Chapter 3: Premodern Japan
- The Azuchi-Momoyama and Edo Periods
Section 1 – From warring states to national unification

Topic 31 – The warring states daimyo

What were the distinguishing characteristics of the new style of government instituted by the warring states daimyo?

The emergence of the daimyo

The protector-daimyo lost their positions of strength during and after the Onin War. Gekokujo became widespread as more and more of the powerful retainers and village samurai toppled the protector-daimyo through force of arms and installed themselves as masters of their provinces. These new feudal lords are called the **warring states daimyo**.

*1* The major daimyo families included the Hojo clan of Sagami Province (modern-day Kanagawa Prefecture), the Asakura clan of Echizen Province (modern-day Fukui Prefecture), the Imagawa clan, whose power extended from Suruga Province (modern-day Shizuoka Prefecture) to Mikawa Province (modern-day eastern Aichi Prefecture), the Uesugi clan of Echigo Province (modern-day Niigata Prefecture), the Takeda clan of Kai Province (modern-day Yamanashi Prefecture), and the Mori clan, which was based in Aki Province (modern-day Hiroshima Prefecture) and extended its influence across southern Japan, including Shikoku and Kyushu.

Japan's farming villages had already been forming their own governing bodies called **so** and asserting their autonomy since the time of the War of the Northern and Southern Courts, which had loosened the grip of the shogunate and the protectors over rural communities. Some of these **so** had been organizing ikki to achieve common ends. Under the leadership of local samurai, they often succeeded in making their demands heard.

Nonetheless, the **so** soon came to desire stronger leaders who could mediate territorial disputes or protect them from outside enemies. This power vacuum was filled through the appearance of the warring states daimyo.

These daimyo had the samurai within their domains pledge allegiance to them, amassed large numbers of powerful retainers, and prepared for war with the other daimyo. Rebellion against one's lord was not always thought of as inherently dishonorable, and indeed, it was often praised as a wise decision. They came to their positions from diverse backgrounds. Takeda Shingen of...
Kai was originally a protector-daimyo, Uesugi Kenshin of Echigo had served as a deputy protector-daimyo, and Mori Motonari of Aki hailed from a local samurai family.

**Castle towns and domain administration**

What distinguished the warring states daimyo from the earlier protector-daimyo was that the protector-daimyo ruled by virtue of the authority of the shogunate, whereas the warring states daimyo ruled solely on the basis of their competence to administer their own domains. Therefore, a daimyo who proved incompetent might be abandoned by his own retainers and citizens and replaced with another leader.

In preparation for war, the warring states daimyo built heavily fortified castles atop mountains or hills and enclosed them with many defensive walls and a moat. They set up their residences on the flat ground at the base of the mountains and had their retainers and local businessmen live in the vicinity. These communities, known as **castle towns**, served as the political, economic, and cultural centers of the daimyo's domains.

Furthermore, to make their domains wealthier, the daimyo enthusiastically promoted agriculture by expanding farmland and constructing large-scale water management projects. They also devoted considerable energy to exploiting mines, supporting business activity, and maintaining transportation networks. In many cases, they promulgated their own legal codes, often styled as "regulations" and now known as **domain laws**, to discipline their retainers or to protect and control their subjects. As the daimyo tightened their grip on their domains, the shoen lost their importance. Once consolidated in their own domains, the daimyo sought to extend their influence, sparking a brutal civil war known as the **Warring States period** that was to last about one hundred years.

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*2=Some of the most well-known daimyo-led water management projects were Takeda Shingen's Shingen Embankment, Date Masamune's Teizan Canal, and Hojo Ujifusa's Arakawa Dam. Such structures built by the daimyo can still be seen throughout Japan and continue to serve their original purposes.*

*3=Iwami Ginzan Silver Mine (in modern-day Shimane Prefecture) is a representative example. Discovered in the fourteenth century, it proved an extraordinarily rich source of silver to be minted into silver coinage. During the Warring States period, it was fought
over by the Ouchi clan, Amago clan, and finally the Mori clan. During the Edo period, the Tokugawa shogunate appointed a commissioner to run the mine directly.

**Topic 31 Recap Challenge!** – Using approximately one hundred words, summarize the differences between the protector-daimyo and the warring states daimyo.

**The Daimyo and the Domain Laws**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Though the daimyo did rule over the people of their domains, the relationship was not simply one of one-sided coercion. That this is true can be seen clearly in certain clauses of the domain laws.</th>
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<td>For instance, the domain law of Kai Province that was promulgated by the daimyo Takeda Shingen adopted the principle of equally punishing both parties of any quarrel, which was a longstanding practice in rural society. The daimyo used such traditional Japanese laws to judge disputes within their domains.</td>
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<td>In addition, the domain law of Echizen Province promulgated by the Asakura clan required that, &quot;At least three times annually a capable and honest man shall be asked to tour the entire domain and listen to the requests of the people, which shall be consulted as a basis for future political reforms.&quot;</td>
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<td>The consent of the people was indispensable in the administration of a domain, and the greatest daimyo were those who absorbed the people's will and incorporated it into their policies.</td>
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The Christian world and the Muslim world

In the Christian world of medieval Europe, the Catholic Church, led by the Pope in Rome, wielded tremendous power. At the same time, Arab Muslims were embarking on a wave of expansion and by the eighth century extended their control across the Mediterranean region from Western Asia to the Iberian Peninsula. In medieval times, the nations of the Muslim world were considerably more militarily, technologically, and culturally advanced than the Christian world.

Despite this, Christian forces succeeded by the late-fifteenth century in driving the Muslims from the Iberian Peninsula, which was then transformed into the Christian nations of Spain and Portugal.

At the start of the sixteenth century, German priest Martin Luther and others criticized the Catholic Church’s corruption and founded a reformist movement, in that individuals seek God directly through the Bible, without reliance on the Church hierarchy. This was called the Reformation and its supporters were called Protestants. The sudden rise of the Protestants shocked the Catholic Church, which launched its own internal reform movement. The Church founded the Society of Jesus, whose members were known as Jesuits, and made aggressive efforts to proselytize overseas.

*1 The Church of Rome was called the Catholic Church, meaning "universal church", while the reformers were dubbed Protestants, meaning "those who protest".

*2 The Society of Jesus, founded by Spaniard Ignatius of Loyola and six others, was one of the Catholic Church’s male religious orders. After receiving official recognition from the Pope, the Jesuits set up a base in Goa, India, and started missions across Asia.

The Age of Discovery

In the late-fifteenth century, Spain and Portugal commenced national efforts to expand overseas. Their desire to import goods from the East had been stymied by the naval might of Muslim countries, such as the Ottoman Empire, which held sway over the Mediterranean Sea. In Europe at that time, spices like pepper were in high demand as seasoning for meat, and though they could be bought from Arab merchants, they came at such a steep price that it was said that a
A gram of gold could purchase only a gram of pepper. Spain and Portugal wanted new trade routes to India where they could buy pepper directly.

Portugal attempted to find a sea route to India by sailing southwards along the west coast of Africa. By contrast, Spain sent Italian Christopher Columbus on a journey across the Atlantic Ocean as far west as he could go. The Age of Discovery began, and before long the Europeans were actively seeking to colonize Asia itself.

Spain and Portugal's plan to partition the world
In 1492, Columbus arrived in the islands of the West Indies. Europe had "discovered" the Americas. Because Columbus was convinced that he had reached India, the indigenous peoples of North America continue to this day to be called "Indians." Two years later, in 1494, Portugal and Spain, after intercession by Pope Alexander VI, signed the Treaty of Tordesillas, in that Spain and Portugal would divide the world into two hemispheres based on a line running down the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. According to the terms of the treaty, all lands discovered in the Eastern Hemisphere would belong to the King of Portugal, whereas the lands discovered in the Western Hemisphere would belong to the King of Spain.

In 1498, Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama opened a new sea route to India by rounding the Cape of Good Hope on the southern tip of Africa and traveling along Africa's east coast north to India.

Topic 32 Recap Challenge! – Give two factors that motivated the peoples of Europe to advance overseas during the Age of Discovery of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

| New Sea Routes Opened by Europeans |
| Year | Events |
| 1492 | Columbus crosses the Atlantic Ocean on behalf of Spain and lands in the Americas. |
| 1498 | Vasco da Gama of Portugal rounds the Cape of Good Hope in southern Africa and reaches India. |
| 1522 | An expedition led by Ferdinand Magellan of Spain sails past the southern tip of South America into the Pacific Ocean, lands in the Philippines, and successfully circumnavigates the world. |
| 1534 | Founding of the Catholic Society of Jesus. |
Topic 33 – The Arrival of the Europeans

What impact did the European imports of firearms and Christianity have on Japanese society?

Christian missionaries and the introduction of firearms

In 1543 (Tenbun 12), a Chinese junk sailing from Siam (modern-day Thailand) with Portuguese merchants on board was struck by a storm and shipwrecked on the southern Japanese island of Tanegashima (in modern-day Kagoshima Prefecture). These were the first Europeans to reach the shores of Japan. The lord who controlled the island, a member of the Tanegashima clan, paid them a hefty sum in exchange for two firearms, which he ordered his swordsmiths to carefully study.

In no time, Japanese swordsmiths were manufacturing their own firearms in various parts of Japan, such as Sakai (modern-day Osaka). The new weapons were highly sought after by the daimyo, and Japan quickly rose to become the world's largest producer of firearms. The adoption of firearms by the daimyo dramatically changed battlefield tactics and served to hasten the process of national unification.

In 1549, six years after the introduction of firearms, the Jesuit missionary Francis Xavier arrived in Kagoshima in Kyushu, Japan, and worked to convert the local people to Christianity. Later, more missionaries came to Japan alongside Portuguese merchants and proselytized aggressively. Christianity spread rapidly, gaining an especially large number of converts in western Japan. The missionaries won the hearts of many Japanese through their charitable deeds such as the building of orphanages, and the daimyo prized the rare imports that Portuguese merchants brought in their wake.

*1=Francis Xavier was one of the founders of the Society of Jesus. He was running a mission in Malacca in the Malay Peninsula when he is said to have met a young Japanese samurai named Yajiro. Surprised by his remarkable intellectual curiosity, Xavier acquired an interest in Japan and became determined to do missionary work there.

The Southern Barbarian Trade

In the late-sixteenth century, armed merchants from Spain also entered Asia. They conquered the Philippines and made it their trade base. Referred to as the "southern barbarians", or nanban in the Japanese language, they brought European products such as gunpowder, clocks,
and glassware to Japan, as well as Chinese products such as unprocessed silk and silk fabric. What they wanted in exchange was silver. Japan was one of the world’s largest producers of silver, which they coined into currency used for trade with other Asian nations. This is known as the Southern Barbarian Trade. Japanese people eventually also became active participants in the Southern Barbarian Trade, doing business across Southeast Asia and forming permanent settlements there called Japantowns.

The Christian daimyo
Some of the daimyo of western Japan hoped to profit from the Southern Barbarian Trade by patronizing Christianity or even being baptized into the faith themselves. These were the “Christian daimyo”. The first daimyo to convert to Christianity were the Omura clan of Kyushu, who opened the port of Nagasaki to foreign trade and then donated it to the Society of Jesus. Nagasaki was a good port which rapidly developed into the center of the Southern Barbarian Trade and of Christian evangelization in Japan. It would later serve as Japan’s only window to the European world.

The Jesuits took advantage of the protection given by the Christian daimyo to further their efforts to disseminate their religion. They erected churches, which the Japanese called “southern barbarian temples”, in Nagasaki, Yamaguchi, Kyoto, and other cities.

In 1582 (Tensho 10), three Christian daimyo sent the Tensho Embassy to Europe, which comprised of four Japanese boys acting as their envoys to the Pope. After enduring a three-year journey, the boys finally arrived in Rome where they were warmly welcomed with an audience by the Pope. The Tensho Embassy stimulated greater interest in Japan among the people of Europe.

Topic 33 Recap Challenge! – List all the Chinese and European products Japan received through the Southern Barbarian Trade as well as the main product Japan exported.

Topic 34 – Nobunaga and Hideyoshi’s unification of Japan
How did Oda Nobunaga and Toyotomi Hideyoshi unify Japan?

The rise of Oda Nobunaga

Even as foreign nations were capturing the attentions of the Japanese people, Japan itself was riven by fighting between the country's most powerful daimyo. The daimyo were locked in a competition to be the first to reach Kyoto and declared with the support of the Imperial Court the ruler of all Japan.

Among a large field of daimyo, Oda Nobunaga of Owari Province (modern-day western Aichi Prefecture) distinguished himself by exploiting innovative military tactics and his advantageous geographical position close to Kyoto. In 1560 (Eiroku 3) at Okehazama, Oda Nobunaga crushed the army of Imagawa Yoshimoto of Suruga Province (modern-day Shizuoka Prefecture). Soon after, he arrived in Kyoto, installed Ashikaga Yoshiaki as shogun, and launched a series of campaigns with the goal of uniting all Japan.

Nobunaga later came into conflict with Yoshiaki and, in 1573 (Tensho 1), he expelled Yoshiaki from Kyoto. This date marked the end of the 230-year history of the Muromachi shogunate.

When Enryaku-ji Temple on Mount Hiei aligned itself with other daimyo, Nobunaga set the entire mountain ablaze, and he also subdued the rebellious followers of the True Pure Land Ikko school. These acts played a major role in breaking the influence of Buddhist groups over the Japanese government.

In 1575 (Tensho 3), Nobunaga defeated Takeda Katsuyori of Kai Province (modern-day Yamanashi Prefecture), who was reputed to be Japan's most powerful daimyo, at the Battle of Nagashino. Katsuyori's cavalry units were decimated by Nobunaga's gunners. The next year, Nobunaga constructed an immense fortress, Azuchi Castle, along the shore of Lake Biwa near Kyoto. Though he clamped down on the interference of Buddhist groups in his government, Nobunaga lauded the courage of Christian missionaries for braving the stormy seas to reach Japan.

Nobunaga adopted a policy of "free markets, free guilds" towards merchants and craftsmen around Azuchi Castle. He guaranteed them free enterprise and abolished the travel checkpoints that had become barriers to trade.
In this manner, Nobunaga cleared the path to national unification by destroying Japan's traditional political forces and social institutions. However, in 1582 (Tensho 10), Nobunaga was betrayed by his retainer Akechi Mitsuhide. After clashing with Mitsuhide's rebels at Honno-ji Temple in Kyoto, Nobunaga committed suicide there. This is called the **Honno-ji Temple Incident**.

**National unification under Toyotomi Hideyoshi**

The man who inherited Oda Nobunaga's ambition and unified Japan was his senior retainer Hashiba Hideyoshi, later known under the name of **Toyotomi Hideyoshi**. Hideyoshi was facing off against the army of the Mori clan at Takamatsu Castle in Bicchu (modern-day Okayama Prefecture) when he learned of what had transpired at Honno-ji Temple. He immediately made peace with the Mori clan and pulled his army back to Kyoto where he defeated Akechi Mitsuhide at Tennozan.

In 1583 (Tensho 11), Hideyoshi demonstrated his commitment to ruling over a united Japan by commencing construction of the spectacular Osaka Castle, which was modeled on Nobunaga's Azuchi Castle.

In 1585 (Tensho 13), the Imperial Court appointed Hideyoshi chancellor, and the next year it bestowed him with the surname of Toyotomi, which means "bountiful minister". In the Emperor's name, Hideyoshi issued the Peace Edict, ordering all the daimyo to lay down their arms and pledge loyalty to him. He subjugated the remaining independent daimyo one-by-one and, by 1590 (Tensho 18), there was no one left to oppose him and conflict finally ended. Hideyoshi had completed the unification of Japan. The following year, Hideyoshi transferred the chancellorcy to his adopted son Hidetsugu and became *taiko*, the title of a retired chancellor who has passed his post to his son.

*Topic 34 Recap Challenge! – Give two major reforms implemented by Oda Nobunaga.*
What were the distinguishing characteristics of Hideyoshi’s government?

The Taiko Land Surveys and the Sword Hunt

Starting in the year 1582 (Tensho 10), Hideyoshi ordered the daimyo to undertake accurate evaluations of the rice yield of their domains and to prepare land registries with the grade of each plot of land and the income they derived from it. This is known as the Taiko Land Survey. The survey dealt a mortal blow to the shoen system by stripping shoen holders, including court nobles, of their right to own land. On the other hand, it did guarantee the rights of farmers to private land ownership, provided that they paid land tax to the daimyo in charge of the domain.

*1=Farmland was classified as high grade, medium grade, low grade, or bottom grade. The income derived from farmland, called kokudaka in Japanese, was calculated through multiplying the total area of the land, measured in tan of about 1,000 square meters, by the rice yield expected of the land’s grade.

In 1588 (Tensho 16), Hideyoshi issued the Sword Hunt Ordinance, demanding that all farmers and temples be disarmed of their weapons, including swords, bows, spears, and firearms. Farmers were to preserve the stability of the nation and future generations by devoting their lives to agriculture, whereas the role of the samurai was to protect the domain and nation and maintain public security. This principle was called separation of farmer and samurai.

The prohibition of Christianity

Hideyoshi defended Christianity until 1587 (Tensho 15), when he abruptly issued the Priest Expulsion Ordinance and switched to an anti-Christian policy. Still, Hideyoshi valued the profitable trade with the "southern barbarian" merchants and reaffirmed their right to enter Japanese ports, so the anti-Christian policy was inconsistently enforced and the expulsion of the priests was never realized. Because Hideyoshi never prohibited ordinary citizens from practicing Christianity, the number of Christians in Japan continued to increase.

*2=In Japanese, this ordinance was called the bateren tsuikourei. The word bateren meant "priest" and derived from the Portuguese word "Padre" meaning "Father".
However, Spanish missionaries based in the Philippines were said to be planning to conquer China and Japan and impose Christianity by force of arms, as they did in South America and southern Asia.

**Excerpts from the Sword Hunt Ordinance**

"Peasants in all parts of Japan are strictly forbidden from owning swords, daggers, bows, spears, firearms, or any other type of weapon. If the peasants were allowed to own unnecessary weaponry, they would withhold taxes, plot rebellions without provocation, and behave disrespectfully towards samurai retainers who have been given land by the daimyo. Such deeds shall naturally be punished, as they will result in the wet and dry fields going uncultivated and the land being rendered useless. Therefore, the daimyo, retainers, and bailiffs shall collect all the aforementioned weapons and put them in government custody."

"The swords, daggers, and other weaponry collected will not be wasted. Rather, they will be turned into nails and bolts for the great Buddha statue of Hojo-ji Temple that is being constructed in Kyoto. This ordinance is therefore a boon to the peasantry not only in their current lives, but in the next life as well."

"If the peasants carry only their agricultural tools and devote themselves fully to farming, they will be able to ensure both their own livelihoods and those of their descendants. This is the true cornerstone of national peace and human happiness."

**The Japanese invasions of Korea**

Once he had unified Japan, Hideyoshi developed the grandiose ambition of conquering Ming China, transferring his capital city there, and even extending his dominion to faraway India.

In 1592 (Bunroku 1), Hideyoshi launched the **Japanese invasions of Korea** by sending a grand army of 150,000 soldiers into the Korean Peninsula. Hideyoshi’s forces, commanded by such capable generals as Kato Kiyomasa and Konishi Yukinaga, quickly captured the Korean capital of Hansong (modern-day Seoul) and advanced deep into northern Korea. However, Japan’s military position was complicated by the arrival of enemy reinforcements from Ming China and the effective naval tactics of Korean Admiral Yi Sun-sin. Consequently, Japan entered peace negotiations with Ming China and withdrew its army from Korea. The Japanese called this first conflict the Bunroku War.
In 1597 (Keicho 2), negotiations with China broke down, and Hideyoshi deployed another army to Korea, this one about 140,000-men strong. This time, Japanese forces were counterattacked by the Chinese and never managed to advance beyond the southern half of the Korean Peninsula. The following year, Hideyoshi died and Japan withdrew its army from Korea. The Japanese called this second conflict the Keicho War.3

*3=Over the course of the Japanese invasions of Korea, many Korean potters were taken to Japan. Pottery techniques transmitted to Japan by Koreans include the Satsuma ware of Sim Su-gwan, the Arita ware of Yi Samp'yong, and the Hagi ware of Yi Jak-kwang.

The Japanese invasions devastated the people and land of Korea, and they also undermined the Toyotomi clan which had squandered massive human and financial resources on the campaigns.

The daimyo Tokugawa Ieyasu had supported the invasions of Korea. Though he had readied his army in Kyushu for departure to Korea, he ultimately never left Japan.

\textit{Topic 35 Recap Challenge!} – Give three major policies that Toyotomi Hideyoshi promoted while serving as chancellor in order to unify Japan.

\textbf{Hideyoshi and King Philip II}

At the same time that Hideyoshi was unifying Japan, King Philip II had scored a major triumph over the Muslim powers of Europe and reached the height of his power. Spanish missionaries working in Asia sent him a letter, advising that he conquer China and stressing the importance of control over the Japanese Isles.

However, Philip II died in 1598, the same year as Hideyoshi, and plans for war were never implemented.

\textbf{Excerpts from the Priest Expulsion Ordinance}

The Priest Expulsion Ordinance, announced in 1587, warned of the influence of Christian missionaries. In fact, the ordinance was never implemented.

"-Because Japan is the land of the gods, we cannot allow the evil religion of the Christian nations to be taught here."

"-Christian priests have been approaching people in the provinces, converting them, and inciting them to destroy shrines and temples. This is a crime unlike any this country has seen before."

"-Christian priests shall not be permitted to live in Japan and shall be given twenty days to prepare themselves to return to their home countries."

"-Because the circumstances surrounding trade are different, Portuguese and Spanish ships are still free to come to Japan to buy and sell goods."

"-Those who do not interfere with Buddhism, whether merchants or otherwise, are free to come and go from the Christian nations."
In the sixteenth century, Christian missionaries who came to Japan were surprised to discover a proud and civilized people living on islands off the coast of East Asia. They were especially impressed by the absence of theft and high literacy even among Japan's lower classes.

Father Francis Xavier wrote the following in a letter that he sent to a church in Goa, India:

"Of all the peoples I have encountered, the Japanese people are the most outstanding. Among the heathen peoples, I believe that none are greater than the Japanese. The Japanese people generally have fine dispositions. They bear no evil thoughts and are very pleasant to keep company with... Most of them are poor, but none among them, neither the samurai nor the commoners, see poverty as a disgrace."

Prosperity and sophistication exceeding that of Europe

Head Missionary Cosme de Torres stated that the Japanese led prosperous and self-sufficient lives:

"The prosperity of this country exceeds that of Spain, France, or Italy. Everything that the Christian nations have, so too do the Japanese have. I could not recount all their good qualities without running short of ink and paper."

The more that Father Organtino learned of the Japanese people, the higher an opinion he held of them:

"We Europeans see ourselves as a sophisticated people, but compared to the Japanese, I believe that we are utter barbarians. Indeed, I must confess that I learn new things from them every day. There may be no other people in the world with so much innate talent."

The differences between Japanese and European culture

Still, not all the missionaries spoke well of the Japanese people. Head Missionary Francisco Cabral was a narrow-minded man who refused to ordain Japanese men into the priesthood or teach them Latin. He made the following callous remark:
"The Japanese converts in our order lead cooperative and obedient lives only because they have no other means of survival."

However, Alessandro Valignano, a Jesuit Visitor from eastern India, removed Cabral for holding views prejudicial to the propagation of Christianity in Japan. According to Valignano:

"The Japanese are neither ignorant nor apathetic enough to kowtow to foreign domination. We have no option but to entrust the leadership of our churches in Japan to Japanese people."

Father Luis Frois, author of the book *The History of Japan*, described a long list of stark cultural contrasts between Japan and the West, expressing particular confusion over the fact that, "Japanese people can cut off the head of a criminal without a second thought, but are astonished that we kill animals."

For the missionaries, Japan was truly a mysterious country.

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**I WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT...**

**Why Hideyoshi Expelled the Missionaries**

Takayama Ukon’s refusal to convert

Japan was a polytheistic country since antiquity and was open to new religions from foreign lands. Thanks to the pro-Christian stances of Oda Nobunaga and Toyotomi Hideyoshi, Japan profited greatly from the flourishing trade with Christian nations. In that case, why was it that Hideyoshi promulgated the Priest Expulsion Ordinance?

It has been said that in June of 1587, on the night before Hideyoshi issued the ordinance, the Buddhist priests who had accompanied him to Hakata complained to him about the misconduct of the missionaries and Christian daimyo. They brought to his attention that the missionaries had been instigating the Christian daimyo to forcibly convert their subjects, destroy the shrines and temples within their domains, and banish the Shinto and Buddhist priests.

Enraged to hear of this, Hideyoshi immediately dashed off a message to Takayama Ukon, a Christian daimyo in his encampment. The message read, "Either give up Christianity or give up your domain." Ukon replied, "I will stay true to my faith and agree to leave my domain," and Hideyoshi promptly ordered him to be divested of his lands.
The interrogation of Gaspar Coelho

Around the same time, Hideyoshi sent an emissary to speak to the missionary Gaspar Coelho, who had come from Hirado to meet him.

Hideyoshi's emissary asked Coelho the following questions: (1.) Why do you force Japanese people to convert to Christianity? (2.) Why do you destroy shrines and temples? (3.) Why do you eat the meat of horses and cattle? (4.) Why do the Portuguese buy so many Japanese slaves and take them overseas? Hideyoshi was not persuaded by Coelho's answers. He gathered the daimyō closest to him and announced that he was reversing his policy of protecting Christianity, emphatically declaring that, "The teachings of the missionaries are those of the devil and will be the death of all that's good in Japan!" Hideyoshi then drew up and released the Priest Expulsion Ordinance.

The text of the ordinance was put up on official notice boards throughout the country. The ordinance was primarily intended to remove the Christian missionaries from Japan without prohibiting ordinary citizens from practicing any faith. Because of this, Coelho simply ordered the Jesuit missionaries to stay where they were and go into hiding.

The indiscretion of a Spanish captain

In 1596 (Keicho 1), the Spanish ship *San Felipe* was wrecked off the coast of Tosa Province. A rumor spread that the ship's captain had threatened a Japanese official, telling him that the Spanish would first bring in missionaries to convert the local people and then bring in an army to conquer them. Fearing the growth of religious orders that would resist central authority like the ikko ikki had, Hideyoshi responded with a renewed crackdown on Christians, even making martyrs of many of them.
**Topic 36 – Momoyama culture**

What were the distinguishing characteristics of the Momoyama culture?

The culture of the daimyo and wealthy merchants

The ostentatious culture of this period was created by the daimyo who emerged triumphant from the Warring States period and eager to flaunt their newly acquired power. It is known as the Azuchi-Momoyama culture, or just Momoyama culture for short, from Nobunaga's Azuchi Castle and Hideyoshi's Momoyama Castle (also called Fushimi Castle). Likewise, the era when Nobunaga and Hideyoshi ruled Japan is referred to as the Azuchi-Momoyama period.

The castles constructed by Nobunaga and Hideyoshi were characterized by their magnificent keeps. The keep served as the headquarters and watchtower of the castle, but it was also intended to be a conspicuous symbol of the power of its owner. Nobunaga’s Azuchi Castle used so much gold leaf that it was reputed that every inch of the interior shone with gold. The extravagant and vividly colored paintings that decorated the gold leaf of its folding screens and sliding paper doors were the work of the painters of the Kano school, including **Kano Eitoku**. They were also responsible for creating the wall paintings of Hideyoshi’s Osaka Castle.

**Sen no Rikyu**, a tea master from Sakai, perfected the art of the tea ceremony. Rikyu turned his back on the luxurious tastes of the time and instead developed *wabi* tea that could be quietly enjoyed in a small tea hut. The interiors of Rikyu's tea huts were built entirely of simple earthen walls with an alcove displaying a bamboo flower vase. For tea cups, he favored Kyoto’s hand-molded *raku* ware. The tea ceremony founded by Rikyu helped to popularize the *wabi* aesthetic among the Japanese people. It was also during the Azuchi-Momoyama period that the Japanese art of flower arrangement, which arose during the Muromachi period, was perfected by Ikenobo Senko I.

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*1=Sen no Rikyu, born in Sakai to a wealthy merchant, served Nobunaga and Hideyoshi and is regarded as the greatest tea master of his era. Rikyu was a connoisseur of tea utensils and the progenitor of the Sen family of tea masters. Rikyu trained many disciples, but eventually came into conflict with Hideyoshi and was ordered to commit ritual suicide.*
The lifestyles and culture of the common people

The trend toward sensual entertainment also spread among the common people. Ballads called *kouta* became popular, as did a form of dramatic storytelling called *joruri*, which was accompanied by the music of the *shamisen*, a three-stringed lute. *Joruri* also gave rise during this period of time to traditional Japanese puppet theater. Izumo no Okuni, who was said to have been a priestess at Izumo Grand Shrine, invented the *kabuki* dance, which would evolve into kabuki theater during the later Edo period.2

*Izumo no Okuni* wore flamboyant outfits when dancing. During her performances, she would wield a large sword and dress in eccentric men’s ware to play the role of a man on a wild teahouse romp. Consequently, she was dubbed a fop, or *kabukimono* in Japanese. She elicited enthusiastic responses from contemporary crowds.

As clothing, the common people came to prefer the lightweight and short-sleeved kimonos known as *kosode*. Hemp was increasingly replaced with cotton fabric, which was not only more comfortable and durable, but also could easily be dyed in many colors.

Southern Barbarian culture

At the height of the Southern Barbarian Trade and the work of Christian missionaries, Western astronomy, medicine, and navigation techniques entered Japan. Copies of the *Bible* and Aesop’s Fables were printed in Japan with movable type presses, and the art on Japanese folding screens came to depict European and Western customs. Western tastes also appeared in Japanese fashion, craftsmanship, and food. The Japanese people began to smoke tobacco, which is native to South America, and to play card games. In addition, a wide range of Western vocabulary words were assimilated into the Japanese language, such as *kasutera* (meaning “sponge cake” from the Portuguese word *Castella*), *pan* (meaning “bread” from the Portuguese word *pão*), *manto* (meaning “cloak” from the French word *manteau*), and *juban* (meaning “undershirt” from the Portuguese word *jibão*).

These exotic cultural influences introduced to Japan by Westerners are collectively referred to as the *Southern Barbarian culture*. The wealthy merchants of cities like Sakai and Hakata, who earned their fortunes in the Southern Barbarian Trade, were responsible for patronizing and spreading the Southern Barbarian culture. The heyday of the Southern Barbarian culture proved short-lived and was soon quashed along with Christianity, but by then parts of it had taken root.
in Japanese society. It had made the Japanese people conscious of the existence of diverse foreign cultures well beyond China and India, and thus dramatically broadened their world view.

*Topic 36 Recap Challenge! – State the distinguishing features of the Momoyama culture in three fields: architecture, painting, the arts of the tea ceremony and flower arrangement.*
Section 2 – The politics of the Edo shogunate

Topic 37 – The establishment of the Edo shogunate

Through what means did the Edo shogunate control the daimyo?

Tokugawa Ieyasu and the Edo shogunate

The most powerful man in Japan after Toyotomi Hideyoshi was Tokugawa Ieyasu. Hideyoshi was wary of having such a powerful figure near to his headquarters in Osaka, so he moved Ieyasu’s domain eastward to the Kanto region. In Kanto, Ieyasu consolidated his power while developing and enlarging Edo, a small town on the fringes of his territory. After Hideyoshi’s death, Ieyasu allied himself with numerous other powerful warlords. In 1600 (Keicho 5), Ieyasu’s forces confronted the Western Army led by Ishida Mitsunari, who had been Hideyoshi’s senior retainer, and won a decisive victory at the Battle of Sekigahara.

In 1603 (Keicho 8), the Imperial Court appointed Ieyasu shogun. He established the Edo shogunate. In the summer of 1615 (Genna 1), Ieyasu attacked and destroyed Osaka Castle, the base of Hideyoshi’s son Hideyori, removing the last obstacle to his domination of Japan.

The Tokugawa family ruled Japan through the shogunate for fifteen generations. These next 260 years, which were devoid of any major wars, are called the Edo period.

The direct retainers of the shogun, the bannermen and housemen, were responsible for defending Edo Castle. The lands that were directly controlled by the shogun and bannermen were valued at about seven million koku, a koku being the amount of rice needed to feed one person for one year. This amounted to one quarter of Japan’s rice production. Furthermore, the shogunate held exclusive rights to conduct diplomacy and mint currency. By the time of the third Tokugawa shogun, Iemitsu, the administrative structures of the shogunate were stabilized. The highest-ranking officials were called the Elders, followed by the Junior Elders, superintendants, and commissioners. In spite of the power he wielded, the shogun himself was careful to not act arbitrarily. He decided on a policy only after holding councils with his staff and carefully considering their opinions.

Shogun-daimyo relations

The daimyo of the Edo period were those warlords to whom the shogun had granted a domain valued at over 10,000 koku. All the daimyo pledged fealty to the shogun and were his vassals.
Japan's land was divided among 260 daimyo, who were grouped by the shogunate into three categories: the collateral daimyo (shimpan in Japanese) were members of the Tokugawa family, the hereditary daimyo (fudai daimyo) were retainers of the Tokugawa prior to the Battle of Sekigahara, and the outsider daimyo (tozama daimyo) pledged fealty to the Tokugawa after the Battle of Sekigahara. The shogunate strategically positioned the daimyo on domains where they would be unlikely to pose a threat. The domains of Edo daimyo were called han, and the system through which these domains were governed was called the han system.

In 1615 (Keicho 20), the shogunate promulgated the Laws for the Military Houses, which forbade the daimyo from unilaterally renovating their castles, building large ships, and arranging marriages with other daimyo without permission. Any daimyo who failed to fully comply could have his clan broken up and his land confiscated or transferred to a different domain. The Laws for the Military Houses also imposed the alternate attendance system, requiring that the daimyo spend alternate years in Edo instead of their domains. To further tie their hands, when the daimyo were in their home domains, they had to leave their wives and children at the shogun's residence in Edo as his hostages. The shogun did leave the day-to-day administration of the domains to the daimyo, but he kept their financial power in check by ordering them to contribute to expensive public works projects, such as flood control and renovations and repairs for Edo Castle.

The latitude that the daimyo were given to govern the land and people of their domains fostered the development of diverse regional cultures throughout Japan.

**Topic 37 Recap Challenge!** – The Edo shogunate classified the daimyo of the Edo period into three groups. Give the name of a daimyo family belonging to each group.
Topic 38 – From licensed trading to national isolation

Why did the shogunate reverse its pro-trade policy and ban the Christian religion?

Red-seal ships and Japantowns
Tokugawa Ieyasu sought to promote trade by granting licenses to certain trading ships, including those operated by the daimyō of western Japan and the merchants of Nagasaki and Sakai. The ships carried these licenses, known as “red seals”, as proof that they were officially sanctioned merchant vessels and not pirates. The red-seal ships set sail from Japan and vigorously traded with people across Southeast Asia, including Vietnam, the Philippines, and Thailand.

Japanese people also formed settlements called Japantowns throughout Southeast Asia. The combined population of the Japantowns quickly climbed to 10,000 people, including masterless samurai who went into exile after their lords were killed during the 1615 siege of Osaka. Some former samurai, like Yamada Nagamasa, went on to become high-ranking officials in the Kingdom of Siam (now Thailand).

*1=Yamada traveled to the Kingdom of Siam aboard a red-seal ship in 1611 (Keicho 16) and was active in Southeast Asian affairs as the leader of a Siamese Japantown.

From a pro-trade policy to the prohibition of Christianity
Because Ieyasu valued the profitable Southern Barbarian Trade, he declined to endorse the persecution of Christians, and the number of Japanese Christians continued to rise. The shogunate felt threatened by this but struggled on how to respond.

Meanwhile, Dutch and English merchants arrived in Asia as latecomers hoping to make inroads into the Southern Barbarian Trade. To persuade the Japanese to give them a share of the trade, they told the Japanese that they, as Protestants, desired only trade and not evangelization, which was part of a Spanish and Portuguese plot to conquer Japan.

In 1612 (Keicho 17), the shogunate released the first of a set of three ordinances to suppress Christianity and also moved to prevent Spanish and Portuguese ships from landing on Japanese shores. In 1635 (Kanei 12), the shogunate further tightened its grip by banning Japanese citizens from leaving Japan or returning from overseas.
The Shimabara Rebellion and the policy of national isolation

In 1637 (Kanei 14), a revolt was launched in Shimabara and Amakusa, two regions of the southern Japanese island of Kyushu, by 40,000 farmers, mostly Christians, and former retainers of the deposed Christian daimyo Konishi Yukinaga. Amakusa Shiro Tokisada, a boy fifteen years of age, led the uprising protesting the heavy taxation and harsh anti-Christian persecution of Matsukura Katsuie, daimyo of Shimabara Domain. This is known as the Shimabara Rebellion. Stunned by the fierce resistance of the rebel forces, the shogunate responded the following year by sending a massive army of 120,000 soldiers which crushed the rebellion within three months.²

*²At the end of the rebellion, a force of 19,000 rebels holed up in Hara Castle and fought to the bitter end. Though ultimately annihilated, they killed 1,130 soldiers of the shogun’s army and wounded over 8,000. The shogunate pinned blame for the incident on the Shimabara Domain. Shimabara Domain Daimyo Matsukura Katsuie was escorted to Edo and executed.

The shogunate decided that it would have to increase enforcement of its prohibition of Christianity to forestall another rebellion like the one at Shimabara. Henceforth, all Japanese people were required to enroll in the temple registry of a local Buddhist temple where they would be issued a temple certificate proving that they were not Christians. This was called the "temple certificate system" (terakusei in Japanese), which was the forerunner of the "donor-household system" (danka seido) that survives in Japan to this day. An individual could prove that he was not a Christian by stamping on a tablet depicting a holy symbol of the Christian faith.

In 1639 (Kanei 16), Shogun Tokugawa Iemitsu issued a fifth official prohibition, this one banning all foreign ships from Japanese ports except for Chinese and Dutch ships. Then, in 1641, he closed the Dutch trading post at Hirado and ordered the Dutch to conduct all their business at Dejima, an island off the coast of Nagasaki.

The shogunate’s prohibitions on emigration, immigration, and foreign trade with nations apart from China and the Netherlends were later called sakoku, a word commonly translated into English as "national isolation". However, the objective of the shogunate’s policy was not total "national isolation". Rather, the shogunate desired only to remove the influence of Christianity from Japanese society and to monopolize foreign trade and foreign knowledge.
Topic 38 Recap Challenge! – Write down the reasons why the Edo shogunate shifted from tolerance of Christianity to prohibition of it and implemented the policy of national isolation.

**HISTORICAL KEYWORDS**

*Sakoku*

The Japanese word *sakoku* means "closed country", and is often translated in English as "national isolation". However, the English definition is far more extreme than what really took place.

In fact, the shogunate only cut ties with Spain and Portugal and had no intention of completely isolating itself from the outside world. The shogunate never used the word *sakoku* to describe its policies.

The word *sakoku* itself did not exist until 1801 when the Nagasaki translator Shizuki Tadao used it in the title of a piece of writing that he translated from the book *History of Japan*, originally written by the German scholar Engelbert Kaempfer. During the Meiji period, *sakoku* came into use as a historical term to refer to the policies of the period.
Even under the policy of "national isolation", commerce between Japan and other nations was vigorous, albeit tightly controlled by the shogunate. Through what networks did this commerce take place?

Trade at Dejima
At Dejima, an island off the coast of Nagasaki, Dutch merchants continued to sell clocks, books, and many other European products to the Japanese. The Dutch ships also brought raw silk, cotton fabric, and books that they acquired in Qing China\(^1\) on their way to Japan. As payment, Japan initially exported silver and copper, but later exported handicraft products such as Imari ware pottery. In order to acquire overseas information, the shogun asked the head of the Dutch trading post to submit "Dutch Reports". The Chinese also traded in Nagasaki, and their walled community was likewise asked to submit "Chinese Ship Reports" concerning news from Asia.

*1=In the mid-seventeenth century, the Ming dynasty was overthrown by an internal rebellion, but was soon invaded by the Manchus who founded the Qing dynasty.

Korea, Ryukyu, and Ezochi
Tokugawa Ieyasu used the So clan, who were the daimyo of Tsushima Domain, to patch up Japan's relations with Korea that had been frayed by Hideyoshi's invasions. From then on, the Korean government sent envoys, referred to as the Korean missions to Japan, as a courtesy gesture each time a new shogun was appointed. The So clan conducted business with Korea at "Japan House", a Japanese settlement set up in Pusan.

In 1609 (Keicho 14), the Satsuma Domain sent a military expedition to the Ryukyu Kingdom and forced the ruling Sho dynasty to submit. The Kings of Ryukyu were already vassals of Qing China, and so the Ryukyu Kingdom was technically a tributary of both nations. Consequently, Ryukyu pursued a policy of dual diplomacy, paying tribute to China as well as sending envoys to Edo whenever a new shogun was appointed. The information and goods that the Ryukyu Kingdom acquired due to its relationship with China also made their way to the Edo shogunate via the Satsuma Domain.

The Matsumae Domain, which ruled the southern half of the northern island of Ezochi (modern day Hokkaido), held a monopoly on trade with the native Ainu fishermen, through which it acquired marine products and bear and seal furs. The Ainu themselves also conducted trade with
the peoples of the Kuril Islands, Sakhalin, and Manchuria. These commercial ties allowed the Ainu to obtain a type of Chinese clothing that was dubbed "Ezo brocade". In 1669 (Kanbun 9), Ainu leader Shakushain led an uprising in response to unfair terms of trade offered by Japanese merchants, but the Matsumae Domain counterattacked and defeated the rebels.

**The four windows**
Thus, Japan maintained four windows to the outside world during its phase of "national isolation" during the Edo period: Nagasaki, Tsushima, Satsuma, and Matsumae. Through these four windows, Japan continued trading goods and information from abroad. Though the shogunate strived to control commerce and to keep its monopoly on profits and foreign information, many of Japan’s domains eventually gained access to the "Dutch Reports" and similar sources of news. Therefore, the domains managed to acquire foreign information through their own means.

*Topic 39 Recap Challenge! – Despite the policy of “national isolation”, Japan did not close every avenue through which it could obtain information about the outside world. List the four principal windows that remained open and briefly explain the circumstances behind each one.*
The class system

The Edo shogunate inherited Hideyoshi’s policies of disarming non-samurai and reinforced them through a class system that divided the people of Japan into three social classes: the samurai, the peasants, and the townspeople. Edo Japan achieved a remarkable level of peace and stability under a class system rooted in a harmonious and tranquil social order.

Members of the samurai class, who enjoyed the honor of being permitted to use surnames and wear swords, were responsible for public security, national defense, and government administration. On the other hand, peasants and townspeople engaged in production, manufacturing, and trade. It was they who were the economic backbone that supported the shogunate and the domains. The bonds of mutual dependence that existed between each of the classes were the bedrock of the prosperity Japan experienced during the Edo period.

Nevertheless, the class divisions between samurai, peasant, and townspeople were not always rigidly fixed. There were instances of samurai becoming peasants or townspeople and instances of townspeople being adopted into samurai families. Furthermore, there were a number of other occupational groups, such as the court nobles, the Shinto priests, and the Buddhist monks.

The lowest social class was the untouchables, who were referred to as "the unclean ones" (eta) and "the sub-humans" (hinin). In addition to farming, untouchables were also involved in the disposal of animal carcasses and special crafts such as leatherwork for weaponry. They were subjected to harsh discrimination and were forced to live in segregated districts.

Villages and peasants

During the Edo period, rural communities were governed by village officers, including the village headman, assistant headman, and peasants' representative. Under what was known as the village contract system, they were responsible for undertaking work bearing on the entire village, such as the payment of taxes, upkeep of common lands, and management of fields, mountains, and water resources. The villages also inherited the medieval tradition of the autonomous so and continued to decide their own affairs at village forums, called yoriai in Japanese.
Villagers were grouped into five-household units that bore collective responsibility for collection of taxes and suppression of crime. They also practiced forms of mutual aid called moyai and yui. Those found guilty of serious crimes or refusal to abide by the rules laid down by village forums were subjected to the punishment of social ostracism.

*1=Moyai and yui were mutual aid organizations that existed in Japanese villages since the Kamakura period to enhance cooperative labor. Yui were common in farming villages and involved villagers coming together on short-term labor projects such as rice planting, rice harvesting, and roof thatching. By contrast, moyai were common in mountain and fishing villages where they undertook collaborative fishing under the leadership of a boss called an amimoto.

*2=Social ostracism, called murahachibu in Japanese, meant that all interaction and transactions with other villagers would be cut off except for assistance in putting out fires and burying deceased family members.

In principle, the shogunate forbade the purchase and sale of agricultural land in order to ensure stable land tax revenues. The peasants accepted payment of the land tax as a necessary public duty, but if the taxes being levied were unjustly high, they did band together to press for tax relief. These were known as peasant ikki. The peasant ikki usually attempted collective bargaining with the daimyo, and only rarely took the form of armed insurrections. The daimyo attempted to settle such disputes peaceably by accepting the demands of the ikki as far as possible.

Castle towns and their inhabitants

In castle towns, samurai and townspeople lived in separate districts. The samurai were situated where they could best defend the castle, but the townspeople lived in the low-lying parts of the town where they set up shop along roadways. Sometimes the townspeople arranged themselves by occupation, forming separate carpenters' towns, blacksmiths' towns, and tailors' towns. Merchants paid both licensing fees and annual taxes to the domain, which, along with the land tax, were the most important sources of revenue for the daimyo. Influential townspeople were also appointed as village officers, allowing the townspeople to exercise a degree of autonomy over their own communities.
Town officers were selected by occupation from among the townspeople and governed by consensus. They were supervised by the town commissioners, who were samurai. However, eligibility to participate in the town government was limited to townspeople who had a store and paid business taxes, not the servants and the craftsmen living in tenements who worked for them.

**Topic 40 Recap Challenge!** – Summarize the key points concerning the three Edo period classes of samurai, peasant, and townsperson.

**Peasants and Townspeople Under the Class System**

It is commonly said that the class system of the Edo period was based upon the "four occupations" of warrior, farmer, craftsman, and merchant. In fact, the Edo class system did not distinguish between craftsmen and merchants. "Four occupations" was merely an expression used in Chinese classical literature, while the system adopted by Edo Japan was divided into only three classes: samurai, peasant, and townsperson.

Because this system established classes based on occupation rather than bloodline, it was not rigidly maintained. Some peasants and townspeople were designated as samurai, and conversely, some samurai became townspeople. Even in a samurai family, if the eldest son inherited the estate, the younger sons might be adopted into a peasant family.

The term "townsperson" actually referred to anyone living and working in a castle town, apart from the samurai, and likewise, "peasant" meant a person living in a village. Consequently, a blacksmith working in a castle town was a townsperson, whereas a village blacksmith was a peasant. Loggers and fishermen were also considered to be peasants. Therefore, the Japanese word for "peasant", hyakusho, is not necessarily synonymous with "farmer".