



HST2 Historical Tripos, Part II

Friday 29 May 2020, 9.00 to 14.00

This is a three hour examination

Paper 18 (HST2) [=J6]

Japanese history

Answer **three** questions, including **one** from **each** section.

Limit each answer to a maximum of 1200 words.

All questions carry **equal** marks.

Type your number **not** your name as well as the paper code (H18) on the first page of your **submission**.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS TO BE SUPPLIED FOR THIS EXAMINATION

Student declaration form

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Save your file as H18_[your number].

Upload your answers as a Word document.

Upload a completed student declaration form as a separate file.

The exam will begin as soon as you open the file containing the questions. Once begun you will have three hours to complete the exam.

Section A

- 1) How did the *shōen* affect society in ancient Japan? Why and when were they created and why did they remain fundamental to the Japanese land system for so long?
- 2) What, in your estimation, were the three most important tools of warrior rule prior to the Tokugawa period? One tool must be a physical object, and one 'tool' must be abstract (for instance, a concept, dynamic interaction, or relationship). The third is your choice. Elaborate on the role and function of each, with specific examples from sources.
- 3) The Tokugawa polity has often been referred to as 'centralised feudalism', and while today's scholars eschew the expression, it can still be useful to understand why it was used to begin with. What were scholars thinking when they applied the concept? After all, it is an oxymoron, is it not? Discuss which aspects of Tokugawa Japan that may have given rise to that idea, and assess also what may have been overlooked in using it.

Section B

- 4) Identify and elaborate on three visions of 'modernity' in Meiji Japan. What do these conceptions share? Where do they diverge? Which (if any) do you believe best informs our understanding of Japan since the mid-nineteenth century?
- 5) What led Japan to war against its neighbours in East Asia and ultimately the US? Could the Asia-Pacific War have been avoided?
- 6) Can Japan's postwar economic miracle be explained or was it indeed a miracle? What exactly was the 'miracle'? Discuss this remarkable development with a critical eye towards later interpretations of it.

Section C

- 7) The following quote is from the diary of a German doctor living in Japan in 1876:

But (and here I come to the strangest feature of the situation) the Japanese have their eyes fixed exclusively on the future, and are impatient when a word is said of their past. The cultured among them are actually ashamed of it. 'That was in the days of barbarism', said one of them in my hearing. Another, when I asked him about Japanese history, bluntly rejoined: 'We have no history. Our history begins today.'
(Awakening Japan: The Diary of a German Doctor: Erwin Baelz [1974], entry for October 25, 1876)

What would be your response to the two 'impatient' Japanese quoted here if you were part of the conversation? Identify at least three things from the 'days of barbarism' that you think will shape the speakers' experiences over the remainder of their lifetimes and explain their importance. When constructing your answer, remember that this conversation is taking place in 1876.

- 8) Compare and contrast Japan's relationship with the outside world during the Nara, Tokugawa and Meiji periods. Be specific in noting differences and similarities and explain how they affected society as a whole. Include references to sources when possible.
- 9) 'The notion that women had any form of influence or power in Japan prior to the postwar period is absurd. Males always dominated the political, social and economic realms, and it was men who dictated how the state was conceived and developed.' Discuss this statement and explain with specific references why you agree or disagree.

END OF PAPER