Okuma Shigenobu was one of the most outstanding statesmen in Japan in modern times. He was one of a small group of oligarchs who, through a series of remarkably successful reforms, helped guide Japan into the modern era, and was exceptional in that he consistently urged the adoption of British-style parliamentary government when his colleagues favoured a German model.

Okuma founded Japan's second major political party and can be regarded as the country's first democrat, for he considered the role of public opinion vital to healthy government. Indeed, he founded a major private university to foster an educated electorate.

Twice Prime Minister, Okuma's career spanned both the Meiji and Taishō periods. The part he played in political and economic reforms and the modernisation of Japan are the focus of this book, which was written in the expectation that it would help Western understanding of a most important period in the history of Japan.
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Dr Lebra's Ph.D. dissertation was a more detailed study of Ōkuma Shigenobu, and she has published extensively on many aspects of Far Eastern history.
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OKUMA SHIGENOBU
Statesman of Meiji Japan
By the same author

Chandora Bosu to Nihon, 1968
Jungle Alliance, 1971
To my Mother and the memory of my Father
AUTHOR'S NOTE

Definitions of Japanese words not in common English usage follow the first use. The customary convention of Japanese surname preceding given name is followed.
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J.C.L.

University of Colorado, 1972
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Introduction

This biographical study is concerned with the impact on Japan's modernisation of one statesman, Ōkuma Shigenobu. I am particularly concerned with his influence on the development of parliamentary institutions and economic growth in Meiji Japan, and with his role as an archetypal democratic politician and precursor of 'mass democracy'.

Historians are attracted to Japan as the leading example of a non-Western, successful, late modernising nation. What are the significant dimensions of this modernisation, and how did the career of Ōkuma Shigenobu illustrate them? Any discussion of the rationally planned modernisation of Japan during the past century accords a prominent place to political and economic modernisation. In these areas a group of leaders in the new Meiji government made conscious decisions to strengthen Japan as a modern nation-state capable of meeting the West on equal terms. Among the goals the Meiji leaders sought for Japan were constitutional government and modern industrial development. In both these areas Ōkuma Shigenobu, one among a spectacular group of early Meiji political leaders, made signal contributions. As Finance Minister before 1881, for example, he helped create a modern, national economy out of the confusion of 265 separate fiefal economies.

In other areas—intellectual and cultural modernisation, where change was less rational, less planned, but equally palpable—Ōkuma was also an agent of representative transitional developments. He personified many of the traits which made the Meiji transformation possible, and was perhaps closer than many of his colleagues in both the government and political party movement to that ineffable phenomenon, the modern individual. These qualities led foreigners to describe him as having a 'modern mind' and extraordinary vision.
For many reasons inherent in his family and educational and geographic background Okuma became an outsider, an iconoclast, even an anti-hero among the heroes of the Restoration. Despite his many modernising achievements he was never admitted to the magic inner political circle, the genrō (council of older statesmen). As an outsider beyond the pale of the Satsuma-Chōshū hambatsu (fiefal cliques) and the genrō, Okuma’s iconoclasm turned him toward a democratic faith in political parties, parliamentary government on the British model, and the common man. In giving substance to these convictions Okuma evolved techniques which were democratic, not in the mid-twentieth-century American or Japanese sense, but in the mid-Meiji and even Taishō context.

In Japan modernisation was undertaken more deliberately and consciously than in the earlier, more evolutionary process in Western Europe. Modernisation for Meiji Japan was achieved through the rational, volitional choice of a relatively small group of ex-samurai, or shizoku, leaders in the government. Okuma, as a leading councillor in government until 1881, personified many of the dimensions of Japan’s national will to modernise. This national will to succeed has been recognised even by economic historians, notably Johannes Hirschmeier, as the single most significant resource and ideological determinant for modern development.

The will to modernise Japan was generated in part by the unequal treaties imposed by the West in the 1850s. The Japanese government’s response was a determination to revise the treaties and achieve equality with the West. Okuma figured prominently in the treaty revision process, but his efforts as Foreign Minister were attacked by conservatives as insulting to Japan. This sentiment evoked an abortive attempt on his life in 1889.

Another essential facet of Japan’s will to succeed was that nineteenth-century phenomenon, faith in the idea of progress. Okuma had a supreme optimism that all things were working for a brighter future for Japan.

Yet another significant ingredient of the national will to succeed was nationalism. Perhaps peculiar to modern Japanese nationalism was the strong sense of personal identification felt by the individual, a kind of internalisation of nationalism. For Okuma the strength of this sense of identification with Japan made it impossible for him to study in the West, either before or after the Restoration.
The ideology of science was another dimension of the Japanese will to progress. While Ōkuma’s personal knowledge of science and technology was slight, he nevertheless recognised the need for education beyond the restrictive horizons of the traditional Confucian system. Toward this end he founded Waseda University (or Tokyo Semmon Gakkō, as it was first called) and helped found Japan Women’s University. Waseda became noted for specialisation in law, politics, and commerce.

Some historians of modern Japan believe Japan’s modernisation was facilitated by the samurai ethic, Bushido, which encouraged the values of thrift and diligence, much as the Protestant ethic contributed to the rise of capitalism in the West. While Ōkuma criticised an excess of Bushido in some of his colleagues, he nevertheless praised Japan’s feudal legacy for easing the transition to constitutional government. He commended the spirit of self-sacrifice for one’s ideals, even when it came to a Bushido-like attempt on his own life.

Secularism and the weakening of religious dogma are also recognised as requisites of modernisation. Ōkuma was exceptional in the degree of his abhorrence of the Chinese system of writing and the Confucian classics. In his search for a national ethic Ōkuma found both Confucianism and Buddhism deficient by contrast with the function of Christianity in the West. There was no national religion; Ōkuma felt the need for a substitute moral imperative in the educational system. His quest led him to write a reader advocating loyalty to the emperor and nation.

Students of modernisation have argued that democratisation cannot or need not be equated with political modernisation. Whether one accepts the affirmative or negative position in this debate need not affect our judgment of Ōkuma’s role as a political moderniser. There can be no disputing the significance of his contribution to the development of Japanese constitutionalism. Nor can we detract from his role in the creation of a national bureaucracy and a national political party. The nation beyond the han became his stage. His political vision went beyond the Prussian-inspired constitutionalism of his colleagues in the Meiji government to the British model of parliamentary government in which ‘constitutional government is party government’.

Ōkuma’s role as a political innovator had several dimensions. At
the time of his birth in 1838, the political unit in Japan was about to shift from the fiefal han to the broader, newer nation-state. Ōkuma acted as an agent in this process of political nationalisation, both within the government prior to 1881 and in the political party which he later founded. In both capacities he threw off the close ties which bound other Restoration leaders to their old han cliques; in doing so he helped to forge new national loyalties. He was a 'modern' statesman, too, in his insistence on efficiency both in government and in the economy. Ōkuma's political modernity was reflected in the transfer of his personal loyalty from han to nation-state, in his insistence on efficient performance in the bureaucracy, and in his vision of a new national Japan.

In other respects Ōkuma was atypical to the point of being revolutionary. He was not bound by the strict dichotomy of Meiji politics into oligarchy and party so often delineated by historians. He may be compared on the one hand with an oligarch like Itō Hirobumi, 'father of the Constitution', and on the other with Itagaki Taisuke, founder of Japan's first major political party. Ōkuma was politically versatile. He was active in the pre-1881 oligarchy but equally capable of assuming leadership in the political party movement which sprang up in opposition to it. In both roles—in the oligarchy and in the party—Ōkuma was a new political phenomenon in Japan: a national statesman.

There are other reasons—if his revolutionary role were not enough—for concentrating on Ōkuma. His life span alone gives him a certain claim to represent the transitional Meiji period, as well as the Bakumatsu era and part of the Taishō period. He was typical of the Restoration leadership in his upper-middle samurai origin. He was the leading representative of Hizen han in government between 1869 and 1881, one of the few non-Satsuma-Chōshū men to survive so long in government. During these years he rose in the Finance Ministry to a position of pre-eminent power among the oligarchs, and in this post he helped to forge for Japan a modern, unified financial and economic structure.

Ōkuma's role as political moderniser went beyond these generally recognised attainments into the more controversial area of political values. He became a democrat, Japan's leading exponent of parliamentary government on the British model. He displayed strong convictions in his political thought and actions, both within the
government and through the party movement. Ōkuma was a persistent—if not always consistent—champion of parliamentary institutions, British style. He grasped the significance of the role of political parties in the parliamentary process, revealing it not only in the formation of the Kaishintō, but in repeated later attempts to institute parliamentary procedures. Parliamentary government as Ōkuma envisioned it became a reality for Japan in the 1920s and in post-war Japan, making Ōkuma's Meiji views prophetic.

Another aspect of the political transformation of Meiji Japan was the transition of political leadership from the exclusive samurai élite of the late Tokugawa and early Meiji years to a more mixed élite. Shizoku domination of both bureaucracy and political party leadership continued until about 1883, when the infusion of men of commoner origin became marked. The new Meiji élite became a modern intellectual class whose success depended in part on symbol manipulation—the business of journalists, teachers, statesmen, and lawyers. Ōkuma and other Kaishintō leaders were major agents in both aspects of this transition. Kaishintō leadership very rapidly shed the shizoku élitist patterns of political behaviour to which their backgrounds inclined them. The Kaishintō itself was a national rather than a han grouping, with a rapid increment of commoners or heimin in top positions.

Ōkuma's democratic convictions made him one of Japan's first popular statesmen. He showed a very early awareness of the implications of mass media, making him a precursor of mass democracy. In so far as 'popular opinion' was expressed during the Meiji era, Ōkuma had a good press. There were several reasons for this: he was repeatedly the underdog in dealing with the dominant Sat-Chō hambatsu; as a party leader he had numerous connections with the press, worked for revision of the Press Law during the Matsukata cabinet, and later as Premier was innovator of the cabinet press conference in Japan; his self-image as a democratic statesman led him to campaign vigorously in Japan's first parliamentary elections, giving unprecedented deference to public opinion; and he worked energetically to create an educated electorate and to improve higher education. These actions all gave dimension to Ōkuma's stature as an archetypal democrat in Japan.
The seventeenth of January 1922 was a cold, wintry day in Tokyo with a sharp wind blowing. Yet the streets were lined with thousands of people, all the way from Waseda University to Hibiya Park. Estimates of the crowd ran to a million and a half people. As the funeral procession and guard of honour passed, spectators spontaneously removed their coats and hats in respect. It was the funeral of Ōkuma Shigenobu, the democratic statesman of Meiji and Taishō Japan. For a month afterwards 3,000 people came daily to pay their respects. There had never been a national funeral like it in Japan. What was it that attracted such patient throngs on a blustery day in the dead of winter? For the answer we must trace the career of this statesman touched by the star of destiny.

By the mid-nineteenth century portents of modernisation were unmistakable in feudal Japan. The Tokugawa Bakufu (Tokugawa military government) was weakening as commercial developments made inroads into the feudal agrarian economy. The Tokugawa shoguns could no longer enforce political controls over the daimyo through sankin kōtai or alternate attendance at the shogunal court. The status quo could no longer be maintained in the social order as samurai and merchant families intermarried to combine wealth and social prestige. Nor could shogunal officials prevent heresies from the Chu Hsi Confucian orthodoxy which had helped to legitimise their power.

Western technology and learning had already penetrated tozama (outer) han through Dutch schools at Nagasaki; even the shogunal schools were adopting Western techniques in gunnery and military training. And in Mito han loyalists surreptitiously began questioning the legitimacy and authority of the Tokugawa shoguns.

If these changes were not enough to shake profoundly the
foundations of the feudal order, the assault of the West, beginning with Commodore Perry in 1853, added a final, external blow. However reluctant some shogunal officials were to end Japan's two-century-old sakoku (isolation) policy, the opening wedge had been inserted. The process of expanding relations with modern, Western nations proved irreversible. The signing of the first treaties in 1854 and 1858 precipitated internal dislocations which culminated in victory for the loyalist forces and collapse of the shogunate. The last shogun, Tokugawa Keiki, relinquished office in November 1867; Imperial rule was restored in January 1868, ushering in Japan's modern century.

Hizen in north-west Kyushu was one of the four powerful tozama han during the Tokugawa period. It was a daimiate of the Nabe-shima family. Since Lord Nabeshima encouraged Western technology and science, Hizen was already advanced in these areas despite a conservative han officialdom. In Hizen iron was smelted in reverberatory furnaces, cannon were cast, Western-style ships were built, coal was mined, and foreign advisers were hired. There was a medical school at Saga, the han capital, where Dutch was taught. Furthermore, Nagasaki was just sixty miles from Saga. Although Nagasaki was directly under the jurisdiction of shogunal commissioners, it was also under the military protection of Hizen in alternate years. Samurai of the han were able to acquire Western 'Dutch learning' as it seeped through the sole official channel at Deshima, the Dutch factory on an artificial islet in Nagasaki harbour. Hizen was thus favourably located to absorb ideas and techniques of the West during part of Japan's two centuries of isolation. Hizen was also advantageously situated for surreptitious contacts—interdicted by the shogun—with men of the other large tozama han of west Japan. Modernisation, inadvertently, already was under way in Hizen.

Hizen officials worked zealously in the castle town of Saga to preserve military discipline and loyalty to the han. They did this to counteract disturbing foreign ideologies filtering in through Deshima. Lord Nabeshima himself had encouraged the founding of a Bureau of Dutch Studies in Hizen. By the 1860s, however, he was ageing. He was also surrounded by officials who were convinced that little good could accrue from the study of Western culture, which was commanding increasing attention after Perry's visit. Nabeshima
both supported and opposed the Mito school of thought which was beginning to arouse students in Saga. The official Chu Hsi Neo-Confucianism, challenged by thinkers of heterodox schools in some areas, still held sway in Hizen during the Bakumatsu years.

Feudal values were imbibed by young samurai at Hizen's Kōdōkan, a school for sons of samurai families, and through Hizen's own particular version of Bushido, embodied in a ten-volume text, *Hagakure* (Hidden leaves). This work, which was memorised by all students at the Kōdōkan, enjoined that 'Any samurai should [be ready to] die for Hizen han. The only good he can do for his han is to die for it'.\(^2\) The *Hagakure* placed Confucianism and loyalty to the Nabeshima family high on the scale of values; Buddhism was much lower.

The han system of education was compulsory for samurai sons and was enforced with rigid sanctions. A boy entered primary school at the age of six or seven and was promoted to high school at sixteen or seventeen. He remained there usually until the age of twenty-five or twenty-six, by which time he had been fully imbued with respect for the han feudal virtues. If he failed to pass, a percentage of his family's annual hereditary stipend could be deducted.\(^3\) It was an effective sanction for samurai education.

Among the heterodox streams of thought which infiltrated Hizen was the Mito school. In 1855 Fujita Tōko, a teacher who had influenced many samurai in Western han in Mito ideas, died, and the impact of Mito thought on Hizen began to wane. At the same time opposition to the *tozama sonnō jōi* (revere the emperor; expel the barbarian) position grew. Nabeshima's stance, however, was ambivalent, since he was on friendly terms with Ii Naosuke (shogunal chief minister who signed the Townsend Harris commercial treaty on his own initiative) and the pro-shogun daimyo of Higo on the one hand, and with the Mito group and the daimyo of Satsuma on the other. His sympathies were divided between Court and shogun, and he seemed to put some hope in the movement to reconcile the two. Loyalty to Nabeshima, therefore, did not necessarily connote hostility to either the shogun or the emperor. But among many of the officials who surrounded Nabeshima attachment to the Tokugawa régime was still strong.

On several counts Hizen might have been expected to play a leading role in the Restoration, together with Satsuma and Chōshū.
Hizen was one of the ten wealthiest han with an annual income of 357,000 koku (one koku = about five bushels) of rice and was relatively large in area. As a tozama han it had been traditionally hostile to the Tokugawa Shogunate since its founding. Hizen was close to Satsuma and Chōshū, in fact, between the two. Receptivity to Western learning and technology was heightened by the political and economic position of Nagasaki. Commercial development and even some trade with Hokkaido were making headway. But, partly because of traditionalism among han officials and Nabeshima's ambivalence and advancing age, Hizen failed to live up to these potentialities and to join with Satsuma and Chōshū samurai in effecting the Restoration of power to the emperor and the establishment of a new central government.

Ökuma Shigenobu was born of a middle samurai family in 1838 in Saga, the castle town of Hizen. His father, of yarigashira or chief lancer rank, commanded the artillery unit at the fort of Nagasaki. The family income, a matter of dispute among scholars, was around 250 koku of rice annually.4

Ökuma's biographers have been unable to make the usual claims to a diligent, studious childhood. His father died when he was thirteen, and his mother was anything but a stern disciplinarian of her first son. Lack of family restraints may have nurtured Ökuma's rebellious spirit even as a child.

Ökuma developed none of the polite or manly Japanese accomplishments. As a young man he was never known for prowess in military arts, as would have befitted the eldest son in a samurai family. By various ingenious ruses he eluded classes in fencing, archery, and horsemanship which he was expected to attend. Nor did he while away spare moments composing haiku or tanka (a thirty-one syllable poem). He abhorred calligraphy practice and felt he was gauche with the writing brush. Although he showed average skill in calligraphy, he felt at a disadvantage, not only in calligraphy but also in Confucian studies. There is no extant example of his handwriting after the age of fifteen, when he made the extraordinary vow to give up writing for the rest of his life. He later came to regard the use of Chinese characters, which he called 'the devil's characters', as an indefensible drag on the intellectual progress of Japan and advocated their discontinuance. Out of this rebellion against traditional arts he developed a deep-seated aversion to some aspects
of feudal ethics and discipline. His anti-Confucianism also put him at a disadvantage later in dealing with Confucian-influenced officials. On the other hand at an early age he began to be attracted to Dutch learning and inflammatory Mito ideas which were penetrating the tozama han.

At the age of seventeen Ōkuma was expelled from the Kōdōkan, when he became the centre of a dormitory fracas between ‘conservatives’ and ‘progressives’. This gave him a chance to follow his own inclinations rather freely for a year. He joined a student discussion group called the Gisai Dōmei (League of the Loyalist Festival, having loyalist sentiments toward the emperor), led by Edayoshi Shinjō. Edayoshi was a kokugakusha, or scholar of Japanese studies, who was at odds with han officials. He was critically concerned with educational reform in the Kōdōkan and administrative reform of the han government. From Edayoshi Ōkuma gained instruction in Mito ideas. Ōkuma remained in the Gisai Dōmei even though it did not give full scope to his developing vision of national political and educational reform. The League, most of whose members were older than Ōkuma, split into two factions, and the traditionalist faction gained strength as pro-Bakufu sentiment led han officials around Nabeshima to try to stem the loyalist tide.

But fortunately for Ōkuma and his young colleagues, Lord Nabeshima promoted in 1853 the establishment of a Rangakuryō, a school for the study of the Dutch language, Western history, science, and military tactics, which was attached to the medical school in Saga. Ōkuma matriculated at this forward-looking school when he was nineteen.

The assassination of Ii Naosuke in 1860 by Mito loyalists irate at Ii’s signing of the treaty precipitated Nabeshima’s formal if not de facto retirement in favour of his seventeen-year-old son. Political confusion in Hizen only grew apace, though the older Nabeshima continued to wield influence. Many of Ōkuma’s group now came to despair of accomplishing anything by remaining in Hizen, and they began to abscond to Kyoto, where the Imperial forces were rallying. From there they could try to influence Nabeshima to join actively with the loyalists. Ōkuma also sought contact with men of other han, notably Kido Takayoshi, who came to Saga from Chōshū in 1864 to secure aid against the foreigners. Ōkuma met Kido for
the first time and became sympathetic with his xenophobic, pro-
emperor cause.

In the midst of this political ferment, Ōkuma studied and even
began to teach Dutch at the Saga Rangakuryō, where he came to the
attention of Lord Nabeshima. Ōkuma was one of two students
selected by Nabeshima to go to Nagasaki about 1861 to study English
and constitutional law with Guido Verbeck, an American missionary
of Dutch extraction, who introduced Ōkuma to the New Testament
and the American Constitution. Ōkuma’s iconoclasm, individualism
and opposition to Confucian traditionalism made him, if not
scholarly, at least receptive to Western learning.

In Nagasaki Ōkuma met both Japanese and foreign merchants,
and from them began to acquire knowledge of the new financial and
commercial methods. His native talent along these lines developed
rapidly and was to carry him far in the Restoration Government.
About this time Ōkuma, Soejima Taneomi and others of the Gisai
Dōmei from Hizen decided to found an English school at Nagasaki,
and they succeeded in securing Nabeshima’s financial support.
They raised additional funds from among their friends in Nagasaki.
The Chienkan school was duly established in Nagasaki in 1865,
and Ōkuma became one of the English instructors. Although he
never learned to speak English fluently, he did read and understand
it and was able to communicate with foreigners.

Nabeshima established the office of trade representative or
daihimpō in Hizen and appointed Ōkuma to this office about 1860,
as he commuted between Nagasaki and Saga. Ōkuma was charged
with assisting Hizen merchants and collecting duties from them.
Previously on his own initiative Ōkuma concocted a plan for enrich-
ing Hizen through establishing commercial agents in Nagasaki and
Osaka as other han were doing, to take advantage of price differenti-
als for rice in the Edo and Osaka areas. Han officials turned a cold
shoulder on his schemes. Through the daihimpō he had better luck
and eventually persuaded some rice dealers to ship rice to Edo.
Opposition from the Edo rice dealers, however, made this first
venture a financial fiasco. Another projected expedition for Osaka
was not allowed to sail, because han officials feared it was bound for
Chōshū to aid that han against the Bakufu.

During the second Bakufu punitive expedition against Chōshū in
1866, Ökuma again was distracted from commerce and English teaching to the political situation. He felt that when the Bakufu called on Nabeshima for help, this was Nabeshima's opportunity to act, to go actively to the aid of Chōshū, and possibly even to attempt to unite Satsuma and Chōshū. Nabeshima vacillated, and Sakamoto Ryōma of Tosa han instead became the catalyst of the Sat-Chō rapprochement. This alliance provided the necessary impetus for restoring power from the shogun to the Emperor Meiji.

Ökuma and Soejima now felt the destiny of Hizen was sealed, that there could be no further hope for dynamic leadership from within the han. They decided to abscond to Kyoto and from outside Hizen to join those urging the Tokugawa Shogun to return political power to the emperor. En route, however, they were caught by han authorities and imprisoned. They escaped death only through the intervention of Nabeshima himself, and were released from prison shortly thereafter. Ökuma in his memoirs regretted that it had been impossible to unite the loyalist movement within Hizen or to attain Hizen representation in the Restoration Government as it was formed. 'We were all in a kind of prison in Saga han', he lamented.

Nabeshima's motive in interceding personally on Ökuma's behalf is not readily apparent. No doubt Ökuma had already come to Nabeshima's attention as a capable young man teaching in the Rangakuryō. Of those at the school, Nabeshima had singled Ökuma out for appointment to the daihimpō. In addition, Ökuma's father had enjoyed a fairly prominent position in the han, and it may have been partly for his father's sake that Nabeshima took an interest in Ökuma. Furthermore, Nabeshima probably feared reaction among restless young samurai should so strict a punishment be carried out. In any case, a close personal relationship between the two families was maintained during Ökuma's lifetime.

The first of many unsuccessful attempts to persuade Ökuma to go abroad to study was made at this time. Taking advantage of the shogunal proposal to send students and officials to the international exposition in Paris in 1867, some of Ökuma's relatives hatched a plan to prevent him from doing further damage to the family honour by persuading him to go to France. Study abroad had by now become the vogue with young samurai, but Ökuma was not to be persuaded to leave the 'prison' of Saga han. He feared that Japan in the midst of internal upheaval might suffer the fate of China at the hands of
the Western powers. Ōkuma's self-image as a man of destiny in time of national peril precluded his going abroad either then or later. He objected to the suggestion saying, 'Why should someone who can do something for his country go to France and do nothing?'

He was convinced the shogunate had run its course and Japan was on the verge of momentous change. He wanted to be part of it. If this was personal ambition, there was also a compelling feeling of duty which contributed to Ōkuma's sense of involvement with Japan's destiny. Japan's national goals were also Ōkuma's personal aspirations; the two coincided. In his memoirs, looking back on his early decision, he felt he should have spent four or five years abroad. His vigorous internalised nationalism kept him in Japan all his life.

Nabeshima at this juncture was under the thumb of the pro-Bakufu faction in Hizen. He hired students who had studied in pro-Bakufu Higo and planned to cement relations with Lord Hosokawa of that han by giving his daughter in marriage to Hosokawa's son. Again Ōkuma despaired of Nabeshima and made his way to Kyoto and Edo to work for the loyalist cause. By the end of 1867, however, he concluded his best plan was to return and try one last time to persuade Nabeshima to lead an army to help the loyalists restore power to the emperor. En route back to Hizen by ship, Ōkuma made his maiden political speech, filled with loyalist passion for the emperor and concern for national security. He so impressed the crew that the ship changed course from Shimonoseki to Nagasaki, and the captain agreed to visit one of Nabeshima's officials to try to persuade him to act. Ōkuma's sense of urgency would not allow him to sit idly by, watching his han left behind in the new alignments that were taking shape. He raged that later historians would judge Nabeshima to have been ineffectual, and he exhorted han officials to take decisive action to redeem the honour of Saga and at the same time save the nation. Ōkuma was critically concerned with having his han gain position on the national stage.

But Ōkuma's eloquence was lost on Nabeshima. Rumour circulated at the end of the year that Nabeshima would leave for Kyoto, but meanwhile the last Tokugawa Shogun had transferred political authority to the emperor, and Nabeshima's stance was no longer an issue. Ōkuma lamented that Hizen had lost its chance for leadership on the new national stage.

Still, by January 1868 Ōkuma enjoyed several advantages as a
potential Meiji leader. He was born in a middle samurai family in a leading *tozama* han. He was educated in the samurai Confucian tradition but had already developed a contempt for backward-looking Confucian scholasticism and a taste for new Western ideas. He was already equipped with some knowledge of both Dutch and English. He had gained some commercial expertise through the han bureaucracy. And finally, he had joined the side of the loyalists and had met some of the Sat-Chō *shishi* (young patriots) who were the nucleus of the nascent Meiji leadership.
2 Nationalising and Rationalising the Government and Economy

From Hizen origins and student-official roots in Nagasaki Ōkuma gained his first appointment to the new government in Nagasaki. This first diplomatic and commercial assignment was only a short though crucial step away from the new central government in Tokyo. Once in the national government Ōkuma rose spectacularly to become a key architect of establishing a national economy and polity. Within ten years he became Finance Minister and wielded power so great as to arouse fear and resentment among the leading sangi (councillors) from Satsuma and Chōshū. By 1880 at a vigorous forty-two Ōkuma was doyen of the sangi and his power in the Meiji oligarchy seemed secure.

During these ten years two distinctive features characterised Ōkuma's rise to power: his neglect of his own han as a base of power or clique and his ability to operate within the Sat-Chō power axis. These were the political premises from which Ōkuma acted successfully until 1881. In both respects—failure to use his han as a base of support and alternate Satsuma and Chōshū sponsorship—Ōkuma developed as a revolutionary national statesman.

In January 1868 the old shogunal commissioner fled Nagasaki, leaving the city in temporary anarchy. The new Kyoto government appointed a commission of sixteen men from leading han to assume charge of the city provisionally. Ōkuma was chosen one of the sixteen. Another was Matsukata Masayoshi of Satsuma, who later succeeded Ōkuma as Finance Minister. National instability and uncertainty were reflected in the committee; some were loyalists and others still displayed pro-Bakufu sentiments. When a Chōshū committeeeman accused Hizen of being pro-Bakufu, Ōkuma retorted indignantly, 'No! My han has respected the Emperor since the days of the first Lord Nabeshima'.

By February the commission was disbanded and a newly-appointed Governor-General of Kyushu arrived with Chōshū samurai Inoue Kaoru as chief aide. By April 1868 Ökuma was advanced to Judge of the Foreign Office in the central government, charged with handling foreigners’ claims relating to commercial contracts in Nagasaki. He handled his new duties with dispatch, directing foreign merchants to present their claims immediately. Ökuma’s ties with Inoue and Matsukata as Chōshū and Satsuma men were the beginning of his relationship within the new Sat-Chō dominated oligarchy. Ökuma gained access to the central government not by virtue of han origin, which gave Satsuma and Chōshū men ready access to key government councils, but because his ability had been proven in Nagasaki. There was another significant reason which led Ökuma’s Sat-Chō colleagues to turn to him. Hizen did not have the xenophobic reputation Satsuma and Chōshū had acquired in early contacts with the Western nations. Ökuma, it was felt, would thus have a better chance of success with foreigners than his Sat-Chō counterparts.

Another problem which involved Ökuma directly with the central government concerned the imprisonment and execution of Japanese Christians in early 1868 by the anti-Christian Governor of Kyushu. Ökuma’s talents had already been noticed by Inoue, who in April recommended his appointment as san’yo (junior councillor) in the central government. Ökuma was charged with investigating the Urakami situation and reporting to Sanjō, Iwakura, Kido, and Inoue.

Turning his attention to Urakami, Ökuma was confronted with foreign protests over the treatment of Urakami Christians. British Minister Sir Harry Parkes demanded religious tolerance toward the Christians. When Parkes was introduced to Ökuma as the official who would hear his claims, Parkes refused to deal with such an unknown underling. Ökuma, however, parried Parkes’ demands with firmness and aplomb, and, despite the heat of argument, gained the respect of Parkes. Though Ökuma privately sought to persuade the Japanese Christians to recant, he did not regard foreign pressure on Japan as an unalloyed evil. He saw the possible value of external pressure to force Japan to unite behind its shaky new central government. With the foreign diplomats, however, Ökuma argued against lifting the Tokugawa ban on Christianity, invoking Japanese
national character, the inviolability of Japanese law, and the danger of political confusion, citing the example of religious wars in Europe. The Meiji government tried to resolve the Urakami impasse by exiling the leader of the Christian community and scattering the 150 confirmed Christians throughout the country, in the hope they might recant. But the government lifted the ban on Christianity.

Having thus gained some renown nationally and internationally, Ōkuma was drawn into other diplomatic problems. He worked for the recovery of the Yokosuka Dockyard from the French government, for the delivery of the warship Stonewall Jackson, which had been purchased from the United States by the Bakufu, for the payment of a Bakufu debt of 500,000 ryō to the French government through a loan from the Oriental Bank (negotiated through the good offices of Parkes and repaid the following year), and for investigation of the murder of two British seamen in Nagasaki. Ōkuma also delivered 250,000 ryō (borrowed from Osaka merchants) to Governor Ōmura Masujirō of Tokyo for pacification of masterless samurai or rōnin who still roamed the streets of Tokyo.

As Ōkuma's first appointment as san’yo had come at Inoue's recommendation, so too his next appointments resulted from the efforts of another powerful Chōshū sangi, Kido Takayoshi. In February 1869 Ōkuma was appointed one of the Vice-Controllers of the Foreign Office, charged with economic problems which had international ramifications.

Foreign envoys were calling for unification and standardisation of Japan's numerous confusing currencies. Foreign merchants were unable to distinguish among the welter of Bakufu and han currencies circulating simultaneously. They were also suffering from depreciation of the silver ichibugin, after initially profiting from exchange of the Mexican dollar for the ichibugin in Japan. They demanded a stable uniform currency and rate of exchange.

Japan's pressing economic crisis could not be divorced from diplomatic relations, and Ōkuma had already demonstrated his ability in both these fields. Consequently, three months after his appointment in the Foreign Office, he was given a corresponding post of Vice-Controller in the Accounting Office. With an up-to-date concern for efficiency, Ōkuma warned that financial mismanagement was resulting from an excess of officials, wasteful expenditures, and unscrupulous practices at the top of the structure. He saw clearly
that, since finance and diplomacy were inextricably related, unless the whole financial structure were revised, none of Japan's pressing diplomatic problems could be solved.\(^8\)

In these early days of the Meiji government financial and diplomatic procedures were as yet unstructured, and affairs were conducted on a highly personalised basis among the very young oligarchs. An example of this personalisation was Ōkuma's July 1869 decision to resign from the Accounting Office. Ōkuma in mid-1869 was discouraged about negotiations to settle the currency disarray and temporarily disheartened. Dainin (state ministers) Sanjō and Iwakura, both ex-kuge (court nobles), however, persuaded Ōkubo Toshimichi of Satsuma to urge Ōkuma to remain. Ōkubo and Sanjō succeeded not only in persuading Ōkuma to remain but also in gaining him a promotion to taiifu (Vice-Minister) of Finance in August 1869, and concurrently to Vice-Minister of Internal Affairs.\(^9\)

Under Ōkuma as Assistant Vice-Minister in both Internal Affairs and Finance was Itō Hirobumi of Chōshū, who later overshadowed Ōkuma within the government and helped engineer Ōkuma's ouster. At the time, personal relations between the two, as among the first-rank oligarchs in general, were close and informal. Governmental affairs were as likely to be discussed over saké into the early morning hours as in daytime councils. Together Ōkuma and Itō prompted many innovations at this time: the establishment of a national mint through foreign technical aid, the opening of telecommunications, the negotiation of a loan from Britain for construction of Japan's first railway, and the building of lighthouses. Under Ōkuma in Finance were not only Itō but also Inoue, who had first recommended Ōkuma to the central government.

While Ōkuma's titles changed frequently during the first ten years of the Restoration Government, along with experiments in the whole administrative structure, his function remained essentially constant. After brief appointments in Foreign Affairs and Home Affairs he became in August 1869 Vice-Minister of Finance, in August 1871 Vice-Minister to Ōkubo, then in October 1873 Finance Minister himself. This was a key department in the new administration, as its purview extended over a variety of functions in the whole government. Besides such matters as public works, communications, temples and shrines, and railways, there was the matter of budgetary control over all other ministries. An estimated 70 to 80 per cent of policy-making
power in the new government was concentrated in the Finance Ministry. It thus formed a relatively stable policy-making axis for the Meiji government.

Ōkuma gained such renown through his position and reforms that it was not long before four sangi—Ōkubo of Satsuma, Sasaki Takayuki of Tosa, Hizawa of Chōshū, and Soejima of Hizen—began to criticise him for arbitrary use of power. Leading representatives of all four major han, including his own, were arrayed against Ōkuma. By 1870 Ōkubo had become apprehensive of Ōkuma's burgeoning power. Sasaki had earlier attacked Ōkuma for his progressivism. And now even Ōkuma's old childhood friend Soejima had shifted his stance and was supporting the opposition to Ōkuma. The four sangi pressed Sanjō and Iwakura to separate the offices of Internal Affairs and Finance and to dismiss Ōkuma.

Kido, who had already unsuccessfully recommended Ōkuma for the post of sangi in 1869, now rallied to his defence and supported his stance. Sanjō, often the mediator in personal disputes among sangi and kyō (ministers in charge of departments), now conceived the idea of resolving the situation by making Ōkuma sangi. This he felt would enable Ōkuma to act as liaison between saigi and kyō and would also give more power to the sangi. Sanjō's proposal suggests that by 1870 Ōkuma was already a power to be reckoned with rather than simply a pawn in the hands of the Satsuma and Chōshū oligarchs. Sanjō repeatedly expressed his admiration for the native ability and knowledge of both Ōkuma and Itō. But although Kido supported Sanjō's efforts, the proposal only evoked a threat by the four sangi to resign.

This early opposition to Ōkuma was a portent of later Sat-Chō antagonism and attempts to oust Ōkuma. It was also the beginning of a schism among the Meiji leaders over their support of Ōkuma. The split often followed the traditional lines of Satsuma-Chōshū rivalry. When Satsuma and Chōshū were at odds, Ōkuma was often able to ally himself with one clique against the other. This was the key to much of his viability in the early Meiji oligarchy, since he had no Hizen base of support. When both sides were joined against him, however, he could not withstand them and went down to defeat.

In 1870 the formidable sangi opposition was partly successful in the bid to curb Ōkuma's power. Separation of the Home and Finance Ministries was formalised. Sanjō and Iwakura insisted that
Ökuma remain as Vice-Minister of Finance, but they yielded to the demand that he resign from Home Affairs. The change was effected on 10 July 1870, and Ökubo and Hirozawa were put in charge of Home Affairs. At the same time many of the functions which had accumulated under Ökuma in Finance were shorn away from the purview of the Finance Ministry. This move, aimed at further curtailing Ökuma's power, left him only the sections of revenue, supplies, buildings, mint, taxes and general supervision. A compromise with the demands of the four sangi left Ökuma with less formal power.

Meanwhile, Kido and Sanjō renewed their efforts to secure Ökuma's appointment as sangi. But Ökuma spurned a post among those who had so recently opposed him; he presented a number of stipulations before agreeing to accept office in September 1870. Among his terms were control by the Dajōkan (council of state) of several ministries, execution of some reforms already projected, expansion of railways and telecommunications, establishment of an Industrial Ministry to foster new industries, and completion of the process of abolishing the feudal system and han. Ökuma's conditions were accepted. He assumed and retained the office of sangi until June 1871, when he resigned, only to be reappointed in July on Kido's insistence. Again there was opposition from Satsuma leaders, this time Ökubo and Saigō Takamori. Saigō unsuccessfully demanded as a compromise that his Tosa friend Itagaki Taisuke be appointed sangi also. Kido's position was buttressed by his Chōshū confederates Itō and Inoue. So far Ökuma's Chōshū support was holding firm.

In August 1871 Ökubo was appointed Minister of Finance, and for a brief period Ökuma was his Vice-Minister before being replaced by Inoue. As the sangi concerned with that Ministry, however, part of Ökuma's de facto power was unchanged. During most of 1872 and 1873 Ökubo's absence with the Iwakura Embassy abroad made Ökuma's involvement with financial matters imperative.

In August 1871 Saigō Takamori joined the government as sangi through his fellow clansman Ökubo's recommendation. Saigō recommended that Ökuma employ certain persons in Finance, but Ökuma was antipathetic to Saigō's candidates. Ökuma was concerned about how to destroy the feudal structure and carry out reforms of the new system with a conservative like Saigō in the government. This led Ökuma to reverse his earlier stand for uniting sangi and
heads of ministries, and to advocate decreasing the power of the Dajōkan and distributing the power among the departments.\(^{16}\) No doubt Ōkuma’s new stand on the Dajōkan was also affected by his own resignation as sangi in August 1871. In any case, formal administrative machinery was secondary to personal influence in the early years of the Meiji government.

During the first four years of the Meiji era, Ōkuma was regarded by Kido as his protegé and was under the protection of the Chōshū faction. Ōkubo’s attitude toward Ōkuma was more ambivalent. While Ōkubo was willing to have Ōkuma remain in Finance in 1869, he also urged reduction of Ōkuma’s power through separation of the Home and Finance Ministries. And Saigō, who with Kido and Ōkubo formed the original power axis in the Meiji government, was almost hostile to Ōkuma because of fundamental differences of principle. During this period Ōkuma was closest to Kido on the question of basic reforms. Kido, although more visionary than Ōkubo, advised moderation in reforms, and viewed Itagaki as too rash to be practical in matters of administration. Kido believed Ōkuma was wiser, capable of caution and therefore worthy of trust.\(^{17}\) This judgment of Kido’s was significant during the period of the Iwakura Embassy.

Ōkuma was appointed to the Committee to Investigate the Administrative System in July 1871, again through Kido’s influence. The committee was to implement the abolition of the han and creation of ken and gun (prefectures and counties). Saigō was chief opponent of this modernisation and delayed execution of the plan. Realising that he was in a small minority in government, Saigō finally relented. Saigō’s conservatism was so repugnant to Ōkuma that he raised the question of expelling Saigō, but Ōkubo took Saigō’s part and refused.\(^{18}\)

In November 1871 the forty-eight member Iwakura Embassy left Japan on its tour of Europe and the United States. Its purpose was to study the economic, political, and legal institutions of the treaty powers, with a view to revising Japan’s unequal treaties. Guido Verbeck in Nagasaki had suggested to Ōkuma that the new government send a study mission abroad, and Ōkuma may have encouraged the plans. When the mission actually left, however, he remained at home. At the same time Ōkubo arranged Ōkuma’s appointment as Chief of the Office of Treaty Revision Affairs. Ōkuma’s official
biographer suggests Ōkuma planned the mission to get as many conservatives out of the country as possible so that he could execute what reforms he wished.\(^{19}\) However, his actual influence on the mission appears to have been minimal, and his earlier reluctance to leave Japan had not changed.

The forty-eight member embassy included Kido, Ōkubo, Itō, and Iwakura, leaving Saigō, Itagaki Taisuke, and Ōkuma at home with Sanjō. Members of the mission were apprehensive about leaving the government in the hands of this trio under Sanjō's supervision. Accordingly, before departure of the mission they exacted a promise from those remaining that the latter would not undertake any major reforms while the mission was away, and that minor reforms were to be undertaken only after prior communication with the embassy.\(^{20}\) There was no age difference between those who went with Iwakura and those who remained at home. Most of the oligarchs were under forty at the time of the Restoration, making them an exceptional leadership group in Japan.

Ōkuma was troubled by having to conduct the business of government with the 'two warriors', Saigō and Itagaki, who preferred regaling each other with tales of prowess in hunting or in battle. It is alleged that Saigō came to Ōkuma and entrusted him with his share of responsibility in governmental affairs.\(^{21}\) While Ōkuma was never averse to spending an evening over sake with his colleagues, he was, for a samurai son, singularly unimpressed with warrior tales. Nor did he spend as much time in entertainment establishments in the company of geisha as other major statesmen of the time. It is significant that Saigō felt closer to Itagaki—considered one of Meiji Japan's leading liberals—than to Ōkuma. Kido must have realised before he left that Ōkuma might act, not Saigō or Itagaki. For his part, Ōkuma regarded Ōkubo and Itō as the strongest men on the mission.\(^{22}\)

Ōkuma felt frustrated by having to rely on delayed correspondence with the mission abroad before taking any action. Many of the reforms of the next three years were actually undertaken without prior consultation with the mission. Sanjō, anxious that the letter of the agreement be observed, was concerned. In May 1872 he asked Ōkuma to be more cautious in his plans.\(^{23}\)

The government at home proceeded with many reforms to abolish the feudal régime and to create the new state. In the first category
were legal abolition of the *eta* (pariah caste), legal abolition of prostitution, prohibition of wearing swords, liquidation of han debts, exchange of han currencies for a national currency, and plans for amortisation of samurai pensions through bonds and cash payments. Steps toward the creation of the new state were revision of the calendar, passage of the universal education and universal conscription edicts, creation of a new land-tax structure, lifting the prohibition on transactions in land, building lighthouses, and constructing Japan's first railway between Tokyo and Yokohama. Said Ōkuma, 'We can reform everything without consulting them [the mission] because world civilisation is known everywhere'.

He did not define 'world civilisation'. But at least once he invoked the terms of the agreement with the departed embassy. This was over the question of moving the Ise Shrine to the Imperial Palace. He opposed the transfer, no doubt as an attempt by traditionalists to increase their power in the government.

In April 1873, Inoue, Vice-Minister of Finance, was caught in the crossfire of attacks and demands of Justice Minister Etō Shimpei and Education Minister Ōki Takaō for revenue. Inoue informed the absent Finance Minister Ōkubo that he would resign. Sanjō begged Ōkuma to settle the impasse, perhaps because Etō and Ōki were both from Hizen. Inoue calculated that national expenditures were 50 million yen, revenue 40 million yen, and the national debt was 140 million. Ōkuma sided with fellow clansmen Etō and Ōki against Inoue and drew up a different budget, based apparently on a differing calculation of the price of rice: revenue 48 million, expenditures 46 million yen. Ōkuma's budget, based on anticipated revenue and expenditures, was Japan's first national budget, published on 9 June 1873. Publication of the budget may have been an early attempt by Ōkuma to bring into the open government expenditures and thereby exert some control over Sat-Chō arbitrary exercise of power in the government.

Apart from the budget, Ōkuma was concerned over Inoue's intended resignation and devised a plan to placate him. Inoue resigned anyway, and Ōkuma became Acting Director of Finance. When Ōkubo returned home in September and decided to become Home Minister, Ōkuma became Finance Minister.

Before the return of the mission, however, another serious problem arose at home. Saigō and Itagaki urged sending an envoy to
Korea to begin diplomatic relations with the 'hermit kingdom', in the hope that Korean refusal would precipitate a Japanese punitive expedition. This in turn would provide an outlet for samurai discontent with the new régime. Sanjō agreed in principle to the proposal but wanted to delay action until the embassy returned. Ōkuma may have opposed the idea of a punitive war against Korea and wanted to delay a final decision for the same reason. Or he may simply have wanted to await the return of the mission in order to side with the winning faction. In any case, he did not take a firm stand until the return of Iwakura, when he joined the majority opposition to the scheme. He thereby became vulnerable to charges of opportunism.

Saigō and Itagaki were joined by Gotō Shōjirō of Tosa and Etō Shimpei of Hizen in urging Ōkuma to support the proposed expedition to Korea. They argued that it was an opportunity for him to gain independence from Sat-Chō control. (Saigō's view was not shared by other Satsuma leaders.) Although Ōkuma was increasingly aware of his position in relation to the Satsuma-Chōshū power axis in the government, this argument did not convince him. He felt a military demarche might, on the contrary, enhance Sat-Chō power. Ōkuma vacillated. When the mission returned, he advocated devoting national energies to domestic reform rather than to foreign ventures and sided with the opposition. When the embassy returned Saigō, Itagaki, Etō, Gotō, and several others were outvoted and resigned from the government.

During 1873 Ōkuma became increasingly aware of the Satsuma and Chōshū power which confronted him. The term 'Sat-Chō hambatsu' (Sat-Chō han cliques) became the symbol of everything he opposed in the government. The return of the Iwakura Embassy even more than the Korean issue made Ōkuma aware of his isolation from Satsuma and Chōshū power. For one thing, Kido was angry that what he viewed as so many nonessential reforms had been undertaken in his absence. He was especially furious with Ōkuma, who, he felt, had betrayed the trust placed in him. Kido recognised that Ōkuma personally bore a large responsibility for the reforms. Moreover, Ōkuma had neglected to keep Kido informed. Kido particularly criticised Ōkuma's budget, which he viewed as simply desk accounting and beyond reasonable expectation for revenue.
Nor could Kido forgive Ōkuma for siding with Itō and Ōki against Inoue. Kido communicated his annoyance with Ōkuma to Sanjō, Itō, Itagaki, and Iwakura, and tried to persuade Ōkubo to resume his office in Finance and have Ōkuma discharged. Kido’s venomous pen was busy accusing Ōkuma of worse tyranny than the Bakufu. All this letter writing by Kido made everyone in government aware that Ōkuma could no longer be counted a Kido protegé in the Sat-Chō framework of rivalry. Kido and Ōkuma were not on speaking terms for two years following the return of the Iwakura Embassy.

Soon after the Korean expedition had been cancelled and Itō, Soejima, Saigō, and Itagaki had resigned from the government, another problem arose with even broader ramifications. In February 1874 Ōkuma and Ōkubo were directed to investigate the murder of more than fifty Ryukyuan sailors from Miyako Island by Taiwan aborigines in 1871. Ōkuma and Ōkubo recommended after investigating that it was the duty of the Japanese government to avenge the deaths of the Miyakoans and to conquer and civilise the tribes of Taiwan. The area was not under effective control of the Chinese government. The sangi were at first in agreement, though they had been sharply divided over the Korean issue. Kido, who was ill at the time, did not take part in the discussions.

On 4 April Saigō Tsugumichi, younger brother of Takamori, was appointed Governor-General of the Taiwan Aborigines Affairs Office and Ōkuma became Secretary-General. When the plan for a punitive expedition was presented to the emperor, however, Kido demurred on the same grounds on which he opposed the Korean expedition: foreign war would dissipate valuable national resources necessary for reforms at home. Kido asked Ōkuma what funds were available. Ōkuma replied that 500,000 yen could be used. Kido objected, and Ōkuma replied, ‘If the cost exceeds 500,000 yen, Saigō says he will pay with his death’. Kido angrily retorted that Saigō’s death would serve no useful purpose. He resigned from the government in protest.

Part of the inspiration and information for the proposals of Ōkuma and Ōkubo seems to have derived from a report by General Charles LeGendre, filibustering American consul at Amoy. LeGendre had detailed to Soejima and Ōkuma the military and diplomatic steps necessary to persuade China that Taiwan needed civilising by Japan. He also suggested Japanese conquest of Korea.
swashbuckling career later brought him to Tokyo as adviser to the Japanese government, and subsequently to Korea as adviser to that government.

There were other sources of information from Americans regarding Taiwan. Ōkuma corresponded with J. M. Batchelder, an American merchant in China. Batchelder not only supplied information on Chinese troop formations and military installations in Taiwan but also attempted to sell Ōkuma three ships for the expedition.³²

Plans for the expedition were laid. The Taiwan Aborigines Office was moved to Nagasaki in April, and arrangements were completed for departure of the expedition under Generals Saigō and Tani Kanjō. Details were concluded for employing American mercenaries and purchasing British ships. But the American Minister, Bingham, and British Minister, Parkes, got wind of the plans and became irate at the prospect of using American mercenaries and British ships in such a venture. They demanded the Japanese government cancel the whole undertaking. Ōkubo accordingly sent a government order for suspension of the expedition, informing Saigō and Ōkuma of it. Saigō disregarded the order for suspension and, with the co-operation of American mercenaries Cassel, House, and Wasson, dispatched the force.

Ōkuma did not attempt to stop the expedition. Later justifying his inaction, he explained that the Taiwan expedition was more feasible than the Korean and was a necessary outlet for samurai who were still discontented over cancellation of the Korean project.³³ As in the Korean debate Ōkuma was more vacillating and less the man of principle than Kido. Sanjō in October re-inforced Kido in the wisdom of his view and was concerned over how to withdraw the expeditionary force from Taiwan without compromising Japan's honour. The force was eventually withdrawn through Ōkubo's diplomacy, and China paid Japan an indemnity for the bereaved families. The agreement also settled by implication a long-pending issue between China and Japan regarding sovereignty over the Ryukyu Islands, in favour of Japan.

Perhaps Ōkuma's change of heart over Taiwan occurred partly because of the samurai revolt in his own han in the first months of 1874. After Etō and Soejima resigned from the government over the Korean issue, Ōkuma and Ōki remained the only Saga men in the
government’s top councils. Before returning to Saga to collect money and followers for a revolt, Etō had spoken to Ōkuma about the seething unrest among samurai in Saga, but Ōkuma paid little attention. Some of the Saga revolutionaries evidently concluded that they would have to assassinate Ōkuma. Home Minister Ōkubo took charge of subduing the rebellion, and Ōkuma remained singularly unconcerned. The revolt was quelled by government troops, and Etō was captured in Tosa and executed.

Ōkuma clearly revealed his lack of han feeling or even concern for his old han and directed his attention instead to creating a national bureaucracy. He might have associated himself with the dissatisfaction among samurai in Hizen to create strong local support for himself in the government. Or he might have forged the nucleus of a later political party, as Itagaki was doing in Tosa. Itagaki, though often considered a leading ‘liberal’ of the Meiji era, had somewhat paradoxically resigned from the government because it failed to pursue the military policy he and Saigō espoused. Ōkuma, however, neither used the discontent within his own han as a source of support nor took action against it on behalf of the government.

Ōkuma had turned his back at least partially on the samurai spirit and way of life even before the Restoration. The Saga revolt emphasised his estrangement from his old han. His alienation stemmed in part from his disillusionment at Nabeshima’s earlier inaction, in part from distaste for the samurai life-style, and in part from the resignations of Soejima and Etō from the government over the Korean fiasco. The base of Ōkuma’s support within the government was not regional or as narrow as that of most other Meiji oligarchs and party leaders; he looked to areas other than Saga and to diverse economic and intellectual strata for his following later in the government. The other side of the coin was that during his first years in the government he relied on alternating sponsorship of Kido and Ōkubo within the Sat-Chō government.

Again in 1874 Ōkuma was attacked from another direction by former daimyo Shimazu Hisamitsu of Satsuma. Shimazu, who was appointed Sadaijin (Minister of the Left, one of three without whose approval government decisions were not final) in April 1874, presented the government with a series of reactionary demands for revival of old customs: the old land-tax system, the old military
system, a decrease in the new Army (under Chōshū leadership), and an increase in the Navy (under Satsuma leadership). He threatened that, if Ökubo did not agree, he would resign, and that he would not assume his duties until Ōkuma was dismissed and Saigō reappointed. Shimazu regarded Ōkuma as the personification of heedless destruction of the past, while Ōkuma regarded Shimazu as steeped in Confucian and feudal ethics and hopelessly anachronistic. Ōkuma wrote Shimazu asking for clarification of his objections, but Shimazu refused to answer or to meet with Ōkuma, on the pretext of illness.35

Sanjō suggested to Iwakura the danger that if Ōkuma were dismissed he might stir up his followers and popular criticism, intimating that by this time Ōkuma had some claim on popular sympathies. There was also a problem in dismissing him while the Taiwan question was still pending, and this argument saved the day for Ōkuma. Ökubo refused to dismiss Ōkuma or agree to Shimazu’s reactionary suggestions.

But the issue was not closed. In June Sanjō asked Ōkuma to resign as sangi but to remain as Minister of Finance and Secretary-General of the Taiwan Aborigines Affairs Office; Shimazu was somewhat placated. Ōkuma, however, demurred, saying that if he were not trusted, he would resign all his positions, as he did not understand in which capacity he had erred.36 Ever since Kido’s alienation from Ōkuma, Ökubo had been Ōkuma’s supporter, and Ökubo now presented his own resignation in protest.37 Sanjō and Iwakura refused to hear of it, whereupon the case against Ōkuma was dropped again. This was the third concerted attempt to expel Ōkuma from his positions, but he was still secure so long as Ökubo backed him.

These shifts in support of Ōkuma derived from several factors. Ōkuma, when first he entered government, realised that he had to accommodate himself to the Sat-Chō framework of rivalry. He needed and got the alternating sponsorship of Kido and Ökubo because, in part, he was useful to them.

Itagaki and Kido returned to the government following the Osaka Conference agreement of 1875, in which Ōkuma had not been consulted. Both wished for Ōkuma’s discharge from the Finance Ministry and reform of the Ministry. Ökubo, however, stood by Ōkuma and still refused to condone his dismissal. Sanjō begged Itō to mediate between the sangi, but Kido remained implacable when his views were rejected. The conflict was, as Watanabe suggests, a
matter of personal antagonism and also the old rivalry between Satsuma, represented by Ōkubo, and Chōshū, represented by Kido. Ōkuma existed within the Sat-Chō framework, at times using the rivalry to his own advantage, but at times used by either of the rival *batsu* as a scapegoat. Ōkuma's position between Satsuma and Chōshū was at times a cause of frustration to him, and he is reputed to have said that he did not want to work with an 'old man and an old woman', referring to Ōkubo and Kido.38 Actually they were chronologically only eight and five years Ōkuma's seniors, but it was not chronological age of which Ōkuma complained.

One adventitious outgrowth of the Taiwan expedition was the development of Japan's shipping and transport industries. Iwasaki Yatarō had been operating a transport company with ships transferred to him from Tosa han. The oligarchs selected him to transport the expeditionary force to Taiwan. Ōkubo and Ōkuma were so impressed with his execution of the commission that they subsidised and supported him. The Home Ministry granted Iwasaki the thirteen ships used in the expedition, plus an annual subsidy of 250,000 yen for the new Mitsubishi Company. An additional eighteen ships purchased by the government were loaned to Iwasaki. Besides, a loan of 810,000 yen was made to the company for purchase of six Pacific Mail Company ships, and 15,000 yen yearly were granted the Company to establish a merchant marine school.39 Ōkuma as Finance Minister developed a personal relationship with Iwasaki which later caused acrimonious political debate.

Other financial problems also demanded Ōkuma's attention in the years between 1873 and 1880. Ōkuma and Ōkubo in 1873 turned their attention to a basic reform designed to give the new government financial stability. They devised a program for amortising the annual samurai pensions in lump sum payments, half in cash and half in government bonds. This program was announced through the prefectural governors for those samurai with annual pensions of 100 *koku* or less. The commutation was calculated at the rate of six years' pension for hereditary incomes and four years' for life incomes. It was designed both to relieve the government of an onerous burden and to provide samurai with capital for rehabilitating themselves by entering business or agriculture. As adopted, however, the plan was only voluntary and failed to alleviate the situation.
After the Korean issue was settled, Ōkuma was charged by Iwakura and Ōkubo with devising a plan for finally adjusting pensions. The result was a pension tax law dividing incomes into 336 grades and levying a progressive tax ranging from two-thirds for the highest to one-twentieth for the lowest. Ōkubo overrode Kido's opposition to the plan and supervised its execution. Kido's opposition probably stemmed in part from his personal antagonism to Ōkuma and to Satsuma as well as to the timing and terms of the plan.

The scheme proved still not rigorous enough to meet governmental needs, particularly after the expenses of the Taiwan expedition. The problem was further complicated by the fact that pensions were still being paid in rice, whereas the new land tax was being paid in cash. At the end of 1874, therefore, Ōkuma proposed that pensions be paid in cash, beginning in 1875. This still did not resolve the problem.

In March 1876, Ōkuma and Ōkubo finally proposed issuing pension commutation bonds on a compulsory basis. They emphasised the need to revise the feudal system of hereditary rewards, which was anachronistic and a heavy drain on the nation's finances. Accordingly, in August 1876 the Dajōkan ordered all samurai and daimyo to accept bonds and lump sums in lieu of their annual pensions. The government was at last relieved of a great annual burden, and all pensioners became holders of capitalised pension bonds.

Ōkubo and Ōkuma also turned to the problem of inadequate reserves for paper currency; they advocated establishing a Bureau of Loans which would issue special capital (interchangeable on demand with ordinary currency) to encourage industry. For this purpose one million yen was to be reserved annually for thirty years.

Ōkuma submitted during these five years two other major proposals on finance. One of these, presented on 4 January 1875, was designed to solve financial problems caused by the bankruptcy of the Ono and Shimada banks and the out-flow of Japanese gold and silver, and to promote long-range industrial expansion. His plan embodied the concept of a national budget, presaged by his 1873 publication of the first national budget. His scheme called for a dual tax on imports and on retailers in imports, for subsidies and other encouragement for domestic industries, for government management of transportation, for the encouragement of agriculture, and for
the establishment of a Commerce Office modelled on the English Board of Trade and parallel to the existing government bureaus for industry and agriculture. He envisioned a total decrease in direct taxes and an increase in indirect taxes. These imaginative proposals demonstrate Ōkuma's significance as an innovator over a broad range of economic activity.

Ōkuma's scheme was not adopted immediately, although again Ōkubo pushed it. Some sections were, however, implemented separately over a period of years. Several types of tax were abolished or revised during 1875, and the appropriation for the Office to Encourage Industry was increased. Other aspects of the plan saw realisation a few years later, e.g., the establishment of the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce in 1881.

Another proposal by Ōkuma, in June 1876, called for a revision of the National Banking Law. A genuine national bank with liaison with the Finance Ministry was established, and bank capital was made to serve as 80 per cent security for public bonds. During the years 1876 to 1880, 148 new national banks were established while Ōkuma was active. A national mint was also established under his inspiration.

Ōkuma's problems in national finance were complicated in 1877 by the Satsuma Rebellion. He had to find funds to put some 60,000 government troops into the field against the 40,000 rebels in a campaign which continued for eight months. A public loan of the magnitude required would not be feasible. Nor was a large foreign loan practicable, both because the government felt it politically unwise and because foreign bankers would not condone the large risk involved. Ōkuma negotiated a loan of 15 million yen from the Fifteenth Bank, established in 1877 by some elite families including Mōri of Chōshū, and capitalised at 18 million yen. As the campaign advanced, however, it became obvious that this sum plus scant government reserves would fall far short of requirements. The situation was somewhat aggravated by reduction of the land-tax—at the instigation of Kido and Ōkubo—in February from 3 per cent to 2½ per cent of land value.

Failing other alternatives, Ōkuma resorted to issuing 27 million yen of irredeemable paper money, partly at Matsukata's suggestion. The total budget for subduing the rebellion reached 42 million yen. The natural result of the paper issue was inflation. The price of rice
doubled between 1877 and 1880, specie left Japan, silver rose in terms of paper, its value fluctuated from one day to the next, and imports exceeded exports by 66 million yen in 1877.42

Saigō, Kido and finally Ōkubo died during 1877 and 1878, leaving a power vacuum within the government which aggravated the economic situation. Ōkuma and Itō filled the vacuum as rivals. One biographer describes Ōkuma during these years as ‘autocrat of the Council table’.43 Ōkuma’s power had been steadily increasing in the Finance Ministry over a ten-year period.

Within the Finance Ministry Ōkuma was well aware of the dangers created by the inflationary issuance of paper in 1877. At first he tended to blame the confusion on the out-flow of gold and silver rather than on the over-issuance of paper; he made several suggestions during 1878 and 1879 to redress the inflation. His first program, for redeeming paper over a twenty-eight-year period beginning in 1878, was rejected. Later, in May 1880, he advocated exchange on demand of the irredeemable paper notes for specie, and the circulation of specie, to be financed by specie in the treasury and by flotation of 50 million yen in foreign bonds. Itō, for the first time assuming Kido’s role as Ōkuma’s critic, now objected that 50 million yen would not cover the exchange for paper, once its value began to rise, and that the interest on foreign bonds would be too high and would only increase the out-flow of coinage from the country. Satsuma and Chōshū sangi generally opposed the proposal, though Kuroda Kiyotaka and Saigō Tsugumichi of Satsuma supported it wholly or in part. But a foreign loan of this magnitude was still unacceptable to the government. During 1878 and 1879 the government undertook to reduce paper, attempting to complete the program within six years. Government reserves were deposited with Mitsui in an effort to check the depreciation in value of the notes, and the government’s issue of paper money fell by 12 million during those two years.44

In February 1879, Ōkuma requested that the government establish a silver exchange in Yokohama. He pushed the establishment of the Yokohama Specie Bank as a measure to redress the financial situation through facilitating foreign exchange.

In August 1880, Ōkuma, working this time with Itō, concocted a plan to relieve further the government’s financial distress. The new scheme called for doubling the saké tax, revision of bonds exchange-
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able for gold notes, charging expenses for building repairs in municipalities to local rather than to national tax revenues, reduction of expenditures in all departments, and drawing specie payments abroad from customs revenues, thus reducing the out-flow of specie; Ökuma regarded the last as key to the whole financial imbalance. It was decided to put this program into operation after November.45

Ökuma summarised the financial history of Japan during the previous thirteen difficult years in an attempt to justify his fiscal policies. He pointed out that necessity had dictated three large currency issues during that period: in 1869 for suppression of the last Bakufu resistance in the north, in 1873 at the time of the abolition of the han and establishment of the ken, and finally, during the Satsuma Rebellion.

A less publicised but equally significant proposal was made by Ökuma in 1880. This plan embodied the following four points:

1. Government factories should be sold to the public except for those engaged in munitions, minting, and communications, and buyers should repay the investment in annual instalments. (He itemised fourteen factories under the jurisdiction of the Home and Public Works Ministries which should be sold.)

2. The education system should be completely controlled by the Education Ministry, a centralised training program should be instituted for specialists employed by governmental departments, and priority should be given the establishment of technical rather than primary schools.

3. Imperial Household Property should be secured, since 'after the Restoration the emperor decided to give land to the people and through his wise judgement granted them the right to own land'. This property should be exempt from the General Accounting Law. (Kido had proposed something similar in 1875.)

4. The administrative system should be revised, with certain sections and bureaus of the Home, Finance and Public Works Ministries amalgamated and separated, and a Bureau of Imperial Household Property should be established.46

The first item was particularly noteworthy, since the scheme for the sale of public factories, announced on 5 November, is generally credited not to Ökuma but to his successor in Finance, Matsukata Masayoshi of Satsuma. Ökuma has generally received only obloquy
for over-issuing currency in 1877, though Matsukata also approved the plan. Ōkuma's suggestions for redressing the inflationary situation were also similar to the plan Matsukata put into effect when he assumed office.

Ōkuma's rising power and the commensurate increase in Sat-Chō opposition to him during this critical period were reflected by an incident which occurred in April 1878. It was proposed that the emperor pay a visit to Ōkuma's home. Although the emperor had visited Kido and Ōkubo the previous year, the suggestion aroused consternation and jealousy, particularly in Itō. Iwakura was forced to apologise for the suggestion, but the emperor nevertheless did visit Ōkuma.47

After the deaths of the 'three heroes of the Restoration', Ōkuma's power grew rapidly, as did the opposition to him. Finally, in February 1880, he was dismissed as Finance Minister. The impetus for this move seems to have been generated more from political motives than from disagreement with his economic policies. The plan was devised by Itō to increase his own and Chōshū power in the government. Ōkuma and Ōki opposed the scheme, but Itō was able to get the support of all the other sangi, and Iwakura finally swung even Ōkuma's agreement behind the plan. In March 1880, accordingly, sangi were separated from ministries, and instead the sangi supervised six administrative sections.48

The change did reduce Ōkuma's power, as he had feared. Ozaki Yukio remarked, 'At the time of the separation, the strong people were sangi and the second-rate men became secretaries ... and one sangi superintended two or three sections at the same time. Count Ōkuma was sangi superintending the Finance, Foreign, and Agriculture and Commerce sections'.49 But Ōkuma was checked by Itō in Finance and by Inoue in Foreign Affairs, and was not pleased with the new arrangement. He recommended Sano Tsunetami as his successor in Finance, but Sano actually opposed Ōkuma on some financial matters. Matsukata shortly replaced Sano and announced the sale of government factories to private firms, as Ōkuma had suggested.

Under Ōkuma in the new Finance section was the Board of Audit, to which gravitated many able graduates of Fukuzawa Yukichi's Keiō Gijuku (later Keiō University), such as Yano Fumio, Ozaki Yukio, and Inukai Tsuyoshi. These men, later prominent statesmen,
all began their public careers as appointees of Ōkuma. Although little known at the time, they were a singularly able coterie and added greatly to Ōkuma's stature later. Ōkuma turned to these men rather than to any grouping based on close han ties when looking for assistance in Finance.

Ōkuma was an outsider in the dominant Sat-Chō oligarchy. In 1868 he had not been one of the group of samurai of Satsuma and Chōshū who figured most actively in the actual Restoration—the return of political power from shogun to emperor and the establishment of a central government. Furthermore, he was not a member of the Iwakura Embassy which took most leaders abroad to examine Western institutions at their source.

Hizen was one of the less important Western han to assume leadership in the Restoration. It did not produce an influential and cohesive cabal within the government as did Satsuma and Chōshū. Within the government Hizen men with strong local backing, notably Ōki and Sano, opposed Ōkuma on key issues. Ōkuma was brought into the central government largely because of his technical expertise, at the recommendation of a Chōshū man, Inoue, and was promoted at the behest of another, Kido. When Kido disavowed Ōkuma, Ōkubo, leader of the rival Satsuma batsu within government, quickly came to his support. Although Ōkuma had never fostered cohesion among Saga men in government, his Hizen background at times operated to his advantage, as when Kido or Ōbuko sought to ally with him. Ōkuma presaged a new style of national statesman who looked beyond his han to emperor and nation.

An assessment of Ōkuma's financial policies in these early years must credit him with publication of Japan's first national budget (debatable though his calculations were), assistance in liquidating Bakufu debts and in devising the samurai pension capitalisation scheme, establishing a unified currency, mint and tax system, proposing a national bank, and encouraging industrial development and shipping.

Ōkuma's financial policies during the seven years prior to 1880 have been much criticised. But unprecedented financial problems faced the new government, growing out of inheritance of Shogunal debts, the Saga and Satsuma Rebellions, the Taiwan expedition, the commutation of samurai pensions, and the establishment of new
industries and government agencies. It is to Ōkuma's credit that the new government was able to operate at all financially.

The first twelve years of the Meiji period were years in which Ōkuma demonstrated his extraordinary political versatility, surviving several successive Satsuma- and Chōshū-inspired attempts to dismiss him from positions in 1871, 1873, 1874, and 1880. During this period, and particularly between 1877 and 1880, he achieved his greatest personal power and made still visible contributions to modernising Japan. He was an important agent in the process of weakening feudal han ties and nationalising and rationalising the bureaucracy and economy.
In 1881 Ōkuma's power as councillor appeared deceptively secure. Itō was an active contender, and Iwakura, Arisugawa, and Sanjō were still powerful state ministers without whose sanction no governmental decision was final. Despite his power, Ōkuma was vulnerable in a government plagued by financial problems, as the crisis of 1881 dramatically revealed. Three principal issues faced the government in the crisis: the problem of establishing a national parliament, the proposal to sell government colonisation properties in Hokkaido, and the Sat-Chō demand to dismiss Ōkuma from the government. Nearly everyone in the government was drawn into the crisis at some point, and Ōkuma was at the vortex of events which unfolded.

The crisis was generated in an atmosphere of discontent and agitation for popular rights issuing from samurai dissatisfaction with the Restoration government and the settlement it effected. After the Satsuma Rebellion of 1877 all remaining samurai unrest had been diverted from military channels to demands for popular rights and parliamentary government.

During the decade following 1870, Western concepts of liberty and equality found fertile ground among the anti-government segments of the shizoku. Western constitutional thought penetrated Japan through students returning from Europe and America. Translations of Mill, Spencer, Locke, and Rousseau and others found avid readers in Japanese. The first centre of the Popular Rights Movement was Tosa, where Itagaki Taisuke in January 1874 organised local samurai and landowners into the Aikokukōtō (Patriotic Party) and disseminated French-style liberalism. The Aikokukōtō was progenitor of two later organisations, the Risshisha (Society for Establishing One's Aims) and the Aikokusha. These associations in
turn presaged Japan's first major political party, the Jiyūtō (Liberal Party), which Itagaki organised in late 1881. This kind of agitation produced the so-called 'Tosa Memorial', which demanded that the government institute a popularly elected legislature and protect 'universal rights'. The memorial was signed by samurai of the tozama han.¹

These groups formed the Aikokusha federation at Osaka in 1878, and later, in 1880, the Kokkai Kisei Dōmeikai (Association for Petitioning for a National Assembly). The association memorialised the emperor for opening a parliament, but the Dajōkan rejected the memorial on the grounds that it had no power to accept popular petitions.

The government's response to demands for popular rights was two-fold: repressive action on the one hand, on the other partially meeting their demands by considering constitutionalism. The government was nevertheless alarmed and attempted to counter the Popular Rights Movement by promulgating repressive legislation. The Public Meeting Law was designed to control political associations by restricting meetings. The Newspaper Law of 1875 and the Libel Ordinance of 1877 provided for jailing newspaper editors who expressed seditious views.² These laws, however, only served to channel discontent more markedly into the rapidly growing press, a new force which played a significant role of opposition to the government through much of the Meiji period and later.

In spite of the government's repressive actions, some type of representative body had been envisioned in government circles as early as the emperor's Charter Oath which proclaimed, 'Deliberative assemblies shall be organised, and administrative affairs shall be decided by public opinion'. By 1872 the Dajōkan, aware of the need for information on constitutional systems, ordered an investigation. Osatake Takeki enumerates nineteen different constitutional drafts, some issuing from within the government and some drafted by private individuals or groups, beginning with a memorial by Kido to the Sei-in in 1873.³

At the Osaka Conference of government leaders in 1875, the oligarchs had also pledged their adherence to the principle of gradual development of constitutional government in Japan. The Emperor in 1875 commissioned Princes Arisugawa Taruhito and Iwakura Tomomi to draft a constitution. Arisugawa's draft of May
1878 was rejected, partly because the Genrō-in feared it gave too much credence to surging popular rights sentiment. Itō Hirobumi, wary of having the emperor share legislative power with parliament, charged that the draft contravened kokutai (the national polity), and wrote Iwakura that he was opposed to having the draft processed further within the government. Nearly everyone in government, however, including Itō, realised that initiative in introducing constitutional government could not be allowed to remain outside the government. Moreover, constitutionalism was equated with a strong nation-state, which appealed both to the government and to the nascent political parties during the high tide of early Meiji nationalism.

As early as 1879 an informal discussion group of government leaders was organised at Tsukiji. Leaders of this group were the three powerful councillors—Ōkuma, Itō, and Inoue, respectively heads of Finance, Home, and Industry departments. These men met often at Ōkuma's home to drink sake and compare concepts of constitutional government. During 1880 the triumvirate found themselves viewed as moderates in government. They sought to find some common denominator between the conservative position, represented by some of their colleagues, and the Popular Rights Movement.

The three found another bond in anti-Satsuma sentiment, which helped unite Ōkuma with his two Chōshū colleagues. Ōkuma attacked Satsuma at one point through the Tokyo Metropolitan Police Board (at least by his own account), which, like the Navy Ministry, was under Satsuma control. Ōkuma charged the Board was unnecessary and a threat in that it was nearly independent of the Home Ministry. Satsuma leaders, rising to the challenge, successfully fended off the attack. Godai Tomatsu and Matsukata Masayoshi, both of Satsuma, had made an earlier bid to win Ōkuma to their side but failed to separate him from his Chōshū friends.

In cementing his friendship with Itō and Inoue, Ōkuma was apparently attempting to recreate his earlier relationship with Chōshū now that Ōkubo was dead. When Ōkubo was assassinated, Ōkuma cabled Inoue in England, begging him to return to the government as sangi. Through his efforts on Inoue's behalf, Ōkuma not only renewed his ties with Chōshū but also returned an old favour; Inoue had recommended Ōkuma as san'yō in 1868.

Toward the close of 1880, the trio met at Atami to try to clarify
their areas of agreement on constitutional government and its implications. By this time the public demand for a parliament was reaching a high pitch. The emperor in February 1879 had ordered all sangi to submit memorials of their views on constitutional government and on the Genrō-in draft. Itō planned to begin with these memorials as a basis of discussion at Atami. Although no records of this meeting are extant, the three agreed on the need for a parliament. They could not, however, concur on the exact date when it should be convened nor on the type of constitution Japan should adopt. Shortly after the conference, Fukuzawa Yūkichi, Ōkuma’s friend and protagonist of the Meiji enlightenment, questioned the three separately on the proper date for convening a parliament. Ōkuma replied that the date had not been fixed but that the government would probably decide before autumn. Inoue answered that it would probably be three years hence, and Itō that the Genrō-in (Senate) should first be reformed. Inoue’s early estimate is especially significant in view of later developments.

One item on which the Atami conferees reached agreement was a plan to publish a government newspaper through which they could lead public opinion and fend off press criticism of the government. Their discussions with Fukuzawa led them to single him out as a distinguished writer who agreed on the need for a parliament, but who was a moderate and besides had the support of leading intellectuals.

Fukuzawa, intellectual mentor of Keiō Gijuku, which he founded, had shunned political office and even political parties, and thus avoided the need for compromising his liberalism. He thereby gained a reputation with some as a genuine democrat and with many as a man of integrity. He objected to many of the popular rights leaders as too radical and motivated by a desire to secure jobs, to avenge Saigō’s defeat, or to sell newspapers. Fukuzawa knew Itō and Inoue, and from 1879 to 1881 he often wrote to Ōkuma requesting that the Finance Ministry appropriate funds for his struggling school, or recommending some graduate for a position under Ōkuma in Finance. Fukuzawa at first thought to decline the newspaper editorship, but, when Inoue explained that the government hoped to establish a parliament, Fukuzawa acquiesced. He envisioned expansion of national power through gradual evolution of parliamentary government under the leadership of Itō, Inoue, and Ōkuma.
(Satsuma men he regarded as unalterably opposed to parliamentary government.) National power remained throughout Fukuzawa's career a vital concern. These leaders would, through the establishment of a Diet, also bridge the gap separating the government and people. Before the newspaper could get under way, however, plans were interrupted by the government crisis, and Fukuzawa demanded compensation for money he had already expended on the project.

By the end of 1880, the draft memorials of most of the sangi had been presented to Arisugawa, but Ōkuma procrastinated. When Arisugawa urged Ōkuma to comply, he demurred, saying that he would rather explain his views to the emperor in person. Not only would a document not make his intentions fully clear, but there was the danger that it would be seen by others. The emperor, however, again ordered Ōkuma through Arisugawa to submit his views. Ōkuma was frustrated in gaining personal access to the emperor through which oligarchs often were able to exert influence over their fellow oligarchs. In March 1881, Ōkuma proffered a seven-point memorial, requesting Arisugawa to refrain from showing it to the other sangi and daijin. Although the actual draft was drawn up by Yano Fumio, it was submitted in Ōkuma's name. The seven points, in brief, were:

1. The date of opening the national Diet should be announced publicly.

2. Government officials must be appointed according to the wishes of the people. The leader of the majority party in the Diet, as representative of the popular will, should form the cabinet. When the majority party in the Diet loses the popular mandate the Emperor, perceiving this, must entrust to the leader of the stronger party the task of organising the new cabinet. When important bills issued by the cabinet are criticised and rejected in the Diet, this is a symptom of the loss of power by the cabinet party and it should resign at this time. When the Diet majority votes lack of confidence in the government, it must also petition the Emperor to declare a new election. Or, if the government, faced with a loss of confidence, feels that the majority party in the Diet is not representative of the popular will, it may request the Emperor to dissolve the Diet and call a new election.

3. A distinction must be made between parliamentary officials and
permanent civil servants ... To link subordinate officials with the rise and fall of parties would be to produce disorder ... Party officials should include *sangi*, bureau chiefs, and some officials in the Imperial Household ... Among the non-partisan permanent officials should be included military, police superintendents, three *daijin*, and judicial officials. ...

4. The constitution must be established according to the Emperor's will ... To co-ordinate the advance of the popular will with the reform of institutions and laws ... the Emperor should appoint a constitutional committee within the government as rapidly as possible ... The organisation of the Upper House and the right to vote and hold office in the Lower House should be considered with particular care ... The chief functions of the constitution are to clarify the locus of the right to govern and the rights of the individual. ...

5. The election of members of the Diet should be held at the end of 1882, and the Diet should be convened early in 1883. Since the quintessence of constitutional government lies in government by political parties, which tends to produce unity between the executive and legislature ... the establishment of a constitutional form of government should be publicly proclaimed soon in order to give political parties an opportunity to arise concomitantly. ...

6. Administrative policies of the government should be determined ... Victory or defeat of a party is victory or defeat of its policies, and struggles between parties are struggles over differences in policy ... Therefore, if the present cabinet is to form a political party, it must determine its policies. ...

7. Summary: Constitutional government is government by political parties, and party struggles are doctrinal struggles. Therefore, if one maintains the doctrines of the majority, one's political party wins political power, and if one opposes this one loses political power. This is the essence of constitutional government, and it is here that its real advantage lies. If we follow the form and neglect the substance there will ensue misfortune not only for the nation but also perhaps for the government ... Love of power is the origin of the loss of power ... 9

This was for its time in Japan a sophisticated formulation of the theory of parliamentary government, British style. At Atami there
had apparently been little mention of political parties or of a bicameral legislature. Many provisions in the memorial conclude with the phrase ‘after the example of England’. Ökuma selected as protegés a stellar group of young men like Yano who were influenced by English constitutional theory. Because the memorial was submitted in Ökuma’s name, it represented the principles he espoused, whether or not he himself articulated them.

There were several significant differences between Ökuma’s memorial and those of the other oligarchs. One important difference raised by Ökuma’s memorial was the matter of timing and convening of parliament. For Ökuma it was only a matter of two years; all the other sangi believed the time would not be propitious for an indefinite period. In setting an early and specific date, Ökuma was forcing the government to take some action. A more fundamental difference, which set Ökuma apart from everyone else of his rank in the government, was his preference for parliamentary government on the British model. The Prussian system was nearly unanimously favoured by other government leaders. Iwakura, for example, in July 1881, stated that the Prussian constitution was most adaptable to Japan’s purposes because of its ‘gradualism’ and emphasis on the prerogatives of the monarch.¹⁰

Another significant point was Ökuma’s distinction between party or parliamentary officials and a permanent civil service. In designating sangi and department heads as party appointees Ökuma was challenging his more conservative colleagues on another sensitive point.

Yet another difference was that Itō in his memorial did not envision a bicameral legislature as Ökuma did. Itō proposed a revision of the Genrō-in, to be elected by certain ‘upper segments’ of the population. Yamagata proposed a parliament composed of leaders from the prefectural assemblies.

Neither Itō, Inoue nor any other leading oligarch defined constitutional government as government by political parties. This was a basic difference in political theory between Ökuma and others in the Meiji government. Suzuki Yasuzō, one of Itō’s biographers, holds that Itō’s constitutionalism at this time has been over-emphasised and that, compared with Ökuma, Itō was conservative and immature in constitutional theory. Further, Suzuki credits Itō’s knowledge of constitutional government at this time to Inoue
Kowashi and notes that Itō had no colleagues as well versed in parliamentary theory as Ono and Yano. Even as late as 1899 Itō professed doubts about Japan's readiness for parliamentary government and specifically about the role of political parties in the government.

In early 1881 Itō and Ōkuma believed their objectives were the same—the achievement of constitutional government in Japan. But Ōkuma's model was the British system, while Itō, Iwakura and others were impressed with Bismarck and the Prussian state. Ōkuma's ouster from the government meant the triumph of Prussian constitutionalism and its advocates. It was another twenty years before Itō realised the significance of political parties in the Diet for the operation of constitutional government. Ōkuma, carrying his views a logical further step, was to be the first major statesman to campaign through speeches to the electorate, a technique which Itō or Yamagata, with their elitist predilections, would have found repugnant. The attraction of the British system for Ōkuma was due partly to his followers Ono and Yano, partly to genuine commitment, and partly to his natural opposition to whatever the Sat-Chō hambatsu espoused.

One point on which Ōkuma agreed with other sangi in 1881 was that the constitution be granted by the emperor. Ōkuma regarded an imperial decree as absolute, a fiat against which no citizen could or should have recourse. Ōkuma later equated loyalty to the emperor with constitutionalism. 'What is loyalty to the Emperor?' he asked. 'In my opinion, following the constitution is the best way to be loyal to the Emperor ... The Imperial Constitution is sacrosanct and the genius of Imperial Japan.' There was no necessary contradiction between constitutionalism and monarchism in Ōkuma's political philosophy.

Ōkuma believed that parliamentary government was inevitable, just as he believed that the Popular Rights Movement was a political development rooted in Japan's own past, not predicated solely on Western concepts. In his memoirs he acknowledged Japan's debt to tradition when he said,

Bushido had the power to change feudalism into constitutionalism, because in Bushido we were taught that the samurai must not be defeated, must always struggle ... and stand at the head of society
Constitutionalism is a gift of our feudalism... A constitutional system was inevitable. This is a universal principle... I think it followed a smooth and speedy course as a legacy of our feudalism.\textsuperscript{14}

This was Ökuma himself speaking, not his protegés.

There is a tradition among some historians that Ökuma presented the emperor a private constitutional draft along with his memorial. Osatake credits the rumour to Ökuma’s connection with the Kōjunsha (Mutual Consultation Society), a group which included Yano Fumio and Baba Tatsui, another Meiji intellectual. The society eventually did draw up a draft, calling for a premier to be appointed by the emperor according to the ‘popular will’. Yoshino Sakuzō mentions another possible draft associated erroneously with Ökuma’s memorial, called the ‘Nihon kokken-an’ (Draft of a Japanese national constitution). There was in addition a draft drawn up by the Ōmeisha (Crying Birds’ Society), a society which included later Kaishintō members.\textsuperscript{15} There seems to be no conclusive evidence, however, that any private draft existed.

Why did Ökuma submit a constitutional memorial so radically different from those of his colleagues? He was motivated by his own iconoclasm, by the ideas of his associates, by the British example, and by his own political experience. Ökuma had not forgotten the many attempts by Satsuma and Chōshū men to divest him of his governmental positions in the 1870s, out of resentment at his growing power. He may have counted on continued Sat-Chō rivalry to force the government to turn to his own solution. But Satsuma and Chōshū were in enough basic agreement to overcome their clan-based rivalry in face of the threat of Ökuma. The fact that Ökuma was without a base of support within Saga and had come to act largely alone made him more acutely aware of his separation from Satsuma and Chōshū. He felt that Sat-Chō power was oppressive, and that it would be greatly reduced by parliamentary government as he envisioned it. Ökuma’s feeling of being an outsider led him to a basically anti-Sat-Chō point of view, and he saw the hambatsu as a threat both to himself and to the development of parliamentary government in Japan. When nearly all the sangi except Ökuma had submitted their memorials, it was no doubt apparent to him that there was a discrepancy between what the councillors were prepared to concede and the aspirations of the
popular rights advocates. In his memorial he attempted to bridge this gap and at the same time strike a blow at hambatsu government.

It has been suggested that Ōkuma presented a memorial different from those of the other sangi and in accord with popular aspirations because he was motivated chiefly by a desire for power. Unquestionably he did have some of the taste for power common to politicians, but had this been uppermost he would have begun by fostering support in Hizen several years earlier. There was integrity of purpose as well as opportunism mingled in his complex motivation. His later organisation of the Kaishintō as a step toward parliamentary government supports this interpretation.

Ōkuma's talks at Atami with Itō and Inoue apparently produced no binding agreement. Although Ōkuma's memorial was taken by Itō as a repudiation of those talks, there is also some basis for the interpretation that it was Itō and Inoue who backtracked from the Atami discussions when they became aware of the strength of the opposition to Ōkuma's memorial.16

Ōkuma's memorial differed in several significant respects from those of the other councillors. Prince Arisugawa, in some consternation, decided therefore to show it to Sanjō and Iwakura, who in turn showed it to Itō. Itō was furious at the unexpected character of the document and copied it by hand, as Osatake believes, to use it as ammunition against Ōkuma.17 Itō angrily raged that he could not remain in the government with a man whose opinion differed so from his, but Sanjō and Iwakura prevailed on him to remain, and Ōkuma later visited Itō in an attempt to placate him and gain Itō's continued co-operation.18 But Itō now took the lead in attacking Ōkuma.

The Sat-Chō oligarchs, fearing that Ōkuma might capture the popular imagination through his venturesome memorial, joined forces against him. In June Itō said accusingly, 'It is very foolish for a person like you in the position of sangi to work as deputy for someone like Fukuzawa ... Recently I read Fukuzawa's "Personal View of a Constitution" and it is quite the same as yours.' Ōkuma replied, 'Such a suspicion may be natural, but it isn't a fact.'19 It was, as Ōkuma remarked, natural that similarities should exist between his memorial and Fukuzawa's constitutional views, since Yano, a graduate of Fukuzawa's school, actually wrote the memorial.

Another line of attack by Sat-Chō critics, particularly by Itō, was
that Ōkuma had presented his radical memorial in secret to the emperor as part of a plot to overthrow the Sat-Chō oligarchs. Of course, political manoeuvring was not the monopoly of any faction. Several times between 1871 and 1880 Satsuma and Chōshū men had tried to oust Ōkuma from the government, particularly from Finance. As to the charge of secrecy, Ōkuma’s aversion to communicating in writing must be remembered. The fact that he did make the somewhat unrealistic request that Arisugawa refrain from showing the memorial to anyone but the Emperor indicates that he may have feared the sort of reaction that did occur.

Questioned by Iwakura about his memorial, Ōkuma defended himself, replying that his opinions were not very different from Itō’s (possibly referring to the Atami discussions). Ōkuma continued, ‘Since [the memorial] has been shown to Itō, it is imperative that I state my views. In view of present conditions, a temporising decision will not help the government. Like a half-open door it would tempt outsiders, so we had better open the door fully and reveal the government’s plan’. Iwakura tried unsuccessfully to mediate between Ōkuma and his Sat-Chō antagonists.

Ōkuma’s suggestion that the Diet be opened by 1883 was viewed by the others in the government as too hasty, whether because of conservative hesitation over the convening of a parliament, or because of apprehension that election machinery could not be brought into operation that soon. Iwakura objected that it would be very difficult to complete preparations by 1883. The moderates, in addition, may have feared that pushing the issue too fast would result in total rejection by traditionalists.

Although a reconciliation of sorts was effected between Ōkuma and his Sat-Chō antagonists after Ōkuma’s conciliatory visit to Itō, differences which had become apparent may already have sealed Ōkuma’s fate, regardless of later events.

The problem which further ruffled Satsuma and Chōshū sentiments toward Ōkuma and completed the schism concerned the proposed sale of government assets in Hokkaido to a firm headed by Godai Tomoatsu, a Satsuma merchant in Osaka. Since the establishment of the Colonization Bureau twelve years earlier to open Hokkaido to settlement and economic development, the government had spent 14 million yen on the project (the sum is variously reported up to 22 million). Early in 1881 the new govern-
ment policy of retrenchment through disposing of government factories to private hands had been inaugurated. Furthermore, the ten-year appropriation for Hokkaido was to expire in 1882. Rationalisation of government finance now dictated a policy of retrenchment. Just at this time, Colonization Bureau Chief Kuroda Kiyotaka, a Satsuma man, was approached on the scheme of selling government property there. Godai Tomoatsu, head of the Kansai Böeki Kaisha, on 21 July offered Kuroda the sum of 300,000 yen at no interest (which the press thought was scandalously low), to be paid in monthly instalments over a thirty-year period to purchase buildings, ships, factories, and hunting preserves in Hokkaido.21

Kuroda recommended that the Dajökan accept Godai’s offer, and permission was granted despite objections from Arisugawa and particularly from Ōkuma. The Dajökan approved the offer on 30 July, the day the emperor left for northern Honshu on a tour.

Discussion of the proposed sale could not be confined to government councils. It became a public scandal and was attacked widely in the press. The Tokyo-Yokohama mainichi shimbun, Yūbin hōchi shimbun, and Chōya shimbun, liberal newspapers supporting Ōkuma, were adamant against the sale. Even Fukuchi Gen’ichirō, editor of the semi-official Tōkyō nichichi shimbun, expressed fear that the sale would give Godai’s company power analogous to the British East India Company. Five thousand tickets were sold for a public meeting of protest, and Yano, Gotō Shōjirō, and Fukuchi appeared on the rostrum. At this 25 August meeting and in the press generally Ōkuma was hailed as spokesman of the people, as the only sangi to stand against the sale.

A number of Tosa members of the Genrō-in, together with the Imperial Household Minister, Hijikata Hisamoto, were neutral regarding the issue of the sale. They feared, however, that the popular outcry would promote demands for a constitution and parliament directed by the parties. While objecting to the sale on these grounds, they nonetheless insisted that Ōkuma be punished for his public alignment with critics of the government. On the other hand, these men were also strongly opposed to what they regarded as the dictatorship of the Sat-Chō hambatsu, and they sought through their ‘neutrality’ to strike a blow at the hambatsu as well as against Ōkuma.22

The next two months were critical for Ōkuma’s career. After
weathering the storm provoked by his memorial and his stand on Kuroda’s Hokkaido scheme, Ōkuma left to accompany the emperor on a tour of northern Honshu. The group left Tokyo on 30 July and did not return until 11 October 1881. Ōkuma’s absence gave Sat-Chō men an opportunity to connive against him. What made Ōkuma’s position in government prior to 1878 viable was that he enjoyed the rival and shifting patronage of Chōshū and Satsuma sponsors. In 1881, however, both Satsuma and Chōshū men were irate, and his old mentors, Kido and Ōkubo, were gone from the scene.

During Ōkuma’s two-and-a-half month absence much transpired in Tokyo. He was kept informed by various friends in the Finance Ministry, particularly Ono Azusa, who was later a key figure in Ōkuma’s political party. Ono was convinced not so much of the intrinsic importance of the Hokkaido issue as of the need to oppose the hambatsu. He feared a hambatsu victory on the Hokkaido issue would mean a blow to the supporters of parliamentary government. He attributed the lack of concerted cabinet opposition to Kuroda to the fact that Sanjō lacked power to refute Kuroda, Iwakura avoided the issue, and Itō and Inoue vacillated and harboured ulterior motives. At the same time Ono was apprehensive that Ōkuma might become separated from Itō; he wrote Okuma to beware of attempts to effect such a separation. What Ono feared most was not defeat but being forced to compromise on principle, since those who supported parliamentary government lacked enough power.

The Sat-Chō oligarchs had cause for concern because of indications of support for Ōkuma from the press and public, as well as from within the government, even when he was not in Tokyo to defend himself. Ōkuma was now identified with popular opinion by both the hambatsu and the press; this was too dangerous a threat for Sat-Chō statesmen to ignore. They must act quickly, while Ōkuma was away, to redress the situation and get some of the increasingly vocal press behind themselves.

From within the government rumours were bruited about that Fukuzawa was Ōkuma’s co-conspirator in a plot to overthrow Satsuma and Chōshū and establish a government of Keiō (Fukuzawa’s school) men, that the Mitsubishi firm had donated to him enormous sums of money to attack Satsuma and Chōshū, and finally that the
budget announced by the Finance Ministry had under-reported the issuance of paper by 4 million yen. The fact that many Keiō graduates in both government and press were supporting Ōkuma, and that Mitsubishi, as a competitor of Godai’s Kansai Bōki Kaisha, might logically be expected to oppose the sale, lent enough credence to the claims to give them wide currency. Furthermore, Mitsubishi was the employer of many Keiō alumni. And Fukuzawa had recently failed to get government support for his struggling institution.

From Kaneko Kentarō, Itō’s colleague and biographer, came the charge that Mitsubishi had given Fukuzawa 8,000 yen to carry on political activities and had donated 12,000 yen to newspapers in Osaka for the same purpose. Hijikata Hisamoto, Imperial Household Minister, charged that the Höchi shimbun had received 18,000 yen from Mitsubishi. Iwasaki of Mitsubishi repudiated these charges as groundless, arguing that it might be well for his competitor Godai to undertake the unsuccessful Hokkaido enterprises, since the government had not profited from them. But the facts are debatable, and Iwasaki himself gave some support to the contrary view when he went to Sasaki Takayuki, vice-president of the Genrō-in and critic of the sale, and objected to being followed by government-hired detectives. Iwasaki complained, ‘Because we attacked the government and are supporting Ōkuma, Satsuma people regard us as traitors and believe Godai Tomoatsu’. Although Iwasaki refrained from taking an open stand on the Hokkaido issue, in view of his general support of Ōkuma, it is conceivable that he contributed materially to Ōkuma’s cause.

As to the charge that Ōkuma and his group were implicated in a plot to overthrow the hambatsu government, evidence does not prove or disprove the claim. This was one of the chief advantages of such rumours to hambatsu statesmen. Yano indignantly replied to the accusation, ‘From the beginning we had no intention of destroying the Sat-Chō government. It was our government ... Neither did Ōkuma have any aim of destroying the government, as he held the position of head of the cabinet’. But Ono regarded hambatsu government as incompatible with parliamentary government, and Ōkuma later remarked that he agreed with Ono. The strength of Ōkuma’s anti-Sat-Chō sentiment, his fostering of Keiō graduates in government, and his progressive views on parliamentary government
are demonstrable. That these constituted a sinister 'plot', and that he was the only one conspiring in the government, however, are debatable.

Sat-Chō officials, led by Itō, proceeded on the assumption that Ōkuma's activities warranted drastic action against him. Iwakura was in Kyoto, and Navy Secretary Kawamura Sumiyoshi embarked on a Navy ship to bring Iwakura back to Tokyo to help settle the government crisis. Itō wrote Iwakura that Kuroda had told the emperor he would not oppose cancellation of the sale and that the decision to convene a parliament must be made quickly. Itō's view that the three problems—dismissal of Ōkuma, convening of a parliament, and settlement of the Hokkaido question—should be dealt with simultaneously was decisive in securing Iwakura's assent to Ōkuma's dismissal. Itō had never been completely reconciled with Ōkuma after June, and Itō now took the initiative against Ōkuma with the co-operation of most of the Sat-Chō hambatsu. For Itō Ōkuma's memorial was a personal challenge for pre-eminence in the government.28

On his return to Tokyo, Iwakura was confronted jointly by Itō, Inoue, Saigō, and Kawamura, who urged Iwakura to reach a decision. Iwakura at first opposed Ōkuma's purge, but he could not withstand the combined views of nearly everyone else in the government. On 11 October a conference of several powerful sangi met—Itō, Kuroda, Yamagata, Inoue, Saigō, Terajima Munenori (Satsuma), and Yamada Akiyoshi (Chōshū)—together with daijin Sanjō, Iwakura, and Arisugawa. Consensus was reached to dismiss Ōkuma. The conferees agreed to meet the emperor on his return to Tokyo and to seek Imperial approval of all three issues—Ōkuma's expulsion, cancellation of the Hokkaido sale, and convening of a parliament. Itō saw 1890 as the proper date for convening the Diet, and Kuroda, who at first preferred 1897, came around to Itō's point of view.

The emperor, returning on 11 October, reportedly questioned the councillors as to proof of charges against Ōkuma, but, facing the combined ire of the sangi and the possibility of collapse of the cabinet, he acquiesced to dismissing Ōkuma. The emperor also objected to linking settlement of the Hokkaido question with the issue of Ōkuma's dismissal, but was told that if Ōkuma were dismissed Kuroda would drop his objections to cancellation of the sale.

Ōkuma, returning to Tokyo with the emperor, was visited past
midnight by Itō and Saigō with a fait accompli—a request from the government that he resign. Ökuma was for once in his life speechless. He replied quietly that he would comply the following day, after seeing the emperor. He arrived at the Palace gates next morning, only to be denied entry by the guards; nor was he admitted to see Arisugawa, who had also accompanied the Imperial tour. The three daijin and Itō, who all had ready access to the emperor, effectively blocked Ökuma. His countermeasures were in vain.

Ökuma resigned on 12 October, with a formal statement: 'Recently I have been suffering from rheumatism and can no longer perform my administrative duties. Consequently, I wish to be relieved of my post'. On the same day the government announced suspension of the Hokkaido sale, and an Imperial Edict proclaimed 1890 as the date for convening the Diet. Thus the government attempted to assuage public indignation and to draw attention away from the purge of Ökuma.

There were some, however, who would not be placated. Following Ökuma, a total of fifteen men resigned from the government, largely from the Finance and Agriculture and Commerce Ministries. Thus the '1881 political crisis' ended with an exodus from the government larger than the resignations following the Korean affair. Many of these officials were requested to resign. Matsukata (later Finance Minister), for one, regarded their dismissal as inevitable, since they had been closely associated with Ökuma. The group included such men as Yano, Ozaki Yukio, and Inukai Tsuyoshi, all Keiö graduates and later leading politicians.

The purge of Ökuma and his supporters within the government was not precipitated solely by differences in constitutional views or the Hokkaido issue. Neither can it be viewed simply as a political manoeuvre resulting from a power struggle between Ökuma and his Sat-Chō antagonists. A combination of complex factors in the circumstances of late 1880 and 1881 converged to produce the crisis.

The accumulated resentment at Ökuma's power in government, particularly since 1879, had reached a climax. Ökuma had aligned himself with increasingly articulate segments of public opinion, specifically the progressive intellectual press. He emerged as champion of the people through his stand opposed to the rest of the government, first in presenting his memorial on parliamentary
government and then in the scandal over the Hokkaido properties sale. The government could not ignore this combined threat.

Itö and Inoue believed that Ökuma had betrayed the gradual progressivism of Atami and thrown in his lot with the 'radical' press. The choice was clear, and Itö, who earlier had been Ökuma's colleague and subordinate, made his decision. He does not seem to have suffered the qualms of conscience that led Iwakura to make a dramatic death-bed apology to Ökuma. In Fukuzawa's words, 'Itö and Inoue cut off General Ökuma's head and presented it to the enemy's camp.'31 The balance of historical opinion in Japan is that Ökuma's purge was effected by the Sat-Chō oligarchs led by Itö.32

Although the 1881 crisis ended in Ökuma's expulsion from the government, it had a profound effect on both the development of parliamentary government in Japan and on Ökuma's own subsequent role. Ökuma had now flung down his challenge to Satsuma and Chōshū on the issue of parliamentary government, rather than on a military question such as the Korean expedition. From the standpoint of constitutional development, Itö, 'Father of the Constitution', had a significant role in its formulation, but some of the credit for precipitating the constitution and convening the Diet belongs to Ökuma. Ökuma's own evaluation of the crisis also emphasised this result: 'What we should note is that from this upheaval the constitution was born. At this time no one in the cabinet objected to constitutional government, but there were differences in opinion on the date'.33

Apart from its effect on his career, Ökuma's ouster from the government was significant because it signalled the loss of the leading contender against the Satsuma-Chōshū government and the defeat of the advocates of parliamentary government on the British model. There was now no challenger to Sat-Chō power within the government. The crisis made it clear that no rival to Sat-Chō power could survive within the government. That Ökuma without a firm basis of power in any han and outside the Sat-Chō system had survived so long in the government was testimony to his ability, ingenuity, and courage. Ökuma's purge also made it apparent that boldness of vision was no substitute for cold political acumen.

Purged from the government, Ökuma nevertheless emerged a champion of the people. Perhaps anyone out of favour with the
hambatsu could have performed this role, but Ōkuma had a special appeal for the press and was hailed its hero. In organising the Kaishintō the following year Ōkuma gave substance to his recognition of the need for political parties two decades before his Sat-Chō colleagues. His dismissal enabled him to give effect to his conviction that 'Constitutional government is party government'.

The crisis also had other implications far beyond the purge of Ōkuma or settlement of the Hokkaido issue. More significantly, it helped precipitate the establishment of constitutional government and the first parliamentary election in Japan.
The Meiji Restoration was an élite revolution, a feature which distinguishes it from other major world revolutions. It has been estimated that while only 5 per cent of the population at the time of the Restoration were of the samurai or shizoku class, in 1882 61.2 per cent of the bureaucracy were still shizoku.¹ For this reason the shizoku have been termed the 'political class' of the Meiji period. It has been suggested that the origin and composition of the oligarchy were reflected in the élitist character and behaviour of this group. More specifically, the oligarchic attitude has been described as disdain and fear of mass movements, and consequent failure to create them or to be associated with them, and avoidance of techniques of popular leadership, particularly in the later careers of the party leaders.² The genesis of the Kaishintō and character of its leadership were at least in part exceptions to the characterisation of Meiji political leadership as élitist in political behaviour. The transformation represented by the Kaishintō reflected the political modernisation of Meiji leadership.

Both the bureaucracy and the political parties of the early Meiji era were partly conditioned by their shizoku leadership. As Itagaki had led his Tosa followers into the Jiyūtō in late 1881, so too Ōkuma followed suit a few months later, organising a party of his own. These parties were an outgrowth of the earlier Popular Rights Movement and also a portent of the role of the parties in the Diet a few years later.

The government at the end of 1881 was apprehensive over the quiet mood with which Ōkuma took his dismissal. What had he meant when he said he would be a 'model of a resigned Imperially-appointed official'? Might he even follow the military course taken by Saigō and Etō after they had resigned from the government in
1873? There was an air of expectancy as statesmen and journalists watched to see what Ōkuma's next move would be. They did not have six months to wait before he showed his hand in founding the Rikken Kaishintō, or Constitutional Reform Party.

Whether or not Ōkuma would have organised a party ever or at this juncture had he not been dismissed from the government can be debated. He had certainly hinted that he might do so, and no doubt his ouster strengthened his resolve. On the other hand, some assert that he was too attached to power and influence within the government to separate himself from it. The fact remains, however, that he advocated a party cabinet system while still in the government. His organisation of the Kaishintō was therefore a logical move now that he was out of office. The 1881 crisis may have been welcomed by Ōkuma's close advisers as an opportunity to test their theories.

The creation of the Kaishintō must be viewed in part through the men who were the motive force behind its inception. Although Ōkuma recognised that political parties were an integral part of parliamentary government and a prerequisite to a Diet, there is no assurance that he would have ushered a party into being himself had he not been urged to do so by his supporters soon after his dismissal. Still, in the government, and especially since 1879, he had fostered a fairly cohesive group of appointees who now became a natural nucleus for the Kaishintō.

Ōkuma's right-hand man in the Kaishintō was Ono Azusa, Kaishintō 'brain-truster' and leader of one faction of the party. Apart from Ōkuma no one played a more crucial role in inaugurating the party and formulating its principles than Ono. A publicist and educator of note, Ono joined Ōkuma in founding the school which became Waseda University. Ono was prodigiously active in the infusion of Western thought into Japan through his writing and teaching.

Ono was born in 1851 in Tosa, crucible of Japan's Popular Rights movement. As a child his scholastic ability led him to be hailed as a prodigy by teachers and friends, who gave him financial assistance to continue his study of the Chinese classics, which was de rigueur for samurai sons at the time. During the Restoration Ono joined the Tosa Kiseitai and fought with verve in the Aizu expedition, putting to rout the last of the Bakufu resistance in the north. As a samurai
he became restless at being fettered by the strictures of han regulations and sought adoption by a *heimin* (commoner) so that he might be free to travel and study as he wished. He thereby turned his back on the samurai spirit and way of life, as Ōkuma also did in other ways. Ono thus revealed a deeper grasp of the concept of equality than many more 'radical' thinkers. His brother-in-law gave him money to go to Shanghai, and from there he boarded a ship for America, where he studied Western legal systems.4

In 1872 the Finance Ministry sent Ono from New York to London, where he immersed himself in studying banking and finance for two years. During his spare time he pursued his first interest in law. Late nineteenth-century England was under Gladstone's first ministry, and Ono became attracted to the utilitarianism of Bentham and Mill, later the keynote of his own political theories. Ono's constant plea, when he returned home, was that Japan must modernise and become enlightened through a system of government based on law.

Back in Japan in 1875, he divided his attention between academic organisations and writing. He joined one of many coteries of students home from abroad: the Kyōzon Dōshū (Co-existing Comrades). The group held discussions on reforms in law, education, and economics, and published its own magazine, *Kyōzon zasshi*, which printed discourses on utilitarianism and treaty revision. Ono was at this time concerned equally with politics, where he saw practice as critical, and with law, where he regarded theory as fundamental. His diary reveals that during this time he worked assiduously arranging discussions and writing for the magazine.5

In 1877 Ono launched his career as a reformer within the government. During the next five years he held several positions in the Justice Ministry, the Committee to Investigate the Legal System, the Dajōkan, the Genrō-in, and the Bureau of Audit. In 1879, as a result of the government interdiction on public speeches by government officials, he broke with his friend Inoue Kowashi, who upheld the government viewpoint, and even threatened to resign his position in the Dajōkan.6 As Auditor Ono investigated the finances of other departments and bureaus, stirring up much opposition to the proposed sale of government assets in Hokkaido. Ono was busy codifying an accounting law when the political crisis swept him from office with Ōkuma in 1881.

There is some question as to just when Ono met Ōkuma and pre-
cisely what, if anything, was Ono's role in drafting Ōkuma's famous memorial on constitutional government. In 1880, Ono's espousal of Western theories and his advocacy of convening a parliament by 1881 led Ōkuma to warn Ono not to speak against the government if he wished to keep his position. Ono's free criticism of the hambatsu in fact nearly led to his dismissal on one occasion; Ōkuma interceded successfully for Ono. Although Ōkuma cautioned Ono about attacking the hambatsu, both men felt strongly the need to curb hambatsu power. Ono believed that the cardinal goal of the Restoration was to eliminate the possibility of a monopoly of political power by any single faction. Ono no doubt appealed to Ōkuma too because of his education, his convictions on parliamentary government and political parties, and his wide knowledge of Western institutions. Ono in turn may have seen in co-operation with a powerful charismatic man like Ōkuma the possibility of realising his own idealistic vision for Japan.

Ono was leader of one wing of the Kaishintō derived from the Ōtōkai (Gull Society), a group of students who first met in June 1881. Ono was not a Keiō man but a graduate of what was to become Tokyo Imperial University, and many who met with him in the Ōtōkai were from the same university. One of the best known of these was Takada Sanae, later associated with Ōkuma and Ono in founding Waseda and also the only Ōtōkai man elected to the first session of the Diet. For a while the Ōtōkai had as its organ a newspaper called Naigai seitō jijō (Internal and external political party conditions). When Ono resigned from the government, the Ōtōkai again became more active, and Ono was soon involved in preparations for the first meeting of the Kaishintō.

Ono urged the creation of the Kaishintō as a necessary bulwark against hambatsu power. While he viewed Sat-Chō power as a formidable barrier to the development of parliamentary government, he and Ōkuma both repudiated radical 'Jacobinism' (an allusion to Jiyūtō activities) in favour of more moderate and less destructive measures. Ono's moderate progressivism and his repudiation of the militaristic and elitist samurai spirit may have accounted for his failure to join men of his own home prefecture in the Jiyūtō.

Ōkuma later credited Ono with impetus for the party's founding when he remarked,
I resigned from the government and worked to organise the Kaishintō. At that time the government was buffeted about by the violence of the Satsuma, Tosa, and Chōshū factions, and consequently there was danger that a crisis would confront the nation. I therefore decided to organise a great party to achieve a second restoration, and partly because I had a tacit understanding with Ono to do so.9

Most brilliant of the Kaishintō theorists, Ono was convinced that Western methodology in scholarship was as significant for Japan as Western ideas. His study of the West was therefore motivated by a desire to import not only Western ideology but also methodology. He was strongly influenced by nineteenth-century positivism and has been credited with attempting to introduce the empirical method into Japanese scholarship.10

While he was one of Japan's chief exponents of nineteenth-century liberalism and utilitarianism, Ono's ideas were syncretic rather than adhering to a single school or doctrine. His utilitarianism was coloured by positivism, nationalism, and moderation, with a disinclination to alter the status quo. He was widely read in authors on government, law and metaphysics, notably Comte, Montesquieu, Herder, Schelling, Rousseau, Austin, and Voltaire. Philosophically he stood between idealism and realism, drawn on the one hand to the utopianism of Thomas Moore and on the other to the realism of the utilitarians. Ono was sparing in the use of such terms as 'liberty' and 'equality', which were the focus of the Jiyūtō prospectus. He invoked legal sanctions for those specific rights he enumerated.

Ono began his most important book, Kokken hanron (A treatise on national constitutions) in 1877, while in the government, fearing that parliamentary government could not be realised at once in Japan and that the only recourse was to record his thoughts for posterity. He drew on his studies of the constitutions of several nations and the commentaries of jurists. This work especially reflects the influence of English thought (although he also cites French and German authors) in its discussions of constitutional history in general and Japan's proposed constitution in particular. Takada Sanae wrote of Kokken hanron: 'In my view this is the greatest book on politics that has ever been written in Japan'. Kaneko Kentarō, on the committee to draft the constitution, credited Kokken hanron
with providing many suggestions useful during the work of drafting.\textsuperscript{11}

Ono wrote a second work, \textit{Mimpö no hone} (Fundamentals of civil law) out of the conviction that Japanese legal scholars were superficial in their focus on French and English law, and that they should look ultimately to Roman law, the source of Western law, for precedents. Ono defines the legal system as 'the command of the sovereign, which it is the duty of the subjects to uphold'. On the other hand, the individual also has certain rights which the law must guarantee, within the framework of the family system. He discusses what he considers the principal classifications of law and the rights guaranteed by each.\textsuperscript{12}

The Kaishintö is regarded as the chief repository of Japanese utilitarianism, a doctrine with which Ono was deeply involved. He was first of all dissatisfied with previous Japanese translations of the word 'utilitarianism'. In a more philosophical but incomplete work, \textit{Rigaku nyūmon} (Guide to utilitarianism), Ono professed Bentham's 'greatest happiness of the greatest number' or 'utility, as the test and measure of virtue', which should be sanctioned by law rather than by human reason or any such construct as 'natural rights'. While accepting this much of Western philosophy, Ono matched the West's Christ and Mohammed against the East's Confucius and Buddha, and opted for the Buddha. He viewed the Buddha as the guide to the path of genuine happiness and avoidance of individual self-aggrandisement. His Buddhist faith seemed to evolve from his commitment to utilitarianism and perhaps also from a need to redeem Japan's past. At a time when many thinkers were faddishly eschewing Japanese tradition for Western innovations, Ono nevertheless saw the need to accommodate East and West philosophically. In a similar vein he sought to combine the concepts of popular rights and sovereign rights, an effort which characterised the Kaishintö as well as the Jiyūtö posture. His last scholarly work, a comprehensive 3,000-year history of Japan in English, French, and German as an introduction for Western readers, was incomplete when Ono died of tuberculosis in 1886 at the age of thirty-five.

By contrast with Ono, Yano Fumio, actual author of Ōkuma's memorial on constitutional government, made notable contributions to the democratic character of the Kaishintö. Born in 1850 in Saeki
han (near Fukuzawa's birthplace) of samurai lineage, he later entered Keiö. There he became a Fukuzawa disciple and leader of a student group called the Kōjunsha, which studied constitutional government and published a magazine. Yano's political career began in the lower echelons of the Finance Ministry under Ōkuma in the first decade of the Meiji era, and before the 1881 crisis Yano had advanced to head of the Bureau of Statistics and also secretary of the Dajōkan. Yano's versatility led him to play a multi-dimensional role in confronting some of the political challenges of the Meiji era.

As an outgrowth of the Keiö group, Yano organised the Tōyō Giseikai (Oriental Parliamentary Society), another of the political enlightenment societies so characteristic of the intellectual life of the Meiji era. This group included Keiö graduates Ozaki Yukio and Inukai Tsuyoshi, employed under Yano in the Statistics Bureau. When Ōkuma appointed Ozaki and Inukai to the Statistics Bureau, he exhorted them to immerse themselves not only in statistics but also in all of national affairs. This may indicate that, at least by early 1881, Ōkuma was looking beyond the confines of the bureaucracy, if not toward the establishment of a party specifically. He may have been paving the way toward the ‘de-bureaucratisation’ of his appointees in the bureaucracy.

Members of the Tōyō Giseikai were convinced that creation of a party and political training of the people were requisites for a parliament. Unwilling to enter the Jiyūtō, which they criticised as too radical, they turned rather to the Kaishintō. About half the group, following Fukuzawa's lead, remained outside the Kaishintō, while the more radical among them, led by Yano, joined. Yano also welcomed a few survivors of Saigō's rebellion, now out of prison and attracted to politics. Before Saigō's defeat Yano briefly considered the possibility of working through Saigō for representative government. Yano's faction now formed the radical wing of the Kaishintō and was in frequent conflict with Numa Morikazu and the third faction within the party.

Fukuzawa's hesitancy to join the party may have been due to his aversion to assuming any role in government or to his constant preoccupation with the individual. One version has it that he hoped the party would be a fusion of the Ōkuma and Goto factions (Goto, a Tosa Jiyūtō man, later founded a political federation, the Daidō
Danketsu), and that when Gotô did not join, Fukuzawa likewise chose to remain beyond the pale.\textsuperscript{15} Fukuzawa's chief ideological influence on the party was through Yano.

Yano's views gained wide currency when in 1883 he published one of Japan's earliest political novels (a Meiji belles-lettres innovation), \textit{Keikoku bidan} (Exemplary tales of statesmanship). The novel sold so well among popular rights activists that the royalties enabled Yano to realise a cherished dream—a tour of Europe and America, where he spent two years (1884-6) studying constitutional law and political systems. Yano was particularly attracted to aspects of direct democracy which he observed in Switzerland and the United States, since they confirmed his convictions that the removal of political processes from the people increased in direct proportion the possibility of political abuses. In view of Yano's role as leading party strategist, it was unfortunate for the Kaishintô that he chose the most critical year for the party, 1884, for his trip.

Yano expressed some of his democratic convictions through his novel, \textit{Keikoku bidan}. His aims in writing this most popular of his novels were to heighten the respectability of the novel, to add to the popular pressure for constitutional government, and to broaden the popular political vision. These goals, which Yano shared with the Kaishintô and the Popular Rights Movement, were partially achieved through unprecedented sales of the novel to a most receptive young audience. But popular rights ideals were so new to Japan that Yano could not allude to any Japanese historical precedent which might accord them the sanction of tradition and the dimension of familiarity. He turned instead to the less familiar setting of Thebes, where his three young protagonists personified the virtues of wisdom, benevolence, and courage and valiantly faced a tyrannical government which was in collusion with the militaristic state of Sparta. Their ideal was \textit{minsei} (popular government), by which Yano meant constitutional monarchy. Yano expected his audience to read into the novel a parallel to the repression of the Popular Rights Movement at the hands of the \textit{hambatsu} oligarchs, and an analogy to the fate of Meiji Japan confronted by the military superiority of Western powers. The final realisation of \textit{minsei} in Thebes and the success of Thebes against the military might of Sparta Yano hoped would portend in Japan success for the parties at home and a heightening of Japan's prestige abroad.\textsuperscript{16}
Yano's activities as party organiser were linked also to journalistic endeavours, particularly as editor of the *Yūbin hōchi shimbun*, which was purchased by the party soon after its founding. The staff of the newspaper included Inukai and Ozaki, and this 'Hōchi group' was cohesive over a period of years in Japanese politics. The *Hōchi* became one of the principal organs for Kaishintō criticism of the *hambatsu* and the *Jiyūtō*. Yano remained with the paper after he left the party; he attempted a Western-inspired reform in which journalistic language was simplified and the paper then became a commercial enterprise rather than a party organ. Yano's concern with public information media reflected his commitment to a democracy in which the people would be free to criticise.

Probably the most paradoxical phase of Yano's mercurial career was his entry into the Imperial Household Ministry in 1890 as *Shikibukan* (Master of Ceremonies), in which capacity he escorted the emperor to the inaugural ceremony of the first Diet. To many of Yano's old colleagues in the press and the party this seemed an anomalous, even ignominious kind of task for the author of *Keikoku bidan* and organiser of the Kaishintō. His action, which he did not attempt to justify in *minken* terms, appears to have been dictated by a desire for 'retirement' (during which he did no writing), and by earlier elitist predilections. He subsequently accepted an appointment as Ambassador to China before returning at the end of his career to writing and journalism. He refused to re-enter active political life when Ōkuma asked him to join the cabinet in 1914.17

Numa Morikazu was leader of a third faction of the Kaishintō. He too was a journalist, the editor of the *Tōkyō-Yokohama mainichi shimbun*. Born in Edo the son of a Bakufu adherent, Numa studied Chinese classics and English in Edo and military science in Nagasaki and Yokohama. He fought the Imperial forces at Aizu and later escaped Bakufu purview in Tosa, where he formed a friendship with Itagaki and Goto and taught Tosa soldiers at Itagaki's request. Later he was employed by Inoue Kaoru in the Yokohama Customs Administration. Inoue still later sent Numa abroad to study when he was found to be quarrelsome with his colleagues. In England he studied law for a year and returned home in 1873, greatly impressed by the freedom of speech he had observed.

On his return, he organised with Kōno Togama, later Secretary of Agriculture and Commerce, a cabal to study law and to test freedom
of speech in Japan. After 1877 the group became known as the Ōmeisha (Crying Birds Society) and grew in membership allegedly to one thousand, with twenty-nine branches.

Numa meanwhile was appointed a judge in the Genrō-in and heard a case involving complaints against the behaviour of certain officials. Objections of enraged officials brought the case notoriety, but Numa's findings against the officials were upheld and his reputation for unbiased justice established. In February 1879, a law prohibiting government officials from speaking at public meetings was promulgated. Since one-third of the Ōmeisha members were government officials, it was forced to disband, and Numa resigned from the Genrō-in.

Numa began work on behalf of freedom of speech and the press through the Tōkyō-Yokohama mainichi shimbun, which he asked Shimada Saburō to edit. Numa was elected to the Tokyo prefectural assembly from 1879 to 1890 and in 1882 he became speaker of the assembly. In the assembly he worked for lower taxes, for the establishment of constitutional government, and against the Hokkaido government properties sale.18

At one time Numa had been closely associated with Baba Tatsui and with Itagaki, but when he quarrelled with Baba he also severed connections with other Jiyūtō men. In February 1882, Numa was approached at his newspaper office by Itagaki, who hoped he would join the Jiyūtō. Numa, however, refused, as he had already discussed with Kōno Togama a plan to organise a party and besides had fallen out with Baba. Numa reported to a friend that he believed Itagaki honest but nothing more. Numa's frustration over his attempts to work with the Jiyūtō no doubt gave impetus to his support of Ōkuma in founding the party. Numa died soon after the first Diet convened. Ono, Yano, and Numa, together with two party committeemen, Haruki Yoshiaki and Mudaguchi Gengaku, were popularly referred to as the five bugyō or commissioners of the Kaishintō.

These three men—Ono, Yano, and Numa—illustrated in their diverse origins the relatively broad base of Kaishintō leadership by contrast with the Jiyūtō's early Tosa-based leadership. The organisation of a party whose leadership was not from a single prefecture was a departure from earlier political patterns and was a portent of the transition from han to nation-state as the major political unit.
Kaishintō leadership was heterogeneous not only in geographic origin but also in other respects. Ono was a scholar of impressive stature, author of several works on legal philosophy, and a general political theorist, but perhaps without as much popular appeal as some others among the party's leaders. Yano Fumio, on the other hand, was something of a political chameleon. He threw himself into organisational activities of the party with élan and was more akin to the political following of Itagaki than were others in the Kaishintō. Yano was a popular journalist and successful novelist, but he finally forsook the party to enter the Imperial Household Ministry in a move which was mocked by his old party comrades. Numa was a politician of a different ilk from both Ono and Yano. Edo-born and son of a Bakufu adherent, he was nevertheless also a child of the Restoration and a student of Western legal institutions and practices. For a time he attempted unsuccessfully to work with the Jiyūtō. Numa was distinguished from Ono and Yano also by the fact that he was an elected official in the Tokyo Assembly during the active period of the Kaishintō's early existence. These men were united by a common desire to destroy arbitrary hambatsu rule, a belief in parliamentary government on the English model, and a conviction that they must unite under Ōkuma to achieve their aims.

A fourth group which coalesced with the above three was more amorphous and had less ideological cohesion than the others. This group consisted of ex-bureaucrats who resigned with Ōkuma in 1881. Many in the above three groups were also former bureaucrats. Among these men were Kōno Togama of Tosa, ex-Secretary of Agriculture and Commerce; Maejima Hisoka, ex-Secretary of Communications; ex-judge Kitabatake Harufusa, a former Shinto priest; and chief secretary of Agriculture and Commerce Mudaguchi Gengaku. Kōno, Maejima, and Kitabatake were referred to as Ōkuma's three karō, or principal retainers. There was little in the way of organisation or agreement on principle to lend cohesion to these men as a group. They had in common that they were former bureaucrats who had been associated with Ōkuma but were not closely identified with Ono, Yano, or Numa.

From the foregoing it will be apparent that it cannot be maintained, as has been argued, that the formation of the Kaishintō was connected with sectional factors or that the Kaishintō party ranks were swelled by men of Kyushu and other areas who resented Tosa
domination of the civil rights movement'. Kaishintō leadership was notably national in character and included some Tosa men.

Of the original 116 members of the party, fifty-eight men, or 50 per cent, were from Tokyo, and twelve of the most important twenty-two leaders were also listed as from Tokyo, many of them having come recently to the capital. This preponderance of Tokyo men is itself a reflection of the national character of party leadership, since in addition to being the capital, Meiji Tokyo was attracting people from all parts of Japan. Of the additional members who joined the party during June, 94.5 per cent were from Tokyo, reflecting also the concentration of party activity in the capital.

Why should these men of such diverse origins have chosen to rally around Ōkuma in 1882 rather than to join Itagaki's Jiyūtō? Probably Ōkuma's individualistic iconoclasm appealed to some of these men, many of whom were nonconformists. Further, Ōkuma's political ideals were less extreme, less 'radical' than Itagaki's, and enabled Ōkuma to appeal to those who were opposed to hambatsu government but at the same time were not prepared to follow Itagaki. Numa was an example of this; part of his failure to work with the Jiyūtō must be attributed to personal rather than ideological factors. In addition to being less radical, Ōkuma represented an appeal that was broader and less narrowly geographical than Itagaki's party, whose leadership was nearly exclusively from Tosa. Further, Ōkuma was a charismatic leader. And finally, he had worked actively to foster the support of these intellectuals by appointing them to the Finance Ministry prior to 1881. They had thus become Ōkuma's coterie in government.

Significantly, none of the factions which formed the nucleus of the Kaishintō consisted of men from Saga, Ōkuma's home prefecture. Etō Shimpei had been executed in the Saga revolt, and Soejima had long since deserted Ōkuma to turn toward conservatism. Ōki Takatō and Sano Tsunetami, who were of secondary importance in the bureaucracy, showed no inclination to leave their positions. During the Meiji era when Satsuma or Chōshū origin was a major determinant in the careers of the oligarchs, Ōkuma was exceptional in his rise in the central government without significant political support from his own han. It would be difficult to charge Ōkuma with 'cronyism'. His appointees in the bureaucracy were selected nation-
ally. Accordingly, his national orientation in organising the Kaishintō was not entirely unexpected.

While Ōkuma was still in the government some of his disciples approached Itagaki with a scheme for overthrowing the hambatsu through a union of Ōkuma and Itagaki forces. Itagaki, however, was apprehensive, since Ōkuma was still in the oligarchy and also because of the financial problems which had arisen while Ōkuma was in the Finance Ministry. Itagaki wanted Ōkuma to first demonstrate his good faith by a reform of the Dajōkan to broaden its membership. The mutual lack of confidence between Ōkuma and Itagaki precluded any alliance at this time.21

There were other reasons for Ōkuma to organise his own party rather than combine with Itagaki and the Jiyūtō. Ōkuma did not share the samurai mentality of Saigō and Itagaki, and in 1873 his image of Itagaki was of a samurai unable to devote his attention to the practical affairs of government. When Itagaki joined Saigō in advocating the Korean expedition, then subsequently resigned, this only proved Ōkuma's point. His personal aversion to Itagaki was further strengthened by his view that Itagaki's political ideals were too radical for Japan. Moreover, Ōkuma wanted to attract segments other than the rural and Tosa groups in the Jiyūtō. In the image of one author, Itagaki was a dragon on a cloud and Ōkuma a tiger in the field.22

One story related of Ōkuma's early days in the government attests to the personal charisma which enabled him to attract such an able group of young men. Ōkuma's plan to float a foreign loan in 1869 to finance railway construction was strongly opposed by many who feared it would lead to dependence on foreign nations and would compromise Japan's integrity. China was proof of these dangers. Kitabatake Harufusa and two fellow-conspirators, strongly of this and more xenophobic convictions, decided that Ōkuma should be assassinated, and accordingly confronted him prepared to execute their plot. The impact of Ōkuma's charisma on Kitabatake was so powerful, however, that Kitabatake abandoned the attempt and was thereafter counted among the disciples who followed Ōkuma out of the government and into the Kaishintō.23

The initiative of these men of diverse origins, plus specific conditions of the time, lent historical logic to the founding of a party
less radical and more national in leadership than the Jiyūtō. It would be too much to claim that the Kaishintō would not have been founded had it not been for Ōkuma. Without him, nonetheless, it would have been more difficult for the factions to combine or to agree on a leader.

Ōkuma was a natural choice to lead the party because of his political experience, his popularity with the press, his influence on a great many intellectuals, and his ready-made following of ex-bureaucrats. He was a rallying point for anti-hambatsu sentiment, particularly following the 1881 crisis.

Consultations leading to creation of the party began at Ōkuma’s residence as early at 3 November 1881, shortly after formation of the Jiyūtō. Ono and Numa were joined in the planning by Kōno, Maejima, Kitabatake, and Mudaguchi. Rumours reached the press of the activity at Ōkuma’s residence: he was visited in early March 1882 by Fujita Ichirō of the Tōkyō nichichi shimbun, who asked if Ōkuma were contemplating organising a party. Ōkuma replied:

It is true that I am going to organise a political party. Last year when I resigned, I told the Dajōkan I would not change my principles whether in or out of the government. Itagaki, five days after leaving the government over the Korean issue, presented a memorial for a popularly elected Diet, but I will not behave like him. I resigned from the government on the basis of principle, and I appeal to the government and people through principle ... Most people worry about Japan, comparing her situation to the French Revolution, but I am afraid it will go even further ... The Jiyūtō members are most extreme. If we don’t do something about the situation, they will destroy society ... They think that simply by attacking the government they can acquire popular rights.24

Plans for formation of the party were laid. In December 1881 Ono enumerated the desiderata of the party. He advised party leaders to state their principles clearly, to publish a newspaper, to avoid following fads and buying of party members, to send party men through the countryside to gain support, and to try to gain the confidence of the ‘middle class’ of independent officials outside the Imperial Household. This was a conscious appeal to segments not already attracted to the Jiyūtō. He urged men of like persuasion to join the party not only as a matter of conviction but as a patriotic duty.25
Because he was so articulate, Ono was asked to draft the party manifesto. He came to be known as 'the voice of the party'.

On 16 March 1882 Japan's second major political party was inaugurated. At the first meeting, Ōkuma was unanimously elected president; Kōno was elected vice-president, and Ono, Mudaguchi, and Haruki, party directors. Party regulations were adopted governing membership, meetings, and dues.

The party platform, drafted by Ono, proclaimed six objectives:

1. The dignity of the Imperial House should be preserved and the welfare of the people should be promoted.
2. Internal reform should precede the extension of national rights and prestige.
3. Local self-government should be established, restricting interference by central authorities.
4. The franchise should be extended in accordance with the progress of society. Restrictions on the franchise should be based on intelligence, with a small property qualification.
5. Commercial intercourse with foreign nationals should be promoted.
6. The monetary system should be reformed on the principle of hard currency.

In this platform Ono revealed the influence not only of British utilitarianism and parliamentary principles but also of the political potency of the Imperial institution. Further, the first principle of the platform made it patent that it was imperative to identify the Imperial House with the people, since the parties were regarded by the government as seditious.

At the inaugural meeting Ōkuma articulated the party principles in a speech actually drafted by Ono. In it Ōkuma cautioned against Jiyūtō tactics, saying, 'I don't share the principles of those who try to imitate Rousseau or Jacobin principles and try to effect change radically. I reject radical change'.

In addition to the documents he had already contributed, Ono drew up a set of principles of administration designed to put the platform into effect through specific measures. These directives proclaimed that the Kaishintō awaited the Imperial will on matters relating to organising the Diet; would promote the Imperial Household's prosperity and prestige; advocated circulation of gold coin;
wanted centralisation of Army barracks; proposed introduction of preliminary military training into primary schools and eventual expansion of the Navy; and would promote improvement of public works, courts, and education. The Rikken Kaishintō was now fully launched and immediately held several meetings during May. Yano, Maejima, and Ono were sent out through the countryside to garner support.

What, then, were the tenets of the Kaishintō which distinguished it from the Jiyūtō on the one hand and the Rikken Teiseitō (Constitutional Imperial Party, inaugurated by the government to counter the influence of the popular parties) on the other, and what were the ideological common denominators of the parties? What was the significance of ideological differences in relation to the total political party scene?

As has been noted in the discussion of party leaders above, there was in Kaishintō thought a main stream of ideological influence from British utilitarianism via the writings of Mill, Locke, Bentham, and Spencer. Although Jiyūtō doctrine has been called the 'French School' of liberalism epitomised by Rousseau and writers of the Revolution, the Social Contract was also cited—though at times negatively—by arbiters of Kaishintō thought. Ókuma enunciated the party motto, 'Slow and steady, moderate but sound', which came to characterise the party stance as distinguished from the Jiyūtō.

Fukuzawa had expressed concern over the slow development of Japan's national power, and this concern was reflected also by some of the Keiō men who entered the Kaishintō. Ideologically this emphasis on the development of national power was the natural aspiration of a new nation seeking equality internationally. It reflected Japan's attempt to counter the superior technology of the West. Emphasis on the prestige of the Imperial House demonstrated this national concern of Meiji Japan, since the Emperor symbolised the new Japan. Whatever other elements in the thought of Meiji ideologues and statesmen may have been altered by their reading of Locke and Mill, this was constant. The result was the generation of certain ideological tensions, as for example when Ókuma said, 'The constitution was not engendered fortuitously but originated according to the demands of the times', but 'It was granted not through the arbitrary decision of the Emperor Meiji but through his hand following the spirit of his ancestors', and 'Since the Emperor says we
must respect the constitution, we must respect it'. Thus Ōkuma equated constitutionalism with Imperial dignity and prerogatives. Kaishintō doctrine did not represent only the 'British school' of thought, since Kaishintō principles evolved a synthesis of several streams of ideology from Western and Japanese traditions.

The official Rikken Teiseitō, organised soon after the Kaishintō as part of government strategy against the popular parties, numbered among its members Shinto and Buddhist priests, retired officials, Confucian scholars, municipal officials, and public school teachers. It made no pretence at being a popular party, and its chief organ was Fukuchi Gen'ichirō's *Nichi nichī shim bun*.

The Kaishintō's ideological posture was closer to the Jiyūtō than to the Rikken Teiseitō. While the Jiyūtō leaned toward a constitutional monarchy but was ambiguous on the locus of sovereignty, and the Teiseitō held that sovereignty rested in the emperor, the Kaishintō (and Jiyūtō to some extent) sought to resolve the issue through the position that sovereignty lay between emperor and people, inherent in both. To this end the first article of the Kaishintō platform upheld the 'prosperity of the Emperor and the welfare of the people'.

Despite these differences, it is nevertheless difficult to delineate a political ideology which clearly distinguished the Kaishintō from the Jiyūtō. There was an ambiguity which characterised party utterances and also partly accounted for the constant regrouping, merging and splitting in the farrago of political parties in pre-war Japan.

Equally cogent determinants of party organisation were personalities, and some of the differences between the parties derived in part from the men who constituted their leadership. These were often immeasurable differences of spirit and temperament and historical conditioning, yet they have always played a significant role in politics.

Attempting to describe to a group of Chinese students in 1906 the differences between the two parties in 1882, Ōkuma explained,

At that time the Kaishintō and Jiyūtō had the same aim, with only slight differences. The Kaishintō was comparatively mild, and the Jiyūtō a little radical. The Jiyūtō advocated extreme extension of the franchise, while the Kaishintō advocated gradual extension of the franchise . . . I think the Jiyūtō and Kaishintō
should have been united, but they often clashed ... The struggle between the Kaishintō and the Jiyūtō helped the government.30

It has been noted that the Kaishintō initially did not derive as much from a regional base as did the Jiyūtō, but was more a national party in terms of geographic origins of the leadership. The parties were in part differentiated on the basis of the economic and social strata from which they drew their membership and leadership. The appeal of the Jiyūtō had been directed consciously toward the rural landowning class, which formed a strong bastion of local Tosa support, and to shizoku who had not succeeded in entering the Restoration Government. The Jiyūtō had also gained popularity among those who had been attracted to the Popular Rights Movement through the Rishisha, Aikokusha, and Kokkai Kisei Dōmeikai. The Kaishintō, on the other hand, purposely directed its conscious appeal to those who remained outside the ranks of the Jiyūtō. The nucleus of Kaishintō leadership consisted of journalists, intellectuals, and former bureaucrats. The party also enjoyed strong support among urban commercial and industrial interests, such as the much-touted patronage of Iwasaki Yatarō.

Although the Jiyūtō was identified with rural interests and the Kaishintō with urban, figures on fu and ken assembly membership in 1883 do not support a simplistic dichotomy. While the Kaishintō had 163 members in twenty-three fu and ken assemblies, at the same time the Jiyūtō had forty-six in seventeen assemblies.31 The difference was perhaps a function of the relatively poorer position of Jiyūtō electors and candidates in meeting the early property qualification for the franchise and office holding. By the 1890 national election to the Shugiin (House of Representatives), however, of a total of forty-two Kaishintō candidates elected seventeen, or close to 43 per cent of the total, were elected from the six largest cities, reflecting considerable Kaishintō strength in urban areas.32

The Kaishintō and Jiyūtō both sought to extend their strength through prefectural branch organisations throughout the country. The Kaishintō was particularly successful in electing candidates to the prefectural assemblies. The Kaishintō emerged as a national party, then, in several senses: in the importance of Tokyo as the place of residence (not necessarily of origin) of the initial leadership and membership; and in the diversity of geographic representation
in 1882, the rapid burgeoning of regional branches, and the wide representation of party members in fu and ken assemblies as early as 1883. This demonstrates the role of the Kaishintō as an agent in a crucial aspect of the transformation of Meiji political leadership: its nationalisation.

In terms of social status of the original party membership, fifty-five were listed on the original roster as heimin and fifty-nine as shizoku. This was a significantly greater proportion of shizoku to heimin than in the population as a whole and again lends credence to the characterisation of the shizoku as the ‘political class’ of the Meiji period. Among the party leaders, the proportion of shizoku to heimin was even higher than for the party as a whole: thirteen shizoku to nine heimin. Between 1882 and 1883 there was a rapid shift in the heimin-shizoku ratio in fu and ken assemblies for both parties to a preponderance of heimin (88 per cent).

The view that Ōkuma’s financial support derived largely from the Mitsubishi Company was widely accepted and often had implications for his career. Stories of Iwasaki’s relationship to Ōkuma dated back to the founding of the Mitsubishi Company and government subsidies and other privileges for the company after the 1874 Taiwan expedition. The rumours were used by Ōkuma’s hambatsu and Jiyūtō opponents, and continued to plague him in the Kaishintō. Although the stories were never proven definitely, neither were they disproven. Herein lay their value to Ōkuma’s opponents.

Many in the government as well as in the Jiyūtō subscribed to the view of the close relationship between Ōkuma and Iwasaki. Even after Ōkuma left the government and organised the Kaishintō, the government still sought to destroy the reputed tie between Ōkuma and Iwasaki. Accordingly, in February 1882, the government issued an order restraining Mitsubishi from engaging in subsidiary undertakings and depriving the company of its special prerogatives. Under the aegis of Shinagawa Yajirō, Secretary of Agriculture and Commerce, the Kyōdō Unyu Kaisha was launched with 3 million yen capital, to compete with Mitsubishi and destroy its shipping monopoly. Later, in 1898, the two firms were amalgamated to form the Nippon Yūsen Kaisha, since the government had discovered the disadvantages of subsidising two competing companies.

An example sometimes cited to prove the close connection between Mitsubishi interests and Ōkuma and Fukuzawa is the career of
Asabuki Eiji, a Keiō graduate. Asabuki entered Mitsubishi in 1878, later rising to a policy-making position. On at least one occasion he made a profitable share transaction for Ōkuma. He allegedly supported Ōkuma anonymously, apportioning funds to party organs and supporters, always in Ōkuma's name. In 1880 he formally left Mitsubishi employ to join the Bōeki Shōkai in Yokohama. This firm, however, was also financed by Iwasaki (with 80,000 yen), by Fukuzawa and the Mita group, and by the Yokohama Specie Bank, and officially assisted by Ōkuma in the Finance Ministry before 1880. Asabuki was simultaneously employed in the Yokohama Specie Bank for foreign transactions. The founding of the bank had been suggested by Fukuzawa and promoted by Ōkuma, and it obtained Ōkuma's permission to invest in the Bōeki Shōkai. The connection with Ōkuma is further suggested by the fact that the Bōeki Shōkai began to fail after Ōkuma's ouster from the government in 1881. There were also several other Keiō graduates employed by Mitsubishi.

Whatever the degree of Ōkuma's financial dependence on Mitsubishi, he also had other private sources of income. He was an able financier in his own right and was known to be adroit at speculations in property. There was Ōkuma's own statement that, 'without Nabeshima's help, Hōchi, Waseda, and the Kaishintō would have encountered more problems than they did'. Ōkuma in turn was said to have acted as Nabeshima's financial adviser, suggesting property sales and purchases in Kobe, Korea, and Tokyo. Ōkuma was reputed to have had notable success in increasing Nabeshima's wealth. It was a mutually advantageous relationship.

Rumours of Kaishintō dependence on Mitsubishi were denied by several Kaishintō leaders, including Yano and Ozaki. Ozaki objected, some people believed that the Kaishintō derived funds from Mitsubishi. But this charge is baseless. The Kaishintō had no connection with Mitsubishi financially, so the party was very poor even at election time. I know how poor the party was when I controlled the Kaishintō campaigns. Campaigns were waged with a few contributions and no other resources.

But Iwasaki himself lent some credence to Jiyūtō and government charges when he said, after being attacked by the Jiyūtō as a traitor,
I was furious and thought I would aid the Kaishintō with all my resources in order to defeat the hambatsu government and the Jiyūtō. Similar stories were current of Jiyūtō funds being supplied by Mitsui.39

Party rivalries led to mutual recriminations, weakening the parties. The government moved in to attack both parties and further debilitated them. Soon after formation of the Kaishintō, hostility between the two parties became manifest, in part because they were competing ideologically for support of similar dissident segments. The parties carried on campaigns of mutual vituperation in the press. Although both parties had their organs, Kaishintō leaders were particularly articulate editorially. Besides the Kaishintō organs—Yūbin hōchi shim bun and Tōkyō-Yokohama mainichi shim bun—Narishima Ryūhoku of Chōya shim bun, Maeda Genjirō and Takada Sanae of Yomiuri shim bun and Teramura Hayamasa of Ukiyo shim bun were journalists who supported the Kaishintō. Newspaper circulation was still comparatively limited; Chōya circulation was alleged to be 12,000 and Hōchi 5,000.40 Nevertheless, the influence of the press on public opinion cannot be gauged solely in terms of circulation figures, since the press played the significant role of government critic through much of the Meiji era, as subsequently.

The influence of the press grew to the point where, in 1894, cabinet secretary Itō Miyōji told Itō Hirobumi that something would have to be done to break the power of the newspaper alliance or the press would become an obstacle in forthcoming local elections. The journalists, including three Kaishintō men (Ozaki, Ichijima, and Koizuka), met in March of 1894 to demand ‘responsible cabinets and autonomous diplomacy’. The government’s fears attested to the growing real power of the Kaishintō press and the press generally in the Meiji period.41

The parties engaged in mutual recrimination. Personal differences often predominated over the common opposition of the parties to the hambatsu government. Kaishintō men charged their Jiyūtō counterparts with being too enamoured of abstract ideas and too radical, while Jiyūtō partisans regarded the Kaishintō as a hopelessly conservative ‘silk hat party’. The Jiyūtō further alleged that the Kaishintō was a ‘false party’ supported by the ‘sea monster’ (Mitsubishi) and the wealthy.
Okuma, always the target of personal attack as well as encomium, now drew his share of the charges. The Jiyū shimbun published a lengthy invective against his fiscal policies in office, charging that he had lost 10 million yen, depleted the national treasury by 4 million yen, issued over 10 million yen in reserve notes, issued weak notes in office but advocated hard currency in the Kaishintō platform, and finally, that he was concerned solely with his own profit. Kaishintō papers replied in kind to these charges.

Both political parties were anathema to the Sat-Chō oligarchs, convinced that the Restoration was an achievement of Sat-Chō co-operation, and that party principles contravened respect for the emperor and endangered the 'national polity'. The government should stand above the parties, 'transcendently'. In September 1882, Itō warned in a letter from Paris to Matsukata:

The behaviour of the Kaishintō is piteous ... They are simply trying to garner power from the people by speaking ... using various terms and agitating the public, but the attempt seems without any definite conviction and with only slight knowledge of foreign writing. They are acting in disregard of the body politic of their own nation ... Ignorant young people ... are apt to follow anyone.

The government, convinced of the logic of its transcendentalism, employed a variety of tactics to thwart party development. Besides putting its own party into the field, the government abetted both inter- and intra-party rivalries. Itagaki's trip abroad was alleged to be part of a government scheme to deprive his party of his leadership. Funds for it were provided through Mitsui, partial owner of the semi-government Kyōdo Unyu Kaisha, which in turn stood to gain by Jiyūtō attacks on Mitsubishi. It was charged also that the attempted assassination of Itagaki at Gifu in March 1882 was instigated by an editorial in the semi-official Tōkyō nichū nichū. This attempt had evoked Itagaki's historic cry, 'Itagaki may perish, but liberty never!' Numa Morikazu's charge in the Yokohama mainichi, in July 1882, that Itagaki's trip was being financed by the government, launched a press battle over the issue. Ōishi and Baba of the Jiyūtō bitterly criticised Itagaki's duplicity in accepting travel funds and defected from the party, creating a schism from within. Itagaki's absence in Europe further weakened the Jiyūtō.
The government hoped to produce a similar schism within the Kaishintō by inducing Ōkuma to take his first trip abroad. Sano Tsunetami, who had remained in the government in 1881 despite his Saga background, called on Yano and urged him to persuade Ōkuma to take a trip abroad, but to leave his wife at home, since the government was not prepared to finance her travels. Yano gave the proposal a cool reception, replying that Ōkuma would certainly refuse, and the government abandoned the attempt. The government had similarly concocted an earlier plan to send Ono to the United States as Ambassador, but this proposal did not work.

The government also made a frontal attack on both parties through repressive press and assembly laws enforced by police arrests and threats. The first press and meeting laws, as noted above, were enacted soon after formation of the earliest political groups in Tosa. After formation of the Jiyūtō and Kaishintō, however, the government deemed it necessary to pass more stringent legislation. Accordingly, in June 1882, the Public Assembly Law was revised, providing that parties must submit membership rosters to the police, that police permission was necessary before a party might meet, and that police were empowered to dissolve meetings. Parties, moreover, were forbidden to send out notices of meetings or to establish branches in other parts of the country. In April 1883 the Newspaper Law was also made more rigorous, extending the period of suspension of a paper. Ozaki, one-time writer for Höchi shim bun, credited the revised laws with some success both in increasing the circulation of government newspapers and in effecting some apostasy of party advocates to the government side.44

The parties at first refused to submit reports to the police, declaring that they were organised for social purposes only. Soon after revision of the Assembly Law Fujita Mokichi, a Höchi editor, was summoned by the Kyōbashi Police Station in Tokyo and questioned about the aims of the Kaishintō. Party secretary Haruki Yoshiaki replied that it was founded solely for social purposes and that meetings, communications, and dues were all used for that end. The police, however, were not convinced and on 23 June ordered the Kaishintō to submit its roster and request police permission as a political association according to the Assembly Law. Ōkuma suggested compliance with the law and exhorted members to take heart and face such dangers courageously. On the ground that non-
compliance might only evoke stricter government repression, Ōkuma’s view carried. The party roster was accordingly submitted to the police. In this action the Kaishintō was following the course already chosen by the Jiyūtō. To circumvent the interdiction on communicating with local branches, the party established nominally independent organisations locally. Liaison was, however, maintained by members from the central organisation who travelled through the prefectures.

The government extended its attack on the Kaishintō and Ōkuma to the Tōkyō Semmon Gakkō (later Waseda University), which Ōkuma founded in 1882 ‘to train the next generations in the spirit of freedom and independence’. The official view was that the school was the training ground for Ōkuma’s disciples. The school’s finances were on shaky ground from the outset, and Ōkuma enabled it to continue only through a loan from his old daimyo, Nabeshima. The government attempted to dissuade students from matriculating by spreading through the prefectures the report that it was a school for traitors. Detectives appeared in the classrooms, and the school’s faculty was threatened when the government forbade professors of national universities to teach in private institutions.45

Just as the Jiyūtō was the first popular party organised, so it was the first to succumb under the onslaught of government pressure and its own internal weaknesses. Open hostility was aroused over several incidents in which Jiyūtō men resorted to violence against police and government officials. Public concern with politics in any case had lapsed. Political consciousness was not high enough to sustain itself through the transition period from the announcement of the first Diet to the actual convening of the first session a decade later. Furthermore, party treasuries were exhausted, and party members were unable to obtain government posts. Factional disputes further weakened the parties. On 29 October 1884, therefore, the Jiyūtō voted its own dissolution.

The Kaishintō faced the same problems that plagued the Jiyūtō. In particular, hostility between members of the Tōyō Giseikai and Ōmeisha factions, long a source of weakness in the party, broke into the open. Yano’s group was especially hostile to Shimada Saburō, while Takada Sanae of the Ōtokai faction tried to conciliate them.

Ōkuma was urged by some to dissolve the party as the Jiyūtō had done, but the Kaishintō was divided over the issue. Disagreement
had also arisen internally over another problem: land tax reduction. Numa and thirty others intended to petition the government to reduce the land tax to give people a chance for economic recovery. This had in fact been part of the original Kaishintō platform. Ōkuma, however, decided against tax reduction now in view of the government's increasing revenue needs, and stated that anyone who urged reduction now was uninformed about current affairs. This created a further breach in the party. There were other differences over the issue of the party roster, which Ōkuma and Kōno now opposed on the ground that it was hindering the party. Ōkuma may well have been annoyed that the party would not follow him unanimously on these two issues.

Ono was adamant for sustaining the party, writing in his diary of 4 December: 'Dissolution of the party now won't bring any advantage to the nation. There is no reason at all to dissolve it. It will only incur ridicule in the future'. Ono from his sick-bed begged Ozaki to tell Ōkuma that, even if all other party members should defect, he would remain to advocate gradual progressivism in Japan. He also told Mudaguchi that dissolution of the party would mean political death for Ōkuma, and he could not condone such suicide. Ono regretted bitterly that he could not be more active in the struggle to maintain the party.

The party split into three factions. Those favouring dissolution were headed by Kōno Tōgama, those for maintaining the party at any cost were led by Kitabatake Harufusa, and a neutral group was represented by Maejima Hisoka. The guiding light of the party, Ono Azusa, lay dying. Yano Fumio, on whom Ōkuma also relied heavily, was away in Europe. Leaders of the three factions (ex-bureaucrats), unable to break the deadlock, appealed to Ōkuma for a final verdict. The results of the historic meeting are recorded in three vastly different versions. Kōno reported, 'Ōkuma has decided for dissolution'. Kitabatake announced, 'Ōkuma has decided against dissolution'. And Maejima asserted, 'There was no decision'. These conflicting reports of the same interview with Ōkuma are significant in revealing that politically Ōkuma could on occasion be all things to all men. This says much for his durability if not for his integrity. While the meeting did not produce unanimity, at least it precipitated action. On 17 December 1884 Kōno resigned. Ōkuma opted also to have his name removed from the party roster, and the list itself was
abolished, since it had come to serve as a blacklist for the police. Ono, aggrieved over his inability to hold the party together, also resigned.

Ökuma later attempted to rationalise his decision to resign in terms of duty, recalling,

In 1884 I was practically forced to resign as leader of the Kaishintō, but I had to consider those who left the government with me in 1881 out of personal obligation to me. I was banished from the government as a traitor, and if I didn't do something for them, there would be no chance for them to find employment ... I intended for them to enter the government as officials. There were twenty such men, so I left the party, and they with me.50

He considered his aim achieved when many of them returned to the bureaucracy and remarked, 'Thus I was able to lay down my burden'. That these ex-bureaucrats were unable to shed their bureaucratic proclivities in favour of the party is attested to by the fact that the abolition of the roster and defection of some of the leaders were precipitated partly by a desire to return to the bureaucracy.

While we must give some credence to Ökuma's feeling of responsibility toward his followers, it is probable that his defection was also precipitated by internal opposition in the party to his proposals regarding taxes and the membership roster, as well as by the above-mentioned difficulties. Factional rivalries, financial difficulties, and government repression might in any case have caused the collapse of the Kaishintō sooner or later, regardless of Ökuma's personal inclinations.

The departure of Ökuma, Kōno and others, however, did not mean the obliteration of the Kaishintō. The party did not completely lose its identity, nor did the Jiyūtō. Ökuma remained behind the scenes as adviser to party leaders. An emergency meeting was called three days after Ökuma and Kōno resigned. The party elected seven commissioners in lieu of a president, including Numa and Ozaki. The party continued to hold meetings, but its influence gradually waned because of the loss of leadership, continuing government suppression, lack of funds, and decreasing newspaper circulation. In addition, the unifying force of Ökuma was gone, and personal
jealousies and rivalries, such as those between Ozaki and Shimada, Numa and Yano, were given full vent.

The Kaishintō continued a desultory existence. Meetings continued to be held through 1885, the party passed resolutions on freedom of speech and a parliamentary system with a cabinet responsible to the majority in the Diet rather than to the emperor. Passage of the Peace Preservation Law in 1887 further debilitated party vestiges, leading as it did to expulsion of Ozaku Yukio and others from Tokyo under provisions of the law.

The principles, leadership, and membership of the Kaishintō lived on through several successor parties. Following the fall of the Kuroda cabinet in October 1889, there was continuity of some membership from the Kaishintō into the Shimpotō (Progressive Party) at the time of the Matsukata cabinet in 1896. This continuity was extended through the formation in 1898 of the Kenseitō (Constitutional Government Party) out of a segment of the Shimpotō, with elements of the old Jiyūtō. Ōkuma continued to play an active role in these successor parties until he resigned finally from the Kenseihontō (Orthodox Constitutional Government Party, an offshoot of the Kenseitō), in 1907.

Regardless of changes in name, however, politicians and historians continued to refer to the Kaishintō and Kaishintō men, since the party had created a lasting image. Long after the Kaishintō actually gave way to successor parties, its name continued to evoke in men's minds the party which had rallied around Ōkuma in 1882. Though the original Kaishintō shared the same elitist social origins as the oligarchy, and was in fact partly generated by the oligarchy, it nevertheless departed from traditionalist patterns of political behaviour. It thus performed the historical function of preparing the way toward broadening the base of power through the development of a party system and parliamentary government in Japan. As Ōkuma had been an agent in the nationalisation of the bureaucracy in the early Meiji years, so he also helped create and develop national political parties. Both within the government and in his party Ōkuma helped Japan achieve nationalisation and modernisation of political functions.
Between late 1887 and 1898 Ōkuma entered three cabinets. Each may be seen as a stage in the growth of political parties, a step in the accommodation between the power of the genrō and the parties. The first cabinet, the Kuroda cabinet, pre-dated the Diet; the later two cabinets faced growing party strength in the Diet. Ōkuma's actions in these three cases revealed a commitment to parliamentary ideals which contributed significantly to the development of parliamentary government in Japan.

In the fall of 1887 Gotō Shōjirō, former jiyū minken leader from Tosa, revived political party activity by founding the Daidō Danketsu out of remnants of the Jiyūtō and Kaishintō. In speeches and in the magazine Seiron (political discussion), Gotō cautioned against the government's vacillation toward the Treaty Powers and advocated freedom of speech, press, and assembly, continuing his earlier concern with popular rights.

The old Kaishintō was represented in the new party by several men, including Inukai and Ozaki. While Ōkuma's name was notably missing, he remained in close touch with his old colleagues. Inukai felt obliged to explain to Ōkuma his motive in joining forces with the new coalition. In a letter dated 17 January 1888 he wrote Ōkuma that his aim in joining was to lure Daidō men 'back to our side'. He assured Ōkuma that the Chōya shimbun announcement that it was not an organ of any party was not actually true, that the paper remained true to the Kaishintō as always.

The government intensified its pressure against the parties. The Peace Preservation Law of December 1887 dealt a telling blow, for through it many party members (570 men in all) were expelled from the environs of Tokyo as subversives. Gotō's acceptance of the Communications Ministership in the Kuroda cabinet in March 1889...
further weakened the Daidō Danketsu. Government success in
drawing party leaders into cabinets has often been interpreted as
victory for the government and capitulation by the parties. But party
leaders joining cabinets may also be viewed as a tactical move by
party leaders to narrow the gap between governmental power and
the parties. Both were altered in the process. The Daidō Danketsu,
however, was unable to survive until the first national election;
instead it split into the Daidō Kurabu, Daidō Kyōwakai (Like
Thinkers' Harmonious Association), and its Jiyūtō and Kaishintō
components.3

In July 1887 the Premier had to find a replacement for Inoue to
continue treaty revision negotiations and to recoup some popular
support for the cabinet. Inoue, Kuroda, and Itō decided that having
Ōkuma and the Kaishintō faction support the cabinet might
neutralise the power of the growing opposition.4 Ōkuma's earlier
successes in dealing with foreign diplomats were an added considera-
tion. The oligarchs were beginning to perceive also that without
some party support it would be increasingly difficult to achieve their
goals. It is noteworthy that Inoue throughout Ōkuma's career often
pushed him into office.

Ōkuma did not reply immediately, as he wished to sound out
views of former Kaishintō men, even though many of its leaders
had entered the Daidō Danketsu. Besides, the men who were now
offering him a cabinet post—the Sat-Chō hambatsu—were the same
men who had ousted him from the government seven years earlier.

There were indications of conditional support for Ōkuma's move.
Yano wrote to Ōkuma on 10 September 1887, suggesting that if
Ōkuma were to make the following demands prior to accepting the
portfolio, the Kaishintō would support the cabinet: responsible
cabinets within eight years of the convening of the Diet; the
franchise for those who pay at least ten yen in property taxes; and
convening the Diet in 1889.5

It was apparently these demands drafted by Yano which Ōkuma
presented Kuroda and Itō as conditions for entering the cabinet.
Thus he set a precedent for his practice of entering the cabinet
conditionally on acceptance of parliamentary principles.6 He sought
to retain the support of his old party and to advance the develop-
ment of parliamentary government in Japan. Itō, however, balked
at Ōkuma's conditions, unsuccessfully recommended another man
for the post, then was forced to assume it temporarily himself.

Itō and Kuroda again approached Ōkuma two months later. Again Ōkuma posed his conditions, now phrased in parliamentary terms. Itō, now using Ōki Takatō as go-between, this time succeeded. Ōkuma accepted.⁷

Two months after Ōkuma's entry into the cabinet, Itō resigned according to prior agreement with Kuroda, who then became Prime Minister. Itō moved on to become chairman of the newly-created Privy Council, whose main function was to ratify the Constitution.

With Ōkuma's entry into the cabinet, the regrouping Kaishintō threw its support behind him. It was not a true government party, since the cabinet was not responsible to the Diet, which had not yet convened. When the first election was held, the Jiyūtō elected more candidates than the Kaishintō. One of the cabinet's more progressive achievements, in which Ōkuma's influence was felt, was the 29 June 1889 repeal of the prohibition on speeches by government officials. This early example demonstrated Ōkuma's concern with civil rights fundamental to democratic processes.

On the day following promulgation of the Constitution, 12 February 1889, Prime Minister Kuroda explained government policy toward political parties to the prefectural governors, declaring that, although development of parties was inevitable, the government should 'stand outside these parties transcendentally and maintain a most impartial and just middle course'.⁸ Itō at a meeting of prefectural assembly speakers on 15 February asserted that political parties in the Diet were inevitable, but 'To introduce any political party into the government is very unreasonable: the government must be independent and outside political parties'. Every minister of His Majesty must be politically neutral, for the British system could not be followed in Japan. Further, 'Appointment and dismissal of the Prime Minister must depend on the will of the Emperor. The Emperor will judge whether the candidate is supported by the people, and whether he is able or not'.⁹ Itō and Kuroda sought to preserve transcendentalism in anticipation of convening the first Diet. No doubt they were apprehensive about possible assertion of Ōkuma's 1881 principles again.

A few days later, on 21 February, Foreign Minister Ōkuma spoke in a very different spirit to some thirty prefectural assemblymen in Tokyo. He contradicted Itō, stressing that the English type of
parliamentary government was ideal, and realisation of party cabinets on the British model in Japan would not be impossible. He urged his audience not to despair because of press complaints about the Constitution, since "the system of political party cabinets cannot be regulated in the Constitution", but was rather a matter of how the Constitution was interpreted in practice. Ökuma's assessment of the possibility of growth of party cabinets through actual operation of the Constitution proved prophetic in view of later events.

Ökuma had an advantage in the cabinet in that the press was willing to accord him credit for measures which were popular, and at the same time, as he was not Prime Minister, he was not likely to incur the onus for policies which were unpopular. He was still the popular politician who alone had championed parliamentary principles against the hambatsu oligarchs and who had subsequently organised the Kaishintō. He could hardly lose with the press.

The most critical task facing Ökuma in the Kuroda cabinet was treaty revision, which under Inoue had achieved no significant progress. Ökuma viewed Japan's diplomacy since the Restoration as a demonstration of weakness, as it seemed Japan could only rely on conflicts of interest among the powers to advance her own. Foreign Minister Inoue, overlooking this factor, had negotiated with foreign diplomats jointly but made no headway against their combined strength. His proposal of the appointment of foreign judges to Japanese courts elicited such a storm of nationalistic protest that he was forced to resign in July 1887.

Resuming negotiations in November 1888, Ökuma introduced some innovations in the conduct of diplomacy to strengthen Japan's stance. He began negotiating with the powers singly rather than in joint conference, thus reducing the number of adversaries at any given time to one. There was a more subtle but equally significant difference between Ökuma and Inoue in psychological approach. Ever since his first diplomatic encounter in Nagasaki, Ökuma had impressed foreign diplomats with his dignity, aplomb, and firmness, a marked contrast to the sometimes self-effacing manner of other officials. Ökuma's panache was a definite advantage in negotiations with foreigners. Ökuma first pushed an equal treaty with Mexico in November 1888, through Ambassador Mutsu Munemitsu in Washington. Although Mexico opened the way by relinquishing
extraterritorial rights, none of the other powers would follow suit. The treaty consequently did not take effect, owing to the most-favoured-nation clause.

Britain typically balked, and while negotiations were still under way, the London *Times* got wind of the details of Ōkuma’s proposals and publicised them on 19 April 1889. They were almost immediately translated into Japanese in *Nippon*, and by the end of May received widespread notoriety throughout Japan. The essentials of the plan revealed by *The Times* were:

1. Securing the right for foreigners to travel, reside and own property in Japan, subject to Japanese law, before the first Diet session.
2. Abolition of consular jurisdiction in treaty settlements after a short term of years.
3. Appointment of foreign judges to the Supreme Court in a majority in cases involving foreigners, for a period of ten or twelve years.
4. Promulgation of new civil codes three years before abolishing the treaty-port system.¹¹

From the Japanese standpoint Ōkuma’s plan had several advantages over Inoue’s. The period of extraterritoriality would be shortened; only foreign defendants (not plaintiffs as well, as in Inoue’s scheme) could appeal cases to the Supreme Court having a majority of foreign judges; and foreign judges would be appointed only to the Supreme Court and not in the courts of appeal and lower courts, as in Inoue’s plan.¹² Ōkuma also rejected Inoue’s proposal to use English in judicial decisions.

Despite the advantages of Ōkuma’s terms, however, conservative fears were immediately roused that foreign residence would lead to foreign expropriation of land and that the appointment of naturalised judges to the Supreme Court would violate the Constitution and desecrate the national honour. Even Ambassador Mutsu wrote Ōkuma from the United States in early May, objecting on these grounds. Ōkuma replied to Mutsu that Article 58 provided that qualifications of judges were to be determined by law, and that this would be encompassed in the Law of Composition of the Imperial Courts which would be promulgated shortly; hence no contradiction or unconstitutionality would result. He also came to his own defence
on the question of foreign residence, dismissing as groundless fears that foreigners would buy up all the land in Japan, and noted that foreign countries accorded Japanese the privilege of buying land. The employment of naturalised foreign judges he regarded as a necessary concession during a transitional period.\footnote{13}

A controversy erupted also in the press. Höchi, the old Kaishintō organ, published a defence of Ökuma's plan, using the same arguments he had used in his response to Mutsu.\footnote{14} Conservative Nippon's rejoinder was that it was ridiculous to view appointment of foreign judges as a sign of the government's good will toward foreign nationals and not submission to them. Further, employment of foreign judges and mixed residence were too high a price to pay for abolition of extraterritoriality, since foreigners would come to feel contempt for the Japanese, the nationalist argument ran.\footnote{15}

The Kaishintō rallied support behind Ökuma at a special meeting held on 25–9 June, presided over by Yano. Further meetings were held in July, with attendance reportedly reaching 3,000. The opposition, however, centring around remnants of the Daidō Danketsu, sponsored an anti-treaty revision rally on 14 August. The Daidō Kyōwakai, Daidō Kurabu, Hoshutō Chūseiha (Conservative and Neutral Political Faction), Shimeikai (Purple Ocean Society) of Kumamoto, Genyōsha (Dark Ocean Society) of Fukuoka, and Kokkentō (National Power Party) of Fukuoka and Kumamoto all participated. Fukuoka, it may be noted, was the traditional centre of ultra-nationalistic activity.

Opposition grew even within the government, where it was spearheaded by military men in the Privy Council—Tani Kanjō, Miura Gorō, and Torio Koyata. Torio, a powerful leader of the opposition, worked through Nippon shimbun and organised the Nippon Kurabu with the specific objective of destroying Ökuma's efforts at treaty revision.\footnote{16}

Torio also challenged Ökuma in person on 14 August, suggesting the appointment of foreigners to the Supreme Court would violate the Constitution. Ökuma replied that it would not if they were naturalised. Torio persisted, asking, ‘Do you mean persons naturalised before the treaty?’ but Ökuma remained silent. Torio objected further to four-year terms for foreign judges; still Ökuma did not respond. Finally Ökuma said, ‘We must pay [something] to abolish extraterritoriality’. Torio concluded the conversation by telling
Ökuma that he had no alternative but to resign. Ökuma thanked Torio for his 'kind advice', which he had no intention of following.\(^{17}\)

Recognising the intensity of conservative opposition, some in the cabinet began to feel they would have to repudiate Ökuma or fall on the issue. Inoue Kaoru, now Minister of Agriculture and Commerce, perceived that a victory for Ökuma on this issue would be a blow against the hambatsu (recalling their pre-1881 rivalry) and further that it might mean a Kaishintō majority in the first Diet election. Inoue returned to Chōshū in August, possibly to avoid having to bring his opposition to Ökuma into the open.\(^{18}\) Kuroda's failure to align unanimous cabinet support behind Ökuma was partly a function of the old Sat-Chō fear of his power, partly apprehension over opposition to his treaty revision scheme.

The reluctance with which both Itō and Inoue finally opposed Ökuma is apparent from the fact that they both were away from Tokyo when the issue was being fought in the government. They had, after all, induced Ökuma to enter the cabinet; on the other hand, they did not want to espouse so unpopular a cause or lend support to the Kaishintō. Itō had refused a request to return to the Privy Council from Odawara (where he had gone after resigning from the Privy Council on 11 October), and he wrote that it would be inappropriate for the Privy Council to play a decisive role.\(^{19}\)

On 14 October, Matsukata, Saigō, Ōyama, and Yamagata talked with Kuroda and urged him to meet with the emperor the following day. Accordingly, an audience was held, and Yamagata opposed Ökuma's stance. Ökuma met then with Yamagata, but they were unable to reach accord. Kuroda, Enomoto, and Yamada Akiyoshi were now Ökuma's only supporters within the cabinet. Kuroda persisted in support of Ökuma partly because of his responsibility as Premier, partly as the antipathy of a Satsuma man toward Ökuma's Chōshū detractors.

A cabinet meeting was held on 18 October. There is some debate about whether Ökuma agreed to halt negotiations. The question has not been resolved because of subsequent events.\(^{20}\) After the meeting Ökuma left for the Foreign Ministry. Just as he approached the gates of the Ministry, out of the darkness someone tossed a package at the carriage. It was a bomb! It struck a wheel and exploded, shattering Ökuma's right leg. The attempted assassin in
this dramatic incident was Kurushima Tsuneki, a thirty-year-old superpatriot of the Fukuoka Gen’yōsha. Kurushima bore Ōkuma no personal animosity but viewed assassination as the only way to halt the negotiations and recoup Japan’s national honour. He succeeded in his first objective—although he committed suicide immediately following the attack—for Ōkuma’s leg had to be amputated and he lay in a bed for several weeks unable to work. Kurushima’s checkered career had included service in Saigō’s army but also active membership in the Kaishintō. He was a regular reader of *Nippon* and was committed to the ultra-nationalist position of the Gen’yōsha.21 Ōkuma nevertheless felt such sympathy for Kurushima, who had died for his principles, that he sent money to Kurushima’s family regularly thereafter on the anniversary of the attempted assassination. In this behaviour Ōkuma demonstrated his extraordinary tolerance plus some of the traditional Japanese reverence for one who has the courage of his convictions.

Ōkuma resigned as Foreign Minister. The cabinet, accepting joint responsibility, resigned on 25 October. Kuroda supported Ōkuma on this issue to the end.

Again Ōkuma had failed but was rescued from total disgrace, perhaps even achieving a certain ‘martyrdom’, through the abortive assassination attempt. Ōkuma had the additional good fortune to remain very much alive. Tani Kanjō, speaking for the conservative opposition, is quoted as saying, ‘We have saved Ōkuma’s political life’, for ‘If Ōkuma’s plan had succeeded, he would have been regarded by the people as a traitor forever’.22

Ōkuma’s negotiation scheme was predicated on what he believed was a realistic evaluation of prospects for acceptance and for protection of Japan’s interests. He saw some concessions as an inevitable *sine qua non* for success in negotiations. Ōkuma misjudged public opinion at home. So unpopular was the Inoue and Ōkuma plan to appoint foreign judges that it was not again considered. Opposition to Ōkuma’s diplomacy also may have been part of a nativistic reaction to excessive Westernisation of the early Meiji years. Ōkuma’s willingness to make concessions illustrated his interpretation of the political art of compromise.

*Kokumin no tomo* acclaimed victory out of defeat when it editorialised:
If the credit of the nation is the most important possession of a statesman, we must say that Count Itō has injured his credit materially, while Count Ōkuma’s credit has been sensibly increased. Count Ōkuma has indeed sustained a defeat, but morally he is victorious. In a certain sense Count Itō obtained success, but morally he is a vanquished man.23

This distinction between moral victory and political success was frequently made in Meiji politics. Throughout Ōkuma’s career his opposition role both enhanced and reflected his moral stature.

The English-language *Japan Weekly Mail* saw attacks on the treaty revision plan by cabinet members as unconscionable. The paper editorialised, ‘Success begets jealousy; failure involves humiliation. Ōkuma’s greatest fault is that he has been conspicuously successful. His political enemies cannot forget an achievement that entitles him to so much public applause’.24 This was accurate in so far as it recognised vestiges of Sat-Chō resentment at Ōkuma’s popularity. Jiyūtō leaders revealed a latent conservatism when they joined the chauvinist opposition to any concessions.

Ōkuma had entered the Kuroda cabinet reluctantly and conditionally, first consulting with Kaishintō colleagues just emerging from collaboration with the Daidō Danketsu. While the Diet had not yet convened the Kaishintō was not a government party; its members supported Ōkuma despite his entry into a Sat-Chō cabinet. Within the cabinet Ōkuma wielded power through finance and diplomacy as he had done earlier. Chōshū opposition to Ōkuma within the cabinet also recalled his pre-1881 position in the government. He also used his old technical expertise in diplomacy. Thus Ōkuma played a catalytic role in the transition toward a rapprochement between cabinet and parties.

Following Ōkuma’s resignation from the Kuroda cabinet in 1889, he remained out of the government for another seven years, although he was formally a member of the Privy Council briefly. These years saw the first general election, the Diet convened in its first session, and the cabinet and Diet confronting each other and attempting to evolve a *modus vivendi*. The Diet gained strength and Japan inched gradually toward parliamentary government as cabinets were less able to ignore the Diet. Ōkuma played a role in this evolving rapprochement between the two unequal bases of political power in the late Meiji years.
The budget became the point of confrontation between the parties and the cabinet during the first several sessions of the Diet. According to the Meiji Constitution the House of Representatives could discuss and should pass the government budget, failing which the previous year’s budget could be appropriated. This constitutional fiscal power, limited though it was, became the opening wedge for the gradual growth of legislative power.

One of the weapons with which government fought the growth of Diet strength was the power of dissolution. Yamagata, Matsukata, and other Sat-Chō oligarchs resorted to this tactic against three of the first six Diets. They viewed dissolution more as a punitive measure against Diet intransigence than as a step to test governmental policy against the will of the electorate. Nevertheless, there were limits to the feasibility of a policy of repeated dissolution of the Diet, as the oligarchs came to understand. Japan—oligarchs as well as parties—was committed to constitutional government, and not even Yamagata would have wanted to cripple the Diet completely. To do so would have meant an admission that Japan was incapable of functioning under a constitutional government. This in turn might have hindered indefinitely the efforts to revise the treaties.

The old-line Jiyūtō and Kaishintō faced the first general election of July 1890 in disarray. Candidates emerged from the old Kaishintō and Jiyūtō, also the Daidō Danketsu, a revived Aikokutō, Hoshutō, Kyushu Shimpotō, and many smaller factions.

In April 1889, Ōkuma launched a nation-wide campaign tour to garner support for Kaishintō candidates in the approaching election. He travelled through several prefectures in the Kansai area, speaking at each stop. Such activity helped enhance Ōkuma’s image as a popular statesman in contrast to Sat-Chō oligarchs, who could not at this time envisage such grass-roots electioneering. It was an augur of Ōkuma’s full-blown appeal to the mass media of the Taishō period.

Prior to the election there were suggestions for amalgamation of the parties against the hambatsu government. One faction of the Kaishintō advocated dissolution of the party and amalgamation in a larger progressive party. Yano, on 14 August 1890, begged Ōkuma to push such a coalition. Ōkuma demurred. A second Kaishintō faction proposed dissolution of the party as a political association
and formation of a social club, reminiscent of arguments of 1884. A third group, including Ozaki, opposed a progressive alliance as untimely. For lack of a viable basis for agreement among old Kaishintō activists and due to revived anti-party pressures from the Metropolitan Police Board, these negotiations by Kaishintō men proved unavailing.

When the first Diet convened, however, the parties united against Prime Minister Yamagata and Finance Minister Matsukata over the issue of the budget. Wrote Kokumin no tomo: ‘Now the Diet has convened, and the general behind the Diet stronghold is Ökuma’. Though Ökuma had no official position, his influence was felt as de facto party leader and strong advocate of Diet prerogatives.

Co-operation of the two parties against the government during the first Diet led to further proposals of formal coalition. When the first session closed, Nakae Chōmin, Tosa ideologue of Jiyūtō affiliation, and a member of the Lower House, decided the time was ripe. Nakae, sometimes called ‘the Rousseau of Japan’, visited Itagaki and Ökuma separately in November 1891, and got their agreement in principle to coalition. Others urged the parties to overcome factional differences and together face in the Diet the overwhelming threat of hambatsu government. But neither party wanted to surrender its name, and there was in addition the traditional mutual antipathy between Ökuma and Itagaki.

Ökuma and Itagaki did manage to meet, as the cabinet noted with apprehension. Yamagata, Matsukata, and Home Minister Shingawa, ostensibly incensed that Privy Councillor Ökuma should engage in political activities, demanded that Ökuma resign from the Privy Council. Ökuma duly resigned, after first reminding Öki that he had accepted the post only when the emperor suggested Ökuma use it as a tactic to gain access to the emperor. The importance of gaining the emperor's ear was a lesson Ökuma had learned at great cost in 1881. Ökuma was now free, in the eyes of the government, to resume an openly active role in the Kaishintō.

Before the convening of the second Diet (21 November–25 December 1891), Prime Minister Yamagata resigned and was succeeded by Matsukata. The parties agreed beforehand to co-operate in the Diet again in demanding a reduction of the budget. The Diet accordingly rejected the government's budget bill and the government, faced with Diet intransigence, retaliated by dissolving the Diet. This
established the precedent for dissolution of the Diet which was to be followed by succeeding cabinets. Yamagata supported Matsukata's tactics and urged the government to take courage and dissolve the Diet again and again, until it complied.

The general election following dissolution was marked by charges of widespread government interference. Money was allegedly distributed to candidates opposing Kaishintō and Jiyūtō candidates, through police and prefectural officials. In many districts campaign speeches were forbidden or interrupted by the police, who resorted to physical violence against candidates endorsed by the parties. Even Itō and Agriculture and Commerce Minister Mutsu objected; Itō threatened to resign again as chairman of the Privy Council. Matsukata heatedly denied having intervened. Although the parties in the Diet had twice passed bills of non-confidence in the government, Matsukata rejected the view that the cabinet should resign as a result of a vote in the Diet. Matsukata was forced to replace maligned Home Minister Shinagawa with Soejima, but this was not enough to save the cabinet, which fell when Matsukata was unable to secure replacements for the Army and Navy Ministers.

If we are to believe Ozaki, Ōkuma's old Kaishintō follower, the government was not alone in buying votes, for similar tactics were allegedly suggested by Ōkuma. After being told Ozaki's Diet constituency covered a distance of fifty ri (1 ri = 2.44 miles) between Ise and Ki, Ōkuma replied, ‘Let us buy them all so the government cannot interfere with the election’. Ōkuma was meanwhile elaborating a theory of party strategy to counter oligarchic tactics. He spoke eloquently to Kaishintō members on 16 April 1892:

Henceforth, the elections are to be the point of contest, the local areas the arena. Not, indeed, of deliberate choice do we take the country districts ... as a place of party organisation; yet, there can be no doubt that if our supporters, with united enterprise, put forth all their strength, working from wards and villages to cities and prefectures, from cities and prefectures to Empire at large, we shall achieve our ultimate purpose. Ōkuma revealed a modern sense of party power at the grass-roots level, seeking to translate his program into reality through day-to-day local operations.
The Kaishintō platform, however, announced a few days prior to Ōkuma's address, did not succeed in a real revitalisation of the party, despite the progressive ring of some of its phrases. The party went on record again for 'responsible cabinets', for reducing public expenditures, for strengthening national defence, for negotiating equal treaties, for extending the franchise and abolishing the property qualification, for greater freedom of speech, association, and publication, for widening local autonomy, and for ameliorating administrative abuses.32

Ōkuma spoke again on the prospects for constitutional government at a Kaishintō meeting in January 1893, deprecating the fact that the spirit of representative government was still lacking, as witness the fact that the cabinet was not yet responsible to majority opinion in the Diet.33 Ōkuma pleaded persistently for party cabinets as the basic element of parliamentary government.

The fourth session of the Diet ended with the old hostility between the Jiyūtō and Kaishintō resurgent. Part of the hostility was engendered by Hoshi Tōru, Jiyūtō firebrand, and part was caused by the defection of Kōno Hironaka's faction from the Jiyūtō. Fundamentally, the division was a reassertion of differences which had their roots in personal, emotional, and historical forces which had been operative since the parties were first formed. Even during the height of good relations between the two, they exchanged invectives. The schism enabled Itō to remain Prime Minister through 1896 in the face of disunited party opposition.

The Kaishintō derided the Jiyūtō as a hambatsu puppet, but Kaishintō criticism fell on deaf ears. Perhaps there was some envy mixed with Kaishintō scorn, since the Speaker and Vice-Speaker of the House had been Jiyūtō men since the first Diet.34

Following adjournment of the fifth Diet Ozaki levelled a comprehensive indictment against Itō, accusing him, among other things, of impairing Imperial dignity through his use of Imperial Rescripts during the fourth and fifth Diets, of failing to enhance the people's rights and welfare, of interfering with elections, of appropriating funds in violation of the Accounting Law, and of suppressing newspapers and speeches.35

Ōkuma voiced a more fundamental concern with the operation of the cabinet system when he said:
My opposition to the system of Imperial Cabinets dates back as early as when I left the government in 1881. My opinions have not changed since that time. The expression ‘Imperial Cabinet’ sounds well, but in reality it is nothing more or less than another name for a Cabinet resting on the ascendancy of the two clans of Satsuma and Chōshū ... Can they be said to have rightly discharged their responsibility when they forfeit the confidence of the people and act contrary to public opinion? ... A constitutional government must necessarily be a parliamentary government.\textsuperscript{30}

Okuma had not changed his basic convictions since 1881. Despite his public abuse of Sat-Chō power, however, in a private conversation with Itō and Itagaki he later (1898) confessed that he regarded Sat-Chō contributions to the nation as remarkable, and he earlier compared Itō as a statesman to Mt Fuji, a national symbol.\textsuperscript{37}

During the ninth Diet (December 1895 to March 1896) the government got support of the majority Jiyūtō in the House of Representatives. The Kaishintō now had to close ranks with smaller opposition parties against the Itō cabinet, which was enforcing the Political Assembly Law and using other tactics against the parties. Kaishintō leaders therefore persuaded several other factions to combine under the name Shimpotō (Progressive Party). Diet members entering the new party numbered fifty-one from the Kaishintō, thirty-three from the Rikken Kakushintō (Constitutional Reform Party), five from the Chūgoku Shimpotō (Central Progressive Party), six from the Ōte Kurabu (Great Hand Club), three from the Zaisei Kakushinkai (Financial Reform Association), and five independents. The Shimpotō coalition totalled 103 seats as against a slim Jiyūtō majority of 106. This reorganisation was an attempt to recoup Kaishintō strength after the break with the Jiyūtō during the fourth Diet.\textsuperscript{38}

The Shimpotō, inaugurated on 1 March 1896, proclaimed as its goals:

to inaugurate responsible cabinets by the steady pursuit of progressive principles, to assert the national rights by remodelling the Empire's foreign policy; and to manage the national finances in such a manner as to encourage the development of popular industry and commerce—in short, to attain the reality of constitu-
tional government, thus completing the grand work of the Restoration, enhancing the dignity of the Imperial Court, and promoting the rights and welfare of the people.\textsuperscript{39}

The organisation of the Shimpotō was spearheaded by such Kai-shintō elders as Ozaki, Inukai, and Takada Sanae. Although Ōkuma’s name was notably missing, his influence was felt at the inception of the new party.\textsuperscript{40}

Jiyūtō leaders reacted immediately, suggesting that the new party included those who had failed in the Jiyūtō, that a party without a chief was like a person without a head, and that Ōkuma had used bribery to gain support for the party.\textsuperscript{41}

Once the Shimpotō was organised, it was faced with two possible courses of action: either it could maintain its traditional opposition to the government, or it could consider co-operating with the government, which might entail putting party men into the cabinet, following Itagaki’s example as Home Minister for Itō.

In October 1895, Ōkuma expressed his view of co-operation with the government as follows:

Nothing could be more extraordinary than that men should talk of my entrance into the Cabinet. You know well that as long as I served in the government, I never held office at the sacrifice of my political views. Obstinance is my constitutional malady ... Had I been free from this weakness, I might have continued without interruption to hold a ministerial post ... Should the time arrive when I can serve my country without doing violence to conscience, I shall ever be ready to offer myself to the State, not hesitating to serve in its cause until the last breath of my life. But I shall never be guilty of taking office against my convictions.\textsuperscript{42}

This reluctance, together with earlier reiterations of his belief in parliamentary government, indicated that Ōkuma did not regard his entry into the Kuroda cabinet as a violation of principle.

When Finance Minister Watanabe resigned, Prime Minister Itō looked to Matsukata to fill the vacancy. Some popular support was shifting to the Shimpotō, and Matsukata now regarded his old associate, Ōkuma, with less antipathy than his more recent antagonist, Itō (who had excoriated Matsukata for election interference in 1892). Matsukata now made his acceptance conditional on Ōkuma’s entry into the cabinet with him. Itagaki objected. Itō then invited
Ökuma into the cabinet, whereupon he refused. Itō at the same time may have encouraged Itagaki in his objections to Ökuma, in a manoeuvre to divide Matsukata and Ökuma and to instigate a Jiyūtō movement against Ökuma’s entry into the cabinet. Such machinations were not outside the bounds of possibility for Itō. Wherever the initiative lay, probably neither Itagaki nor Itō was overly anxious to work with Ökuma. The cabinet then resigned at the end of August, and Itō was replaced by Kuroda as interim Prime Minister. Matsukata took the Premiership permanently, and the way was clear for an offer of the Foreign portfolio to Ökuma.

Matsukata was urged to include Ökuma by two Satsuma advisers, Takashima Tomonosuke and Admiral Kabayama Sukenori, with whom Matsukata was planning cabinet alignment. There was already the precedent of Itō’s collaboration with the Jiyūtō, and the two advisers also wished to secure the government against attack by the parties.

But Ökuma, sceptical of their political compatibility, was reluctant to accept Matsukata’s offer. Inukai, Ozaki, and others urged Ökuma and Shimpotō members to counter the Jiyūtō-Chōshū alliance by co-operating with Matsukata’s Satsuma faction. Inukai advised Ökuma on 26 May that to form a cabinet with Matsukata and Kabayama would be no problem, but ‘What we fear most is that you will act alone’. Inukai was well acquainted with Ökuma’s habit of making his own decisions, without the traditional use of intermediaries and lengthy discussion.

Ozaki’s biographer relates the following episode when Ökuma refused to enter the cabinet. Ozaki visited Ökuma to try to persuade him to change his mind, and, encountering Mrs Ökuma in the vestibule, told her of his errand. She excused herself and, returning a few minutes later, said, ‘He has consented to enter the cabinet’. Whatever the authenticity of this story, Ökuma did in fact change his mind and agree to accept the portfolio, in an exceptional case of apparent feminine influence in Meiji politics.

Ökuma realised that if he entered the cabinet it must be with party support; he accordingly presented Matsukata with Shimpotō-inspired conditions for his entry. They were: ministers must have the confidence of the people and be jointly responsible (to the Diet is added sometimes); freedom of press, speech, and assembly must not be curtailed; and capable officials should be appointed without
Ökuma met with Matsukata, Takashima, and Kabayama (through Iwasaki Yanosuke’s mediation) to discuss formation of the cabinet. Ökuma lectured them at considerable length on constitutionalism, asserting among other things that only a cabinet supported by the people could be responsible to the emperor. Provoking no response from Matsukata and evidently considering his points won, Ökuma agreed to co-operate.

Ökuma related, ‘Itagaki wouldn’t agree [to alliance with Ökuma in organising a cabinet], so Itō retired to the Privy Council, and Matsukata and I organised the cabinet. For the first time since the constitution was promulgated, party power organised a cabinet with the batsuzoku [clique groups]. There is some truth in Ökuma’s claim, since Itagaki had entered Itō’s cabinet only after the cabinet had been formed. This, then, was the first time a Sat-Chō Prime Minister sought party collaboration in organising a cabinet. Ökuma recognised his own and the party’s role in this notable step forward toward parliamentary government.

At a 12 September Conference of Prefectural Governors Matsukata restated some of Ökuma’s stipulations in a public profession of respect for freedom of speech, press, and assembly, and an avowal to strengthen the national economy and reform the administration. Matsukata also included as cabinet policy treaty revision, expansion of armaments, and encouragement of education and business. Ökuma viewed this declaration as a great advance in Japan’s constitutional development, believing it clarified the cabinet’s responsibility. He declared with customary panache, ‘I had Matsukata attend the Conference of Prefectural Governors and read my stipulations and also had the papers print them’.

The Shimpotō officially announced its support of the government on 1 November. With the announcement, however, went the warning, ‘It is not our policy to utter beautiful words and not carry them out ... Therefore, if the cabinet does not carry out its announced policy, we must attack the government’.

In planning party liaison with the cabinet, Ökuma secured the appointment of two party members to key posts, Takahashi Kenzō
as chief cabinet secretary and Kömuchi Tomotsune as Director of the Legislative Bureau. These two men provided liaison between the Shimpotō and the cabinet. Ökuma strengthened the entente between the cabinet and party through appointing Shimpotō men as under-secretaries, bureau chiefs, and local governors. He further appointed Takahashi and Kömuchi to a newly created committee on administrative reorganisation.

Shimpotō leaders anticipated that Ökuma would wield influence in the cabinet. Some even believed Ökuma might have been Prime Minister but for his strained relations with the hambatsu. The parties could not be discounted in the delicate balance of power; it was a balance which could easily be upset. In addition there was the hostility of the Chōshū faction, which maintained its toehold in the cabinet through Justice Minister Kiyoura Keigo. Army Minister Takashima was not a Yamagata appointee, Yamagata having favoured Katsura, and this left the Chōshū faction dissatisfied. Yamagata did, however, approve appointments for Nomura, Kiyoura, and Hachisuka, and persuaded Katsura to accept the Governor-Generalship of Taiwan.

In the tenth Diet, convened in December 1897, Shimpotō support of the cabinet meant that 94 Shimpotō members plus others totalling 160 backed the government in the Diet. Fifty-one were neutral, and Jiyūtō opposition numbered eighty-eight. The Jiyūtō could not in good conscience reject the government budget which provided for expansion of armaments, because the Itō cabinet had pushed the same program in the previous Diet. The budget was therefore not an issue, and it passed with comparative ease.

During this session Ökuma made his first Diet speech as a cabinet minister. He ranged in his customary manner over a variety of topics, including the budget, treaty revision, diplomacy, the Monroe Doctrine, and the Transvaal question. Ökuma also assumed the Agriculture portfolio when Enomoto resigned in 1897, and in this capacity he planned extensive agricultural innovations with Shimpotō appointees to implement the plans. Another of Ökuma’s achievements in the Matsukata cabinet was the formation of an Agricultural and Industrial Enterprises Council which formulated policy in industrial matters, continuing government innovation in these areas. In this connection Ökuma supported a Factory Law.

Having safely survived the passage of the budget, the cabinet soon
faced issues which revealed the incompatibility of Matsukata and the Shimpotō. One issue which seriously threatened the cabinet’s existence was the ‘Twenty-Sixth Century incident’, which proved a test of Matsukata’s promise of freedom of the press. The magazine *Nijūroku seiki* (Twenty-Sixth Century) in 1896 published an article accusing Imperial Household Minister Hijikata of reporting to the Emperor that Ōkuma, Itagaki, Soejima, and others were disloyal; the article alleged also that there was corruption in the Imperial Household Ministry. The paper *Nippon* followed suit with an attack on Hijikata, Itō, and the Imperial Household Ministry. The accused defended themselves in *Tōkyō nichi nichī*. Matsukata and Home Minister Kabayama ordered *Nijūroku seiki* and *Nippon* suspended. Immediately journalists charged the government with breaking its promise of freedom of speech and press. The cabinet then introduced in the tenth Diet a revised Newspaper Law which would limit the period of suspension to one week. This did not mollify the Diet or Ōkuma; Minoura Katsu’ndo of the Shimpotō introduced a bill which would completely abolish the government’s powers of suspension. Minoura’s bill was the version passed through concerted action of Shimpotō and Jiyūtō Dietmen. This was a major victory for Ōkuma’s championing of freedom of press.

There followed a number of other incidents involving appointment and dismissal of officials which eventually led the Shimpotō to withdraw its support of the cabinet. First, Takano Takanori, chief of the Legal Bureau of Taiwan, and Watanabe Noboru, chairman of the Bureau of Audit, were dismissed. Finally, chief cabinet secretary Takahashi was dismissed on 18 October 1897, together with Legislative Bureau Director Kömuchi. Since Takahashi and Kömuchi were liaison for the Shimpotō in the cabinet, the party took a serious view of their dismissal.

The party accordingly held a Dietmen’s meeting on 22 October and decided on the following ultimatum: expulsion of hostile men from the cabinet; reinvestigation of the budget and reduction of unnecessary expenditures; reform of administrative policy in Taiwan; and an end to unconstitutional conduct. The Shimpotō was particularly angered at Matsukata’s proposed increase in the land tax. Matsukata reportedly agreed on condition that the agreement be kept secret. But when the Shimpotō journal published the
agreement, Matsukata retorted testily, 'I was given the responsibility of government by the emperor, so selection of cabinet members and execution of administration should not concern others'. The party replied, 'Our party ... must conclude that the present cabinet is not sincere in carrying out its promises, so we shall cease co-operating with the cabinet as of now'.

Ökuma then resigned on 6 November, with Education Minister Hachisuka and Shimpotō bureau chiefs and vice-ministers. He commented:

I concentrated all my energies on the purposes in view, but to my great astonishment I perceived that almost all the officials who represented the various departments were opposed to my scheme, impeding the execution to the best of their ability. I was virtually crippled by them ... Being now completely convinced that I should be unable to do anything in the way of reforms in unison with the clan statesmen, I resigned my post.

Ökuma's astonishment, if genuine, revealed a certain political naivety, but his resignation was consistent with his conditional entry into the cabinet. There are indications that, even before the Shimpotō announced withdrawal of support, Ökuma had already decided that he could not remain in the cabinet without betraying his convictions. Ökuma's resignation in accordance with the will of the majority party forced Matsukata's hand.

Matsukata unsuccessfully then turned to the Jiyūtō to gain support for the eleventh Diet. The session convened on 25 December and a non-confidence bill was immediately passed by all Jiyūtō, Shimpotō, and Kokumin Kyōkai Dietmen. Matsukata realised he had no recourse but to resign and dissolve the Diet, which he did on 28 December. His advisers Kabayama and Takashima also resigned after unsuccessfully attempting to reorganise the cabinet.

Ökuma's entente with Matsukata and other Satsuma oligarchs of such divergent political convictions from his own did not have great viability, despite the obvious benefits to both sides. As the Japan Weekly Mail put it,

As a politician, he must have felt that he himself had no choice but to break with the cabinet. The long habit of opposition had
created in the minds of the Progressionists a false estimate of the possibilities of power. They anticipated such large results that, when the direction of state affairs came under their control, disappointment was inevitable.61

Ökuma also expressed disappointment with the conservatism of the officials surrounding Matsukata.

The problem of co-operation between the Shimpotō and the Satsuma cabinet was nearly insuperable at the operational level. There was ineradicable hostility between first-rank cabinet ministers on the one hand (all Satsuma or Chōshū men except for Ökuma), and the under-secretaries and bureau chiefs on the other, mostly Shimpotō men, making even day-to-day administration virtually impossible.

But the efforts of Ökuma and the Shimpotō should not be deemed a complete failure. The party’s opposition to the cabinet’s strangling of the press in the Twenty-Sixth Century incident and its introduction of a bill abolishing the government’s right to suspend publication led to the abolition of this form of government repression, if only temporarily. Industrial policy and legislation also made advances under Ökuma’s sponsorship.

While in the cabinet Ökuma reiterated his long-held belief in parliamentary government, and when he came to feel that Matsukata’s actions (including a proposal to increase the land tax) were a violation of his own and his party’s convictions, the Shimpotō withdrew its support and Ökuma resigned, bringing the cabinet down with him. Matsukata was thus forced to accede to the will of the party. Of equal importance, the co-operation of Ökuma and the Shimpotō in forming the Matsukata cabinet was a further step toward the development of party cabinets and greater cabinet responsiveness to the Diet.

The fall of Matsukata’s cabinet was followed by a reversion to Chōshū power briefly under Itō’s third cabinet. Since by 1897 it was no longer feasible for either the oligarchs or the parties to eschew compromise, Itō sought the support of Ökuma and the Shimpotō; he met with Ökuma five times at the end of December 1897. Ökuma, now accustomed to posing prior conditions, demanded the Home Minister portfolio for himself and three other posts for Shimpotō men. Shimpotō leaders warned Ökuma against entering the cabinet,
for their experience with Matsukata had made them dubious about prospects of co-operation with Itō. Unable to agree to Ōkuma's demands, Itō turned instead to Itagaki and the Jiyūtō, again successfully.62

The Jiyūtō supported the government during early 1898 but moved closer to the Shimpotō toward the end of the twelfth Diet. Both parties opposed the government's projected land tax increase and defeated it in the House of Representatives, and because of this combined opposition to his plan, Itō dissolved the Diet in early June.

This rapprochement within the Diet led to the fruition of the efforts of those who had for many years hoped for a two-party coalition against the hambatsu. On 3 June 1898, Jiyūtō men met to plan an approach to the two party leaders. Kōno Hironaka (ex-Jiyūtō) also cherished the hope of a coalition and had discussed it with Hiraoka Kōtarō, an affluent Gen'yōsha man who admired Ōkuma and was willing to lend the party financial support. Suspension of the Diet on 7 June precipitated the first of several meetings between leaders of both parties. A platform and manifesto were drafted jointly. A delegation of the Jiyūtō faction visited Ōkuma, and a group from the Shimpotō talked with Itagaki, seeking compliance. Both men agreed to the merger and appeared at a joint meeting on 16 June to vow co-operation in the new party—and opposition to Sat-Chō power. It seemed a historic step.

The two parties formally dissolved on 21 June, and the following day the Kenseitō (Constitutional Government Party) was born, consecrating itself to capturing the power of the hambatsu and achieving parliamentary government.63

The party platform proclaimed the following goals:

1. To revere the Imperial Household and protect the Constitution.
2. To establish a political party cabinet and clarify ministerial responsibility.
3. To exclude interference by the central government and prepare for development of local self-government.
4. To secure national prestige and extend trade and commerce.
5. To strengthen the financial base and maintain a balance of income and expenditures.
6. To secure economic co-operation within and outside the government and to encourage industry.
7. To make Army and Navy preparations commensurate with the power of Japan.
8. To develop transportation and communications facilities, and
9. To disseminate education and technical instruction.

The new coalition posed a challenge to hambatsu leaders.

Itō, who had been pondering the problem of political parties and their relationship to the government for some time, concluded that the only solution was to organise a party supporting the government to counter the influence of the new coalition. As early as 1892 Itō had told the emperor, ‘I do not believe it will be very difficult to gather comrades on the scale of Ōkuma’s Kaishintō, and, by leading this new party I shall assist the government’. Faced with opposition from the other genrō, however, Itō was forced to abandon his plan temporarily.

Now that the two major parties had merged, Itō decided that government action could no longer be postponed. The situation called for new attitudes and tactics by the government. On 24 June Itō handed the government what was in effect an ultimatum: either he would remain in the government and form a government party, or leave the government to organise a party supporting the government, or resign and have Itagaki and Ōkuma form the next cabinet. Yamagata and the other genrō still categorically opposed the idea of a prime minister with close political party ties, on the ground that it would destroy Japan’s ‘national polity’ and the spirit of the constitution. Confronted with the new Kenseitō and the implacable opposition of the genrō, Itō resigned the next day.

While none of the genrō would assent to Itō’s first two proposals, neither would any of them attempt to organise a cabinet themselves, faced with the new party. Unable to agree on a successor to Itō, they opted for his third alternative. This unprecedented step by the genrō was precipitated by the unexpected appearance of the Kenseitō followed by Itō’s threat.

Did Itō recommend Ōkuma and Itagaki out of a commitment to advance the cause of parliamentary government? This is debatable. Since the Kenseitō had not stabilised the balance of power between its factions, it is equally plausible that Itō, instead of openly fighting the new party, sought to defeat it by giving it an impossible task.
This would have the further advantages of clearing the way for the new party he intended to organise and striking a blow at Yamagata’s power. His plans may have succeeded prematurely, for the new cabinet was destroyed even before his own party was born.

Itō accordingly invited Ōkuma and Itagaki to his Ōiso residence on 25 June and asked them to organise a cabinet. Taken aback, Itagaki at first demurred because of the weakness of the infant party. Ōkuma, however, was ready to accept a chance at power and urged Itagaki to agree. Itagaki relented with the proviso that, should any disagreement arise between them, they would resign together.

Ōkuma and Itagaki immediately set about the work of apportioning portfolios, agreeing that each faction should have four. Itagaki wanted the Home, Foreign, Finance, and Communications Ministries for the Jiyūtō faction. Ōkuma, however, coveted both the Foreign portfolio and the Premiership for himself, and for a while it seemed that the impasse might prevent formation of the cabinet. Leaders of both factions mediated with the result that Ōkuma had his way; Itagaki had to be content with the post of Home Minister.

This was Japan’s first ‘party cabinet’. Still, Ōkuma and Itagaki had no control over the appointment of service ministers. Army and Navy Ministers, according to Yamagata’s service regulations of 1895, had to be appointed from the top two ranks of officers on the active list. This gave the military the power to effect the fall of a cabinet through failure to provide service ministers. The Army and Navy several times used this leverage against civil power. Saigō and Katsura Taro (Yamagata’s protegé) remained as Navy and Army Ministers respectively. Katsura told Ōkuma he would remain so long as the cabinet did not plan reduction in armaments appropriations. Ōkuma and Itagaki agreed.

On 30 June, a bare eight days after inauguration of the party, the Kenseitō cabinet was ushered into being. The Jiyūtō faction had three portfolios: Itagaki, Home Minister; Matsuda, Finance; and Hayashi, Communications. The Shimpotō had five: Ōkuma, Prime Minister and Foreign Minister; Ōishi, Agriculture; Ozaki, Education; and Daitō, Justice. This unequal distribution left the Jiyūtō dissatisfied from the start. Itagaki’s only consolation was that as Home Minister he was also virtual Vice-Premier and had control over appointments under the Home Ministry. The Jiyūtō had chosen Hoshi Tōru, then Minister to the United States, as candidate for
Home Minister. It was agreed Itagaki would assume the portfolio only on a temporary basis.

Ōkuma as new Prime Minister gave the usual greeting to the Conference of Prefectural Governors, describing the new cabinet as a party cabinet with party men in nearly all posts. He distinguished between appointment of *seimukan* (parliamentary officials) and *jimukan* (permanent government officials) as he had done in his 1881 memorial, and asked the governors' co-operation in eliminating superfluous personnel and red tape. Ōkuma's speech signalled the beginning of a struggle between Jiyūtō and Shimpotō factions for spoils in replacing Sat-Chō power in government. Party men were appointed bureau chiefs, prefectural governors, vice-ministers, and other positions of *chokunin* (imperially appointed) rank, except in the Army and Navy ministries. Following the Kenseitō cabinet, the system was temporarily curbed by cabinet regulations making it difficult for party men to fill *chokunin* appointments.

Itagaki became chairman of a Temporary Administrative Affairs Investigating Committee as compensation for having conceded the Foreign Ministry to Ōkuma. In the committee, differences between the Jiyūtō and Shimpotō soon deadlocked action. The Jiyūtō demanded nationalisation of the railways, but the Shimpotō objected; the Shimpotō suggested abolition of the Metropolitan Police Board (under Home Minister Itagaki), but the Jiyūtō refused; and the two also differed on the Civil Service Appointment Law. Every issue became partisan.

In the election of 10 August the Kenseitō polled a large majority of 260 seats, or 80 per cent of the House of Representatives. This majority, the largest since the first Diet, was achieved by tactics of supporting only one candidate per district to avoid splitting the vote and abetting intra-party friction. Satsuma and Chōshū service ministers maintained a hawk-like vigilance waiting for differences to appear.

Ōkuma cautioned:

> It is a very short time since formation of the Kenseitō, and there remains the traditional hostile sentiment within the party. I know there are ambitious men who want to make use of this weakness ... I want to realise the ideal of a party cabinet, but it will take a long time ... In view of this, party members should compromise with each other to sustain the new cabinet'.

<ref>Source reference</ref>
However much Ökuma preached co-operation, he was unwilling to accord the Jiyūtō equal status within the cabinet. On 15 August Hoshi Tōru, Minister to the United States and long a figure around whom Jiyūtō-Shimpotō hostility revolved, returned from Washington despite a telegram from Ökuma advising him to remain there. Hoshi claimed he had not opened the telegram until his arrival in Japan. His return heightened animosities.

Itagaki had been urging Ökuma to resign as Foreign Minister, and the Jiyūtō now suggested his replacement by Hoshi. Hoshi was obviously eager for the appointment. Ozaki cautioned Ökuma that Hoshi would only increase cabinet discord. Deadlocked, both factions referred the problem to the ‘impartiality’ of Saigō and Katsura, temporarily overlooking the traditional hostility to the hambatsu which had united them initially. Ökuma was more persuasive. When Hoshi realised he would not be included in the cabinet, he vowed to destroy it.

Ökuma’s reluctance to relinquish the Foreign Minister post appears to have been based on the kind of personal and factional sentiment he deplored, since he had left the conduct of daily affairs in any case to Vice-Minister Hatoyama Kazuo of the Jiyūtō faction. Ökuma held stubbornly to his refusal to concede the Jiyūtō equality in the cabinet, thereby contributing to his demise. Ökuma was often reluctant to be separated from any position of potential or actual power.

Bad timing and judgment prompted Ozaki to make a speech which became the precipitating cause of the collapse of both the Kenseitō party and cabinet. Speaking to the Imperial Education Association, Ozaki stated, ‘If there were to be a republican form of government in Japan, Mitsui and Mitsubishi would no doubt provide the candidates for President and Vice President’. In some versions of the speech, Ozaki added he did not anticipate a republican form of government in Japan in a millennium. The outcry was instant, from the Jiyūtō, the hambatsu, and the press. This was just the cause célèbre for which the genrō had waited. Ozaki’s dismissal was demanded on grounds he had desecrated the kokutai. The speech also triggered a general attack on the cabinet in the House of Peers and Privy Council.

Katsura advised Ökuma to send Ozaki to the emperor with an apology immediately. Ozaki complained on 6 September. On 20
October Itagaki told the emperor he was unwilling to remain in the cabinet with the perpetrator of the 'Republic speech'.

The emperor conveyed doubts about the propriety of the speech to Ōkuma, who inquired if he should resign (this was interpreted as a token resignation), but Iwakura replied that only Ozaki need resign. Saigō, however, was dubious about this solution. And Hoshi, seeking to make good his vow to destroy the cabinet, demanded responsibility be borne by the whole cabinet. Ōkuma discussed the problem with Ozaki, who replied, 'If I am guilty of something because of the speech I should be punished by law, but not be made to resign'. Ozaki warned Ōkuma that in reality, he, Ōkuma, was the target of the attack, and he should carefully weigh this. Ōkuma, however, remaining optimistic about the cabinet as a whole, consented to Ozaki's resignation on 24 October.70

Ōkuma's failure to come actively to Ozaki's defence lost him Ozaki's support for several years. Further, Ōkuma opened the way to another struggle with the Jiyūtō over the vacant portfolio. Ozaki's resignation, far from settling the furore, only raised anew the old issue of a balance of portfolios between Jiyūtō and Shimpotō. Cabinet discussions on the choice of a successor began on 25 October. Itagaki suggested Ebara Sōroku, or, alternatively, Ōkuma's resignation as Foreign Minister and replacement by Hoshi. Ōkuma refused, as he had done before, whereupon Itagaki proposed a non-party man, Aoki Shūzō. Ōkuma replied Aoki was too close to the Jiyūtō and suggested Konoe Atsumaro instead. Neither side would concede, and the Shimpotō turned to Saigō and the Jiyūtō to Katsura to resolve the deadlock. Itagaki then suggested that Saigō or Katsura assume the post. Ōkuma indignantly refused, recommended Inukai, and stalked out of the meeting, saying he was going to see the emperor.

Ōkuma presented his resignation and, when the emperor refused, countered with the suggestion of Inukai. This direct appeal by Ōkuma to the emperor in a matter of crucial political import succeeded, and Inukai was inaugurated as Education Minister on 27 October. Katsura, nonetheless, advised Ōkuma to resign with the whole cabinet, accepting joint responsibility. Ōkuma was still optimistic about reorganising the cabinet and was confident of majority support in the Diet even if Itagaki should resign. The emperor urged Ōkuma to persuade Itagaki to remain.71
The Jiyūtō was dissatisfied with this dispensation and urged Itagaki to condemn Ōkuma's despotism. On 28 October the general affairs committee of the Jiyūtō proposed dissolution of the Kenseitō. The Shimpotō refused in what proved to be the last joint effort of the party.

The following day Hoshi called a Jiyūtō meeting, passed a resolution unilaterally dissolving the Kenseitō, and declared the organisation of a new party, calling it also the Kenseitō. The Shimpotō, learning of Hoshi's coup, angrily declared the action void and protested to the Chief of the Metropolitan Police Board. But since the Chief of Police was close to the Jiyūtō—as were nearly all Home Ministry appointees—he rejected the report and instead issued a restraining order against use of the name Kenseitō by the Shimpotō. Itagaki then issued an official complaint against Inukai's appointment, and Itagaki, Hayashi, and Katsura, plus Jiyūtō undersecretaries and bureau directors, all resigned on 29 October. The next day Katsura and Saigō advised Ōkuma to resign, which he promised to do the following day. Saigō and Katsura, taking no chances, this time accompanied Ōkuma when he went to the emperor with the resignation; Katsura and Saigō were asked to remain in their posts. Katsura, Yamagata and other genrō then planned a supra-party cabinet to succeed the Kenseitō cabinet.

Katsura took some credit for dividing the Kenseitō when he boasted to Yamagata, 'The political parties are divided. We produced this division ... After signs of collapse of the Kenseitō cabinet appeared, I made arrangements to co-operate with the Jiyūtō because its nature is simple'.72 This lent credence to Ozaki's contention that Katsura had remained in the cabinet to destroy it and augment his own power for the next hambatsu cabinet. Ozaki viewed Ōkuma's reliance on Navy Minister Saigō as a bad miscalculation also.73 Itagaki and Ōkuma, by repeatedly referring disputes to Saigō and Katsura for arbitration, only weakened the cabinet and played into the hands of the genrō.

Ōkuma resigned but hinted strongly that he would be willing to reorganise the cabinet with Itō's backing. Ōkuma thus betrayed the agreement with Itagaki that they would resign together. No reply came from the throne, and on 31 October, realising that he had no alternative, Ōkuma resigned with Daitō, Inukai, and Oishi. Ōkuma later referred bitterly to Sat-Chō opposition, asserting, 'Whenever I
failed it was through Satsuma-Chōshū aggression. Even Tosa men joined in and surrounded me. This was the case with Ozaki’s “Republic speech”.74

Kōno, old Kaishintō sponsor of party coalition, grieved over the cabinet’s failure but blamed Itagaki and Ōkuma rather than Satsuma and Chōshū for losing sight of the main issue, dissipating their energies in factional quarrels. Ōkuma too had second thoughts on his own share of the onus for the cabinet’s demise, as when he said, ‘I failed in the distribution of power ... All factions struggled against each other. These factions have remained since the age of the Bakufu or even since the time of Yoritomo. I wonder if power can ever be distributed fairly among people?’75

Collapse of the party and cabinet after a brief four months in office, despite popular hopes, was a blow to parties and parliamentary government. A return to hambatsu cabinets ensued for another sixteen years. The next cabinet was formed by Yamagata without any party representation.

Although the dispute over Ozaki’s speech was the immediate occasion for the collapse, there were many deeper causes. Lack of a genuine fusion of principles, unwillingness of the two parties to compromise even on procedural questions, insistence of Ōkuma and the Shimpotō faction on five portfolios, and incessant position-seeking through the spoils system were all factors. These internal antagonisms, augmented by hambatsu opposition through the manoeuvres of Yamagata and Katsura, further debilitated the cabinet. The Kenseitō, a newly-forged union, had, through Itō’s prompting and Ōkuma’s willingness, accepted a responsibility for which it was ill-prepared. Itagaki, in hesitating to accept a task against such odds, displayed a more realistic grasp of the situation than Ōkuma. Anti-hambatsu sentiment provided at best only a negative and temporary basis for alliance.

The Kenseitō cabinet nevertheless took another halting step toward party government. It was organised by party leaders and had more party ministers than any previous cabinet. The new party had a healthy majority in the Diet. To the Kenseitō cabinet’s credit the abhorrent Peace Preservation Law of 1887 was repealed (to be reinstated two years later). And internal dissensions and the genrō precluded the next logical step toward parliament, formation of a cabinet by the leader of a single majority party,
Greater caution on Ōkuma's part might have made him less sanguine about the exercise of power and prospects for Kenseitō success. Possibly the formation of the Kenseitō was also a mistake from the standpoint of the two-party system Ōkuma favoured. On three separate occasions Ōkuma refused the Jiyūtō equal representation in the cabinet: when the cabinet was first formed, when Hoshi returned to Japan, and when Ozaki resigned. This failure on Ōkuma's part led to some disaffection among his own political following, for Ozaki soon afterward joined Itō's new party, and Kōno opposed Ōkuma for president of the reorganised Shimpōtō.

The new Kenseitō organised by the Jiyūtō faction was paralleled by the Kenseihontō (True or Orthodox Constitutional Party) formed by the Shimpōtō. When Itō in 1900 formed the Seiyūkai out of the Jiyūtō-Kenseitō faction, Ōkuma agreed to resume presidency of the Kenseihontō. Ōkuma said of Itō's action that it was a sign of the progress of the nation ... But who was it that enabled the country to attain such remarkable progress? The answer may be emphatically made that it was no other than we ourselves who have brought about the present development ... Parties ought to stand against each other. Put authority exclusively in the hands of a single party and corruption will be inevitable ... There is absolute need for an opposition as a check on the cabinet ... ,76 he asserted. He endorsed Itō's action as a necessary stage in the development of parliamentary government, at the same time claiming part of the credit. Ōkuma's grasp of the role of a parliamentary opposition—for whatever motive—added another dimension to his role as a democrat in Japan.

On 12 January 1907, Ōkuma formally resigned as party president, expressing disillusion over the record of the parties. The parties had indeed altered character since the days of the old Jiyūtō and Kaishintō, but in doing so they had moved closer to the bases of political power. Ōkuma added poignantly, 'Out of respect for the nation and the Emperor, I will never abandon politics. Politics is my life'.77 But by this time, there was opposition to Ōkuma's leadership from a 'reform faction' in the party, and he could no longer command support of the entire party.

Ōkuma's entry into three cabinets—those of Kuroda, Matsukata, and with Itagaki—marked a progression in political party strength
in the cabinet and took Japan several steps toward a true parlia-
mentary system. Although he had Kaishintō support in the Kuroda
cabinet, the degree of leverage Ókuma and the party exerted was not
enough to secure acceptance of his stipulations on entry into the
cabinet. The first Diet had not yet convened, and Kaishintō support
was not the most cogent factor in the viability of the cabinet.

As a step further, Matsukata was the first Prime Minister to seek
party support in organising a cabinet. Ókuma's entry into this
cabinet was predicated on Matsukata's acceptance of Shimpotō-
inspired conditions. Though the Shimpotō was not the majority
party in the Diet, party support was used in organising the cabinet.
Shimpotō men became bureau chiefs and vice-ministers in the
cabinet. Withdrawal of the support of Ókuma and the Shimpotō
meant the downfall of the Matsukata cabinet.

POLITICAL PARTIES SUPPORTING ÓKUMA

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The Kenseitō cabinet, Japan's first 'party cabinet', represented
yet another step toward parliamentary government. The new party
had a Diet majority and held all cabinet portfolios with the exception
of Army and Navy. This was, however, a brief, halting step, both
because of internal factional weaknesses within the party and
because of opposition by clan oligarchs. Itō's recommendation that
the Kenseitō organise a cabinet did not endow the party with
strength to overcome these formidable obstacles. The Kenseitō
cabinet nevertheless established a precedent for formation of
genuine party cabinets two decades later.
In 1912 the Emperor Meiji died and his undistinguished son, Emperor Taishō, ushered in a new age. It was marked by enhanced international prestige following Japan’s victories over China then Russia. Itō had been assassinated in Harbin in 1909, and several other statesmen who lent colour to the Meiji era had also vanished from the stage. Notable changes altered the political, social, and economic scene. Literacy rose and with it the circulation of newspapers and magazines, a heightened public conscience was fostered, and economic and industrial advances enhanced popular involvement in politics. Ōkuma was heartened by these signs of ‘Taishō democracy’, though his enthusiasm was not shared by his Sat-Chō colleagues.

For Ōkuma personally, though he held no office for several years following the collapse of the Kenseitō cabinet, they were not idle years. He remained the leader of the Kenseihontō opposition party until his famous resignation speech of 1907. He was promoter of the Anti-Land Tax League which agitated throughout the country against a heavy land tax. In connection with the League Ōkuma spoke throughout the country against the tax in 1899. These were also years during which Ōkuma devoted increasing energy to education, particularly after 1907 when he became chancellor of Waseda. At his Waseda residence Ōkuma received statesmen and other visitors from all over the world. Despite Ōkuma's lack of fluency in English his garden parties were famous, and he was continually quoted in the English language press.

This was an important time too for Ōkuma's own intellectual development, for between 1898 and 1914 he did his best writing. He co-edited with Itagaki the two-volume Fifty Years of New Japan, in which leading statesmen reviewed the achievements of the early
Meiji years. He also wrote a reader, *Kokumin sho tokuhon* (People’s brief reader) to inculcate moral values in primary school students.

Ökuma was very active in a wide diversity of civic organisations such as the Peace Society (1909), the Japan-India Society, the Japan-Holland Society, the Culture Society (which he founded), and the Flying Association. He followed closely the explorations of the South Pole and the early history of flight. The scope of his concern made Ökuma a true Meiji man in the sense that leaders of sixteenth-century Italy were genuine men of the Renaissance.

Vigorous new parties also appeared during these years. These parties helped work out the evolving compromise between the *genrō* exponents of transcendental cabinets on the one hand and the growing power of the Diet on the other. Firstly, Saionji led the Seiyūkai, which Itō had organised as a ‘national party’. Saionji was an acceptable party leader to the *genrō* because he was one of their number. His successor Hara Takashi was more a hard-headed, realistic party boss, closer to bases of power and to the art of compromise than either Itō or Saionji had been. During the years of Hara’s effective leadership, the Seiyūkai became a major agent in the growth of the power of the parties in the Diet on the one hand and in the accommodation with the power of the oligarchs and transcendental styles of government on the other.

Secondly, there was the Dōshikai (Like Thinkers Association), founded by Yamagata’s protegé, Katsura, out of the segments of earlier parties, including the Kokumintō and Shimpotō, the Kaishintō successor parties. Between 1901 and 1913 the Premiership alternated between the two party leaders, Saionji and Katsura.

The Kokumintō (National People’s Party) and Chūseikai (Central Political Party), two small and ephemeral parties, were led respectively by ex-Kaishintō men Inukai and Ozaki. Both parties ran candidates for the Diet and frequently voted with other parties supporting Ökuma, but neither lasted more than four years. The members were subsequently absorbed into the Dōshikai, Chūseikai, and Ökuma Supporters’ Association.

Saionji replaced Katsura as Premier in 1912, but Yamagata planned the downfall of this civilian Seiyūkai cabinet over the issue of adding two divisions to the Army for Korea. When Army Minister Uehara Yūsaku resigned a few months after the cabinet was organised, Yamagata refused to furnish another. Saionji therefore
was forced to resign, again in favour of Katsura. Katsura dissolved the Diet and used the Imperial Rescript to protect his cabinet. This led party supporters to demonstrate in protest against his tactics by the thousand around the Diet building, forcing Katsura to resign in February 1913, after less than two months in office. The Taishō political crisis engendered a new awareness of the power of public opinion which neither Katsura nor Yamagata could totally ignore.1

Katsura, now emulating Itō, sought to siphon off into his party, the Dōshikai,2 some of Ōkuma’s supporters from the Kokumintō. It was a kind of symptom of the times that Katsura, who so incensed the parties by his cavalier treatment of the Diet and his use of the Imperial Rescript, should now attract party men to his following. Katsura, however, died in October 1913, and the party presidency passed to Katō Takaaki, who was able to create a unified opposition to the Seiyūkai.

The genrō now recommended as Premier Admiral Yamamoto Gonnohyōe, who got Seiyūkai support by including party leader Hara Takashi in the cabinet as Home Minister. The cabinet embarked on a program of naval expansion. Soon a scandal enveloped the cabinet, focused on the ‘Siemens Affair’, in which several naval officers were implicated of accepting bribes from foreign (particularly German) firms. The Kokumintō, Ozaki’s group, and several newspapers attacked the cabinet. Although the budget was passed by the Seiyūkai majority in the Lower House, the House of Peers, under the influence of the Yamagata clique, rejected it. Because of this impasse the cabinet resigned on 24 March 1914.

The genrō had to find a new Prime Minister. There was a public mood of indignation against official corruption and against ham-batsu arrogance toward the Diet. And the Yamagata faction was demanding two more Army divisions. The Navy coterie was also calling for expansion of armaments. The genrō considered the problem at length before recommending for Premier the last shogun’s son, Prince Tokugawa Iesato, president of the House of Peers. Tokugawa, however, eschewed the political limelight and refused. The genrō next turned to Kiyoura Keigo, Yamagata’s protégé from Kumamoto. Kiyoura accepted the commission, but met opposition from the press and the Satsuma Navy faction in Katō Tomosaburō. Katō demanded an annual naval budget of 9.5 million yen as a condition for his entry into the cabinet. Kiyoura refused to
agree, and the Navy declined to provide another minister, whereupon Kiyoura had to admit defeat.

Yamagata, Matsukata, and Ōyama, in some perturbation, met with Inoue Kaoru's go-between. Inoue then, as in the past, suggested Ōkuma. Yamagata at first hesitated, but when it was pointed out that there was no alternative, he relented. The genrō saw the advantages of Ōkuma: his appeal for the press, his popularity with the public, and his opposition to the Seiyūkai. In addition, his candidacy seemed a realistic way out of the Army-Navy deadlock. Furthermore, Inoue was angry because the Seiyūkai had blocked organisation of a Kiyoura cabinet and earlier in the Taishō era had become an enemy of Chōshū by aligning itself with the Satsuma cabal. Although Inoue had helped Itō organise the Seiyūkai, since the third Katsura cabinet Inoue had been hostile to the party. Inoue, too, found Ōkuma substantially in agreement with his own views on Japanese interests in China. Inoue had long advocated partial control of China's iron ore through Yawata steel empire. One notable drawback was that Ōkuma was over seventy-five, though his optimism and vigour still lingered.

Yamagata and the Army faction believed Ōkuma was willing to see two divisions added to the Army; for one thing Ōkuma had become president of the Gunjin Köenkai (Army Supporters' Association). A former Ōkuma critic, Chōshū general Miura Gorō, perceived in Ōkuma a kind of genius for following the spirit of the times and strongly urged his appointment. Yamagata's personal preference was for General Terauchi, but he was Governor-General in Korea. A faction of the Navy also supported Ōkuma. Yashiro Rokurō agreed to accept the Navy portfolio partly because he was a close personal friend of Katō. Yashiro was not of the Satsuma-Yamamoto clique; in fact he was anxious to remove it from influence in the Navy.

Ōkuma came to office, then, because he met a diversity of requirements. He was neither from Satsuma nor leader of the majority Seiyūkai, both of which were anathema to powerful genrō. He was amenable to Yamagata's program, opposed the Seiyūkai, supported Japanese interests in China, and had popular support.

Nevertheless Ōkuma at first demurred on grounds of age, recommending Dōshikai president Katō Takaaki instead. Ōkuma was for one thing caught off guard. Yamagata and Ōyama talked with Ōkuma, and Inoue approached him twice; this time Ōkuma con-
sentenced. Ökuma did not protest very much, and apparently saw this as his last chance in power and of realising his goal of parliamentary government. He seems to have had little hesitation over his relation­ship to Yamagata and the genrō.

When the press learned Ökuma was to be Premier, popular hopes for an end to hambatsu rule soared. Ökuma's 'victory' was hailed in the press as a triumph for parliamentary government, though in fact he returned to office at the behest of the genrō and was dependent on the military for Army and Navy ministers. The Tōkyō nichi nichi acclaimed, 'Although Count Ökuma has been somewhat removed from actual politics ... even the genrō are no match for him'.

Though Ökuma was happy to be hailed as hero of the anti-hambatsu forces, it was to prove an overly optimistic estimate.

For one thing Ökuma had no formal connection with any party, and this distinguished his Taishō cabinet from earlier cabinet membership. He turned, however, to Dōshikai president Katō to discuss allocation of portfolios. They agreed four Dōshikai ministers would be included: Katō Takaaki, Foreign Minister; Ōura Kanetake, Agriculture Minister; Wakatsuki Reijirō, Finance Minister; and Takegami Tokitoshi (of Saga), Communications Minister. The cabinet also included Ozaki Yukio, Justice Minister, now of the Chūseikai; Lt Gen. Oka Ichinosuke, Army Minister; Ichiki Kitokurō, Education Minister; and Vice-Admiral Yashiro Rokurō, Navy Minister. The cabinet took office on 14 April.

During Ökuma's discussions with Katō, he recommended Yamagata supporter Ōura for Home Minister in recognition of Ōura's seniority as co-founder of the party with Katsura. Ozaki, annoyed that he had not been designated Premier, then hoped for the portfolio of Home Minister himself and at first declined to enter the cabinet. He posed strenuous objections to Ōura, and Ōura therefore came in as Agriculture Minister instead. Ökuma became Home Minister as well as Premier; Ōura, however, acted as de facto Home Minister.

Ökuma also wanted to include Inukai, now of the Kokumintō. When Inukai was informed of the proposed composition of the cabinet, he muttered, 'The Ökuma cabinet will necessarily be subordinate to the bureaucratic and militarist factions. The cabinet will not be able to do anything without the consent of Yamagata'.

To further urging Inukai replied he would accept only the portfolio of Home Minister, knowing it was already in dispute. Inukai also
told Ozaki that entering the cabinet would be useless, as it was after all a Katō cabinet. Inukai's desire for Kokumintō independence and his aversion to Chōshū and the Dōshikai figured in his reluctance. Inukai like Ozaki opposed Ōura. On 14 April he announced the official position of the Kokumintō toward the cabinet: the Kokumintō would assist from outside but none of its members would enter the cabinet. Ōkuma deeply regretted his inability to elicit the support of his former Kaishintō lieutenant.

Ōkuma on 15 May informed the prefectural governors of basic cabinet policies: 1) reform of diplomacy and strengthening of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance; 2) abolition of administrative malpractices; 3) strengthening of official discipline; 4) improvement of official regulations; 5) securing national defence through establishment of a national defence conference; 6) safeguarding freedom of speech, assembly, and association; 7) encouragement of industry; 8) revision of the election law so as to abolish election abuses such as vote-buying; 9) reform of education to promote loyalty; and 10) adjustment of finance and the tax structure. No specific commitment to increase the number of Army divisions was included, although national defence was a general goal. By contrast with Ōkuma's former policy pronouncements, mention of parties in the Diet and the relationship between parties and the cabinet was notably omitted. This omission epitomised many of the differences between Ōkuma's stance in 1914 and earlier. Ōkuma did, however, exhort the governors to use their authority to support cabinet policies and 'to revise part of the prefectural system in order to achieve the aim of constitutional government'. Ōkuma also prophesied (accurately, as with many of his predictions) that Japan's population would grow to 100 million in fifty years, posing innumerable social and political problems for the government. He then called for government unity against the Seiyūkai. An unrealistic note was Ōkuma's desire to reduce taxes and expenditures and not to rely on national loans, in view of genrō expectations of additional Army divisions.

The thirty-third Diet in June passed a 6.5 million yen supplementary naval budget. Tax reduction, however, was another matter. Expectations were high that, with Ōkuma as Premier, Dōshikai and Seiyūkai proposals for tax reduction would be realised. Finance Minister Wakatsuki favoured abolition of business and transit taxes, and there was pressure from merchant and industrial
groups for the cabinet to execute the policy. Necessity, however, dictated the opposite course. Japan's entry into World War I made it impossible to consider tax reduction. Ōkuma was further quoted as stating that the government did not stand on a party basis. This lent credence to the view that the genrō were initiating policy, not the Dōshikai or Ōkuma.

Ōkuma's cabinet dealt with two critical foreign policy issues: Japan's entry into World War I and the Twenty-one Demands to China. Japan's entry into the War was predicated in part on the Anglo-Japanese alliance of 1902 and in part on resentment against the tripartite intervention of 1895, by which Germany, France, and Russia had forced Japan to retrocede to China the Liaotung Peninsula following Japan's victory over China. The year 1914 seemed the opportunity to destroy German influence in East Asia and at the same time enhance Japan's international position and interests in China. Foreign Minister Katō actively assumed control of foreign policy and this precipitated a confrontation with the genrō, who were irate at this transfer of diplomatic policy from genrō councils. Ōkuma sought to mediate between Katō and the genrō. There was some ambivalence in Ōkuma's statements and behaviour regarding the genrō. During the thirty-fourth Diet, convened to consider the wartime budget, Ōkuma was questioned by a Seiyūkai Diet member about his relationship to the genrō. Ōkuma replied indignantly, 'The genrō have no responsibility for national affairs. It is the cabinet members who are responsible for national affairs'. He vilified the genrō as irresponsible in the exercise of power, and expressed hope that the institution would some day atrophy.

In diplomatic exchanges with England and Germany Katō neglected to keep the genrō au courant, again incurring the wrath of Yamagata, Matsukata, and Ōyama. Katō regarded genrō advice as gratuitous and had little sympathy for Satsuma and Chōshū. Ōkuma met with the irate genrō on 20 September 1914, and a 'compromise' agreement was reached whereby: the Prime Minister and genrō would exchange views openly; agreements between the Prime Minister and genrō were to be implemented by Foreign Minister Katō; policy decisions in diplomacy were to be made by the Prime Minister and implemented by the Foreign Minister; and in the future important diplomatic documents were to be shown to the genrō before decisions were reached. Ōkuma in practice appeared
to have been much more subject to genrō influence than his statements in the Diet indicated, and he took on himself the onus for lack of communication between Katō and the genrō. The genrō in turn sought to control Katō through Ōkuma.

Ōkuma, though he appeared amenable, at the same time sought to appeal directly to the emperor to protect Katō from genrō anger. He wanted an Imperial Rescript praising the Foreign Minister for his exceptional service in the conduct of foreign relations. Ōkuma failed in this attempt to use the Imperial prerogative just as he had failed in 1881 to gain access to the emperor. These actions were inconsistent with Ōkuma’s professions of parliamentary principles, but he no doubt felt the conduct of the genrō was equally unparlia­mentary and that crisis justified emergency counter-measures.

Presentation of the Twenty-one Demands to China further exacerbated the genrō because of Katō’s continued disregard of them. The genrō were not informed of the content of the original Twenty-one Demands and expressed grave concern about Katō’s China policy. In June 1915 they pressed Ōkuma to have Katō resign. Ōkuma, however, endorsed Katō’s policy by refusing to act on the genrō’s prompting; instead, he unsuccessfully urged Katō to join his reorganised cabinet in 1915. When Ōkuma resigned the following year, he recommended Katō repeatedly as his successor.

Katō timed the demands on 18 January 1915 to take advantage of the dispute between China and Japan over Tsingtao and the Kiaochow Bay area, which Japan had captured from the Germans in November 1914. The five groups of demands concerned: 1) the German concessions in the Shantung Peninsula; 2) Japanese special rights in railways and business in South Manchuria and Eastern Mongolia; 3) the development of the Hanyehping Company (mining and smelting) as a joint Sino-Japanese concern; 4) the non-alienation of Chinese coastal and island territory; and 5) the employment of Japanese advisers by the government in political, financial, and military capacities.

At home the Seiyūkai criticised the demands as too severe. Abroad the demands were widely denounced in Europe, America, and China, despite involvement in the war which Katō had counted on to cause the demands to go unnoticed abroad. President Eliot of Harvard, after having talked with Ōkuma in Japan, sent him a
warning regarding adverse public opinion in America. Ōkuma replied that Japan's policy was aimed at preventing division and collapse of China, and that the security of China was vital to peace in East Asia. Responding to Western criticism and to genrō and Seiyūkai objections, however, Katō withdrew the fifth group of demands, declaring them to be simply a 'hope' of Japan.

Following the demands and just before the 1915 elections, Ōkuma, Ōura, and Ozaki reiterated that cabinet policy was devoted to promotion of lasting peace in Asia and settlement of the China problem, co-operation with England, France, and Russia, and development of China economically.

The rationale for a 'positive China policy' had been long evolving. Its roots were in idealistic Pan-Asianism which dated at least from the turn of the century. Concern over China policy was reflected in statements by political parties and patriotic societies. Late in 1914 the Kokumin Gaikō Dōmeikai (People's Diplomatic Alliance) was founded by leaders of the Kokuryūkai (Amur River Society, otherwise Black Dragon Society), the Kokumintō and the Seiyūkai. The goal of the organisation was to 'establish the basis for a unified policy toward foreign nations to solve the problem of China' and to encourage a constitutional monarchy there. Uchida Ryōhei, Black Dragon Society doyen, presented a memorandum to the cabinet on 29 November 1914, entitled 'Solution of the China Problem'. In it he called on the government to make use of the current rare opportunity for quick settlement of the 'China question'. At a mass meeting held in Tokyo on government policy toward China representations were made to Katō. The Dōshikai also advocated closer relations between China and Japan, articulating the mission of securing peace in Asia. Industrialists and military men sought advancement of Japan's interests in China by a variety of tactics.

Ōkuma too had long expressed the belief that China's instability would only encourage continued despoiling by other nations, depriving Japan of markets, and that Japan should play a stabilising role as guardian of peace in the Orient. When Sun Yat-sen was in exile in Tokyo, Ōkuma spoke to him of securing peace in China, of developing China's resources, and of protecting her territorial integrity. After Ōkuma became Premier, Sun wrote him requesting aid from Japan in the struggle against Yuan Shih-k'ai. Ōkuma
complied by writing to Yuan, cautioning him against producing unrest in Asia and urging postponement of his plans for an Imperial Government.

As early as 1898 Ōkuma’s Pan-Asianism had become known as the ‘Ōkuma Doctrine’, a kind of analogue of the Monroe Doctrine. Ōkuma was convinced that Japan could perform a dual service for China, guiding her on the path toward modernisation and enlightenment and at the same time preventing further incursion by Western nations. Thus would Japan repay her cultural debt to China, taking cognisance of bonds of race and culture. At the same time Ōkuma’s name was on the roster of the Tōhō Kyōkai (Oriental Society), an organisation which urged the less idealistic goal of expansion of industry and commerce in Asia under Japanese aegis. Ōkuma also feared China might be dismembered, impairing Japan’s chief market. He warned in 1900, ‘Under the present circumstances the Chinese question may bring upon us unavoidable calamities, but at the same time it may serve to create a footing for our own aggrandisement. The people should not rely solely upon the government but … endeavour to manifest a desire to consolidate our diplomacy [through some popular expression]’.20

Ōkuma’s Pan-Asianism was not incompatible with Katō’s China policy and in fact led Ōkuma to co-operate actively in that policy. At the same time it fell to Ōkuma to assuage Western doubts about Japan’s plans in China. He sent English-language newspapers and magazines assurances that ‘Japan has no ulterior motive, no desire to secure territory, no thought of depriving China or any other peoples of anything they now possess’.21 In 1915 Ōkuma sought to follow a course between the long-term pressures for a positive policy toward China and the exigencies of Katō’s diplomacy on the one hand and increasing criticism from at home and abroad on the other.

Another problem confronted Ōkuma at home: pressure to increase the Army by two divisions. The cabinet appointed a Council on National Defence to investigate the problem. Ōkuma became chairman of the cabinet committee, which included the service ministers and chiefs of staff. The Conference was nevertheless deplored by Army Minister Oka as a civilian intrusion into military affairs. Ōkuma spoke around the country in defence of military expenditures, criticising the view that they were absorbing too much of the national budget. He discussed extension of Japan’s sphere of
influence to Manchuria and competing with foreign powers for spheres on the China coast. He also pleaded the cause of peace with China, alliance with Britain, and adequate defence for an island empire.\textsuperscript{22}

The wartime thirty-fifth Diet was convened on 5 December 1914, and for Ōkuma and the genrō the time had come for two more Army divisions in Korea. Party alignment in the Diet was 206 Seiyūkai opposition votes against a total of 166 Dōshikai, Kokumintō and Chūseikai votes supporting the government. Inoue warned Ōkuma that it was imperative to get support for the Army increase during the thirty-fifth session. Inoue suggested that, if Seiyūkai opposition could not be overcome, the cabinet might dissolve the Diet. The Seiyūkai opposed the cabinet, arguing that the international situation was too fluid, costs would have to be pro-rated over a three-year period, and the time was inopportune.

Inukai's opposition was a great disappointment to Ōkuma. Inukai's view was predicated not on any abhorrence of military ventures or on curtailing military strength but on the hope of reducing the cost of operations. He devised a plan of his own, which he believed would put more soldiers into the field at a lower cost. Ozaki also opposed the division increase but saw no need to go on record against the plan in view of Seiyūkai opposition. Ōkuma was losing ground with his old Kaishintō comrades.

Debate continued. Ōkuma and Wakatsuki solicited Diet support for the government budget. Questions were raised about the government's failure to reduce taxes. Mediators sought to have Ōkuma meet with Seiyūkai president Hara to effect a compromise, but Ōkuma declined to see Hara. Hara for his part agreed to the Army budget for a year later, but this did not satisfy Ōkuma. In a last bid for Seiyūkai consent, he spoke in the Diet before the ballots were cast, expressing pleasure at the growth of the Seiyūkai as a factor in parliamentary government (laughter greeted this statement) but asking for support to 'maintain peace in Asia' and the national honour.\textsuperscript{23}

Ōkuma's pleas were unavailing, and the House of Representatives rejected the budget by a vote of 213 to 148 on 25 December. On the same night Ōkuma dissolved the thirty-fifth Diet. He publicly explained the following day that, 'The majority of the House of Representatives are too zealous in party struggles to think about the
national emergency ... They want us to question the aims of the war. They are also causing soldiers to doubt their objective.'24 Charges of unconstitutionality came from Hara and the Seiyūkai, who viewed the dissolution as a punitive measure rather than as part of the parliamentary process. Ozaki defended the dissolution as a constitutional act designed to ascertain the popular will.

Ökuma campaigned widely for the impending election and called for a 'fair election'. Not all cabinet ministers shared Ökuma's definition of a 'fair election'. Ozaki may have had some presentiment that former Metropolitan Police Superintendent Öura was contemplating bribery, for he took Öura aside at the cabinet meeting and warned that if local officials interfered with the election he would order public prosecutors to arrest them. Ozaki ordered the courts to enforce the election law and authorised them to arrest violators if the police proved derelict in their duty. As a consequence a dispute arose between the Home and Justice Ministries over whether the Justice Ministry or Home Ministry had authority over the police. Ökuma avoided taking a stand. Reports were rife that officials and police were interfering in local elections, intimidating voters and showing partiality for government-endorsed candidates.

Whether because of interference or effective campaigning, the government won the election. The Seiyūkai and Kokumintō captured 108 seats and government parties 210, a gain of 62 for the government and a loss of 105 for the opposition.

While Ökuma was busy campaigning, Öura's zeal carried him beyond the bounds of propriety in Japanese politics. Öura's bribery provided the opposition with a political issue. In March 1915, in a special issue of Shin Nippon, Öura had furthermore inveighed against political corruption and vote-buying, laying himself open to the charge of hypocrisy when the story of his activities came to light.25

It transpired that during the thirty-fifth Diet, when the cabinet was faced with implacable Seiyūkai opposition to the Army bill, Öura had given 40,000 yen26 to Hayashida Kametarō in the House of Representatives. Hayashida in turn had distributed it among eighteen Seiyūkai men. The ensuing eighteen-man defection from the opposition in the Diet was not enough to shift the majority. The added charge was made that Shirakawa Tomoichi during the
election had given Ōura 10,000 yen to guarantee his (Shirakawa's) election.

When the story came to light Katō and Wakatasuki went to Ōura and advised him to resign to avoid arrest. Ōura replied he had only been acting in the interests of the party, not for personal aggrandisement, and that giving or taking money from Dietmen had never been considered a crime. Ozaki as Justice Minister was advised not to take action against Ōura, on these same grounds. Ozaki ultimately agreed not to prosecute on condition of Ōura's resignation.

During the thirty-sixth Diet convened in May 1915, the Seiyūkai and Kokuminō jointly introduced bills of censure first against the cabinet's diplomatic policy, second against Ōura for his implication in the bribery of Dietmen (after investigation by a Diet committee), third against the government for interference in the election, and fourth against Speaker Shimada for not allowing free discussion of these matters in the House. Hara charged the government's victory was due to spending three to five yen per ballot and that the government's China policy was harmful to relations with that nation. These bills were all defeated.

It is not easy to argue that Ōkuma should be absolved of moral responsibility for Ōura's actions in the Diet. Ōkuma recognised his own laxity when he acknowledged his failure as 'imperfect supervision'. He submitted a token cabinet resignation, which was not accepted. Secretary of the Lower House Hayashida, himself implicated in the scandal, declared that, upon investigation, it was proven that Diet members had not been bribed and that the apocryphal story had been concocted by the opposition for obvious reasons.27

The cabinet's efforts to exonerate itself were not convincing to the Seiyūkai, to some segments of public opinion, or even to some cabinet members. Some journalists were disillusioned that Ōkuma, champion of party government and official morality, who had held that elections were sacred and the basis of parliamentary government, had overlooked such malfeasance in his own cabinet.

Ōura, forced by a judicial decision to resign on 28 July, by so doing escaped any more severe punishment, though others implicated with him were prosecuted. Katō, Wakatsu, and Yashiro, with some subordinate officials, left the cabinet in disgust and refused to re-enter Ōkuma's reorganised cabinet, despite his urging. Katō may
have declined because he wanted to leave the way relatively clear for his appointment as Ōkuma's successor. Katō contended that the cabinet was jointly responsible for Ōura's action and should resign en bloc, but Ozaki, contradicting his own stand after his 'Republic speech', argued that Ōura was solely implicated and the only one who need resign. Katō rejoined that it was not simply legal responsibility, but that other obligations made it incumbent on the whole cabinet to resign. He and Wakatsuki were never reconciled to Ōkuma's attempts to remain in office. Ōkuma failed to distinguish between the conservative outcry over Ozaki's speech and the popular disillusion over the scandal within his cabinet. In both instances he let the minister concerned resign but attempted to remain in office with the rest of the cabinet. He now reorganised his cabinet without Ōura.

Despite this backsliding from earlier principles, Ōkuma during his Taishō cabinet continued to use popular techniques which gave dimension to his role as a democratic statesman. Shortly after assuming office he inaugurated the press conference after cabinet meetings and other important events. Soon after his cabinet took office he spoke to the press about his aims in accepting office and agreed to meet publicly with reporters from time to time. In addition, he sought other media as sounding boards for his views, addressing Waseda alumni and businessmen's organisations. In April 1914 in Shin Nippon he declared that the public was tired of cabinet changes which only repeated the old drama of hambatsu alternation and promised that his cabinet would live up to popular aspirations for the Taishō Restoration. In turning to the press again he sought to enhance its political and educational role in what seemed a vestige of his earlier antagonism to hambatsu power. Ōkuma's techniques also increased popular participation in the political process. But his desire for popular support also led him to forget principle; demagoguery became more apparent as he aged. After speaking one morning to a prohibition society, for example, on the same afternoon he addressed a sake manufacturers' association, extolling the medicinal value of the brew.

Ōkuma had still other bases of support. The Ōkuma Shigenobu Kōenkai (Ōkuma Shigenobu Supporters' Association) was organised nationally by Waseda men in business and agriculture. During the election it canvassed support for Ōkuma. Ichijima Kenkichi, one of
Ökuma’s biographers, was a founder and later president of the organisation. The *Japan Weekly Mail* hoped the organisation might burgeon into a resurgent political party with Ökuma as president; this aspiration did not materialise, although the association did support candidates for the Diet.

Ökuma’s was also the first cabinet to campaign, and his electioneering took him to railway stations, business groups, and other organisations, in a style portending contemporary political campaigns. While his awareness of possibilities of electoral support reflected Ökuma’s perception of a potentially powerful political force, to most other oligarchs it showed an unconscionable lack of dignity.

Ökuma repeatedly urged the need to override party differences in face of national emergency. To his Supporters’ Association he said:

The ultimate purpose of Japan since the Restoration has been to compete with other nations in the world. But when we are about to attain this objective they [the Seiyûkai] block it. Why do they ask foolish questions simply to gain political power, motivated by party sentiments? ... *Hambatsu* government has been destroyed, and we are now suffering from petty factional government ... This is the time to awaken the people from their idle sleep ... for only the influence of public opinion can determine the destiny of the Empire.30

Some of Ökuma’s speeches were recorded on phonograph records and played at meetings where Ökuma was absent. These records were effective because of Ökuma’s distinctive style of speech (he innovated his own double verb ending). There were indications, however, that it was not only the physical impossibility of Ökuma’s presence everywhere but also his habit of speaking off the record that prompted the recordings. One magazine cartoon depicts Ökuma seated on a dais, with one of his followers passing out records to the crowds. It is captioned: ‘Count Ökuma enshrined, for his orations often defeat their own purpose. Instead, gramophone records are given to the masses’.31

In March 1915, Ökuma wrote in *Shin Nippon* under the title, ‘Discussion of the abolition of party abuses’, deploring continuation of *hambatsu* rule through personal association (contradicting another statement that *hambatsu* government had been destroyed), which
prevented the exercise of public opinion through the Diet.32 This sounded more like the Ōkuma of early Meiji. The press continued its traditional support of Ōkuma, because for some journalists he was still the symbol of parliamentary government and the focus of anti-hambatsu forces.

Although Ōkuma on 3 July 1915 announced he would resign, Inoue and Yamagata urged him to remain, and the emperor added weight to the request. Ōkuma’s statement that a Premier could not resign contrary to the will of the emperor contradicted his protestations of cabinet responsibility to the Diet and revealed his attachment to power and position. Since the genrō were not yet prepared for the next cabinet, and since Ōkuma still supported genrō military policy, he was still useful to the genrō.

Ōkuma sought to unite the Dōshikai, Chūseikai, and Köyu Kurabu (the Ōkuma Supporters’ Association in the Diet) behind the cabinet, and during August explored prospects through representatives of these factions. But Ōkuma was also becoming restive in office and told Ozaki he was too old to remain. Ozaki urged Ōkuma not to resign until a year after organisation of a popular coalition headed by Katō which would have a Diet majority. Ōkuma then begged Ozaki to expedite the coalition. Despite some Chūseikai hesitation, a committee was formed to organise the new party. The nascent party was the Kenseikai (Constitutional Government Party), and Ozaki and Katō urged Ōkuma to accept the presidency. He refused, but lent his support. Instead, Katō became president, and the party was inaugurated on 10 October 1915.33

As the thirty-seventh Diet drew to a close, Ōkuma went to Yamagata and hinted he would resign, but also expressed the wish that the next cabinet be a Katō-Terauchi coalition. This was the first of a series of attempts by Ōkuma to secure Katō’s appointment as Premier. Yamagata answered that Terauchi would be acceptable but not Katō. Ōkuma then sought to circumvent Yamagata by consulting privately with General Tanaka Giichi, Vice-Chief of Staff, suggesting that Terauchi might assent to a coalition despite Yamagata’s opposition. Tanaka accordingly cabled Terauchi to return from Korea. Terauchi, however, had meanwhile been advised by Yamagata of the genrō plan and refused to discuss the Premiership, on the grounds it was ‘the emperor’s prerogative’. Yamagata
was certain that Ōkuma would resign at the end of the session, and sought support in the Upper House for the government budget.

After the close of the session in March 1916, Ōkuma visited Yamagata at Odawara to discuss again the choice of a successor. Yamagata told Terauchi later of his difficulty in understanding Ōkuma, complaining, 'Ōkuma explained world trends and the situation of Japan, taking nearly three hours. Just when I thought he had begun the most important part, he changed the subject, and I was completely unable to understand what he meant'. Later, in Tokyo, Yamagata rather eagerly spoke to Ōkuma about resigning, now that Ōkuma was nearly eighty. Ōkuma agreed. Yamagata continued, asking Ōkuma if he wished to remain in office, and again the reply was affirmative. The conversation ended inconclusively, without Ōkuma's having definitely committed himself to resign, much to Yamagata's frustration. Ōkuma's behaviour was perhaps partly due to senility, and partly to the art of haragei (dissimulation) as Yamagata's observations indicated.

Yamagata wrote to Ōkuma in April, warning that if the Prime Minister were selected from the majority party in the Diet, the unity of the nation would be imperilled. On 22 June Ōkuma again visited Yamagata and again urged Katō's candidacy. Although he himself had been a genrō appointee, he was reluctant to see a genrō-Seiyūkai coalition and refused to accept the fact that the genrō and not the parties were the final arbiters of the choice of Premier.

The confrontation illustrated well the distance between Ōkuma and Yamagata, who, though their life spans coincided to the year, were in so many ways the opposite of each other. Yamagata, the aristocratic soldier-poet of Chōshū whose career rested on a commitment to the principle of transcendental cabinets, could never accommodate himself to Ōkuma's swashbuckling demagogic political style or parliamentary convictions. Real communication between them was almost impossible, as their conversations revealed.

On 24 June Ōkuma informed the emperor that he would resign and again recommended Katō as his successor. Terauchi was advanced in rank to Field Marshal the same day and left Seoul for Tokyo on 1 July, later meeting with Ōkuma, who unsuccessfully tried to extract a promise from Terauchi to continue the policies of his own cabinet. The appointment of a Field Marshal as Premier
must have appeared to Okuma to augur ill for the future of parliamentary government. Okuma hung on in office through August and September, warning Yamagata on 11 August that, if Terauchi did not co-operate with the policy of his own cabinet, political chaos would ensue. Katō denied any knowledge of Okuma's many attempts to organise a coalition, though he perhaps would not have refused an offer. On 14 July 1916, when decorations were announced, Okuma advanced from Count to Marquis and received the Grand Order of the Chrysanthemum. This may have been a compensation for his vacating office at last.

Okuma finally resigned on 4 October and again recommended Katō. His resignation was accepted by the emperor, this time in a letter of appreciation for Okuma's long service on behalf of the nation. Although he wept at this Imperial recognition, Okuma's emotions were mixed, for he could not forget his disappointment that his recommendation of Katō had failed.

During his Taishō cabinet Okuma at one time denied that the cabinet rested on party support, referring to the Dōshikai. One observer commented, 'Count Okuma succeeded to the late Prince Katsura's legacy, the Dōshikai party, but it was a fatal inheritance and has killed him politically instead of giving him new life. The Count Okuma of today is not the Count Okuma of yesterday, but an apparition of the late Prince Katsura possessing the body of Count Okuma'.

He had entered the cabinet without his usual conditions, was lax in adhering to his own principles in office, and failed to take strong measures when scandal was uncovered within the cabinet. It was true enough that Okuma in the Taishō period was a different man from the hero of the Meiji era, but it was not only Dōshikai support which spelled the difference.

In 1914 Okuma in office made commitments to the military and to the genrō which made it impossible for him to stand unequivocally for parliamentary government by majority party as he had done through most of his career. There were times during his Taishō cabinet when he appeared to be little more than a catspaw of the genrō. On the other hand, his ambivalence was revealed in his denunciation of the genrō as irresponsible wielders of power, as repressive of public opinion. Perhaps this was his way of expressing frustration at the loss of some of his former independence of thought and action. He was no longer able to stand against the genrō if he
wished to remain in office. He compromised his early principles for the advantages of genrō support, the very Satsuma and Chōshū cabal he had so long abhorred.

Ökuma’s supporters tried to create a popular revival of faith in his image, but the Supporters’ Association never became a genuine political party, and Ökuma never assumed leadership of the Dōshikai. He did successfully swing support behind his cabinet during 1915, but it was a Pyrrhic victory. In other ways, however, he demonstrated that he could still speak for popularisation of politics.

Despite the dimming of Ökuma’s star, some press support of him continued, since he still used the political tactics of ‘Japan’s first democrat’. Even in foreign policy, although the Twenty-one Demands were to some an expansionist venture, the cabinet was pursuing a course suggested by much of articulate opinion. There was in Meiji and Taishō Japan no clear dichotomy between liberalism and expansionism. Ökuma’s concessions were to old age, to genrō power, and to the demands of the Taishō politique.

Ökuma’s appeal to the emperor for Katō as his successor is open to the charge of being unparliamentary, since from a parliamentary point of view he should have recommended Hara, leader of the Seiyūkai opposition. On the other hand, Ökuma may have seen Katō as the only recourse against the less palatable genrō appointment of a military man. And he was no doubt reluctant to see a Hara-genrō entente as well. Had Ökuma succeeded it is possible that the balance between genrō and parties would have shifted more rapidly toward the parties. But if Ökuma lost some favour with Meiji politicians like Inukai and Ozaki, he also demonstrated again his extraordinary political viability and his ability to abandon the strategy of opposition on occasion, compromising in the Taishō political style.

Ökuma spent his last years writing and talking in his Waseda home. He had often said he would live to be 125 years old (the 125-foot tower at Waseda is a celebration of this hope), but he died on 10 January 1922 at the age of eighty-five. No doubt Ökuma’s spectre rejoiced that he was as popular in death as in life. Ökuma’s funeral was a marked contrast to Prince Yamagata’s small, formal funeral the same year. The two ceremonies were a fitting reflection of the careers of two great statesmen of Meiji and Taishō Japan, who were in so many ways the antithesis of each other.
If Ōkuma could see Japan a century after the Meiji Restoration he would no doubt be gratified to survey his nation's accomplishments. He would see the fulfilment of many of his aspirations and prophecies. He would see the maturation of plans he and his colleagues envisioned in the early Meiji years. He would see his dreams matched by events in Japan's development. He would witness the fruition of many changes he helped set in motion. But even in an era of revolutionary change Ōkuma's vision and receptivity to innovation were extraordinary.

Ōkuma was deeply concerned with the multitude of problems which confronted Meiji Japan and expressed views on many facets of Japan's modernisation. It would be misleading to claim that he was a true intellectual, for he had never been immersed in scholarly activities like his followers Ono and Yano. Nevertheless, the scope of Ōkuma's intellectual concern and the breadth of his vision have often gone unrecognised. There was hardly any area of political, social, economic, or educational endeavour which did not excite his imagination. This breadth of concern made Ōkuma a genuine Meiji leader. Despite his disinclination for scholarly pursuits, he was exceptionally well informed on a great variety of issues. This must be attributed in part to his natural gregariousness, which led him to while away many hours in lively conversation with both foreign and Japanese visitors to Waseda, the 'private Foreign Office'. At his Waseda home Ōkuma regaled his guests by the hour, smoking a gold-tipped cigar, oblivious of where the ashes fell. His large mouth was drawn down at the corners, making his appearance distinctive and even frightening to children who saw him on the street. With cane and wooden leg besides, he cut a distinguished figure.

Ōkuma was an iconoclast. One reason for his intellectual unortho-
doxy was the relative lack of influence of the Confucian tradition on his thinking, despite his samurai background and education. His initial antipathy to the study of Chu Hsi Confucianism was more temperamental than ideological. Nevertheless, Confucianism had a negative value in conditioning Ökuma’s thought. His discussion of continuity of tradition revolved more around the influence of Bushido or feudalism than of Confucianism. He did not see Confucianism as having the potential to meet the demand for a national morality. He found it deficient in comparison with the function of Christian morality in the West. Perhaps the relatively weak influence of the Confucian tradition on Ökuma contributed to his iconoclastic approach to national problems. His anti-Confucianism also made him unpopular with the men around the emperor and led them to deny him access to the emperor when political crises motivated him to seek out the emperor directly.

There are limitations, however, to the image of Ökuma as an intellectual iconoclast. He was never the rational critic, the articulate outsider in the scholarly manner of Ono Azusa, Baba Tatsui, or Yano Fumio. He was basically an optimist, untouched by the philosophical pessimism of men who were personally enmeshed in the existential dilemma. What Ökuma lacked in philosophical sophistication, however, he more than compensated for in imagination and courage. He was ever eager to become involved, to commit both himself and Japan to the romantic faith in progress. Ökuma was an activist, convinced that plans were devised to be implemented, that political theory was one dimension of political reality. This is not to say that his views were in the mainstream of Meiji political thought. More often they were a portent of things to come because of the progressive and often prophetic nature of Ökuma’s vision of the future.

It is not apparent whether Ökuma was particularly conversant with Herbert Spencer’s theories of societal evolution which stimulated so many intellectuals to visions of Japan’s changing dimensions. It is certain, however, that he had an unswerving faith in the concept of progress in general and for Japan specifically. His natural optimism made him in this regard a genuine man of the nineteenth century.

It is not strictly accurate to dismiss Ökuma as a scholar. He was a prolific contributor to newspapers and magazines throughout his
career, and journalists were always among his closest associates. He devoted several years while in political retirement to publishing and to discussion groups at Waseda. He wrote numerous articles on a diversity of subjects in the magazines *Shin Nippon* and *Taikan* (Outlook), and wrote *Kaikoku taiseishi* (History of trends in new Japan) and other works.

Ökuma's views on modernisation were significant not only intrinsically, but because they were so often implemented. Although his progressivism and optimism at times made his judgment about prospects for reform overly sanguine, there were also many instances of his palpable influence as government councillor or party leader.

The Meiji shizoku élite was an intellectual class with a high degree of political involvement and sense of identity with nation. This was one of the strengths of Meiji nationalism and played a crucial part in the modernising process. Meiji nationalism reinforced the national identity and continuity with tradition and at the same time created a new focus of loyalty in the nation state. Consequently the new government was confident of support and able to innovate. That the élite was of the educated samurai class made it singularly able to appreciate the nature of the Western technological and military challenge.

The strength of the sense of personal identification with Japan felt by the Meiji individual was perhaps without precedent, though it is paralleled to some extent even today. It never occurred to Meiji Japan's avid peripatetic students of Western institutions not to return home from Europe and the United States to put their newly acquired knowledge and skills to use for the development of Japan. A Meiji 'brain drain' would have been inconceivable. The combined personal devotion of oligarchs and entrepreneurs to strengthening Japan as a world power produced a vigorous national will to modernise.

Man was for Ökuma not a social but a national being. Only under a strong nation could human beings develop their potentialities. The two, for Ökuma, were equated. Japan had achieved national power and the people a well-developed spirit of patriotism, and Japan was thus invincible by contrast with China and Russia. Events had borne this out. Thus ideologically, as in the events of his career, Ökuma's premise was nationalism.

Ökuma believed Japanese patriotism accounted for much of
Japan's success in the modern world. But for Ōkuma the sense of identification with nation went even further than for most. However intent he was on imbibing all currents of Western thought and knowledge which had burst into Japan, he could not be persuaded to leave Japan and visit the West. It was neither lack of interest nor dislike of Westerners which accounted for Ōkuma's singular refusal, for he continually invited Western visitors to his legendary garden parties at Waseda, where he pried them with questions and his own views at great length. But because of his vital involvement with events he remained the only major figure in the Meiji period never to visit the West.

Ōkuma felt himself a man of destiny. Many times as a young man in Saga he voiced concern over the lack of dynamic leadership within his han, and this concern impelled him to look beyond his han for leadership and vision. His feeling for history lent a sense of urgency to his suggestions for reform, both before and after the Restoration.

Ōkuma's regret at not having been more studious as a boy led him to try to compensate for what he felt were his own deficiencies through educating subsequent generations. His negative reaction to Chinese writing and to the Confucian Classics also stimulated his desire to reform the education system. He became convinced that the use of Chinese characters was anachronism, an unconscionable drag on the progress of Japan. A new type of education was an essential in the new Japan which Ōkuma envisioned.

Here, too, it was not simply a matter of theory for Ōkuma; theories were blueprints for action. He found time in the midst of organising the Kaishintō in 1882 to establish Tōkyō Semmon Gakkō, forerunner of Waseda University. Like his friend Fukuzawa, Ōkuma's aim was to change feudal ways of thinking and 'to train the next generation in the spirit of freedom and independence'. The inculcation of this spirit Ōkuma felt was far more significant than the teaching of facts. Graduates of Waseda University were (and still are) known for their high degree of political involvement.

Just as innovative was Ōkuma's conviction that women were as entitled as men to higher education. Out of this conviction he aided President Naruse in founding Japan Women's University, one of the first institutions for higher education for women in Japan. Ōkuma's concern for the education of women reflected a revolutionary attitude toward woman as an individual, a conviction which
informed the Meiji feminist revolt against the long feudal subordination of women. This subordinate role was reinforced ideologically by Confucianism, Buddhism, and Shinto.

In an interview with a Chinese educator in 1906 Ökuma attributed the prosperity of Japan to education and traced the evolution of Japanese education since the Restoration through four stages. In the first stage, what was valuable had been preserved and what was not had been revised in the process of systematising. The aims of education were combined with the goal of creating a strong soldiery. During the second stage, students had been sent to the West and Western teachers had been brought to Japan. During the third stage, a mania for Occidental institutions had appeared, which in turn had produced a reaction in favour of things Japanese. Finally, in the fourth stage, a more scientific approach was achieved, which led to genuine progress. It was Ökuma's hope that China could profit from Japan's experience in education as in other spheres.3

It was not enough to devote national energies to improving the material aspects of civilisation. The values and moral fibre of the nation were equally significant. It was a cause of great concern to Ökuma that Japan had no national ethic comparable to Christianity in the West. Confucianism was of little use in this regard, in Ökuma's view. He felt it was the responsibility of the education system to remedy this defect. He advocated the solution adopted by Meiji educators—inculcating loyalty to emperor and nation through moral instruction in the schools.4

Ökuma was equally concerned about education to meet the needs of a new age, an age of constitutional government. Attitudes could no longer remain confined within the old values of the feudal period, but must be liberated so that people could assume the responsibilities of an educated electorate. Only in this way would national ideals and morality be realised. To this end he wrote Kokumin sho tokuhon, gauged to the level of six years of schooling. Ökuma was convinced it was the duty of an educated public to assure good government.

Ökuma boasted that he enjoyed the company of younger people. Perhaps his enjoyment of youth lent him vigour and dynamism. Many of his generation preached to the young in the years between the Russo-Japanese War and World War II in a didactic vein, urging the next generation to preserve traditional values. Ökuma
addressed youth in a more sympathetic spirit and did not expect the next generation to duplicate his own. His feeling for change was part of his political intuition and sense of history. Out of his convictions and feeling for youth he wrote Seinen kunwa (Training for youth). He directed the attention of his youthful audience to the future and revealed his own enthusiasm for the future in frequent references to the early history of flight. He exhorted youth to develop a sense of public duty as ‘the key to all virtues’.

Ökuma was highly innovative as an economic reformer. His views on economic modernisation were implicit in a whole series of reforms designed to create a unified national economy in the 1870s. He felt it was incumbent on the government to play a guiding role in the modernisation process, stimulating industrial growth. Private enterprise could not be relied on completely. Nascent industries required protection until they were viable enough to compete. Thus the government subsidised the growth of the large zaibatsu such as Mitsubishi. The government also took the initiative in establishment and management of model factories in several industries. By 1880, in Ökuma’s view, if the government continued to manage certain factories there was the danger of perpetuating government monopolies, thus vitiating the aim of encouraging new industries. The wiser policy would be for the government to sell some factories and to supply new entrepreneurs with subsidies in those cases where they were not making profits. This program was also dictated by the need to reduce national expenditures.

In the combination of industriousness and patriotism Ökuma found the key to the great strength of Japan. He felt Japan was distinctive in this regard and noted, ‘An idle spirit is perhaps the most distinctive trait of foreigners’, and further, ‘In foreign countries this beautiful spirit [patriotism] is hardly to be found’.

International rivalries, Ökuma believed, could all be resolved into an economic struggle. All diplomatic and armament contests derived from this rivalry over scarce resources. Whichever nation could most skilfully use technology and produce goods most cheaply would win the struggle. In order to succeed, a nation had to be inventive, to replace manpower continually with new machinery. Ökuma at times sounded like a contemporary social scientist creating a modernisation model. But an abstract model was unnecessary; reality was matching theory and plans in Meiji Japan. In Ökuma’s view the
process of invention and innovation was not restricted solely to the highly educated; even uneducated workmen might unwittingly become innovators if the spirit of progress prevailed. Imitation was a preliminary step toward invention. Japan had learned from China in ancient times but had then surpassed her teacher. In the last analysis the issue would be decided by trained manpower, which was not replaceable by machinery. Ökuma felt Japan was able to deploy her manpower with great efficiency and organisational skill and had all the necessary ingredients to achieve success in this economic struggle for survival. Ökuma, like Meiji entrepreneurs, was not deterred by the shortage of many essential raw materials. The establishment of technical and agricultural schools would also assist Japan to economic success.

Ökuma prophetically foresaw in the future the time when Japan would be producing the cheapest goods in the world in spinning, weaving, glass, and machinery, and when shipping would be virtually a Japanese world monopoly.

Internally, Ökuma projected a trend toward socialism, toward a growing labour movement, with strikes becoming increasingly frequent. But since individualism had never prevailed in Japan, the collision between management and labour would never be as severe as in the West. This confrontation would be regulated, therefore, not solely by law but also by custom.

Expansion of the population did not automatically connote growth of national power. Unless population growth were co-ordinated with technological and industrial advance which could absorb the increase in manpower, national power might in fact be adversely affected. A policy of overseas expansion and colonisation, and development of a strong merchant marine would also have to be followed. Ökuma's grasp of the significance of national power was characteristic of many Meiji thinkers.

While Ökuma had seemingly unlimited faith in Japan's capacities, economic and otherwise, he was also self-critical, comparing Japan unfavourably in some respects with Western nations and injecting on occasion a cautionary note. Japan should recognise and ameliorate her weaknesses rather than become complacent; otherwise her strength would be dissipated.

Ökuma was apprehensive, too, of other aspects of modernisation. Put man in cities, he warned, and the city will become a graveyard,
where natural cyclical regenerative processes are closed off. With an uncanny presentiment of the shape of the future he presaged contemporary environmentalists who today describe 'eco-spheres' and the crisis of the city.8

For Ōkuma, political modernisation meant the abolition of feudalism and the creation of a centralised nation-state with parliamentary institutions. Ōkuma’s was a comprehensive national prospectus, necessitating many implementing reforms. It was, in effect, a revolution. He eagerly welcomed every step, from the abolition of the han and establishment of the ken, through various administrative experiments of the central administration, to the enactment of the Constitution and convening of the Diet. He had little patience with men like Saigō, who looked back nostalgically to the feudal past and balked at every innovation. Even his Sat-Chô colleagues in the government, he felt, were dragging their feet when it came to establishing constitutional government. Unification and centralisation were as valid goals politically as economically. Just as Japan needed a uniform currency, so she needed a bureaucracy open to men from all parts of the nation. This principle Ōkuma observed in his appointments in the government during the 1870s.

The motive force for modernising Japan’s political institutions was, for Ōkuma as for other Meiji oligarchs, the desire to achieve equality with the West, to meet the West on its own ground. But the means Ōkuma would use to attain the goal often went beyond what other statesmen would condone. Consequently he was often attacked within the government. For Ōkuma the old régime could be abolished almost immediately, and the new ushered in rapidly. He seems to have felt no need for transitional stages during which adjustments could be made to changes which had already occurred before proceeding further. Japan should leap ahead courageously. Construction should follow immediately upon destruction. Ōkuma was a double revolutionary, when one revolution was enough for most of his contemporaries or for most men of any era. His colleagues felt he was lacking in caution and failed to see all the implications of what he advocated. How, for example, could an electorate be educated to exercise the franchise by 1883, the date Ōkuma suggested for convening the Diet?

Although Ōkuma was eager to usher in the new Japan, at the same time he did not denigrate the feudal tradition, nor did he wish Japan
to discard completely the feudal virtues. Continuity need not be sacrificed; revolutionary change did not necessarily connote abandoning tradition completely. The smoothness of the transition to constitutional government he attributed to the feudal legacy. And Japan’s military power and success he considered due to a ‘blending of the spirit of the feudal warrior with the scientific knowledge of the Occident’.⁹

The crisis of 1881 was the test of Ökuma’s commitment to the ideal of parliamentary government on the British model. His famous dictum, ‘Constitutional government is party government’, was revolutionary doctrine in 1881, as it proved to be much later in 1935. Ökuma’s commitment to his revolutionary views took precedence over the immediate demands for political accommodation to the Sat-Chō inner circle who disagreed with him. His purge was of more than biographical significance. His memorial helped accelerate the promulgation of the Constitution and convening of the Diet. Although Ökuma’s views were rejected by his contemporaries in government, eventually they prevailed, for constitutional government evolved not so much in the spirit of Itō, Yamagata, and Iwakura, as according to the vision of Ökuma. In the gradual evolution of British-style parliamentary practice his democratic convictions were vindicated.

The Meiji political dispensation left Japan an ambiguous legacy, since the Constitution had met conflicting demands. It reflected on the one hand the absolutist convictions of men like Itō, Yamagata, and Iwakura, predicated on kokutai and transcendentalism, but on the other hand did not exclude the possibility of interpretation according to Ökuma’s parliamentary convictions.¹⁰ Ökuma’s liberal reading of the Constitution approximated constitutional practice of the 1920s. Ten years later, however, the pendulum swung back the other way during the 1930s, and the constitutional issue was again in question.

The ‘Organ Theory Crisis’ in the interpretation of the Constitution in the 1930s was reminiscent of the constitutional debate of 1881. Professor Minobe Tatsukichi, in articulating the ‘organ view’ of the emperor, repeatedly stated ‘constitutional government is party government’. His debt to Ökuma’s memorial was clear, and the language was identical.¹¹ For his views Minobe was dismissed from the faculty of Tokyo University, as Ökuma had been dismissed from
the government over fifty years earlier. Had Ōkuma been alive in 1935 he would have seen in the struggle of Minobe a reminder of his own earlier confrontation with the Sat-Chō oligarchs. For the issue was much the same: opposition of the inner circle of statesmen over the question of a parliamentary cabinet system. The issue was transposed to the academic milieu. In fact, Minobe was reputed to have escaped earlier dismissal after 1912 partly through the intercession of Ōkuma.

Ōkuma warned repeatedly of the monopoly of political power by one party or one faction in the government. The existence of two parties he viewed as a guarantee against this eventuality, which had been all too real in the early years of Meiji. He credited the political parties with destroying bureaucratic hambatsu despotism and leading the way toward constitutional government. Ōkuma saw the historic role of the Japanese parties as more significant than in England, since in Japan the parties had preceded the Diet, and had precipitated the enactment of the Constitution and convening of the Diet, whereas in England the parties arose after parliament had come into being.

Ōkuma did not consider the somewhat elitist composition of the original parties a weakness, since the function of the parties was partly didactic: to broaden the popular political vision. It was also the duty of the party to press for reform of the government. For Ōkuma these tasks were not contradictory; on the contrary, they had been achieved with resounding success. Said Ōkuma:

The history of the political parties is the history of constitutional government in Japan. It was the political parties who first created the public demand for the establishment of a national assembly and hastened the enactment of the Constitution, and, later, commanding a majority in the Diet, forced the government to act constitutionally, while the people in general were as yet indifferent to the right of participation in political affairs.12

Ōkuma had too an early awareness of the function of an opposition in a two-party system. He felt that without an opposition there would be no limitation on the growth and perpetuation of absolutism. Ōkuma welcomed the advent of the Seiyūkai in 1900, partly because he believed a healthy political system presupposed the existence of two parties. It can also be argued that this was one reason for
Okuma's founding of the Kaishintō, in opposition to the Jiyūtō and to the government.

Okuma was of the democratic persuasion that government must be responsible to public opinion. His concept of the role of public opinion and his awareness of mass media were in advance of his time. He felt strongly about the function of criticism of the government by the press. As Prime Minister in 1914 he told journalists, 'It is your business to criticise me if you think I am wrong. But let me explain to you my position and my point of view, so that you may criticise my actual policy'. Without criticism by the people politicians become demoralised; statesmen become political merchants. Politics becomes commerce. With constant criticism politics will improve, Okuma said. Every citizen had an obligation to participate in the political process, which could not be left only to specialists as medical care is left to physicians. In inviting public criticism of himself Okuma passed the real test of tolerance.

Okuma did not regard public opinion in the Meiji or even the Taishō period as sufficiently educated to its political responsibilities. In speeches he constantly exhorted his audiences to exercise their political rights and duties. It was incumbent on the political parties and particularly the intellectuals to inform the public. But despite the embryonic state of development of public opinion during the Meiji period, Okuma was never willing to ignore its potential power. This was evident in his constant attention to the press and in his many educational endeavours. It was only an informed public opinion which could ultimately prevent the abuse of power in the government. Abuse of power was an evil not restricted to the Sat-Chō hambatsu, but extended also to the majority in national and local assemblies. Against this abuse an educated populace was the only guarantee.

To the power of public opinion Okuma attributed three signal achievements in Japan: the abolition of feudal military rule; the effecting of the Restoration; and the enactment of the Meiji Constitution. Despite these contributions, however, there was still a long way to go. He went on to bemoan the absence of a 'fair public opinion', which he considered a serious matter in a parliamentary system. His position was that the diffusion of political knowledge and consciousness among the public was both an achievement of
the early Meiji years and a continuing obligation of the parties and people in the Taishō era.

Most of Ökuma's political views were predicated on his fundamental image of the common man. His colleagues subscribed to the Confucian maxim that only men of virtue can rule. These men constituted a benevolent élite, i.e., themselves. For Ökuma, on the other hand, all men were potentially men of virtue and therefore potential rulers. Ökuma's revolutionary democratic faith in the average man was in part a reflection of his own self-image. 'I am neither a student nor a genius. I am a very average person', Ökuma maintained. He compared his view of the common man to Fukuzawa's anti-élitist contention that 'Heaven never created a man above another nor a man below another'. It was only through diffusion of knowledge among the populace that genuine progress could be attained. This view of the common man set Ökuma and Fukuzawa apart from most of their contemporaries among the educated shizoku élite. The sharing of fundamental views led to the friendship and mutual respect which grew between Ökuma and Fukuzawa after they met in 1873.

Ökuma repeatedly exhorted his compatriots to expend ever greater energies on behalf of the nation, never to rest content with the achievements of the Restoration, since 'the moment it [the nation] rests content with its position, the moment it ceases to profit by stimulus from without and to make unceasing efforts for improvement and reform, from that moment it enters on a career of decline'. National effort was dynamic and cumulative in its impact. Ökuma's own innovative impulse was proof of his contention.

One of Ökuma's favourite topics was the harmonisation of Eastern and Western civilisations. He was convinced that Japan had both the ability and duty to arbitrate between East and West, erasing barriers between races and cultures. Japan had successfully absorbed much of Western civilisation, and it was incumbent on Japan in turn to transmit her knowledge to the rest of Asia. Japan had the unique capacity to graft the scientific civilisation of the West, having its origins in Greek knowledge and analysis, onto the substratum of ancient civilisations of China and India, based on intuition and sentiment. As intermediary Japan would be able to repay her ancient cultural debt to China. This was the ideological basis of Ökuma's
Pan-Asianism. The last five years of Ōkuma's life were spent in a comparative study of Greek and Chinese philosophy, with the aid of two Waseda philosophy professors. But Japan's mission did not end here.

The Japanese should grow in the belief that on them alone devolves the mission of harmonising the civilisations of the East and West, so as to lead the world as a whole to a higher plane... It may cease to be a mere dream to look for the day when the nations of the world will federate under one code of international law and form one organic system, creating a new era of fellowship and good will.18

Such was the visionary and messianic goal to which Ōkuma aspired for Japan. Like his humanistic faith in the average man, Ōkuma's faith in Japan had few limitations. This Pan-Asian romanticism informed both the ideals of Japan's Pan-Asian constructs of the 1930s and 1940s, and their perversions.
An Overview

Ökuma was a paradoxical man. His personal qualities, his political style, his contributions to the economy, his role in the development of constitutional government, and his encouragement of political parties and 'mass democracy' were complexly interwoven. The paradoxes he posed were more than something flowing out of the complexity of the man. They derived also from the paradoxes of his age, from a nation faced with the contradictory demands of a dying feudal order and a new confrontation with the West. Within a society beset by tensions Ökuma added further contradiction and paradox through the eccentricity of his own character.

Ökuma, for example, was unique in that he was the only leading Meiji statesman never to go abroad. Yet he was one of the most Westernised, least Confucian, and in many ways most democratic. As a youth he demonstrated an iconoclastic and strongly anti-feudal attitude, yet he also looked back fondly in later life on *Hagakure* training. In his later years he stated that instant passion at the risk of one's life is 'the flower of Japan' just as is the spirit of lovers' suicide. Similarly, before the Taiwan expedition he told Saigō that he was willing to 'throw his life with Saigō into Taiwan'. Ökuma was thus in some ways the embodiment of the *Hagakure*, although he eschewed many of the traditional attitudes which characterised other leaders of his time.

Paradoxically, also, Ökuma was both popular and unpopular; in his popularity lay the causes for his unpopularity. His most notable traits as a politician were the charismatic appeal which made him popular, and his courage, optimism and willingness to take risks, which sometimes led him to ignore the consequences of his actions. His courage and vigour, both moral and physical, led him to gamble where others hesitated, and suited him for leadership in the innovat-
ing Meiji period. He also admired courage in others, as witness his respect for the man who tried to assassinate him and then took his own life. His courage led Ökuma to develop political brinkmanship as his own distinctive style. The year 1881 was a good example of political brinkmanship rather than the cautious and timorous political realism of most of Ökuma's Sat-Chō colleagues. Crisis was really Ökuma's metier. Just as in the game of go Ökuma was nonchalant until his forces were imperilled, so in politics he failed to build a position of strength before challenging his opponents. Caution was basically distasteful to him, partly because of his impatience with detail. Because of these traits Ökuma was not an outstanding political strategist. He was prone to miscalculation and error, notably in the 1881 crisis, but at other times as well. This was his major weakness as a politician.

Ökuma described himself as extremely optimistic, never discouraged or disappointed by any circumstance. His great faith in the future and optimism were traits he had displayed since childhood. His attention was directed toward the future rather than to regrets about the past. This spirit also imbued nineteenth-century Japan.

Much of Ökuma's political behaviour was generated by great faith in the common man and awareness of the implications of public opinion and media. These qualities and his extrovert nature made him beloved by the public, but led his fellow oligarchs to denigrate him. One of Ökuma's outstanding traits in politics and at home was his need for self-assertion. Although his personality was in many ways the inverse of the traditional Japanese ideal, this seemed if paradoxically to enhance his popularity. Yet he was an anti-hero among the heroes of the Meiji Restoration.

The determinants of Ökuma's iconoclasm were several. Through his mother's leniency and his schooling he developed a rebelliousness which fed on subsequent events. His exceptional distaste for Chinese characters grew to a generalised abhorrence of Confucian classics and their influence. Ökuma's anti-Confucianism at times worked to his disadvantage politically, as it alienated powerful advisers around the emperor. He became early in life a rebel and an outsider. This did not always detract from political effectiveness, but on the contrary gave force to his role as bellwether of political trends.

Ökuma's Hizen origin was a significant determinant of his outsider
role. During his early years in government he rose through rival and shifting patronage of Satsuma and Chōshū sponsors Inoue, Kido, and Ōkubo. Attempts to divest him of positions of increasing power in 1871, 1873, 1874, and 1880 were thwarted. That Ōkuma was promoted within the government was due to his ability rather than to han origin. But the significance of han origin as a determinant of political career was not lost on Ōkuma. His consciousness of being an outsider led him to a basically anti-Sat-Chō point of view, and after 1877 he began to see the hambatsu as a threat to himself and to the growth of parliamentary government in Japan. The relationship between Ōkuma and the Sat-Chō oligarchs is evidence too that Sat-Chō cabalistic power in the Meiji period cannot be underestimated. Had Ōkuma been from Satsuma or Chōshū he would no doubt have been among the genrō, but he also would not have made the contributions dependent on his being an outsider. And his personality would still have set him apart from other Sat-Chō leaders.

Despite or because of the paradoxes of Ōkuma’s character, he was in some ways the first of Japan’s modern, popular statesmen. This role is revealed by his commitment to parliamentary government and the political techniques he created to achieve it. His garnering of popular support made him the bête-noire of the hambatsu. He became a dramaturgic politician, innovator of the cabinet press conference, champion of liberal press legislation, and the first Prime Minister to electioneer. For Ōkuma’s generation there was no expiation for such courting of popular support.

Ōkuma’s gregarious nature and love of crowds affected his political style. He enjoyed being surrounded by people when he travelled and at home at Waseda. Ōkuma, travelling by train with a whole car or two reserved for his retinue and people around him listening as he spoke, resembled both a daimyo of the Tokugawa era and a politician of the twentieth century. It was not simply ostentation but more conviviality and bonhomie that led Ōkuma to surround himself with people. He invited 5,000 guests to his eightieth birthday party at Waseda. His tastes and life style were a blend of the aristocratic and the plebeian. They also influenced his character as a politician.

Ōkuma’s contemporary critics considered him a political demagogue, as his nickname Ō-buroshiki (huge carry-all) indicates. What
he said often reflected a 'Hizen penchant for vagueness' and a talent for being all things to all men in the ambiguity of his statements. After meeting Kaishintō leaders over the issue of party dissolution in 1884, for example, three leaders emerged with three different interpretations of Ökuma's intentions. The obvious advantage of such ambiguity for a politician was that it maximised his options. But what he said was often as much a function of his personality as of political calculation.

Ökuma's magnetism and expansive concerns enabled him to attract remarkably able young men to his following. Not only journalists but young intellectuals with political aspirations found in him a natural leader. It was a role Ökuma loved well, and he never tired of boasting of his championing of party government. This fostering of a coterie of future statesmen, men of the stature of Inukai and Ozaki, must be deemed one of Ökuma's political contributions. Professor Maruyama describes the party leader type in Japan as a 'portable shrine', who through his image more than his person influences a variety of followers. In a sense Professor Maruyama's typology applies to Ökuma, for he had a vivid image as a democratic politician, an image purveyed by the press. But in Ökuma's case the image was close to the reality of the man. Though Yano and Ono, who might be considered among the first generation of Ökuma's deshi (disciples), were really intellectuals more than politicians, the second generation—including Inukai and Ozaki—were political figures of undisputed significance. It says something for Ökuma's judgment of men as well as for his charisma.

No doubt Ökuma's capacious interests made him a fascinating conversationalist, though the conversation was likely to be somewhat one-sided. Ökuma's great need for self-expression, which he refused to articulate in writing, was channelled to talking, and he was one of the most garrulous of the Meiji leaders. Ökuma preferred the role of sensei (teacher), and anyone who made his way to 'the oracle of Waseda' became his pupil, whatever his own status. Yet Ökuma also sought information on every imaginable subject from his visitors from throughout the world. He appreciated a good story and was a non-stop raconteur. It was always open house at his Waseda home.

Ökuma shared one hobby with Yamagata. Both men were avid gardeners. Ökuma grew a dazzling variety of flowers from throughout the world, and was especially fond of his orchid greenhouse and
chrysanthemums. He also grew fruit and vegetables and is said to have introduced cultivation of melons to Japan. He held what was probably Japan's first melon show to share his discovery with friends.

Although the 1881 crisis resulted in Ōkuma's purge from the government, it had a profound impact both on the development of parliamentary government and political parties in Japan and on Ōkuma's own subsequent career. The Hokkaido sale was cancelled because of popular pressures abetted by Ōkuma, and the Diet was convened earlier than it might otherwise have been. Ōkuma's ouster also precipitated the founding of a major party.

Ōkuma palpably added new dimensions to the image of the popular statesman in Meiji and Taishō Japan. He and his Kaishintō associates departed from the traditional elitist patterns of behaviour which led other Meiji oligarchs to eschew the popular political arena and mass movements. The Kaishintō contributed signally to the transition from the traditional socio-political élite to a new political style of symbol manipulation. This departure from traditional patterns led Ōkuma's critics to fault him for unaristocratic behaviour.

Although Ōkuma encouraged popular support by his stand on many issues, the press endorsed him not because of any single event but because there was much in his Meiji record that journalists could support with enthusiasm and conviction. Ōkuma had a good press because of his espousal of political parties, of freedom of speech and press, and of parliamentary government, and also because he was the underdog who had been maltreated by the hambatsu. All these factors contributed to his moral stature, which enabled him to play the role of focus of the opposition. Journalism was a significant new profession in Meiji Japan. The press fed on blunders of the government and came to play the role of opposition. The anti-hambatsu orientation of the press found in Ōkuma a natural focal ally. He in turn perceived the implications of the mass media before any other politician in Japan, in a signal example of his sense of the shape of the future. Again, it was personality as well as conviction and circumstances that led Ōkuma to initiate the opposition-press alliance in Japanese politics.

Ōkuma's didactic role with the press also demonstrated his democratic assumptions. He pushed for liberalisation of repressive press laws in the Matsukata cabinet. His Taishō cabinet was the first to campaign, and he was the first Prime Minister to do so. As Taishō
Premier Ōkuma seemed to embody popular hopes and to reflect the genius of the era, as he had seemed to personify the venturesome Meiji period.

Ōkuma was popular too with the English-language press in Japan. The *Japan Weekly Mail*, ever his admirer, printed the following eulogy in April 1913:

no living statesman has contributed so much towards the political enlightenment of modern Japan as Count Ōkuma. The notion that he has been unsuccessful is based solely on the circumstance that he failed to establish party government in this country notwithstanding the fact that he was President of a fairly strong and well organised political party for twenty-six years... Even though out of office Count Ōkuma and his fellow thinkers have done more towards the spread of democratic ideas in Japan than any other political body... Among the statesmen of the Meiji era three men have earned distinction above their fellows: Prince Itō, as representative of the Japanese empire, Prince Katsura as representative of Japanese officialdom, and Count Ōkuma as representative of the Japanese people.

Another Westerner, the historian La Mazelière, regarded Ōkuma as 'most brilliant of the venturesome men who created modern Japan'. Another Westerner, the historian La Mazelière, regarded Ōkuma as 'most brilliant of the venturesome men who created modern Japan'.

Ōkuma won acclaim abroad for his democratic convictions. He was hailed 'the Jeffersonian Premier' and 'Japan's first democrat'. A visitor to Waseda, Hamilton W. Mabie, wrote of Ōkuma's role: 'Count Ōkuma is a man of the old order with a modern mind; he is not only without fear of radical changes, he has always welcomed them... Japan is often described as a kind of middle term between the East and West, and perhaps as much as any one in the country Count Ōkuma incarnates that idea and fulfills that function'. Yet another American visitor described Ōkuma as having 'rare penetration, grasp, philosophical candor, and statesmanlike sense of proportion of an unusually elevated and courageous thinker'. Foreigners more often than Ōkuma's own colleagues in the political struggle saw in him the elements of greatness.

Ōkuma's own self-image was not always complimentary. Near the end of his life he said, 'My past is a history of failure and stumbling.' There was an element of tragedy in Ōkuma's career, for he realised he had not been as successful by some measures as some of his
Sat-Chō colleagues. But perhaps this sense of failure injected a sense of urgency and courage to his struggle.

Comments were often made abroad about Ōkuma on a more personal level. His 1914 cabinet, for example, was described as a 'non-geisha cabinet', i.e., devoid of men who kept geisha. Ōkuma's singular devotion to his gracious wife appealed to the nineteenth-century Western visitor. The admiration was mutual. Ōkuma found, for example in the spirit of the American New Englander, the same noble spirit and high ideals of the samurai, the same emphasis on discipline and devotion to duty.8

Ōkuma was more impressed, too, with the techniques of foreign journalists than their Japanese counterparts. He praised the directness of foreign visitors in going immediately to the point when they interviewed him rather than discussing the weather at length as Japanese visitors inevitably did. Ōkuma also admitted to mischievously saying something false on occasion, to test his visitors.9 His impatience and preference for directness were personal traits which set him closer to the West than to Japan. Operating in the political context this was often disadvantageous for him.

Ōkuma was the archetype of the national statesman, both as oligarch and as party leader, in his relative detachment from local geographic ties and his strong devotion to national aims. He contributed notably to the nationalisation and modernisation of political and economic functions in Meiji Japan. Ōkuma rose to prominence in the national government because of financial and diplomatic ability. His early talents made it natural that he should achieve prominence in the Finance Ministry. Despite his financial expertise, however, Ōkuma has been overlooked and Matsukata acclaimed instead for some reforms suggested by Ōkuma.10

Ōkuma's stature as a national statesman with strong loyalties to emperor and nation was demonstrated throughout his career. His concern for 'the progress of Meiji Japan' and his political commitment linked man and nation. He by-passed han ties in both government and party. Another trait which enhanced his nationalism was his exceptional political viability and resilience. Long after Itagaki had stopped talking of liberty and equality and had left his party and government, Ōkuma still advocated selection of Premier from the majority in the Diet.

Other aspects of Ōkuma's career were distinctive too. Although he
at times displayed a feudal paternalism toward his supporters, he did not demand from them absolute loyalty in return. The fragile nature of political alliances only enhanced Ōkuma’s natural independence; he fostered the same spirit of independence among his deshi. Ōkuma was so outspoken as to alienate some people. But he seemed strangely immune from personal attack and bore no ill will even toward his attempted assassin in 1889; instead, he sent money to the man’s family in a curious inversion of feudal ethics. He had a detachment which enabled him to distinguish between his public anti-hambatsu professions and his personal relations with his Sat-Chō colleagues, which were generally cordial.

Ōkuma’s participation in three cabinets—the Kuroda, Matsukata, and Kenseitō—represented three steps in the growth of political party strength and the development of a parliamentary system. Ōkuma had Kaishintō support on entering the Kuroda cabinet, but party backing was not the chief determinant of the life of this cabinet. Another step was taken when Matsukata as Premier sought party co-operation in organising a cabinet. Ōkuma and the Shimpotō got Matsukata’s agreement to conditions predicated on parliamentary growth as a condition of support. As yet a further step, in the Kenseitō ‘party cabinet’, the party controlled all cabinet portfolios except Army and Navy, which remained under military control. This cabinet, though it proved a brief respite in the rotation of the Premierships between Satsuma and Chōshū men and their protegés, provided a precedent for party cabinets in the 1920s.

During Ōkuma’s return to the political limelight in 1914 he proved a different man from the Meiji statesman. He made concessions to the genrō, the military, the demands of the time, and old age. But he was still the bellwether of his era in his China policy and endorsing the Twenty-one Demands. Nor had he lost his appeal to the press, which tended still to regard him as champion of popular causes. In fact, however, he was a genrō prisoner on the seat of power. Though Ōkuma was known as the minshū seijika (democratic politician), his compromises in the Taishō cabinet reflect the tragedy of democracy in pre-war Japan.11

Subtract Ōkuma from the political arena of Meiji and early Taishō Japan and the government’s response to the demand for constitutional government would have been retarded and opposition to the
hambatsu would have lacked a focus. There would have been no Meiji protagonist of British-style parliamentary government.

In his political versatility Ōkuma gave a dimension to Meiji political history which might otherwise have been lacking. He acted out diverse roles in his own distinctive style. He innovated both techniques and ideas in politics. He provided a contrast on the one hand to Prince Yamagata, from first to last the military aristocrat, and on the other to Hara Takashi, who developed techniques of balance and compromise based on a realistic appraisal of the relative power of interest groups. Ōkuma was ahead of his era in the Meiji period and also personified the transition between the Meiji and Taishō eras and the emergence of a new Taishō political style.

Ōkuma’s revolt was partly psychological, partly fortuitous, partly a matter of firm conviction. It was conditioned first by his childhood environment and youthful rebellion against feudal values in Hizen. It was partly fortuitous in that attacking the hambatsu and genrō left him with the political parties and press as allies. It derived partly from conviction and commitment to parliamentary principles. It was partly a matter of his gregarious extrovert nature. The degree to which his ‘democratic revolt’ was effective diminished as he grew older.

Even in an era of rapidly expanding horizons and revolutionary change, Ōkuma possessed a vision beyond his time. He personified the progressive innovating spirit, the dynamic will to action, the capacious interests, the imagination and faith in a progressive Japan which characterised the Meiji Restoration. His vision of parliamentary government and his democratic faith in man were portents of developments in the 1920s and the postwar era. Though Ōkuma and Itagaki failed to achieve a viable political entente against the hambatsu in 1898, Ōkuma’s abhorrence of hambatsu rule made him a persistent champion of modernisation and parliamentary government in the Meiji and even Taishō periods. Through his perception of the significance of mass media he became a prototypal popular statesman and precursor of mass democracy in modern Japan.
NOTES TO CHAPTER 1

1 For a discussion of whether Tokugawa Japan was genuinely feudal see Hall, John W., 'Feudalism in Japan—a Reassessment', in Hall, John W. and Marius B. Jansen (eds.), Studies in the Institutional History of Early Modern Japan.
2 Ökuma haku sekiijitsudan (Reminiscences of Count Ökuma, hereafter cited as Sekijitsudan), 3.
3 Sekijitsudan, 2.
4 Iddittie, Shimasa, The Life of Marquis Shigenobu Ökuma, 30 and Ichijima, Kenkichi, Ökuma ichigon ikkō (Ökuma by word and deed), 12, both dissent, claiming that the family income was 400 koku. Either figure would have put the family in the upper-middle/lower-upper range.
5 Griffis, William Elliot, Verbeck of Japan, 172. Soejima was the other student who studied under Verbeck.
6 Sekijitsudan, 93.
7 Sekijitsudan, 60-8.
8 Governor of Saga prefecture and subsequently House of Councillors member, later chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, Nabeshima Naotsugu (a collateral descendant of the last Hizen daimyo) related that his family and Ökuma’s served as nakōdo or marriage go-between for each other on three separate occasions; personal conversation, June 1956, Saga.
9 Sekijitsudan, 125.
10 Ichijima, Kenkichi, Ökuma kō hachijūgo-nen shi (Eighty-five year history of Marquis Ökuma, I), 155-6.
11 Ichijima, Hachijūgo-nen shi, I, 155-6.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 2

1 Ichijima, Hachijūgo-nen shi, I, 164. Ökuma was partially accurate in that the Hizen daimyo had opposed Tokugawa Ieyasu at Sekigahara in 1600.
2 Ichijima, Hachijūgo-nen shi, I, 177.
The consuls at Nagasaki issued a protest to the Governor-General against the deportation of Christians from Nagasaki, but their eventual fate is left in doubt by conflicting accounts. Paske-Smith, M. (ed.), *Japanese Traditions of Christianity*, 118-21. Ōkuma later asserted that ‘the more intelligent members of the Government had the prisoners liberated, thereby tacitly sanctioning their freedom of belief’: ‘Summary of the History of Japan’, 46, in Ōkuma Shigenobu (ed.), *Fifty Years of New Japan*.

Sekijitsudan, 329 ff.

Watanabe Ikujirō, *Ōkuma Shigenobu* (1943 ed.), 12, 301.

H. Parkes to Sawa and Terajima, 1 April 1870. Unpublished correspondence in the Ōkuma papers, Waseda University. The ichibugin and nibugin were coins of supposedly fixed silver content; actually the silver content varied.

Besides Ōkuma, many other later leaders of the Restoration Government were appointed during the first year either in the Office of Foreign Affairs, or to manage diplomatic relations in Osaka, Yokohama, or Nagasaki as a step toward appointment in the Foreign Office.

Sekijitsudan, 382. Japan has Ōkuma to thank for the recoinage of the currency, establishment of a national mint in Osaka, and the decision to adopt round rather than square coinage based on the decimal system: Okada Shumpei, ‘Meiji shoki heisei kaikaku ni okeru Ōkuma kō no kōken’ (‘Ōkuma’s contribution to the reforms of the monetary system in the early Meiji era’), *Ōkuma kenkyū* (Studies on Ōkuma), no. 4, 1954.

Watanabe, *Ōkuma Shigenobu*, 12-14. The Accounting Office came to be known shortly thereafter as the Finance Ministry. The frequent change in titles of offices in these early years reflects the experimental, ad hoc nature of the approach of the oligarchs to the problems they faced.

Ōkuma’s own estimate in Sekijitsudan, 623.

Kido Takayoshi, *Kido Takayoshi nikki* (Kido Takayoshi diary), I, 368-9. During this attack, Itō was part of the time in America investigating banking and finance and was thus unable to defend Ōkuma. At this time Inoue took Itō’s post under Ōkuma and got his start in Finance; when Itō returned and found his position occupied he was sent to Osaka in charge of the mint.

Watanabe Ikujirō (comp.), *Ōkuma Shigenobu kankei monjo* (Documents relating to Ōkuma Shigenobu), I, 257. Hereafter *Kankei monjo*.

Inoue Kaoru kō denki hensankai (Society for the compilation of the biography of Prince Segai Inoue), *Segai Inoue kō den* (Biography of Prince Segai Inoue), I, 411.

Watanabe, *Kankei monjo*, I, 305-6. The Industrial Ministry was especially significant for Japan’s industrial revolution as it envisioned a planning agency to establish priorities and carry out innovations.

It is noteworthy that Saigō felt Itagaki to be more akin to him. They were both samurai at heart and held the code of feudal loyalty in highest esteem. This
was the ideological beginning from which Itagaki later became a leading champion of popular rights and founder of Japan's first political party, the Jiyutō.

18 Baba Tsenego, Ōkuma Shigenobu den (Biography of Ōkuma Shigenobu), 98.
17 Tsumaki Chūta, Kido Takayoshi ibunshū (Posthumous documents of Kido Takayoshi), 101-2.
15 Ichijima, Hachijūgo-nen shi, I, 407.
14 Ichijima, Hachijūgo-nen shi, I, 430. This is probably to ascribe to Ōkuma more influence than he actually wielded within the oligarchy; certainly he was not sole advocate of the mission. Iwata maintains that Ōkuma opposed having so many important leaders away from Japan at once: Iwata Masakazu, Ōkubo Toshimichi, 150.

20 The agreement was signed by Sanjō, Iwakura, Saigō, Kido, Ōkuma, Matsukata, Gotō, Fukuban Bise, Soejima, Ōkubo, Inoue, Yamagata, Ōki, Itō, Sasaki, Toku-daiji Sanenori, Shishido Tamaki, and Kuroda Kiyotaka. Chief objections to the agreement seem to have come from Itagaki: Watanabe, Kankei monjo, I, 408-13.

21 This seems somewhat incongruous in view of Saigō’s prior hostility to Ōkuma, but Saigō was in fact relatively uninterested in the day-to-day affairs of government: Baba, Ōkuma Shigenobu den, 110 ff.

22 Sekijitsudan, 605-8.
23 Watanabe, Ōkuma Shigenobu, 25-6. Sanjō’s most distinctive role in Meiji politics was as moderate mediator.

24 Watanabe Ikujirō (comp.), Monjo yori mitaru Ōkuma Shigenobu (Ōkuma Shigenobu as seen through documents), 331.
25 Watanabe, Ōkuma Shigenobu, 26-7; Watanabe, Monjo yori, 32. The differing calculations of Inoue and Ōkuma caused consternation in financial circles at home and abroad. The Tōkyō ichi ichi shimbun and J. R. Black’s paper, Nishin shinjishi, however, expressed confidence in Ōkuma: Abe Ken’ichi, ‘Yōsan kōhyō shimatsu—Ōkuma zaisei no ichi gyōseki’ (‘Handling of the budget—one of Ōkuma’s financial achievements’) in Ōkuma kenkyū, no. 3, 1953, 42-3.
26 Watanabe, Ōkuma Shigenobu, 31. Sanjō had written to Ōkuma on 18 June hinting that he should decline the office of Finance Minister and give it to Mutsu Munemitsu and Maejima Hisoka: Watanabe, Kankei monjo, II, 136-7.
27 Soejima had urged the Korean expedition on Ōkuma as a measure directed solely against Chōshū power: Baba, Ōkuma Shigenobu, 148.
28 Watanabe, Monjo yori, 331 ff. The extent to which Satsuma and Chōshū factionalism was actually based on han loyalties is difficult to assess. For Ōkuma, however, it was unquestionable, and he saw the dichotomy between himself on the one hand and the Sat-Chō batsu on the other as a constant determinant throughout his career.

29 According to Watanabe, Sōma’s Waseda seiwa and Ōkuma haku hyakuwa
report a reconciliation after 1875, but Kido’s diary and other documents do not support this contention: Monjo yori, 341, 354-6.

30 Watanabe, Monjo yori, 351.

31 Sōma Yoshiio, Waseda seiwa (Serene tales of Waseda), 71-2.

32 J. M. Batchelder to Ōkuma, 25 July 1874. Unpublished correspondence in the Ōkuma papers at Waseda University. LeGendre, who was arrested for filibustering in China in August 1874, also called on Ōkuma for help from the Japanese government. Ōkuma’s replies, if any, are not extant. LeGendre to Ōkuma, 1874-5, Ōkuma papers.

33 In his conversation with Saigō, Ōkuma advised, ‘This order doesn’t mean suspension of the conquest but it means that we must determine the sequence of events and prevent abuses, because foreign envoys object. I shall return to Tokyo to explain your view and demand an order to depart. If the government has changed its mind and opposes the plan of conquest, I am ready to throw my life with you into Taiwan’: Baba, Ōkuma Shigenobu, 178-9.

34 Ōkuma, referring to his han at this time, later said, ‘In Saga han I was hated most by the Yūkokutō ... which wanted to adhere to the feudal system and resisted the trend of the times. Thus in Saga in 1874 the Yūkokutō disturbance occurred and the conservative faction arose supporting Etō. They even tried to kill me. I dealt decisively with them saying, “I can’t allow any speech or behaviour to hinder the achievements of the Restoration”, which I had worked for until that time ...’. Watanabe, Kankei monjo, II, 258. Apparently Ōkuma’s report that counter-revolutionaries tried to kill him should be given credence, for Iwakura in February wrote Ōkuma warning him of an attempt on his life and advising him to pay attention to Etō (ibid., 257).

35 Ōkuma later reported that he had received a letter of apology from Shimazu: Watanabe, Kankei monjo, II, 386; Sōma, Waseda seiwa, 314-15.

36 The memorial biography version is that Itō and Kuroda met with Ōkuma and decided that Ōkuma should give up both the post of sangi and Finance Minister: Ichijima, Hachijügo-nen shi, I, 575.

37 Ōkuma, hearing of this, is reported to have roared, ‘No! This isn’t a feudal age!’ Sōma, Waseda seiwa, 314.

38 This complaint of Ōkuma’s was called to my attention by Dr Andrew Fraser.

39 Ichijima, Hachijügo-nen shi, I, 608 ff.; Hayashida Kametarō, Nihon seitōshi (History of Japan’s political parties), I, 196; Watanabe, Monjo yori, 343-5.

40 Watanabe, Monjo yori, 35 ff.


42 Allen, Short Economic History, 40.

43 Idditiche, Junesay, Marquis Ōkuma (1956 ed.), 178.

44 Allen, Short Economic History, 40.

45 Watanabe, Monjo yori, 63.
NOTES TO CHAPTER 3

1 Miyakoshi Shin'ichirō (ed.), *Nihon kensei kiso shiryō* (Basic historical materials on the Japanese constitution), 170-1. This crisis is discussed further in: Lebra, Joyce C., 'Ökuma Shigenobu and the 1881 Political Crisis', *Journal of Asian Studies*, XVIII, 1959, 475-87; Fraser, Andrew, 'The Expulsion of Ökuma from the Government in 1881', *Journal of Asian Studies*, XXV, 1967, 213-36; Ökubo Toshiaki, 'Meiji Jüyonen no seihen' (The political crisis of 1881) in Meiji Shiryō kenkyū renrakkai (Joint association for the study of Meiji materials) (ed.), *Meiji seiken no kakuritsu katei* (The process of the establishment of Meiji political power); Akita, George, *Foundations of Constitutional Government in Modern Japan.*


3 Osatake, Takeki, *Nihon kensei shironshū* (Collected historical essays on Japanese constitutional history), 318-84; Miyakoshi, *Kensei shiryō*, 17.

4 Miyakoshi, *Kensei shiryō*, 19. The circumstances surrounding the Genrō-in draft and the constitutional views of government leaders are treated in Beckmann, George M., *The Making of the Meiji Constitution*. The Genrō-in, or 'Senate', was an advisory body created in 1875 in an administrative reshuffling.

5 Hattori, Shisō, *Meiji no seijikatachi* (Meiji politicians), II, 3. Gorai Kenzō classifies Ökuma as a 'radical' at this time, and Itō and Inoue as 'gradualists', in *Ningen Ökuma Shigenobu* (The human Ökuma Shigenobu), 271. And Hugh Borton considers Ökuma the only progressive, surrounded by conservatives: *Japan's Modern Century*, 120.


7 Yamagata Aritomo, Kuroda Kiyotaka, Yamada Akiyoshi, Itō, and Inoue had all presented their memorials. Yano Fumio, who accompanied Ökuma to Atami as secretary, was not taken into full confidence by Ökuma, and the details of the discussions were therefore apparently not recorded.
NOTES CHAPTER 3

8 Ishikawa Mikiaki, Fukuzawa Yukichi den (Biography of Fukuzawa Yukichi), III, 52-7.

9 Watanabe, Kankei monjo, IV, 231-6. Ōkuma later stated that there were eight items in his memorial, but the extant texts include only seven; see also Ōtsu Jun'ichi, Dai Nihon kensei shi (Constitutional history of Japan), II, 469.

10 Suzuki Yasuzō, Kempō no rekishi teki kenkyū (Historical study of the constitution), 192; Miyakoshi, Kensei shiryō, 330 ff.

11 Miyakoshi, Kensei shiryō, 285 ff., 294 ff.; Suzuki, Itō Hirobumi, 120-1. Iwakura also relied on Inoue Kowashi for advice on constitutional government as late as June 1881: see Ōkubo Toshiaki, ‘Meiji jūyonen no seihan’, 68.

12 Itagaki, possibly Ōkuma's closest rival in this respect, saw only short terms of office after 1873 for a total of two years, while Ōkuma appeared in four later cabinets, for a total of close to five years.

13 Nobata, Kazuo (comp.), Taisei o takkan seyo (A broad view of the situation).

14 Sekijitsudan, 439.

15 Anon., Ōkuma Shigenobu, 44; Sasuhara Yasuzō, Meiji seisshi (Meiji political history), III, 6, in Yoshino Sakuzō (ed.), Meiji bunka zenshi; Osatake, Takeki, Nihon kensei shi taikō (Outline of Japanese constitutional history), II, 569.

16 Osatake, Nihon kensei shi no kenkyū, 293.

17 According to Kaneko, Ōkuma apologised to Itō in July, stating that he had no intention of attempting to manage affairs alone: Kaneko, Itō Hirobumi, II, 208-9. There is no corroboration in biographies of Ōkuma for Beckmann's statement that Ōkuma withdrew his opinion: Beckmann, Meiji Constitution, 56.

18 Itagaki, Taisuke, Jiyūtō shi (History of the Liberal Party), I, 478.

19 Watanabe, Kankei monjo, IV, 252 quotes Iwakura's diary of 6 July 1881: Baba Tsunego, Ōkuma Shigenobu den (Biography of Ōkuma Shigenobu), 186.

20 Tsuchiya Takao, Nihon shihonshugi no keiei shiteki kenkyū (Historical study of the development of Japanese capitalism), 100-3, and Nishimura Shinji, Ono Azusa den (Biography of Ono Azusa), 12, assert that 380,000 yen was the sum offered. Osatake, Nihon kensei shi taikō, II, reports the sum as 387,082 yen. Godai had known Ōkuma in the early Meiji government and had discussed financial problems with him in 1869. Subsequently, Godai had gone into business in Osaka, where in order to compete with Mitsubishi he organised the Kansai Bōeki Kaisha in co-operation with Nakano Goichi from Chōshū and several employees of the Colonisation Bureau from Kagoshima, all of whom wanted to resign their offices. Nishimura, Ono Azusa, 126; Kaneko, Itō Hirobumi, II, 216-17; Watanabe, Kankei monjo, IV, 314, and Monjo yori, 246; Ōkubo Toshiaki, ‘Meiji jūyonen no seihan’, 102-3. Ōkubo believes that the 1881 crisis was precipitated largely by the manoeuvres of this ‘neutral’ faction.
NOTES TO CHAPTER 4

26 Watanabe, Kankei monjo, IV, 322-3, 342 ff., 348, 356. The distinction should be made between constitutional government, which most of the oligarchs favoured in some form, and parliamentary government, which only Ōkuma among the sangi advocated.

27 Osatake, Nihon kensei shi taikō, II, 579, 583, and Meiji seiji shi tembyō (Highlights of Meiji political history), 149.

28 Tanaka Sōgorō, Iwasaki Yatarō, 247.

29 By 'head of the cabinet' or 'leading sangi' Yano apparently referred to the fact that sangi Ōkuma supervised two of the six sections in the Dajōkan: Ōtsu, Dai Nihon kensei shi, VI, 483.

30 Matsue Yasuji, Ōkuma kō sekijitsudan (Reminiscences on Marquis Ōkuma), 277.

31 For a discussion of this point see Akita, Foundations of Constitutional Government, 50 ff.; Iwakura kō kyūseki hozonkai (Society for the preservation of records of Prince Iwakura) (ed.), Iwakura kō jikki (True record of Prince Iwakura), II, 760-1. Professor Akita's focus on Itō's role is reflected in his approach to Meiji history and accounts for differences in emphasis and interpretation between Akita and this author. While before the convening of the Diet in 1890 he equates the 'liberalism' of the oligarchs with the progressivism of the Popular Rights Movement, after 1890 and particularly after 1900 he credits more the role of the parties in the Diet as carriers of liberalism.

32 Watanabe, Kankei monjo, IV, 372.

33 Watanabe, Kankei monjo, IV, 474; Osatake, Kensei shi taikō, 590-1. Kōno Togama, Mudaguchi Gengaku, Komatsubara Eitarō, Nakano Būei, Shimada Saburō, Tanaka Közō, Morishita Iwakusu, Maejima Hisoka, Kitabatake Harufusa, and Baba Takuzō completed the list. Significantly, none of these men was from Saga. Other than Ōkuma, the only Saga man in the government in 1881 was Ōki Takatō.

34 Osatake Takeki, Nihon kensei shi (History of the Japanese constitution), 299.

35 This view is shared by Oka Yoshitake, Abe Shinnosuke, Baba Tsunego, Osatake Takeki, Tokutomi Iichirō, and Watanabe Ikujirō, among others.

36 Ōtsu, Dai Nihon kensei shi, II, 479-80. The distinction between 'constitutional government' and parliamentary government of the British type, which Ōkuma advocated, should be noted.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 4

1 Fukuchi Shigetaka, Shizoku to samurai ishiki (Shizoku and samurai consciousness), 333. Samurai were designated shizoku shortly after the Restoration as part of the 'abolition' of the feudal class structure. The composition of the Kaishintō
is discussed more fully in Lebra, Joyce C., 'The Kaishintō as a Political Élite', in Silberman, Bernard (ed.), *Modern Japanese Leadership.*

5 Scalapino, *Democracy and the Party Movement,* 304.

6 Abe Shinnosuke, *Kindai seijika hyōden* (Critical biographies of modern statesmen), 43.

*Kaishintō tōhō* (Kaishintō party news), no. 8, 1893, 35-6; no. 9, 1894, 23-4.

7 Nagata Shinnosuke, *Ono Azusa,* 3-6. Other members of the group included Kaneko Kentarō, Koizuka Ryū, Baba Tatsui, and Shimada Saburō, all of whom had studied abroad and were later prominent in the government and party movement. For a discussion of Ono’s role in the Kaishintō see Lebra, Joyce C., ‘Kaishintō no sōritsusha oyobi rironka Ono Azusa’, (‘Ono Azusa, Kaishintō founder and theorist’), in *Nihon rekishi* (Japanese history), 148, no. 10, 1960, 61-7.

8 Ono Azusa, ‘Ryukaku sai nikki’ (Visitor’s diary), 14-15 May 1879, in Nishimura Shinji (ed.), *Ono Azusa zenshū* (Collected works of Ono Azusa), II, 327.

9 Ōkuma had so much respect for Ono’s scholarship and knowledge of the West that he at one time hired him as private secretary: Watanabe, *Monjo yori,* 446.

10 *Kaishintō tōhō,* no. 11, 1893, 9. Other members of the group included Amano Tameyuki, Yamada Ichirō, Yamada Kinosuke, Sunakawa Yushun, and Ichijima Kenkichi.

11 Suzuki Yasuzō, *Jiyū minken—kempō hoppū* (Civil rights—promulgation of the constitution), 184-5.

12 Nishimura Shinji, *Ono Azusa den,* 289; Rōyama Masamichi, *Kindai seijigaku no hattatsu* (The development of modern political science), 49.

13 See Nishimura, *Ono Azusa den,* 273-6; Rōyama, *Kindai seijigaku no hattatsu,* 52-3.


16 For further biographical data on Yano see Kokuri Mataichi, *Ryūkei Yano Fumio kun den* (Biography of Yano Fumio), 197-8, 201-2; Yano Fumio, ‘Ōkuma kō sekijitsusdan’ (‘Reminiscences on Marquis Ōkuma’), 23-4, in Matsue Yasuji (ed.), *Ōkuma kō sekijitsusdan.*


18 See discussion by Yanagida Izumi in ‘“Keikoku bidan” to sono seiji risō’ (‘Keikoku bidan’ and its political ideals), 234-62, in *Seiji shōsetsu kenkyū* (Studies on political novels) by the same author.

19 For a discussion of this last phase of his career see Watanabe, *Monjo yori,*
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435-43; Taiyō (Sun) ‘Scitōshi’ (‘History of political parties’) special edition, 1907, 73; Yano Fumio, Ōkuma kō sekijitsudan, 23-4.
18 Numa’s activities are followed in Kaishintō tōhō, 1893, no. 4, 22-4; no. 5, 43-5; no. 6, 30-1; no. 9, 26-9; no. 10, 17-19.
19 Scalapino, Democracy and the Party Movement, 137.
20 The Kaishintō roster is printed in Sasuhara Yasuzō, Meiji seishi, II, 1320-4. See also Hayashi Shigeru, ‘Rikken Kaishintō-in no tochi bumpu’ (‘Regional distribution of Kaishintō membership’) in Shakai kagaku kenkyū (Studies in social science) IX, nos. 4-5, 1958, 87. Some of the men listed from Tokyo were born in various han.
21 See Itagaki’s own account in Jiyūtō shi (History of the Liberal Party), I, 501.
22 Gorai, Ningen Ōkuma, 309.
23 This story is related by Gorai in Ningen Ōkuma, 136.
24 Quoted in Watanabe, Kankei monjo, V, 5-12.
25 Nishimura, Ono Azusa, 146-9.
26 Uyehara, George, The Political Development of Japan, 1867–1909, 90-2; Mizuno Yutaka, Rikken Kaishintō kōryō satsuyō (Outline of the program of the Constitutional Reform Party), 3-4.
27 Osatake, Nihon kenseishi taikō, II, 630-1.
28 Ichijima, Hachījū-nen shi, II, 30-3.
29 Quoted in Watanabe Gaitarō, Ōkuma rōhaku (Old Count Ōkuma), 157-9.
30 Quoted in Waseda Daigaku Henshūbu hensan (Compiled by the Waseda University Compilation Bureau), Ōkuma haku enzetsushū (Collected speeches of Count Ōkuma) 288-70.
31 Hayashi, ‘Rikken Kaishintō-in no tochi bumpu’, 106.
33 Shizoku accounted for slightly over 5 per cent of the population: Japan Statistical Yearbook, 1961, Bureau of Statistics, Office of the Prime Minister, 10; and Wakamori (ed.), Nihonshi jiten (Dictionary of Japanese history).
35 Tsuchiya, Nihon shihonshugi, 155; Osatake, Nihon kenseishi taikō, II, 644, reports capitalisation at 6 million yen.
36 Asabuki Eiji shi denki hensankai (Society for compilation of Asabuki Eiji’s biography), Asabuki Eiji kun den (Biography of Asabuki Eiji), 129-42; and Tanaka Sōgorō, Iwasaki Yatarō, 238-9.
37 For information on this point see Japan Weekly Mail, 27 June 1891, 736; Gorai, Ningen Ōkuma, 477; Ichijima, Hachījū-nen shi, II, 65; Matsue, Ōkuma kō sekijitsudan, 258, 263.
38 Suzuki, Jiyū minken—kempō happu, 191; Baba, Ōkuma Shigenobu, 220. The late Professor Watanabe Ikujirō of Waseda held the position that no connection had been established between Ōkuma and Mitsubishi, either at the time of the
political crisis or during the Kaishintō's existence subsequently: personal conversation at Waseda, 1956.


40 Narishima, originally more closely associated with the Jiyūtō, defected with Baba and Ōishi in protest against party policy of attacking the Kaishintō and against the financing of Itagaki's trip abroad: Yoshino Sakuzō (ed.), *Meiji bunka zenshū* (Complete works on Meiji culture) 1st ed., XVII, *Shimbun hen* (newspaper volume), 30, 66.

41 Banno Junji, *Meiji kempō taisei no kakuritsu* (Establishment of the Meiji constitutional system), 87-8.


45 It was common then, as now, for professors to teach at more than one university for financial reasons. For government actions against Waseda see Waseda Daigaku Shuppanjo (Waseda University Publications Bureau), *Waseda Daigaku nanajūgo-nen shi* (Seventy-five-year history of Waseda University), 35-7; also Ichijima, *Hachijūgo-nen shi*, II, 46; Matsue, *Ōkuma kō sekijitsudan*, 279.


47 The Marxist interpretation that the schism was produced by a clash between zaibatsu bureaucrats and middle and petty bourgeoisie need be given little credence in view of the other causes of disruption: Hayashida, *Nihon seitōshi*, I, 328; Suzuki, *Jiyū minken—kempō happu*, 223.


50 Ichijima, *Hachijūgo-nen shi*, II, 73; Matsue, *Ōkuma kō sekijitsudan*, 297. There were not actually twenty men who had left the government with Ōkuma in 1881. See pp. 52 and p. 160 n. 30.
Iwasaki in all political moves. Some accounts assert that Itō and Kuroda went so far as to apologise to Ōkuma for their role in the 1881 political crisis. See Hayashida, *Nihon seitōshi*, 254; Kaneko, *Itō Hirobumi*, II, 551; Gorai, *Ningen Ōkuma*, 373; Ichijima, *Hachijūgo-nen shi*, II, 80. If we are to believe Watanabe and Gorai, most of the Sat-Chō oligarchy active in the 1881 upheaval later apologised to Ōkuma for their behaviour toward him on that or other occasions.

6 Kokuri, *Yano Fumio*, 250.

*It is said that when Ōkuma handed Itō a note containing the above conditions, Itō replied, 'If I promise such a thing, and the promise becomes known, many inconveniences will arise, so we can decide that later and co-operate now', and so saying, tossed the note into the fire. There are several versions of what Ōkuma's note penned by Yano actually said and what Itō remarked as he threw it into the fire, but the weight of opinion is that it demanded the establishment of parliamentary government. There is also disagreement on Itō's reaction to the note. One report has it that he shouted angrily, 'It is enough that we decide to recommend you'. Still another version is that Itō destroyed the note because they were such good friends that a written agreement between them was deemed unnecessary. There is also the problem of whether Itō read the note before burning it. Some claim he did not, but stated he had already completed his study of the Constitution. Still another possibility is that Itō destroyed the note because he recognised that Yano and not Ōkuma was its author. See Osatake, *Meiji kenseishi*, 360-1; Osatake, *Nihon kenseishi taikō*, II, 763-4; Watanabe, *Kankei monjo*, V, 130; Ichijima, *Hachijūgo-nen shi*, II, 81-2. Inada Masatsugu, on the evidence of a letter from Kuroda to Itō, believes it was Kuroda, not Itō, who burned the note: *Meiji kempō seiritsushi*, II, 533.

*There is disagreement as to whether Ōkuma withdrew his conditions on 27 January 1888 before becoming Foreign Minister on 1 February. If so, this was an exception to Ōkuma's practice: Kaneko, *Itō Hirobumi*, II, 552-3, 556-8. In the press there was uncertainty about the circumstances of Ōkuma's entry into the cabinet. *Nichi nichibun* shimbun, for example, in the belief that Itō stood to gain by Ōkuma's entry into the cabinet with Kaishintō backing, assumed that Itō and not Ōkuma had made the concessions. Later, however, *Nichi nichibun* was quoted as reporting, 'We think that there is no doubt that Count Ōkuma entered the cabinet with the idea of carrying out his principles, but that he encountered an unexpected obstacle there in the form of clan feeling ... We do not know how it would be possible even for the three liberal counts—Goto, Ōkuma, and Itagaki—to break through clannism ... But we are disappointed that Count Ōkuma did not perceive how matters stood in the cabinet before taking office'; quoted in *Japan Weekly Mail*, 4 August 1888, 108.

*Wakabayashi, *Dai Nihon seitōshi*, 344.

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10 Sasuhara, Meiji seishi, in Meiji bunka zenshū, X, 47.
12 Inoue Kiyoshi, Jōyaku kaisei (Treaty revision), 141; Fukaya Hiroharu, 'Ōkuma Shigenobu to jōyaku kaisei' ('Ōkuma Shigenobu and treaty revision'), in Ōkuma kenkyū, no. 2, 1952, 22.
13 Watanabe, Kankei monjo, V, 247-61; Kokuri, Yano Fumio, 262-3.
14 S July-13 July 1889.
15 Inoue, Jōyaku kaisei, 150; Nippon, 1 September 1889.
16 Inoue, Jōyaku kaisei, 148-9; Taïyō, 1907 edition, Seitōshi, 72.
17 Ōtsu, Dai Nihon kenseishi, III, 283-92. The argument about naturalised judges was somewhat spurious, as there were no such persons in Meiji Japan.
18 Inoue, Jōyaku kaisei, 156-60.
19 Kaneko, Itō Hirobumi, 676-92; Sasuhara, Meiji seishi, X, 86, asserts that Itō and Inoue were at the 2 August cabinet conference.
20 Ōtsu, Dai Nihon kenseishi, III, 299-300; Takeuchi Tatsuji, War and Diplomacy in the Japanese Empire, 97; and Sasuhara, Meiji seishi, X, 101, are among those who assert that Ōkuma on 18 October agreed to halt negotiations. Wakabayashi, Nihon seitōshi, 359, and Gorai, Ningen Ōkuma, 400, hold that Ōkuma refused and was only halted by subsequent events.
21 Japan Weekly Mail, 26 October 1889.
23 Quoted in Japan Weekly Mail, 21 December 1889; 25 January 1890.
24 Japan Weekly Mail, 19 October 1889.
26 246 of a total of 1,243 candidates were supported by the Kaishintō. Wakabayashi, Nihon seitōshi, 364; Tsukada Masao (comp.), Rikken Minseitō shi (History of the Constitutional People's Political Party), I, 53; Japan Weekly Mail, 15 April 1889.
27 Ichijima, Hachijūgo-nen shi, II, 184.
28 Ōkuma, in any case, had attended only one Privy Council session: Watanabe, Kankei monjo, V, 420; Ichijima, Hachijūgo-nen shi, II, 185-6.
29 Tokutomi Iichirō, Kōshaku Matsukata Masayoshi den (Biography of Prince Matsukata Masayoshi), II, 454.
30 Although Ōkuma may have been speaking in jest, Ozaki appears to have taken him seriously; however, he did not specify whether he acted on the suggestion: Takada Sanac, Hampo mukashi banashi (Old stories of Hampo), 275; Ozaki, Nihon kenseishi, I, 236.
31 Japan Weekly Mail, 9 April 1892.
32 Japan Weekly Mail, 9 April 1892.
33 Ichijima, Hachijūgo-nen shi, II, 188.
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**Kaishintö töhö**, no. 26, 1894, 23.

**Kaishintö töhö**, no. 29, 1894, 1-11.

*Japan Weekly Mail*, 10 February 1894, 175.


The new party chose five directors: Ozaki, Inukai, Daitö Gitetsu, Haseba Sumitaka, and Shiba Shirö: *Kokumin no tomo*, no. 301, 1896 (2), 13-16; Lay, ‘Brief Sketch’, 427. It is difficult to gauge the strength of Ökuma’s leadership, and Lay may have overstated the case when he asserted, ‘The Shimpotö was brought into existence in March, 1896, at the instance of Count Ökuma’: ‘Brief Sketch’, 427. Ozaki in *Nihon kenseishi*, I, 306, also asserts Ökuma’s role was crucial.

The *Jiyütö* organ charged: ‘Ökuma got tens of thousands by rice price speculation and used it to buy the Shimpotö by paying part of the former Kaishintö and Kakushintö members to form the Shimpotö’, and added, ‘Undoubtedly Shimpotö speakers are paying people in the districts’: *Jiyütö töhö*, 55, no. 104, 1896, 12-15; no. 105, 33-4.

*Japan Weekly Mail*, 26 October 1895.

Baba, *Ökuma Shigenobu*, 323-4; Hayashida, *Nihon seitöshi*, I, 440; *Jiji shimpö*, 22 August 1896. Its editor was Fukuzawa Yukichi.


Isa, *Ozaki Yukio*, 555-6. If true, this would be an extraordinary instance of feminine influence in Meiji politics. Stories of the unusual regard Ökuma had for his wife are legion; he was exceptional among Meiji statesmen in this respect. He appears to have kept no mistresses, which also set him apart from his philandering colleagues.


Hirota Naoe asserts that the cabinet was established through Mitsubishi power. This theory was strengthened by the marriage tie between Matsukata and the Iwasaki family. Hirota claims that Ökuma would have preferred a rapprochement with Itö rather than with Matsukata: *Gojü-nenkan naikaku kötetsu shironshü* (Complete history of fifty years of cabinet change), 406-7, 449.

It was Ökuma, Matsukata, Kabayama, and Takashima the *Jiyütö* referred to
when the party organ described the cabinet as a ‘four-headed monster’: Jiyūtō tōhō, 5, no. 119, 1896.

49 Watanabe Gaitarō, Ōkuma rōhaku, 177-8.
50 Watanabe Gaitarō, Ōkuma rōhaku, 181; Nakayama, Köno Banshū, II, 436.
51 Ōtsu, Dai Nihon kenseishi, IV, 692-3; Saitō, Nihon seitō hattatsu, 365.
52 Tokutomi, Matsukata Masayoshi, II, 645; Alignment of the new cabinet of 29 September 1896 included: Matsukata as his own Finance Minister; Ōkuma as Foreign Minister; Kabayama as Home Minister; Kiyoura Keigo as Justice Minister; Hachisuka as Education Minister (the post having been refused by Gotō Shōjirō); Enomoto Takeaki as Minister of Agriculture and Commerce; Nomura Yasushi as Communications Minister; Takashima as Army Minister; and Saigo as Navy Minister.
53 Ōtsu, Dai Nihon kenseishi, IV, 679-84. Japan administered Taiwan following the settlement of the Sino-Japanese War in 1895.
54 Tsukada, Minseitō shi, 87.
56 The name Twenty-Sixth Century derived from the Japanese system of chronicling history from the year 660 B.C., which would make the nineteenth century the twenty-sixth.
57 Tokutomi, Matsukata Masayoshi, II, 654; Nakano Seigō, Meiji minken shiron (Historical essays on Meiji popular rights), 452; Ichijima, Hachijūgo-nen shi, II, 276-7. Another version is that the two left voluntarily in disagreement with the cabinet: Taiyō, 1907 edition, Seitōshi, 113.
58 Tokutomi, Matsukata Masayoshi, II, 655; Baba, Ōkuma Shigenobu, 333; Ichijima, Hachijūgo-nen shi, II, 278-9; Ōtsu, Dai Nihon kenseishi, IV, 732; Kudō, Meiji kenseishi, I, 580; Shimpo tōhō, no. 17, 1898, 7.
59 Tokutomi, Matsukata Masayoshi, II, 655; Ōtsu, Dai Nihon kenseishi, I, 732.
60 Tokutomi, Matsukata Masayoshi, II, 656; Nakano, Meiji minken shiron, 455.
61 27 November 1897.
62 Baba, Ōkuma Shigenobu, 334; Gorai, Ningen Ōkuma, 420-1.
63 Kataoka, a Jiyūtō leader, nominated Minoura, Kurihara, Takeuchi, and Itō Daihachi as party directors, and an executive committee of Ozaki, Matsuda, and Daitō was also appointed: Ōtsu, Dai Nihon kenseishi, IV, 792-7; Lay, ‘Brief Sketch’, 435.
64 Nakayama, Köno Banshū, 497.

The genrō, or elder statesmen, not to be confused with the Genrō-in (Senate, created in 1875), were an ex officio but extremely powerful body of oligarchs having no legal existence, composed with one exception entirely of Sat-Chō men. The genrō came into being some time around 1890 and had as their primary function the selection of Prime Minister. The genrō continued to exercise power until the death of their last member, Saionji, in 1940.


Isa, *Ozaki Yukio*, 608-9; Ōkuma may have had this regard for Saigō because of their former association in the Taiwan expedition. The Matsukata and Kuroda cabinets had also continued the tradition of Ōkuma's collaboration with Satsuma.

Tokutomi, *Taishō seikyoku shiron* (Historical essays on the Taishō political situation), 249, 289; Nishino Yōji, *Ōkuma naikaku no shinsō* (Actual state of affairs under the Ōkuma cabinet), 1-2.

Some authors maintain that in Ōkuma's 10-12 April talks with the genrō he was directed to promote the increase of the Army and to attack the Seiyūkai, and that he consented: Tokutomi, *Taishō seikyoku*, 239; Isa, *Ozaki Yukio*, 809; Baba, *Ōkuma Shigenobu*, 362; Segai Inoue kō den, V, 355-6.
7 Quoted in Ichijima, *Hachijûgo-nen shi*, III, 115. Ôkuma and Saionji were the only non-Sat-Chô Premiers since the inception of the cabinet system in 1885.

8 Baba, *Ôkuma Shigenobu*, 366.

9 Ozaki later regretfully conceded that Inukai had been correct in deeming it a Katô cabinet: Baba, *Ôkuma Shigenobu*, 367-79; Ozaki, *Nihon kenseishi*, II, 142-3, 149.

10 There was a cooling of the relationship between Ôkuma and Inukai following Inukai's refusal to enter this cabinet. When Inukai came to visit Ôkuma on his deathbed it is said he was not admitted to see Ôkuma: Tokutomi, *Taishô seikyoku*, 255-7; Ôtsu, *Dai Nihon kenseishi*, VII, 293-6; Ozaki, *Nihon kenseishi*, II, 142-3.


13 This partly explained the opposition of Saionji, Öyama, and Matsukata to Yamagata's later suggestion that Ôkuma be treated like Saionji, i.e., as a member of the genrô, after he retired. Inoue expressed fear that, if this were done, Ôkuma would reveal 'genrô secrets'. Besides, no man not of Satsuma or Chôshû origin had ever sat in genrô councils, except Saionji: Ichijima, *Hachijûgo-nen shi*, III, 189-90; Yokoyama, *Haku Ôkuma*, 182-3; Hara Keiichirô, *Hara Takashi nikki* (Hara Takashi diary), VII, 35; Mogi and Redman, Quigley, and Scalapino erroneously assert that Ôkuma was given the privilege of sitting in on genrô meetings: Mogi and Redman, *The Problem of the Far East*, 54; Quigley, *Japanese Government and Politics*, 96-7; Scalapino, *Democracy and the Party Movement*, 211.


15 I am indebted to Professor Oka Yoshitake for calling my attention to the inconsistency of Ôkuma's appeals to the emperor.

16 Watanabe, *Ôkuma Shigenobu*, 204-6.

17 Segai Inoue kô den, V, 216.

18 Ôtsu, *Dai Nihon kenseishi*, VII, 504. There was some opinion in favour of encouraging Yuan Shih-k'âi, who had usurped power as part of his scheme to establish a constitutional monarchy.


20 *Japan Weekly Mail*, 1 September 1900.

21 *The Independent*, 82, 1915, 56.


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* Nishino, Ōkuma naikaku, 24-5; Japan Weekly Chronicle, 22 April 1915.
* 50,000 yen, according to some accounts, which reportedly came from a 'secret fund' in the Agriculture and Commerce Ministry.
* Hayashida, Nihon seitōshi, II, 236. Expressions of regret like Ōkuma's on the part of public figures or even accused criminals often elicited favourable public and official reactions.
* Wakatsuki Reijirō jiden, 239; Katō Takaaki kankōkai (Kato Takaaki Publication Association), Katō Takaaki den (Biography of Katō Takaaki), 163-4.
* Maeda Renzan, Hara Takashi den (Biography of Hara Takashi), II, 266.
* Watanabe, Gaitarō, Ōkuma rōhaku, 248-55; Ichijima, Hachijügo-nen shi, III, 224-5, 256.
* The Far East, VI, 679, 13 March 1915.
* Nagai Ryutarō, editor of Shin Nippon, was sometimes referred to as 'little Ōkuma' because he was so strongly influenced by Ōkuma's views: Shin Nippon, V, May 1915; Hanazono, The Development of Japanese Journalism, 53.
* Isa, Ozaki Yukio, 853-4; Ozaki, Nihon kenseishi, II, 207-9; Katō Takaaki den, 168-70.
* Takahashi Yoshio, Sankö Iretsu (Legacy of accomplishments of Prince Yamagata), 126.
* Yamagata added, 'I never could understand his intent in his speeches. They were difficult to understand, even if I was very attentive and tried to catch the main point ... This habit [of obfuscation] was one of the reasons for his fame as a great orator'. Hara was convinced that Ōkuma never intended to resign and that Yamagata lacked the courage to force him out: Takahashi, Sankö Iretsu, 127-9; Hara Takashi Nikki, VII, 64-7.
* Japan Weekly Chronicle, 10 December 1914.

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1 Oka Yoshitake, Kindai Nihon no seijika (Statesmen of modern Japan), 72-3.
* This chapter is based on a chapter titled 'Ōkuma Shigenobu, Modernization, and the West', by the author in Skrzypczak, E. (ed.), Japan's Modern Century, 27-40. Permission to quote is acknowledged to Monumenta Nipponica. See also Ōkuma Shigenobu, Ōkuma haku shakai gan (Count Ōkuma's social views).
* Japan Weekly Mail, 1 September 1906, 211.
* Stead, Alfred, Japan by the Japanese, a Survey by its Highest Authorities, 226.
* Kikuchi, Gyōtei (ed.), Seinen kunwa (Training for youth), 2.
* Ōkuma haku shakai gan, 36.
* Ōkuma haku shakai gan, 25-50.
* Emori, Yasukichi (ed.), Ōkuma haku hyakuwa (One hundred stories of Count Ōkuma), 289-91.
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1 Emori, Ōkuma haku hyakuwa, 235.
2 Maruyama, Masao, Thought and Behaviour in Modern Japanese Politics, 128-30.
3 Japan Weekly Mail, 12 April 1913; de la Mazelière, Le Japon, Historie et Civilisation, 70.
5 Iddittie, Marquis Ōkuma, 358.
7 Oka, Kindai Nihon no seijika, 89.
9 Emori, Ōkuma haku hyakuwa, 177-8.
10 In assessing Ōkuma's own financial position, a cautionary note is in order regarding his relationship to the Mitsubushi Company. There has been an aura of mystery surrounding Ōkuma's personal finances and the support of Waseda and the Kaishintō. The origins of the misconceptions are dual: first, the desire of Ōkuma's rivals and critics to exaggerate the relationship between him and Iwasaki, and second, overemphasis by Marxist historians on the political concerns of Mitsui and Mitsubishi. Actually, in the early days of Waseda, Ōkuma complained of penury and expressed gratitude to Lord Nabeshima for the help he gave Waseda and the Kaishintō. Later the school received an Imperial grant and offers of...
assistance from abroad. Ōkuma was of upper middle samurai rank (income), and his early talents in finance he put to use advising friends, including Nabeshima, on managing their property and investments. For this he must have received some return.

Bibliographical Note

Waseda University is the major repository and source of publications on Ōkuma. In commemoration of its founder, Waseda established the Ōkuma Shigenobu Kenkyūshitsu (later the Shakai Kagaku Kenkyūjo) as a repository for its collection of Ōkuma papers, including all extant Ōkuma correspondence. This collection has since been moved to the University Library. A published catalogue is available. Waseda has published two series of volumes of Ōkuma papers: the first edited by the late Professor Watanabe Ikujirō is in six volumes: Ōkuma Shigenobu Kankei Monjo, 1932-5. A second series, Ōkuma Shigenobu Monjo, 1962, is in five volumes. Professor Watanabe also edited another volume of documents with commentary, Monjo yori mitaru Ōkuma Shigenobu Kō (Marquis Ōkuma viewed through documents), 1932. Yet another series of Ōkuma documents has been reprinted under the editorship of Kimura Tsuyoshi: Ōkuma Shigenobu Sōsho, 5 vols., 1969-70. Many papers in the collection have also been microfilmed.

Another useful primary source is Ōkuma’s own memoirs, Ōkuma Haku Sekijitsudan (Reminiscences of Count Ōkuma), published in 1895. There are a number of standard biographies also published by Waseda. The oldest of these was written by a contemporary of Ōkuma, Ichijima Kenkichi: Ōkuma kō hachijūgo-nen shi (Eighty-five-year history of Marquis Ōkuma), 1926, in three volumes, containing some documents. Professor Watanabe’s Ōkuma Shigenobu has appeared in two editions, 1943 and 1952. Another Waseda Professor, Iddittic Junesay (or Ijichi Shimasa) has written a biography in English, also in two editions: The Life of Marquis Ōkuma, a Maker of New Japan, 1940, and Marquis Ōkuma, a Biographical Study in the Rise of Democratic Japan, 1956. A more recent biography has appeared by yet another Waseda professor, Nakamura Naomi, also in two editions, Ōkuma Shigenobu, 1961 and 1968.

Also useful is the journal Ōkuma Kenkyū, formerly published by Waseda’s Shakai Kagaku Kenkyūjo. There are a plethora of other biographies, many of them published by Waseda, for example those by Baba Tsunего and Gorai Kinzō.
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