

DATE	EVENTS RELATING TO THE CONSTITUTIONAL REVISION OF JAPAN (January 1868 – February 1889)
1868: 1.3 (12.9, Keio 3)	With a military backup from Satsuma (薩摩) and other Hans (藩), the Imperial court supports a coup d'état. The court proclaims imperial restoration and official establishment of the Meiji government, having the emperor as the nation's top leader (Ōsei fukko no daigōrei 王政復古の大号令). Tokugawa declines to accept the proclamation.
1.27 (1.3, Meiji 1)	Breakout of the Boshin War (戊辰戦争: War between the Meiji government and the Tokugawa shogunate troops) with the battle of Toba-Fushimi (鳥羽・伏見の戦い).
4.6 (3.14, Meiji 1)	Issuance of the Five Article Imperial Oath (Gokajō no go-seimon 五箇条の御誓文) by the Meiji Emperor. Its first article is the injunction that "broad-based assemblies should be held and every critical issue settled by public debate". (Hiroku kaigi wo okoshi banki kōron ni kessubeshi 広く会議を興し万機公論に決すべし). The next day, the Meiji government issues to citizens the Five Announcements (Gobō no keiji 五榜の揭示), proclaiming a take-over of the basic principles of the Tokugawa governance.
5.3 (4.11, Meiji 1)	Bloodless surrender of Edo Castle.
6.11 (Leap month of 4.21, Meiji 1)	The first constitution of the Meiji government becomes law (Seitaisho 政体書). State authority is centralized to the Grand Council of State (Dajōkan 太政官). The system emulates modern Western style government organizations, mainly the U.S. constitution, by adopting the separation of powers, the bicameral deliberative assembly, and alteration of high rank government officials every four years.
9.3 (7.17, Meiji 1)	Renaming of Edo as Tokyo. (Relocation of the capital from Kyoto to Tokyo is in 1869.)
9.8 (10.23, Meiji 1)	The government names the imperial era following Keio (慶應) as Meiji (明治).
1869: 6.27 (5.18, Meiji 2)	Forces led by a former vassal of the Tokugawa shogunate, Enomoto Takeaki (榎本武揚), surrender in Hokkaidō, ending the Boshin War. All of Japan comes under the imperial rule.
1870: Nov. (10, Meiji 3)	Etō Shinpei (江藤新平), submits his proposal for renovating the national system (Kokusei Kaikaku-an 国政改革案) to the Meiji government. This proposal contains, among other things, provisions for the discussion of "national laws" and the establishment of a bicameral legislative assembly.
1871: 12.23 (11.12, Meiji 4)	Initiation of the Iwakura Mission (Iwakura Shisetsudan 岩倉使節団, headed by Iwakura Tomomi 岩倉具視), which has two main goals: To negotiate to amend the unequal treaties with the U.S., Great Britain and other European countries that Japan had been forced into during the previous decades; To gather information on the modernizing process of the advanced Western countries. The mission fails to accomplish the former goal and concentrates on the latter as they felt the necessity to modernize the country first in order to renegotiate.

1872: May (4, Meiji 5)	Miyajima Seiichirō (宮島誠一郎) of the Left Board (Sa-in 左院: Legislative branch) presents his proposal for a national constitution (Rikkoku kengi 立国憲議) to Gotō Shōjirō (後藤象二郎), president of the Left Board. He calls for the establishment of an interim House with the directors of ministries and prefectural representatives as the members. Receiving this proposal, discussion on a drafting of the constitution and the establishment of parliamentary system begins within the Left Board. However, the study stalls with the later upheaval in political situation. It shows its significance as the first attempt by the government to establish the constitution.
September (8, Meiji 5)	The Left Board submits its studies on the regulations for a national assembly (Kokkai Giin tetsuzuki torishirabe 国会議員手続取調). More efforts in this vein continue for the rest of 1872.
1873: 1.1	Japan officially adopts the Gregorian Calendar. December 3, 1872 (Meiji 5) in the old-style calendar becomes January 1, 1873 (Meiji 6) in the Gregorian calendar.
1.10	Japan adopts conscription system obligating 3 years of military service to male citizens over 20 years old (徴兵令). It is considered to be one of the major reforms to create a centralized national military force.
July	Councilor Kido Takayoshi (木戸孝允) submits a memorandum requesting the drafting of a constitution (kenpō seitei ikensho 憲法制定意見書) to key officials in the government.
9.13	Return of the Iwakura Mission to Japan.
10.25	Conflicts within the Meiji government deepen. Councilors Itagaki Taisuke (板垣退助), Gotō Shōjirō and Saigō Takamori (西郷隆盛) leave the government after their calls for punitive measures against Korea (Seikanron 征韓論) are blocked. (Meiji roku-nen no seihen 明治六年の政変)
1874: 1.12	Itagaki Taisuke and Soejima Taneomi (副島種臣) forms the Patriotic Public Party (Aikokukōtō 愛国公党). It adheres to the principles of popular rights and to the establishment of a representative assembly. However, it disintegrates within two months.
1.17	Former councilors Itagaki Taisuke, Gotō Shōjirō, Etō Shinpei and five others submit to the Left Board a memorial calling for the creation of a popular assembly (Minsen giin setsuritsu kenpakusho 民選議院設立建白書).
2.1	Breakout of the Saga Rebellion (佐賀の乱) in Kyūshū. Etō Shinpei, the former councilor of the Meiji government and one of the leaders of the Rebellion, gets captured two months later. This is the first of many ex-samurai rebellions (Shizoku no ran 士族の乱) following in later years.
April	In Tosa (土佐), Itagaki Taisuke, Kataoka Kenkichi (片岡健吉), Ueki Emori (植木枝盛) and others form a political group, the Risshisha (立志社) to promote the concept of basic human rights and democracy. It also aims to aid the economic rehabilitation of ex-samurais.
4.2	A first academic journal in Japan (Meiroku Zasshi 明六雑誌) is published. The journal is published by the Meiji Six Association (Meirokusha 明六社), an intellectual society devoted to the propagation of Western ideas, formed the previous year. Its members include the intellectual Fukuzawa Yukichi (福澤諭吉) and government officer Mori Arinori (森有礼). The journal contributes to the promotion of civil society and modernization of Japan.

9.20	Formation of the Human Affairs Mutual Study Group (Kyōson Dōshū 共存同衆) founded by scholar Ono Azusa (小野粹) and others. The group is dedicated to the study of the problems involved in constitutionalism. The group writes a draft constitution in March, 1879 (Sigi Kenpō Iken 私擬憲法意見).
1875: 2.11	The Osaka Conference (大阪会議) is convened with the presence of Ōkubo Toshimichi (大久保利通), Kido Takayoshi and Itagaki Taisuke. The conference discusses the national policy including an issue on formation of a national assembly.
2.22	Having the Risshisha and the former members of the Aikokukōtō as core constituents, Itagaki calls for a formation of the Patriotic Society (Aikokusha 愛国社) in Osaka. The Aikokusha collapses in a short time as Itagaki returns to the government and many members join the Satsuma Rebellion in 1876.
3.12	Itagaki Taisuke returns to the government as a councilor.
4.14	Receiving the result of the Osaka Conference, Meiji Emperor announces an imperial rescript (Zenji Rikken-taisei Juritsu no Mikotonori 漸次立憲政体樹立の詔). The rescript consists of a four-point platform: The establishment of the Senate (Genrō-in 元老院); The creation of the Court of Justice (Daishin-in 大審院); The convocation of an assembly of prefectural governors (Chihōkan kaigi 地方官会議); Official declaration of a phase-in approach in establishing a system of government under a new constitution.
6.24	First assembly of prefectural governors. (Held until July 17)
1876: 9.6	Prince Arisugawa Taruhito (Arisugawa-no-miya Taruhito-Shin'nō 有栖川宮熾仁親王), head of the Senate, is commanded by the emperor to draft a constitution (kenpō kisō no chokumei 憲法起草の勅命) from a study of “the laws of various nations (kaigai kakkoku no seihō 海外各国の成法)” as well as a study of “the national polity (kenkoku no tai 建国の体).”
10.24	The Divine Wind Group (Keisintō 敬神党 <i>aka</i> Shinpūren 神風連), a gathering of xenophobic and politically disaffected ex-samurai, attacks the Kumamoto garrison and the Kumamoto prefectural office.
10.27	Breakout of the Akizuki Rebellion (秋月の乱).
10.28	Breakout of the Hagi Rebellion (萩の乱).
1877: 1.29	Breakout of the Satsuma Rebellion (Seinan Sensō 西南戦争), a revolt of ex-samurai from Satsuma against the Meiji government. The rebellion was led by Saigō Takamori, the former councilor of the government. It is crushed by the government troops eight months later, on September 24. It is the last of ex-samurai rebellions in the course of Japan's modernization.
June	The Risshisha submits, to the Senate and the Left Board, the petition to establish the national assembly (Risshisha Kenpaku Sha 立志社建白写).
1878: 5.14	Assassination of Councilor Ōkubo Toshimichi, one of the most influential leading statesmen of the Meiji Restoration. Assassins are Shimada Ichirō (島田一郎) and other politically disaffected ex-samurai.
6.20	Submission to Prince Arisugawa, head of the Senate, of a second draft of the Japanese constitution (Nihonkoku Kokken An 日本国国憲按). It is met with objections from several ministers and is not adopted.

7.22	The Meiji government decides to establish prefectural assemblies (Fu-ken kai 府県会). Although this does not directly affect the central government, it allows in the following year to take place a first election in Japanese history and provides a stage for Freedom and People's rights Movement (Jiyū Minken Undō 自由民権運動).
9.11	Resurrection of the Aikokusha in Osaka.
1879: 11.7	Third convention of the Aikokusha. The convention decides that the Aikokusha will organize and engage in a nation-wide petition campaign calling for the creation of a national assembly.
1880: 3.17	Fourth convention of the Aikokusha. 114 delegates said to represent 87,000 members in 22 prefectures attend. The society's name is changed to the League for the Establishment of a National Assembly (Kokkai kisei dōmei 国会期成同盟).
4.17	Representatives of the League for the Establishment of a National Assembly, Kataoka Kenkichi and Kōno Hironaka (河野広中), present a petition to the government for the creation of a national assembly but gets rejected.
July	Inoue Kowashi (井上毅) drafts a paper regarding the constitution of Japan (Kenpō Chukōryō no Gi 憲法中綱領議) and Iwakura Tomomi submits a recommendation to the emperor (Kenpō Daikōryō 憲法大綱領) based on Inoue's paper. Among others, the recommendation states that the constitution should be an imperial constitution under the Prussian model. Many of the points in the recommendation are later integrated into the Meiji Constitution.
11.10	Second convention of the League for the Establishment of a National Assembly. It calls for people to compile their own version of a constitution draft by the following year.
12.15	Formation of the Liberal Party (Jiyūtō 自由党) by Ueki Emori, Kōno Hironaka and others.
12.27	Submission of the final draft constitution (Nihonkoku Kokken An 日本国国憲按) by Ōki Takatō (大木喬任), who succeeded Arisugawa as head of the Senate. It is submitted to the emperor but rejected as Iwakura Tomomi and Ito Hirobumi being unresponsive of the content of the draft.
1881: March	Councilor Ōkuma Shigenobu (大隈重信) submits a memorandum to the government arguing for the adoption of the English-style parliamentary system in Japan as a form of constitutional government. He also proposes that a first national assembly should be held in 1883.
8.28	Ueki Emori of Risshisha writes a draft of constitution (Tōyō Dinihonkoku Kokken An 東洋大日本国国憲按), known to be the most democratic and progressive draft at the time, acknowledging the right to resistance and the right to revolution.
10.12	The Imperial Rescript calls for the creation of a national assembly by 1890 (Kokkai Kaisetsu no Chokuyu 国会開設の勅諭). The Political Change of 1882 (Meiji jūyōnen no Seihen 明治十四年の政変): Ōkuma Shigenobu and his supporters are forcibly purged from office. The Meiji government is now fully controlled by the ex-samurais from Satsuma and Chōshū (長州). With the purge of Ōkuma, the government shifts its support more to the Prussian-style than the British-style parliamentary democracy.

1882: 3.14	Senate councilor Itō Hirobumi (伊藤博文), by order of the emperor, leads an overseas mission to observe and study various constitutional systems first-hand.
4.16	Ōkuma Shigenobu, with a support of Ono Azusa, Inukai Tsuyoshi (犬養毅), Maejima Hisoka (前島密), Ozaki Yukio (尾崎行雄) and others, forms a political party, the Constitutional Reform Party (Rikken kaisin tō 立憲改進黨). The party calls for a British-style constitutional monarchy within the framework of a parliamentary democracy.
1883: 8.3	The Itō Hirobumi Mission returns to Japan.
November	Itō Hirobumi establishes the Office for the Study of the Constitution (Kenpō Torishirabe Kyoku 憲法取調局).
1884: 3.17	Establishment of the Bureau for the Study of Administrative Reforms (制度取調局 Seido Torishirabe Kyoku). It absorbs the Office for the Study of the Constitution, established the previous year. Itō Hirobumi becomes the first director.
1885: 12.22	Formal establishment of the cabinet system (Naikaku Seido 内閣制度). Itō Hirobumi is appointed the first Prime Minister of Japan.
1886: 10.24	Receiving the official announcement to create a national assembly by 1890, Hoshi Tōru (星亨) and others call for civil movement to unite in order to counter the government and to promote active party politics led by citizens. (Daidō Danketsu Undō 大同團結運動)
1887: 5.23	Inoue Kowashi writes, with the help of Karl Friedrich Hermann Roesler and Albert Mosse, the legal advisors of the government, an official draft of the constitution (Nihon Teikoku Kenpō Sōan 日本帝国憲法草案).
6.1	Itō Hirobumi, Itō Miyoji (伊東巳代治), Kaneko Kentarō (金子堅太郎) and others get together at the private villa of Itō Hirobumi in Natsushima, Kanagawa. Having Inue Kowashi's draft as a starting point, they further discuss to come up with the final draft constitution (Natsushima Sōan 夏島草案).
1888: 4.28	Receiving the finalization of the official draft constitution (Dai Nihon Teikoku Kenpō Jōsha Sangatsu An 大日本帝国憲法浄写三月案), the Privy Council (Sūmitsu-in 枢密院) is established by an imperial ordinance. The Establishment of the highest advisory body to the emperor is aimed to deliberate on the draft constitution and is headed by Itō Hirobumi.
1889: 1.31	The Privy Council finishes its deliberation on the draft constitution.
2.11	Constitution promulgated by the Meiji emperor (Dai Nihon Teikoku Kenpō 大日本帝国憲法).