illustrations, and with reference to the arguments of major works of Western-language scholarship.

Group I

1. Defend or refute the following statement, citing specific works in early-modern history: The “protoindustrialization” analysis of Tokugawa history is fundamentally incompatible with the “modernization school” analysis.
2. What was “religion” in Tokugawa Japan, and how did it relate to social practice?

Group II

3. Who “made” the Meiji Restoration?
4. Propose a critique of the historiography on gender and sexuality in early modern Japan.

Group III

5. How do you account for the turn from “Taisho Democracy” to militarism, aggression, and what some would call (and, by the way, would you?) “fascism”?
6. Compare and contrast Japan’s two modern constitutions and their foreign roots, particularly with reference to the questions of legitimacy and participation.

Preliminary Exam - Japan

April 2001

Please answer two of the following questions.

1. Evaluate the Meiji Restoration as a nationalizing moment in Japanese history. What are the strengths and weaknesses of arguments for nationalism prior to the Restoration, and the strengths and weaknesses of arguments that locate Japanese nationalism after the Meiji Restoration? Demonstrate how the rise of a modern national state after the Restoration developed in relationship to imperialism and how it also simultaneously complicated notions of a Japanese ethnic identity. How is the eruption of modernity related both to the construction of a centralized state and to formulations of an ethnic national Japanese culture?
2. How did popular participation affect the course of the Bakumatsu-Meiji transition, ca. 1830-1890?
3. Support or refute the following statement, with reference to relevant scholarship and sources. "Neo-confucianism was the state ideology of the Tokugawa bakufu."