

## Foreign Influence Mandate by Tokugawa Shogunate

- The reunification of Japan is accomplished by three strong daimyo who succeed each other: Oda Nobunaga (1543-1582), Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536-1598), and finally Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542-1616) who establishes the Tokugawa Shogunate, that governs for more than 250 years, following the Battle of Sekigahara in 1600.
- The reunification of Japan under the Tokugawa Shogunate in 1600 brings with it an emphasis on the reestablishment of order — in social, political, and international relations — following a century of civil war and turmoil. Aware of the political and religious domination of the Philippines since the Spanish colonized the country in 1565, the Japanese political leaders are suspicious of the Dominican and Franciscan missionaries that arrive in Japan from the Philippines and work among the non-samurai classes. The Japanese daimyo move to curtail missionary activity beginning in the 1590s. In 1606, the new Shogun, Tokugawa Ieyasu, proscribes Christianity (just at a time the Jesuits are being received at the imperial court in China), and by 1614 a concerted effort to end all Christian practice is underway. (There are an estimated 300,000 Christians in Japan at this time.)
- Within a century of the arrival of the Portuguese in Japan in 1543, they are followed by the Dutch and British who have battled to break the Portuguese and then Spanish control of the Asian spice trade. The East India companies established by the Dutch and British, respectively, become active in the early 1600s; the Dutch (1609) and the British (1613) establish trading relations with the Japanese with bases on a Japanese island.
- In an effort to reestablish order in its international relations, however, the Tokugawa Shogunate prohibits trade with Western nations, prohibits Japanese from going abroad to trade (ending the unofficial piracy and trade on the China coast), and reaffirms Japan's official relations with China and Korea within the East Asian international structure. Following the "Act of Seclusion" (1636) setting forth these conditions, Japan is effectively "secluded" from interchange with Western Europe (but not with East Asia) for the next 200 years. Only the Dutch retain a small outpost on an island in Nagasaki Harbor; books obtained from the Dutch are translated into Japanese and "Dutch learning" forms the basis of the Japanese knowledge of developments in the West throughout this period. Within East Asia, trade continues with the Koreans and Chinese, and exchange of goods and ideas with China is maintained. The East Asian political order, with China at the center, is reinforced.

## Tokugawa Japan

- Under the rule of the Tokugawa shoguns (1600-1868), Japan enjoys a 250-year period of peace and order.
- Dramatic changes take place within this ordered society, however, particularly those of commercial development, the rise of a merchant class, the growth of cities and of a new urban culture.
- The prolonged period of peace fosters great economic and social changes in Japanese society, culture, and the economy, setting the stage for rapid modernization in the subsequent Meiji period.

- This Tokugawa period is viewed as Japan's "pre-modern" period and is important to historians as they attempt to define what is "modernization" in many contexts.

#### **Literature in Tokugawa Japan**

- The literature of the period gives voice to the culture of the new urban population, the "townsmen".
- The haiku form is perfected in this period by Bashô (1644-1694) from the linked verse written by townsmen in the new urban culture of the period.

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