



3

# Japan Returns to Isolation

### MAIN IDEA

**ECONOMICS** The Tokugawa regime unified Japan and began 250 years of isolation, autocracy, and economic growth.

### WHY IT MATTERS NOW

Even now, Japan continues to limit and control dealings with foreigners, especially in the area of trade.

### TERMS & NAMES

- daimyo
- Oda Nobunaga
- Toyotomi Hideyoshi
- Tokugawa Shogunate
- haiku
- kabuki

**SETTING THE STAGE** In the 1300s, the unity that had been achieved in Japan in the previous century broke down. Shoguns, or military leaders, in the north and south fiercely fought one another for power. Although these two rival courts later came back together at the end of the century, a series of politically weak shoguns let control of the country slip from their grasp. The whole land was torn by factional strife and economic unrest. It would be centuries before Japan would again be unified.

### TAKING NOTES

**Comparing** Use a chart to compare the achievements of the daimyos who unified Japan.

Daimyo	Achievements

## A New Feudalism Under Strong Leaders

In 1467, civil war shattered Japan’s old feudal system. The country collapsed into chaos. Centralized rule ended. Power drained away from the shogun to territorial lords in hundreds of separate domains.

**Local Lords Rule** A violent era of disorder followed. This time in Japanese history, which lasted from 1467 to 1568, is known as the Sengoku, or “Warring States,” period. Powerful samurai seized control of old feudal estates. They offered peasants and others protection in return for their loyalty. These warrior-chieftains, called **daimyo** (DYE•mee•oh), became lords in a new kind of Japanese feudalism. Daimyo meant “great name.” Under this system, security came from this group of powerful warlords. The emperor at Kyoto became a figurehead, having a leadership title but no actual power.

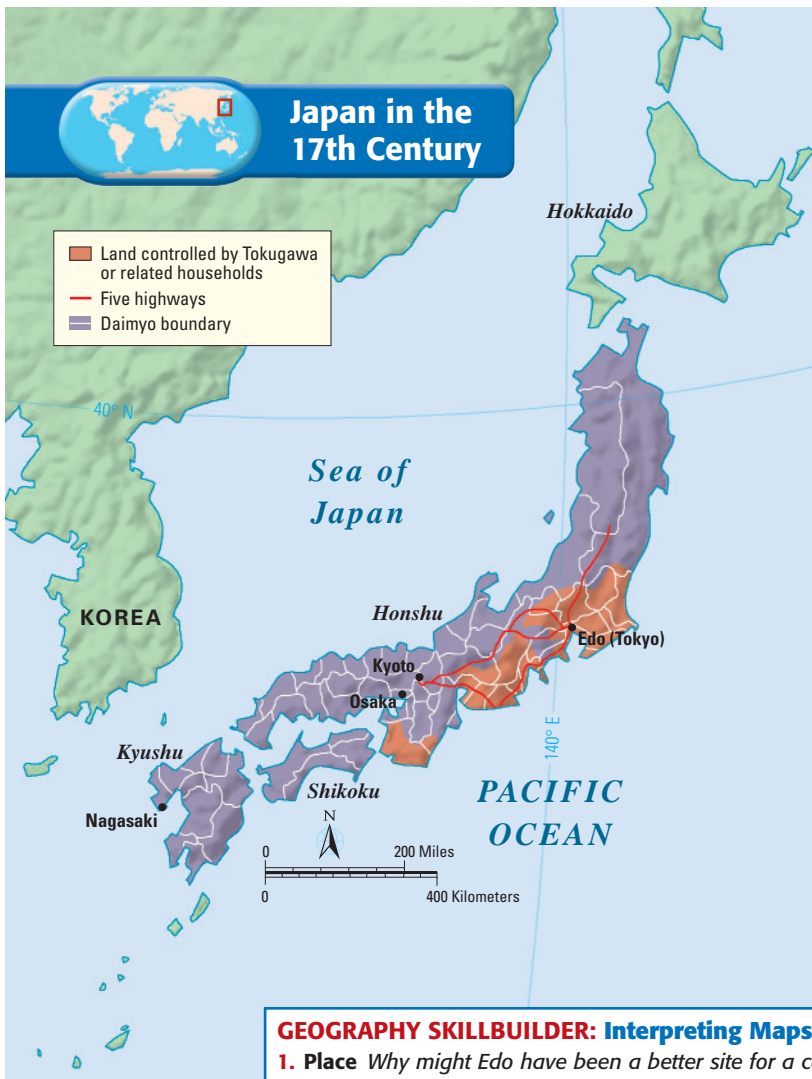
The new Japanese feudalism resembled European feudalism in many ways. The daimyo built fortified castles and created small armies of samurai on horses. Later they added foot soldiers with muskets (guns) to their ranks. Rival daimyo often fought each other for territory. This led to disorder throughout the land.

**New Leaders Restore Order** A number of ambitious daimyo hoped to gather enough power to take control of the entire country. One, the brutal and ambitious **Oda Nobunaga** (oh•dah noh•boo•nah•gah), defeated his rivals and seized the imperial capital Kyoto in 1568.

Following his own motto “Rule the empire by force,” Nobunaga sought to eliminate his remaining enemies. These included rival daimyo as well as wealthy Buddhist monasteries aligned with them. In 1575, Nobunaga’s 3,000 soldiers armed with muskets crushed an enemy force of samurai cavalry. This was the first time firearms had been used effectively in battle in Japan. However,

A samurai warrior ▼





▲ Himeji Castle, completed in the 17th century, is near Kyoto.

**GEOGRAPHY SKILLBUILDER: Interpreting Maps**

- Place** Why might Edo have been a better site for a capital in the 17th century than Kyoto?
- Region** About what percentage of Japan was controlled by Tokugawa or related households when Tokugawa Ieyasu took power in the early 1600s?

Nobunaga was not able to unify Japan. He committed *seppuku*, the ritual suicide of a samurai, in 1582, when one of his own generals turned on him.

Nobunaga's best general, **Toyotomi Hideyoshi** (toh•you•toh•mee hee•deh•yoh•shee), continued his fallen leader's mission. Hideyoshi set out to destroy the daimyo that remained hostile. By 1590, by combining brute force with shrewd political alliances, he controlled most of the country. Hideyoshi did not stop with Japan. With the idea of eventually conquering China, he invaded Korea in 1592 and began a long campaign against the Koreans and their Ming Chinese allies. When Hideyoshi died in 1598, his troops withdrew from Korea.

**Tokugawa Shogunate Unites Japan** One of Hideyoshi's strongest daimyo allies, Tokugawa Ieyasu (toh•koo•gah•wah ee•yeh•yah•soo), completed the unification of Japan. In 1600, Ieyasu defeated his rivals at the Battle of Sekigahara. His victory earned him the loyalty of daimyo throughout Japan. Three years later, Ieyasu became the sole ruler, or shogun. He then moved Japan's capital to his power base at Edo, a small fishing village that would later become the city of Tokyo.

Japan was unified, but the daimyo still governed at the local level. To keep them from rebelling, Ieyasu required that they spend every other year in the capital. Even when they returned to their lands, they had to leave their families behind as hostages in Edo. Through this "alternate attendance policy" and other restrictions, Ieyasu tamed the daimyo. This was a major step toward restoring centralized government to Japan. As a result, the rule of law overcame the rule of the sword. **A**

**MAIN IDEA**

**Drawing Conclusions**

**A** How would the "alternate attendance policy" restrict the daimyo?

Ieyasu founded the **Tokugawa Shogunate**, which would hold power until 1867. On his deathbed in 1616, Ieyasu advised his son, Hidetada, “Take care of the people. Strive to be virtuous. Never neglect to protect the country.” Most Tokugawa shoguns followed that advice. Their rule brought a welcome order to Japan.

**Vocabulary**  
A *shogunate* is the administration or rule of a shogun.

## Life in Tokugawa Japan

Japan enjoyed more than two and a half centuries of stability, prosperity, and isolation under the Tokugawa shoguns. Farmers produced more food, and the population rose. Still, the vast majority of peasants, weighed down by heavy taxes, led lives filled with misery. The people who prospered in Tokugawa society were the merchant class and the wealthy. However, everyone, rich and poor alike, benefited from a flowering of Japanese culture during this era.

**Society in Tokugawa Japan** Tokugawa society was very structured. (See Feudalism feature on page 361.) The emperor had the top rank but was just a figurehead. The actual ruler was the shogun, who was the supreme military commander. Below him were the daimyo, the powerful landholding samurai. Samurai warriors came next. The peasants and artisans followed them. Peasants made up about four-fifths of the population. Merchants were at the bottom, but they gradually became more important as the Japanese economy expanded.

In Japan, as in China, Confucian values influenced ideas about society. According to Confucius, the ideal society depended on agriculture, not commerce. Farmers, not merchants, made ideal citizens. In the real world of Tokugawa Japan, however, peasant farmers bore the main tax burden and faced more difficulties than any other class. Many of them abandoned farm life and headed for the expanding towns and cities. There, they mixed with samurai, artisans, and merchants.

By the mid-1700s, Japan began to shift from a rural to an urban society. Edo had grown from a small village in 1600 to perhaps the largest city in the world. Its population was more than one million. The rise of large commercial centers also increased employment opportunities for women. Women found jobs in entertainment, textile manufacturing, and publishing. Still, the majority of Japanese women led sheltered and restricted lives as peasant wives. They worked in the fields, managed the household, cared for the children, and obeyed their husband without question.

**Culture Under the Tokugawa Shogunate** Traditional culture continued to thrive. Samurai attended ceremonial *noh* dramas, which were based on tragic themes. They read tales of ancient warriors and their courage in battle. In their homes, they hung paintings that showed scenes from classical literature. But traditional entertainment faced competition in the cities from new styles of literature, drama, and art.

Townspeople read a new type of fiction, realistic stories about self-made merchants or the hardships of life. The people also read **haiku** (HI•koo), 5-7-5-syllable, 3-line verse poetry. This poetry presents images rather than ideas. For example, Matsuo Basho, the greatest haiku poet, wrote before his death in 1694:

### PRIMARY SOURCE **B**

On a journey, ailing—  
My dreams roam about  
Over a withered moor.

**MATSUO BASHO**, from *Matsuo Basho*

Tabi ni yande  
Yume wa Karen o  
Kakemeguru

**MATSUO BASHO**, in Japanese

### MAIN IDEA

#### Analyzing Primary Sources

**B** How is Matsuo Basho's haiku a poem about death?



Townspeople also attended **kabuki** theater. Actors in elaborate costumes, using music, dance, and mime, performed skits about modern life. The paintings the people enjoyed were often woodblock prints showing city life.

## Connect to Today

### Kabuki Theater

Kabuki is a traditional form of Japanese theater. It makes use of extravagant costumes, mask-like makeup, and exaggerated postures and gestures. The illustrations to the right show a contemporary actor and a 19th-century performer playing warriors.

Although kabuki was created by a woman, all roles, both male and female, are performed by men. Kabuki plays are about grand historical events or the everyday life of people in Tokugawa Japan.

For 400 years, kabuki has provided entertainment for the Japanese people. And more recently, kabuki has been performed for audiences around the world, including the United States. Major centers for kabuki theater in Japan are Tokyo, Kyoto, and Osaka.



## Contact Between Europe and Japan

Europeans began coming to Japan in the 16th century, during the Warring States period. Despite the severe disorder in the country, the Japanese welcomed traders and missionaries, from Portugal and, later, other European countries. These newcomers introduced fascinating new technologies and ideas. Within a century, however, the aggressive Europeans had worn out their welcome.

**Portugal Sends Ships, Merchants, and Technology to Japan** The Japanese first encountered Europeans in 1543, when shipwrecked Portuguese sailors washed up on the shores of southern Japan. Portuguese merchants soon followed. They hoped to involve themselves in Japan's trade with China and Southeast Asia. The Portuguese brought clocks, eyeglasses, tobacco, firearms, and other unfamiliar items from Europe. Japanese merchants, eager to expand their markets, were happy to receive the newcomers and their goods. **C**

The daimyo, too, welcomed the strangers. They were particularly interested in the Portuguese muskets and cannons, because every daimyo sought an advantage over his rivals. One of these warlords listened intently to a Japanese observer's description of a musket:

### PRIMARY SOURCE

In their hands they carried something two or three feet long, straight on the outside with a passage inside, and made of a heavy substance. . . . This thing with one blow can smash a mountain of silver and a wall of iron. If one sought to do mischief in another man's domain and he was touched by it, he would lose his life instantly.

**ANONYMOUS JAPANESE WRITER**, quoted in *Sources of Japanese Tradition* (1958)

The Japanese purchased weapons from the Portuguese and soon began their own production. Firearms forever changed the time-honored tradition of the Japanese warrior, whose principal weapon had been the sword. Some daimyo recruited and trained corps of peasants to use muskets. Many samurai, who retained the sword as their principal weapon, would lose their lives to musket fire in future combat.

### MAIN IDEA

#### Analyzing Motives

**C** Why did Europeans want to open trade with Japan?

The cannon also had a huge impact on warfare and life in Japan. Daimyo had to build fortified castles to withstand the destructive force of cannonballs. (See the photograph of Himeji Castle on page 543.) The castles attracted merchants, artisans, and others to surrounding lands. Many of these lands were to grow into the towns and cities of modern Japan, including Edo (Tokyo), Osaka, Himeji, and Nagoya.

**Christian Missionaries in Japan** In 1549, Christian missionaries began arriving in Japan. The Japanese accepted the missionaries in part because they associated them with the muskets and other European goods that they wanted to purchase. However, the religious orders of Jesuits, Franciscans, and Dominicans came to convert the Japanese.

Francis Xavier, a Jesuit, led the first mission to Japan. He wrote that the Japanese were “very sociable. . . and much concerned with their honor, which they prize above everything else.” Francis Xavier baptized about a hundred converts before he left Japan. By the year 1600, other European missionaries had converted about 300,000 Japanese to Christianity.

The success of the missionaries upset Tokugawa Ieyasu. He found aspects of the Christian invasion troublesome. Missionaries, actively seeking converts, scorned traditional Japanese beliefs and sometimes involved themselves in local politics. At first, Ieyasu did not take any action. He feared driving off the Portuguese, English, Spanish, and Dutch traders who spurred Japan’s economy. By 1612, however, the shogun had come to fear religious uprisings more. He banned Christianity and focused on ridding his country of all Christians.

Ieyasu died in 1616, but repression of Christianity continued off and on for the next two decades under his successors. In 1637, the issue came to a head. An uprising in southern Japan of some 30,000 peasants, led by dissatisfied samurai, shook the Tokugawa shogunate. Because so many of the rebels were Christian, the shogun decided that Christianity was at the root of the rebellion. After that, the shoguns ruthlessly persecuted Christians. European missionaries were killed or driven out of Japan. All Japanese were forced to demonstrate faithfulness to some branch of Buddhism. These policies eventually eliminated Christianity in Japan and led to the formation of an exclusion policy. **D**

▼ Japanese merchants and Jesuit missionaries await the arrival of a Portuguese ship at Nagasaki in the 1500s in this painting on wood panels.

**MAIN IDEA**

**Comparing**

**D** How was the treatment of Europeans different in Japan and China? How was it similar?



## The Closed Country Policy

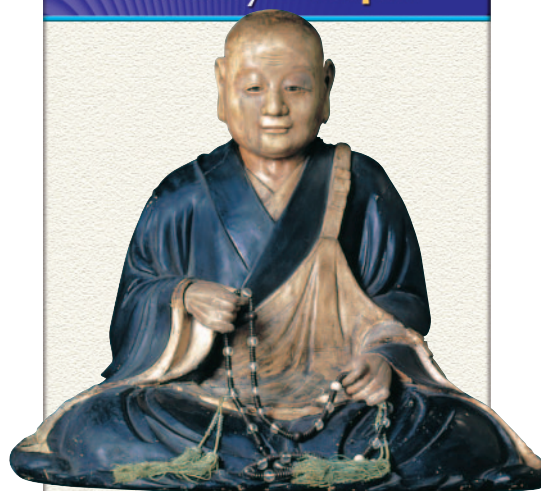
The persecution of Christians was part of an attempt to control foreign ideas. When Europeans first arrived, no central authority existed to contain them. The strong leaders who later took power did not like the introduction of European ideas and ways, but they valued European trade. As time passed, the Tokugawa shoguns realized that they could safely exclude both the missionaries and the merchants. By 1639, they had sealed Japan's borders and instituted a "closed country policy."

**Japan in Isolation** Most commercial contacts with Europeans ended. One port, Nagasaki, remained open to foreign traders. But only Dutch and Chinese merchants were allowed into the port. Earlier, the English had left Japan voluntarily; the Spanish and the Portuguese had been expelled. Since the Tokugawa shoguns controlled Nagasaki, they now had a monopoly on foreign trade, which continued to be profitable.

For more than 200 years, Japan remained basically closed to Europeans. In addition, the Japanese were forbidden to leave, so as not to bring back foreign ideas. Japan would continue to develop, but as a self-sufficient country, free from European attempts to colonize or to establish their presence.

Europeans had met with much resistance in their efforts to open the East to trade. But expansion to the West, in the Americas, as you will learn in Chapter 20, would prove much more successful for European traders, missionaries, and colonizers.

### History *in* Depth



#### Zen Buddhism

The form of Buddhism that had the greatest impact on Japanese culture was Zen Buddhism. It especially influenced the samurai.

Zen Buddhists sought spiritual enlightenment through meditation. Strict discipline of mind and body was the Zen path to wisdom. Zen monks would sit in meditation for hours, as shown in the sculpture above. If they showed signs of losing concentration, a Zen master might shout at them or hit them with a stick.

## SECTION 3 ASSESSMENT

**TERMS & NAMES** 1. For each term or name, write a sentence explaining its significance.

- daimyo
- Oda Nobunaga
- Toyotomi Hideyoshi
- Tokugawa Shogunate
- haiku
- kabuki

### USING YOUR NOTES

2. Which contribution by a daimyo was the most significant? Why?

Daimyo	Achievements

### MAIN IDEAS

3. What happened during the period of the "Warring States"?
4. What was the structure of society in Tokugawa Japan?
5. What were the new styles of drama, art, and literature in Tokugawa Japan?

### CRITICAL THINKING & WRITING

6. **DRAWING CONCLUSIONS** Why do you think that the emperor had less power than a shogun?
7. **ANALYZING CAUSES** Why did the Japanese policy toward Christians change from acceptance to repression?
8. **FORMING OPINIONS** Do you think Japan's closed country policy effectively kept Western ideas and customs out of Japan?
9. **WRITING ACTIVITY** **CULTURAL INTERACTION** Write a two-paragraph **comparison** of the similarities and differences between the roles of women in China (discussed on page 541) and in Japan (page 544).

### INTEGRATED TECHNOLOGY INTERNET ACTIVITY

Use the Internet to find information on the Japanese government today. Then create an **organizational chart** showing the structure of the government.

### INTERNET KEYWORD

country profiles