

Japanese Militarism: Why did Japanese attack?

Japan's march toward militarism started soon after the overthrow of the Tokugawa shogunate and the beginning of the Meiji Restoration (Restoration of the emperor and the move towards modernising Japan) in 1868. The Meiji oligarchs' adoption of a policy of fukoku kyōhei (rich country, strong military). Although the Meiji oligarchs showed restraint in outward expressions of militarism and imperialism in the first half of the Meiji period from 1868 to 1890, this does not mean they disagreed with the goals of foreign expansion and military build-up, but rather they first focused more on modernisation and economic growth to catch up with Western industrial powers. The Meiji oligarchs' early leanings toward militarism and imperialism can be seen by the Conscription Law of 1873, which required all males to serve active duty in the military for three years and reserve duty for an additional four years, and by several small territorial acquisitions in the 1870s, such as the Ryūkyū Islands, Bonin Islands, and Kurile Islands.



Japanese New Year's postcard.
Source: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/423338433705138011/>

Oligarch's move towards militarism:

What does this mean? The Meiji Oligarch (leadership group) wanted to build a stronger military and expand their territory. This was to show they were a rich country with a strong military to other countries.

How do we know this to be true? The conscription law of 1873 required all males to serve in the military. In 1870, the Japanese army acquired the Ryukyu Islands, Bonin Islands and Kuril Islands.

Aspiration for Western style imperialism:

What does this mean? _____

How do we know this to be true? _____

Security Concerns:

What does this mean? _____

How do we know this to be true? _____

Belief in Asian Leadership Role:

What does this mean? _____

How do we know this to be true? _____

Provocation by Western Powers:

What does this mean? _____

How do we know this to be true? _____
