

The Japanese Experience between Heritage and Modernization, the Meiji Reform Movement, Journal of Saudi History Society, King Saud University, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, January 2000

The Japanese experience between heritage and modernization
- Meiji Movement and Modernization-
(Case study)

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Abstract: This paper deals with the Japanese experience of modernization during its renaissance of the Meiji period (1868-1912), from the perspective of heritage and modernization. To handle the topic from this perspective, the research discusses in the first part, the use and application of the traditional concepts in modernization. This particularly becomes very vivid in the Japanese experience through using the Shinto religion which sanctifies the emperor making him the center of power, and calling for the loyalty to the emperor and conformity to the Japanese Society. As a consequence, it helped in overcoming any divisions in the society and led to a popular support for the leadership, creating a stable and strong nation state.

The second part of the present research deals with the selection of modernization factors by the Japanese, through adopting the German constitution, laws and judicial system leaving the liberal French and English models. This was readily accepted by the Japanese society.

The third part of the research deals with the different features of modernization and how congruent these features were with the Japanese heritage and how far they were accepted. At the beginning, the Japanese were eager to adopt blindly from the west, but soon they realized that their national identity could be lost in the process. Later they adopted a novel attitude. They started selecting from the western cultures only those elements that could suit their heritage. This resulted in the creation of a bi-cultural Japanese- western society. Thus Japan succeeded in reconciling heritage with modernization. This is the focal point of this research which

could be taken into consideration by the developing countries in general and the Arabic and Islamic world in particular.