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Kaisei Gakko (開成学校) in Tokyo.

Although Mutsu had been born into a family of the modern state of Japan, he had not experienced the revision of the unequal treaties. After the Russo-Japanese War, it was Japanese diplomacy that had won, which Japan had staked the fate of the country on. Komura was born in 1864, the year Commodore Perry's fleet arrived in Japan. Because Japan was undergoing drastic changes in the 1850s and 1860s, this ten-year difference put Mutsu and Komura in two different generations.

Until he turned fifteen years old, Komura received the traditional education of the Tokugawa period. Komura excelled in all his courses at the highly esteemed school owned by Oki-no (奥の陣), a small local domain in Kyushu of only 50,000 *koku*.<sup>1</sup> Despite the minuscule size of its *han*, the

1. *Koku* was a Japanese unit of volume, originally defined as the quantity of rice (about 150 kilograms, or 330 pounds) sufficient to feed one person for one year.