

The nobles who developed Nasunogahara

Aristocrats of the Meiji era flocked to Nasunogahara to establish farms and develop agricultural land. These nobles, or *kazoku*, included many notable figures from the Meiji Restoration and the Meiji government.



▲ Ladies' Charity Party at Rokumeikan
A picture of a charity bazaar held at Rokumeikan by wives of high-ranking officials.

▶ Hanna Aoki, daughter of Shuzo Aoki. Shuzo married Elisabeth, the daughter of a German aristocrat, while in Germany as a diplomat. Hanna was their only child.



Nobles with ties to Nasunogahara

Perhaps driven by dreams of owning land near Tokyo like a Western noble's estate, many nobles built farms and villas in Nasunogahara. Here are some of the nobles with close ties to Nasunogahara.



Shuzo Aoki
(1844-1914)
Diplomat and politician. Viscount. Established Aoki Farm in 1881.



Iwao Oyama
(1842-1916)
Military officer and politician. Duke. Established Kajiyakaikonjo in 1881 and Oyama Farm in 1901.



Judo Saigo
(1843-1902)
Military officer and politician. Marquis. Established Kajiyakaikonjo in 1881 and Saigo Farm in 1901.



Yajiro Shinagawa
(1843-1900)
Diplomat and politician. Viscount. Established Shinagawa Farm in 1883.



Maresuke Nogii
(1849-1912)
Military officer and educator. Count. Built a villa in Ishibayashi, Karino Village in 1891.

Photo from Nogi Shrine's collection.



Tosuke Hirata
(1849-1925)
Government official and politician. Count. Took over Shinagawa Kaikon (later Kasamatsu Farm) and established the Shinagawa Credit Union.



Masayoshi Matsukata
(1835-1924)
Politician. Duke. Established Senbonmatsu Farm in 1893.



Michitsune Mishima
(1835-1888)
Government official. Viscount. Established Chokosha in 1880 and Mishima Farm in 1886.



Aritomo Yamagata
(1838-1922)
Military officer and politician. Duke. Established Yamagata Farm in 1884.

Photo from General Yamagata Memorial Museum's collection.

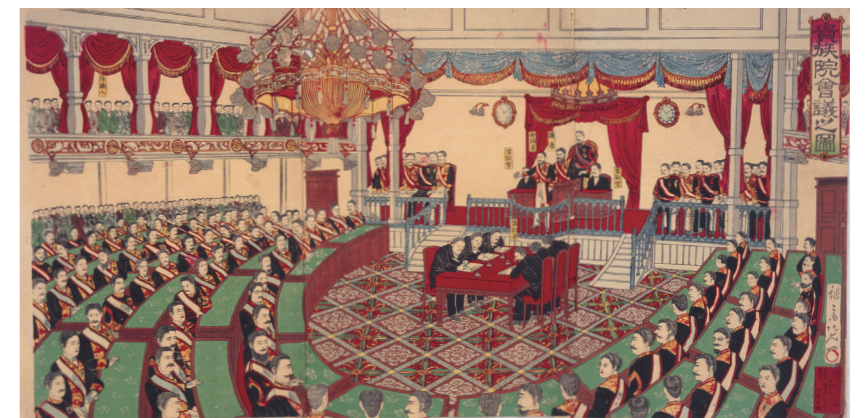
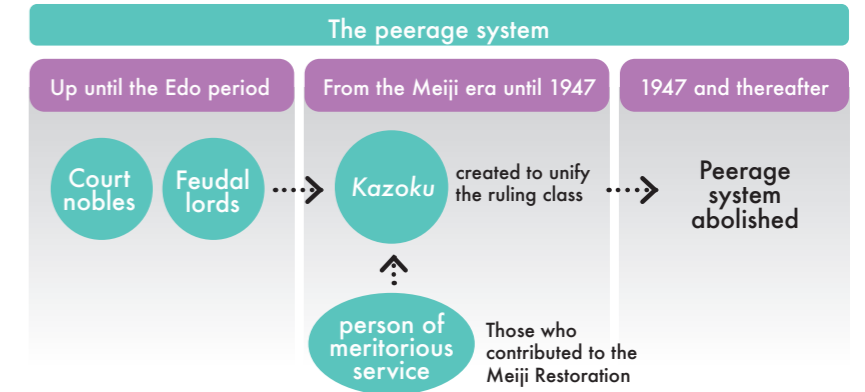


Akiyoshi Yamada
(1844-1892)
Military officer and politician. Count. Established Yamada Farm in 1888.

Photo from Yamada Museum's collection.

The Meiji era's peerage system

Until the Edo period, Japanese aristocracy consisted of nobles who served the emperor. In contrast, the *kazoku* were a new aristocratic class created in the Meiji era. As the Meiji government changed the governmental system, the domains ruled by feudal lords were replaced by prefectures, and the lords no longer ruled their domains. To maintain their high societal positions, nobles of the imperial court, feudal lords, and those who contributed to the Meiji Restoration were included in the new peerage system. The five ranks in increasing order of importance were baron, viscount, count, marquis, and duke, with privileges and duties established for each. The peerage system continued until the new constitution was enacted in 1947.



▲ The House of Peers
During the Meiji era, the Imperial Diet consisted of the House of Representatives and the House of Peers. Only those from privileged classes such as imperial family members and nobles could become members of the House of Peers.

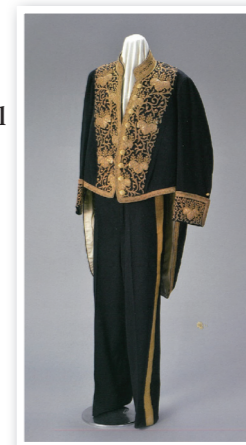
Life of the nobles

Many nobles led lives of luxury by investing the stipend they received from the government, for example. Many also adopted Western influences, mingling with foreigners and dancing at social spaces such as Rokumeikan as part of an elegant lifestyle.



◀ Rokumeikan a Western-style venue built for social events for foreign diplomats, etc. as part of a national policy of modernization through the adoption of Western systems and culture.

Photo from Kasumi Kaikan.



▲ Western wear of the nobles
Left: court uniform of civil officials (1925). Right: court uniform of civil officials and women's robe decollete (replica).



◀ Western tableware tableware used by the Masayoshi Matsukata household, bearing his family crest. The dishes were made in England, and the knives, forks, spoons, etc. were made in France.