

A Modern History of Japan: From Tokugawa Times to the Present

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In *The Modern History of Japan: From Tokugawa Times to the Present*, Andrew Gordon paints a richly nuanced and strikingly original portrait of the last two centuries of Japanese history. He takes students from the days of the shogunate--the feudal overlordship of the Tokugawa family--through the modernizing revolution launched by midlevel samurai in the late nineteenth century; the adoption of Western hairstyles, clothing, and military organization; and the nation's first experiments with mass democracy after World War I. Gordon offers the finest synthesis to date of Japan's passage through militarism, World War II, the American occupation, and the subsequent economic rollercoaster. But the true ingenuity and value of Gordon's approach lies in his close attention to the non-elite layers of society. Here students will see the influence of outside ideas, products, and culture on home life, labor unions, political parties, gender relations, and popular entertainment. The book examines Japan's struggles to define the meaning of its modernization, from villages and urban neighborhoods, to factory floors and middle managers' offices, to the imperial court. Most importantly, it illuminates the interconnectedness of Japanese developments with world history, demonstrating how Japan's historical passage represents a variation of a process experienced by many nations and showing how the Japanese narrative forms one part of the interwoven fabric of modern history. With a sustained focus on setting modern Japan in a comparative and global context, *The Modern History of Japan* is ideal for undergraduate courses in modern Japanese history, Japanese politics, Japanese society, or Japanese culture.