

Japan, Nippon-shūhō

HISTORY
OF THE
EMPIRE OF JAPAN.

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clamation and cultivation of lands in Ezo. had occupied the fortress at Hakodate and obtained possession of a great part of the northern island. Orders were, therefore, issued by the Emperor that the clans of Satsuma, Choshu, and others should undertake the subjugation of these rebels, and in May 1868 they surrendered to the Imperial forces. In August of the same year the name Ezo was changed to Hokkaido, and it was divided into eleven provinces.

Towards the final days of the Tokugawa rule the advocates of closing the country to foreign intercourse had been very numerous and influential, and the Shogun's liberal attitude had exposed him to odium which helped not a little to precipitate his downfall. The most far-seeing of the men opposed to him understood thoroughly that national isolation was no longer possible for Japan, but they perceived also that centralization of the Government was necessary in the interests of the country, and they were consequently not unwilling to utilize the anti-foreign sentiment as an instrument for attacking the Tokugawa. Thus, on January 9th, 1867, Imperial officers of foreign affairs were appointed, their President being Prince Yoshiaki, who held that post in addition to his other functions. Sanjo Sanetomi, Higashikuze Michitomo, and Goto Shojiro were at the same time nominated as a committee to investigate matters relating to foreign intercourse. On the 15th of the same month, an intimation was conveyed to the Foreign Representatives in Edo that the term "Taikun," which had been used in the Treaties to designate the Shogun, should be changed to "Tenno" (son of heaven, *i.e.*, Emperor), and that the administration of the country would thenceforth be conducted by the Emperor in person. An Imperial Rescript was also issued and promulgated throughout the realm, de-

clarifying that the Government had established relations of amity with Foreign Powers and that the people should thereafter avoid being misled by mistaken views as to foreign intercourse. During the disturbances incidental to the fall of the Tokugawa, foreign States, at the instance of the Sovereign and the Shogun alike, had maintained a position of neutrality, but it happened unfortunately that outrages were committed by deluded persons, and that foreigners were either wounded or killed. In such cases the Imperial Government treated these incidents in a kindly spirit and paid liberal indemnities to the sufferers or their families.

During the confusion that naturally prevailed in both the domestic and foreign affairs of the empire at a time of such radical change, the *Dajokwan*, or Chief Department of State, was created, in January 13th, 1867, and four days later it was divided into seven sections, namely, Religion, Home Affairs, Foreign Affairs, Army and Navy, Treasury, Justice, and Law. Further, the ablest men of the various clans were selected to fill the posts of Councillors and legislative officials, and by degrees the Government was so organized as to put an end to the old system of hereditary office, *Samurai* of comparatively low rank being nominated for high positions according to their merits, and the influence attaching to their posts being fully exercised by them. On the 14th of March of that year, the Emperor proceeded to the Shishinden Palace, and there, in the presence of the Court Nobles and Feudal Barons, made solemn oath that, from that time forth, administrative affairs should be decided by general deliberation; that both Government and people should labour for the good of the nation; that encouragement should be given to industrial pursuits; that the evil customs hitherto prevailing should be corrected; and