

E-Learning Study Material

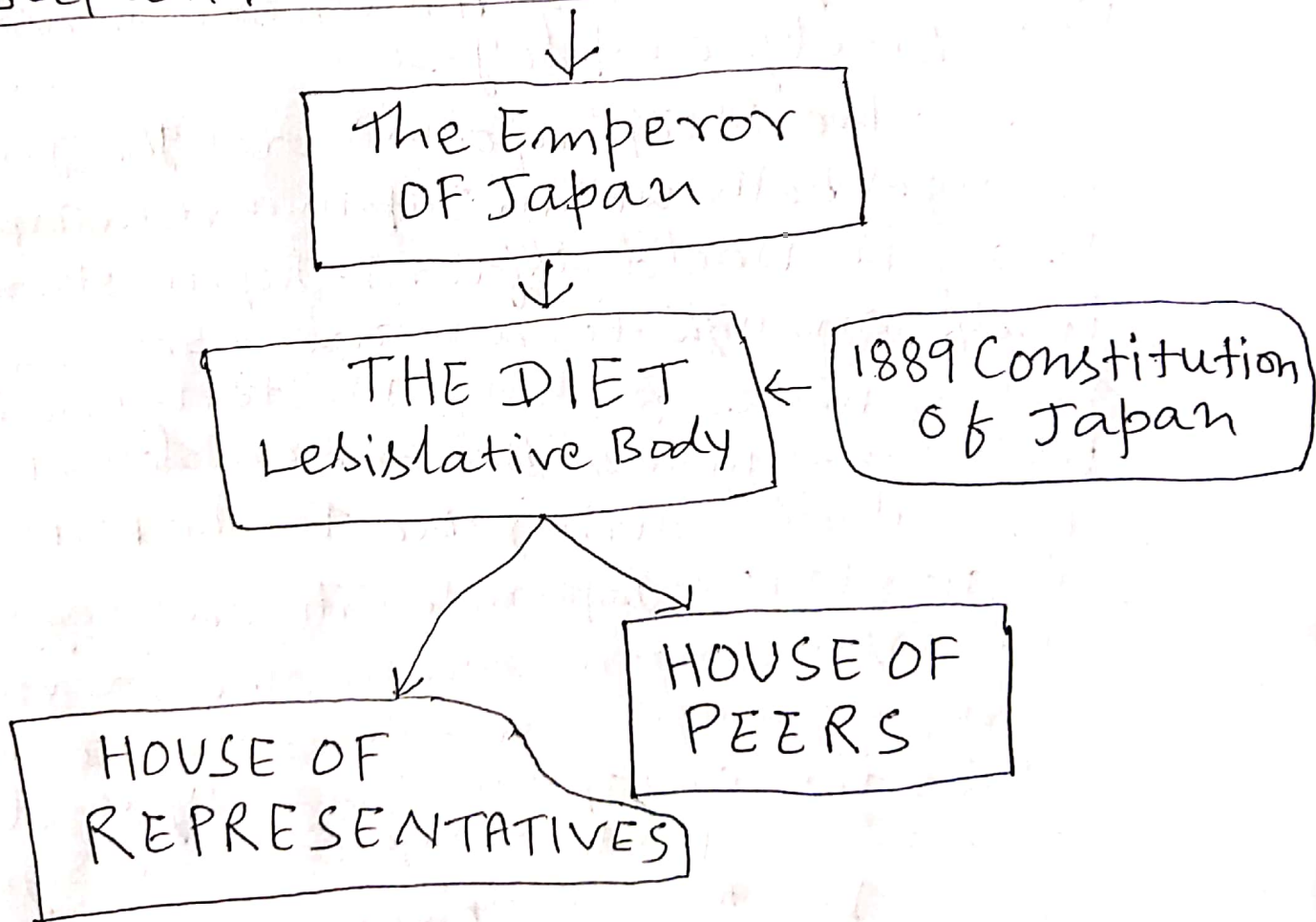
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Political Effects of Meiji Restoration in Japan:-



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In spite of institutional changes brought about by the 1889 Constitution, sovereignty still resided in the emperor on the basis of his divine ancestry. The new constitution specified a form of government that was still authoritarian in character with the DIET receiving only minimal concessions. Political parties were allowed to exist as part of political process, but the compromises made between the DIET and the EMPEROR over the next twenty years increased the DIET's power. The 1889 Constitution (Meiji Constitution) remained the Fundamental Law of Japan until 1947.

The new face of Japan was Emperor Meiji, young and full of new ideas, who set Japan on the path of modernization, with the western nations as his model. A restructuring of Japan in nearly every respect—political, social, and economic—soon followed. Emperor Meiji and his followers sent envoys to these nations to examine their political systems and the ideas that they

brought back to Japan shaped the new government. On the one hand, in order to modernize the the government the new rules would need to dismantle the old Feudal System, which meant taking away the considerable privileges enjoyed by the aristocratic classes - although these aristocrats typically filled the new government posts, so they still wielded political power.

After a period of unrest in which many Japanese began to question the new system that was developing Japan's leaders were forced to reconsider their path to modernization. Farmers, for example, resented the new emphasis on industrial development; agriculture had been, after all understood in the feudal period to be the backbone of the Japanese Economy. In addition ~~to~~ as Japanese developed contacts with the outside world, they absorbed many influences, including notions of ~~democratic~~ democratic political processes. In 1890 the Meiji Constitution was adopted proclaimed as a "gift of the emperor" to the Japanese people. The Constitution established a DIET, a Legislative body with two houses: members of the upper house were appointed while those of the lower house were elected. The emperor abolished the old class system.