



AET1 Asian and Middle Eastern Studies Tripos, Part IB
HST2 Historical Tripos, Part II

Tuesday 28 May 2019 13.30 – 16.30

Paper J6 (AET1) and Paper 18 (HST2)

Japanese history

Answer **three** questions, including at least **one** from **each** section.
All questions carry **equal** marks.

Write your number **not** your name on the cover sheet of **each** answer booklet.

STATIONERY REQUIREMENTS

20 page answer booklet
Rough Work Pad

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS TO BE SUPPLIED FOR THIS EXAMINATION

None

You may not start to read the questions printed on the subsequent pages of this question paper until instructed to do so.

Section A

- 1) The position of women in Japanese premodern society has often been described as one of steady and near constant decline. Using the lectures and seminary materials we have read in class, discuss whether or not this teleology is valid.
- 2) 'To a great extent the story of the samurai has been the story of Japan. In fact, it is impossible to understand contemporary Japanese society and behaviour without knowledge of the values of pre-modern Japan and these values that were evolved primarily by the samurai.' (Varley) Do you agree with this historian's view on the role of samurai in Japan's history? Justify your answer using materials from lectures and discussion.
- 3) What is the significance of the Akō Incident? Explain both the specific incident and what it came to bring to light about society at that time. Make sure also to provide relevant background.

Section B

- 4) What do you see as the root causes for the Meiji Restoration? Was it simply an inevitable revolution brought upon Japan by colonial forces?
- 5) Was the Taisho period worthy of the title 'Taisho Democracy'? Provide at least three clear examples, compare and contrast.
- 6) How did the high economic growth of the Showa era ironically also set the stage for the so-called 'lost decades' of the Heisei era.

Section C

- 7) What or who are the *sōhei* and why are they relevant to both premodern and modern Japan? Be specific with examples.
- 8) Japanese historiography has largely focused on ruptures, such as those between pre-WW2 and post-WW2. Instead, describe the continuities between the premodern and modern eras on a single theme of your choice, such as politics, gender, or religion.
- 9) Identify from which text these articles are drawn and contextualize them:
 - One must wholly devote oneself to the civil and the military arts and to the Way of the bow and horse.
 - Drinking parties and idle, wanton amusements should be restricted.
 - Any repairs of the castles in the provinces must certainly be reported [to the bakufu] – as well as new construction, which is strictly forbidden!
 - One must not contract marriages privately.
 - The lord of a province should select those who have talent and abilities for the tasks of government.

END OF PAPER