# A Whole New World (Order)

*Early Modern Japanese Foreign Relations, 1550–1850*

## Michael Laver

Historians effectively have debunked the notion that Japan was an isolated or "closed society" (*sakoku*) during its early modern period. While it is true that the Tokugawa government (1603–1868) took decisive measures to expel Europeans from the country, with the exception of a few lonely Dutch merchants in Nagasaki, and while it is true that the government took extraordinary measures to stamp out Christianity at every turn, this does not mean that Japan was somehow disengaged from the outside world. Rather, Japan participated in a great deal of foreign intercourse, mainly with Korea, China, Ryūkyū, and Ezo (present-day Hokkaido), as well as with the Dutch and, in a somewhat disguised form, with Siam (now Thailand). Similarly, through its links with Chinese, Dutch, and Ryukyuan merchants, the shogunate was well informed about events shaping the early modern world.

There is no doubt that Tokugawa foreign relations contrasted greatly with Japanese foreign relations in the last half of the sixteenth century. Japanese merchants, who throughout the sixteenth century had settled in "Japan towns" (Nihonmachi) throughout Southeast Asia, were forbidden to travel abroad from the mid-1630s; Christianity, which had been propagated with such zeal by Iberian missionaries from 1549, was absolutely forbidden in Japan on pain of death; Portuguese merchants, who had brought silk to Japan in such massive quantities for nearly a century, were unceremoniously expelled in 1639; and the Dutch, who enjoyed the relative freedom in the Matsuura domain of Hirado, were transferred to the man-made island of Deshima in Nagasaki. These were startling changes, and the fact that they occurred in a relatively short period of time makes them seem all the more radical.

Hideyoshi possessed an enormous appetite for fine Chinese silk and other Southeast Asian luxury goods, going so far as to monopolize the purchase of silk at Nagasaki. After initially tolerating the missionaries, however, in 1587 Hideyoshi suddenly ordered that all priests leave the country immediately.

The reason given was that the Jesuits, or *bateren,* as they were known, had subverted the divinely ordained order of Japan, the "land of the gods"; but Hideyoshi's real motives were probably political. Apparently he had become alarmed at the missionaries' success among the powerful daimyo of western Japan. He had already confiscated the city of Nagasaki from the Ōmura family and placed it under his direct authority, and now, it seems, he began to see Christianity itself, with its allegiance to a foreign clergy and monarchy—the Vatican—as a threat to his rule in Japan.

Most Jesuits ignored the order to leave the country, however, and instead became more circumspect in their missionary activities. Hideyoshi knew about this breach of his orders, of course, but overlooked the Jesuits' defiance as he had more important matters to attend to—including the disastrous invasion of Korea that began in 1592 and ended only with Hideyoshi's death in 1598.

This relatively lax enforcement of the ban on Christianity ended in 1597, when Hideyoshi ordered the execution of twenty-six Christians, including six Europeans, at Nagasaki. It seems that the pilot of a Spanish ship called the *San Felipe,* irked at the confiscation of his cargo when he was wrecked off the coast of Japan, began to boast that Iberian missionary activity was simply a prelude to a European invasion and cited the Philippines as evidence. Hideyoshi appears to have taken this seriously, and acted to stamp out the religion, until his death a year later put an end to the immediate persecution of Christianity. This proved, however, to be more an interlude than a reprieve.

Hideyoshi's son and heir, Hideyori, was only five years old when his father died in 1598. Almost immediately, the five regents designated as caretakers of Hideyori's legacy began to form alliances and fight among themselves. Things came to a head in 1600, at the battle of Sekigahara, in which Tokugawa Ieyasu won a victory over a coalition of his rivals. Lacking sufficient resources to completely vanquish all of the powerful daimyo arrayed against him, however, Ieyasu resorted to a somewhat precarious political balancing act that would have repercussions on Japan's foreign policy as the new shogunate moved to increase its own control throughout the country at the expense of the western daimyo.

## TOKUGAWA IEYASU'S FOREIGN POLICY

Among the first tasks confronting Ieyasu was to construct a coherent foreign policy with regard to both other countries and Japanese merchants trading overseas. He instructed the Sō family on the island of Tsushima, the traditional ar-

biter of relations with Korea, to the relationship between the two countries after the disastrous invasions of the 1590s. The result was a 1604 treaty, under the terms of which Tsushima was permitted a limited amount of trade at the port city of Pusan and state-level letters were exchanged between the two countries. Initially, a certain amount of subterfuge was included in these letters, inasmuch as neither country wanted to be seen as the subordinate partner. The Sō, to facilitate trade and avoid the diplomatic minutia altogether, forged the signatures of Korean and shogunate officials. Interestingly, when the Tokugawa discovered this deception, they meted out a relatively lenient punishment: In a testament to the importance of Korean trade, the Sō were permitted to retain their position as intermediary with only nominal shogunal oversight.

The Koreans and Japanese arrived at a solution to another potential diplomatic impasse when the shogun agreed to use the title "great prince" (*ōkimi*), which carried no sinocentric connotations of status relationship, in interactions with Korea. Over the course of the Tokugawa period, the Koreans sent twelve embassies to Japan, mostly to congratulate new shoguns upon their accession.

Ieyasu also moved to regularize Japan's relations with the Ryūkyū Islands in the west and the island of Ezo in the northeast. Just as the Sō was granted a monopoly over relations with Korea, so the Shimazu family was granted control over the Ryūkyū trade, and the Matsumae family was granted a monopoly on trade and relations with Ezo. In 1609 the Shimazu was given permission to invade Ryūkyū and make it a vassal of Satsuma and, by extension, the Tokugawa—although Ryūkyū also continued to be a Chinese vassal. This intermediate position was, in fact, encouraged by the Shimazu as a way to gain access to the China trade, since Ryūkyū sent regular missions to the continent. The trade in Chinese goods, and later sugarcane cultivation on Ryūkyū, were to play a large role in Satsuma finances throughout the Tokugawa period.

Similarly, the Matsumae were given control over Ezo and its Ainu inhabitants. The Ainu were treated as foreigners, and therefore, trade in exotic goods such as hawks, eagle feathers, sea otter pelts, bear hides, and various medicines constituted a form of foreign trade, although today, of course, Hokkaido is an integral part of the Japanese state.

The Tokugawa welcomed embassies from Ryūkyū, Ezo, and Korea and used spectacles attendant to the reception of these embassies to place itself at the center of a Chinese-style tributary relationship. This political ceremony—in which the "barbarians" paraded from their arrival ports in Kyushu to Edo, the embodiment of civilization, to pay tribute and to recognize their status as vassals to the Tokugawa shogun—enhanced the prestige and the authority of the "center" and lent the shogun a tremendous amount of prestige and legitimacy.

The fact that Chinese foreign relations had for centuries operated through such a tribute system, however, made official relations between Japan and China

difficult for the Tokugawa, who were wary about preserving both the prestige of the shogunate *and* the theoretical authority of the imperial court. For that reason, no official relations were ever established, and a type of ad hoc arrangement existed, wherein the shogunate allowed private Chinese vessels to trade at Nagasaki and the question of state-to-state relations was left open.

The Dutch and English came to Japan in the first two decades of the seventeenth century for the same reasons as had the Portuguese: to tap into the lucrative silver trade of the islands. In 1600 the Dutch ship *De Liefde* limped into Uraga Bay with a handful of survivors, perhaps the most famous being Will Adams. The Dutch established a factory at Hirado in 1609, and the English followed suit in 1613, although for a variety of reasons, the English found it difficult to make a profit in Japan and so after a decade closed their factory and left Japan.

Initially, the Dutch also found it hard to make a profit, simply because they did not have access to the Chinese silk market—unlike the Portuguese, who were able to use their position on Macao to tap into the trade in Chinese goods. This changed in 1624 when the Dutch established a factory on the island of Taiwan and began to trade with wealthy Chinese merchant families, such as the Zheng. The most famous member of this house, Zheng Chenggong or, as he was known in Europe, Coxinga, exemplified the cosmopolitan nature of early modern Japan: Born of a Chinese father and a Japanese mother in Hirado, he went on to facilitate trade among the various ports of Asia in a widespread commercial empire based originally at Amoy and later on Taiwan.

## THE SAKOKU EDICTS: TOKUGAWA RESTRICTIONS ON TRADE AND RELIGION

The notion that the "closing" of Japan represented a sudden turnabout for the Tokugawa, or that legislation restricting trade and religion was a monolithic piece of xenophobia, is completely mistaken. Rather, the move toward "isolation" began at the very start of Tokugawa rule and continued to its final form in 1641 with the removal of the Dutch to Deshima. These edicts and restrictions were tied up more with Tokugawa domestic control than with the shogunate's concerns about foreign countries.

The first restriction came in the form of the *shuinsen*—literally, "red-seal ships." The *shuin* were formal seals issued by the shogunate, and in this case they represented formal approval for overseas trade. Although this system of controlling foreign trade had been initiated by Hideyoshi, it was expanded by Ieyasu and came to be the only mechanism through which Japanese could trade overseas. It served to control both the piracy that had been rife in East Asian waters for centuries and the movement of people and goods into and out of Japan. The shogunate issued an average of about ten *shuin* per year for a total of more than 350 ships between 1604 and 1634. The system became more restrictive as the years went by until, in the last few years of this trade, only seven prominent merchant families were allowed to trade overseas, and in 1634, oceangoing trade, save for that with Korea and Ryūkyū, was abandoned altogether on pain of death.

From 1633 to 1639 the new foreign policy came to be finalized in the so-called *sakoku* edicts. These seventeen decrees can be divided into three groups: the prohibition of travel abroad by Japanese; the prohibition of Christianity, embodied in a system of rewards for those who informed on Christians; and the creation of a machinery of foreign trade at Nagasaki that placed the sale and distribution of foreign goods directly into the hands of the shogunate. These edicts brought to an end the relatively free movement of people and goods that had existed during the medieval period. Two further restrictions with far-reaching consequences for foreign trade were the expulsion of the Portuguese in 1639 and the removal of the Dutch to Deshima in 1641.

The decision to expel the Portuguese came about after the Shimabara rebellion of 1637–1638 convinced the shogunate that the Portuguese could never completely divorce trade from religion. The rebellion itself was not a religious uprising—it was a protest over years of heavy taxation in famine conditions—but it did occur in a region that had been a center of Jesuit activity. The Tokugawa regime chose to interpret the rebellion as a Christian challenge to its authority and put it down savagely, with thousands executed in the aftermath. The Portuguese were expelled from Japan shortly afterward, and an embassy sent from Macao in 1640 to reestablish trade was rejected—and all but its thirteen servants were executed as a warning.

The following year, the Dutch factory was shifted from the relative freedom of Hirado to the island of Deshima in Nagasaki. The ostensible reason for the move was the fact that the Dutch had erected a warehouse inscribed with a Christian-style date, which to the Japanese was an unacceptable display of Christianity. But the real reason for the move was so that the shogunate could directly control the trade in Chinese silk. The cartel in charge (the *itowappu*) had control over Portuguese imports of silk, but after their expulsion the Portuguese lobbied heavily for the shogunate to move the Dutch to Nagasaki. In addition, the Tokugawa controlled the city of Nagasaki directly, and so the move placed the Dutch under direct shogunal control, thereby strengthening the regime's position with regard to foreign relations. The Dutch were allowed to stay in Japan, because the shogunate derived a measure of legitimacy from having yearly Dutch embassies present exotic gifts to the shogun, in addition to the fact that the Dutch were a source of intelligence, presenting yearly reports to the shogunate on conditions in Europe and in European colonies in Asia.

With the Dutch removal to Deshima in 1641, the major circumstances of foreign relations were set in place and would not substantially change until the arrival of Commodore Perry in 1853. Henceforth, Nagasaki, Tsushima, Matsumae, and Satsuma represented the four "mouths," or "windows," at which foreign trade was allowed to occur and at which the shogunate was able to gather intelligence about the world beyond Japan's shores.

## EPILOGUE: BARBARIANS AT THE GATES

Not until the nineteenth century, when the increasing military and economic might of the Europeans began to encroach on this system, did the shogunate face a real threat to the new international order that it had constructed. Even before Western ships began to call on Japanese ports, the shogunate was relatively well apprised of the situation in Europe and the advances that European countries were making into Asia: The shogunate learned that the British had been steadily encroaching on China and that the Americans had been increasing their merchant shipping in the Pacific. It also seemed to have been aware of American ambitions on the West Coast of the American continent. And finally, it knew of Russian expansion into the Kuril Islands, Sakhalin Island, and even into areas of Ezo. The regime's response to these developments was decidedly reactionary, as the shogun and his councilors moved energetically to address the encroaching Western threat, only to abandon any real reform of the system of foreign relations once the immediate threat had passed.

This cycle of energy and inertia is nowhere more evident than on the island of Ezo. A series of Russian visitors to Japan from the late eighteenth to the early nineteenth centuries convinced the shogunal officials that they must secure Japan's northern borders. They therefore sent inspectors to survey Ezo and the northern islands, conduct interviews with the locals, and assess Matsumae's capacity for defense. The officials concluded that the Matsumae were not able to adequately defend the northern border and had consistently mistreated the natives in their extraction of resources from Ezo. The result was that from 1799 to 1821 Ezo was put under direct Tokugawa control. Characteristically, once the Russian crisis had passed, the island was again returned to Matsumae auspices until the shogunate once again assumed control in 1855.

Nagasaki also experienced a series of crises, as foreign ships tried, by direct negotiation or by the return of castaways, to convince the shogunate to open commercial relations. In 1838 the American ship *Morrison* entered Uraga Bay for just this purpose, but was fired upon by Japanese gun batteries and forced to leave the coast. The reason for this hostile reception was that the shogunate had instituted a policy in 1825 of firing on all ships not authorized to approach the coast—meaning essentially all vessels except those of the Dutch or Chinese. Al-

though the policy resulted in only two incidents of ships being fired upon, it represented the shogunate's harshest measures against foreigners to date and was largely the product of ardently anti-Western thinkers, such as Aizawa Seishisai (1781–1863). The policy was abandoned in 1842 after the shogunate learned of the British victory over the Chinese in the Opium War and the humiliating peace agreement that the Qing dynasty was forced to sign at Nanjing.

The regime's response to foreign encroachment was thereafter adapted to fit the occasion at hand. In the north, for example, it took steps to defend the border against Russian encroachment, including sending survey teams to strengthen its claims to the northern islands. There was also a fair amount of public discourse surrounding Japanese foreign policy in this region. Several scholars, including Honda Toshiyaki, advocated the colonization of Ezo and even dreamed of a substantial Japanese colonial presence on the Asian continent. It is true that pundits had to be careful to avoid the shogunate's ire (they often circulated unpublished manuscripts among themselves), but the point is that, much as with the *sakoku* policy itself, there was no uniformity of opinion concerning the course of action the government should take against the approaching "barbarians." This is perhaps most clearly illustrated by the varied opinions that the daimyo gave to Abe Masahiro's request for advice on what to do about the arrival of Commodore Perry, who so brazenly sailed into Edo Bay in 1853.

In the end, that is perhaps a good way to summarize Japanese foreign policy in the early modern period: there were a few points, such as the bans on Christianity and the Portuguese, that were not open to negotiation, but most aspects of foreign relations were comparatively fluid. Chinese were allowed to trade in Japan in large numbers, despite the lack of any official ties to the Qing dynasty; American ships made several trips to Deshima when the Dutch were unable to maintain contact with their distant outposts during the Napoleonic Wars; Russian merchants made contact with Japanese merchants in the Kurils and Sakhalin; Siamese junks routinely came to Japan under the guise of Chinese vessels; Chinese and Dutch merchants flouted trade restrictions at Nagasaki through the use of "private trade"; and toward the end of the Tokugawa period, Japanese were authorized to supply foreign ships with provisions if they put in along the coast of Japan.

Except for a few years in the nineteenth century, there never was a clear-cut anti-foreign policy, apart from Tokugawa abhorrence of the Portuguese, and even the harsh order to fire on foreign vessels was quickly abandoned. It is no surprise, then, that when the Americans arrived in 1853, and were soon followed by other nations, the Japanese were able to adapt to the new international

situation relatively quickly. It is true that the arrival of the foreigners spelled the eventual end of the Tokugawa era, and that a fair amount of anti-foreign violence marked the early years of relations with the West. But it is also true that the Japanese were remarkably adept at quickly conforming to the new international norms of trade and diplomacy, rising within a single generation to join the ranks of the advanced nations of the West. That they were able to adapt so readily to conditions after 1853 and the subsequent Meiji Restoration is surely due, in part, to the relative fluidity of foreign relations under the shogunate, despite the existence of the *sakoku* system.

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# Foreign Affairs And Frontiers in Early Modern Japan: A Historiographical Essay[1]

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When the Edo shogunate implemented maritime prohibitions (*kaikin*) in the 1630s, it marked the beginning of a historical era wherein the shoguns strictly regulated Japan's contact with the outside world. In pre-Meiji Japanese history, it represented one of the few moments when such hegemons, whether in Kyoto, Kamakura or, in this case, Edo, were powerful enough to usurp the prerogatives of coastal domains in Kyushu or such port cities as Sakai, and channel foreign contact through the center. The shoguns prohibited local state and non-state interests from formulating independent foreign agendas, sponsoring religious exchange, and conducting overseas trade without authorization. As the new historiography on the topic argues, it was a powerful assertion of the realm-wide legitimacy of the new regime in Edo, as well as an obvious birthplace of an early "national" consciousness among many Japanese and a critical element in the formation of what historians call Japan's early modern period, or *kinsei*

This essay attempts to create an updated narrative of early modern Japan's foreign relations and frontier experiences, one that incorporates previously neglected topics and highlights the new directions explored by this vibrant sub-field of Japanese studies. This narrative suggests the selective exclusion of certain foreigners from Japanese soil should be viewed as a proactive engagement of the outside world, one which required a fairly sophisticated understanding of the religions and cultures of trading partners and the implications of exchange with them. That is to say, the Edo shogunate actively sought to authorize or prohibit certain domains from conducting trade unilaterally, to debrief repatriated individuals, to craft diplomatic ceremonies so that they bolstered Tokugawa authority, to defend borderlands from invasions and uprisings, and to rigidly scrutinize the implications of the importation of new technologies and ideologies from around the globe. The Edo shogunate's stance toward the outside world, as this narrative portrays it, was a loosely knit fabric of political and cultural assumptions about foreign affairs and prejudices about the outside world, not to mention real fears of events unfolding in Asia, fears motivated by the Jurchen-Tartar unification wars, the Manchu conquest of Ming China, Ainu insurrection, and European expansion. In short, Edo shoguns wove together the threads of military violence, ideological containment, political legitimacy, identity formation, cultural arrogance, individual paranoia, and the economics of foreign trade when crafting their approach to dealing with the outside world.

In the first section, entitled "Kultur Politik," I draw on the scholarship of Jurgis Elisonas, Herman Ooms, and others to paint a portrait of Hideyoshi's invasion of Korea and China. Even though a gruesome failure, Hideyoshi's invasion needs to be viewed within the context of the process of state consolidation and border formation in the beginning decades of the early modern period. Second, in "Diplomacy," I explore the pioneering work of Ronald Toby, as well as Gregory Smits and others, to illustrate how the Tokugawa regime used diplomacy to legitimize its authority both at home and abroad. Third, in "Diplomatic Sham," I look briefly at the critique of Toby's work articulated by Jurgis Elisonas in *The Cambridge History of Japan*, and then, in an attempt to mediate this dispute, I project both Toby's and Elisonas' main arguments against the backdrop of observations made by Engelbert Kaempfer in the seventeenth century. In the fourth section, "Others," I survey new research on the birth of an early modern identity for Japanese, one which positioned foreign peoples as "others" in the creation of ethnic boundaries, political borders, and notions of a Japanese "self." In this context, as Toby, David Howell, and Tessa Morris-Suzuki argue, foreign "others" served to bolster a sense of a Japanese "self" in an otherwise fragmented political and social environment where most *Nihonjin* (a term that people of the

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early modern period seldom used outside discussions of things foreign) delineated identities along patrilineal, domainal, regional, or status lines.   Under the Edo shogunate, it was in the realm of foreign contact that the dominant ethnic group of the present-day Japanese Archipelago, the people we view as "Japanese," best understood themselves to be just that, *Nihonjin*.

The fifth section, entitled "People," looks at multiethnic interaction within the Japanese Archipelago's most ambiguous spaces.   As Smits demonstrates, Ryukyu Islanders possessed more agency in their own cultural assimilation than previously thought.   In a fascinating twist, even following the invasion of the Ryukyu Kingdom, Satsuma and Edo officials preserved Ryukyuan foreignness, or place as "other," in order to keep trade with China alive, while at the same time Ryukyuan ideologues, such as Sai On, emulated Japan, a country they believed to be exemplary in the Confucian world.   To the north, the intensification of trade between Ainu and Matsumae domain led to the emergence of such charismatic chiefs as Shakushain, who, in 1669, waged a bloody war against Japanese after forging a pan-Ainu alliance to expel Japanese from the southern tip of the Oshima Peninsula. And, at Deshima, the small islet near Nagasaki, the experiences of Engelbert Kaempfer support the notion that Japan, because of the shogunate's fear of Christianity, had closed its doors, particularly at the level of interpersonal interaction, during the early modern period.   I argue that these three figures caution against using foreigners as simply "others" either in a cultural anthropological sense or to generalize about Japan's relationship with all foreigners. That is to say, just as Shakushain fought against what he viewed as an expanding Japan to the north, Kaempfer was confronted by an inward looking and, not to put too fine a point on it, paranoid society, one which basically staged diplomatic conduct in the name of domestic politics.

The sixth section, called "Place," investigates the interdependency of Japan's domestic economy, overseas commerce, and the ecology. As Toby, Howell, and Robert Innes argue, Tokugawa foreign relations had an important impact on the domestic economy by fueling market growth, and

hence sparking technological innovations in mining, fishery development, and other industries. In the case of Ezo, Japanese markets and Matsumae trade policy led to regional depletions of deer numbers in Ezo and undermined the ability of Ainu to subsist independently.   The economic intrusion into Ezo also witnessed the introduction of deadly contagions--as European advancement did in "virgin soil" populations around the world in the form of what Alfred Crosby calls "ecological imperialism"[2] -- exposing the implications of Japan's move into new epidemiological terrain.

As this introduction suggests, a fair amount has been written on Japanese early modern foreign relations and frontiers in recent years, and so not all of it can be discussed in this essay.   (For this reason, a fairly comprehensive bibliography has been included in this volume.)   I focus mainly on historical writings that I see as pushing the boundaries of this subfield, writings that have reshaped the ways we look at the early modern period in particular and Japan in general.

## Kultur Politik

Mary Elizabeth Berry argues in her political biography *Hideyoshi* that in the closing years of the sixteenth century, the second great unifier crafted what she refers to as a "federal" state from the remnants of the late medieval polity. Through a variety of political and personal devises, Hideyoshi linked powerful warring states lords (*sengoku daimyo*), rulers who only decades before had viewed their domains as semi-independent states (*kokka*), to the center in Kyoto, and thereby extended his authority over the traditional provinces of the realm.[3]   By the 1590s, Hideyoshi extended this vision of unification even further, and orchestrated the failed invasion of Korea and Ming China. To contextualize this invasion, we must start by looking briefly at the

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[2] On the notion of "ecological imperialism," see Alfred W. Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900? 1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

[3] Mary Elizabeth Berry, *Hideyoshi* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), 147-67.   On the reunification of Japan and the Weberian model, see Berry, "Public Peace and Private Attachment: The Goals and Conduct of Power in Early Modern Japan," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 12, no. 2 (Summer 1986): 237-71.

late medieval period. This fact might seem obvious to those who study pre-modern Japan. But all too often, the early modern period serves as a kind of preface to discussions of Japan's modern period--an epochal "straw man" positioned to show just how fast Japan modernized and industrialized in the late nineteenth century--when the birth of the Edo shogunate also represented the termination of the chaotic medieval period and the emergence of a more perfected form of feudalism. The invasion of Korea (as cruel and ill-fated as it was) was an offshoot of these political developments.

At the outset, there was no "Christian century" in Japan at this time. With only about 130,000 converts in 1579, the height of missionary activity and only eight years before the first expulsion edicts issued by Hideyoshi, what C. R. Boxer saw as the "Christian century" was in fact the terminal decades of the Era of the Warring States and the primordial beginnings of early modernity in Japan.[4] What Boxer exposed was that the late medieval period witnessed intense spiritual exploration by many Japanese, no doubt a response to endemic warfare and the "culture of lawlessness" that gripped the late medieval years.[5] After the Onin War (1467-77), the Ashikaga shogunate had basically lost any semblance of control over the warring states lords of Kyushu, the greatest patrons of the new faith, and motivated for reasons of devotion, exotic magic, weapons technology, domestic ambitions, and access to foreign markets, some gladly accommodated the early missionaries of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.[6] By 1587, however, Hideyoshi had become alarmed. Not because of too many converts, but rather because the hegemon learned that Christian lords reportedly oversaw forced conversions of retainers and commoners, that they had garrisoned the city of Nagasaki, that they participated in the slave trade, and (appar-

ently offending Hideyoshi's Buddhist sentiments) that they allowed the slaughter of horses and oxen for food.[7] With the San Felipe Incident of 1596, moreover, Hideyoshi's resolve hardened considerably, and he undoubtedly viewed Christianity as a threat to the realm. "I have received information that in your kingdoms the promulgation of the law [i.e., Christianity] is a trick and deceit by which you overcome other kingdoms," he wrote in a letter to the Philippines in reply to the embassy led by Navarrete Fajardo in 1597. Christian missionaries, in Hideyoshi's mind, represented the first wave of European imperialism.[8] The expulsion of these missionaries, therefore, needs be viewed as a first step in centering control over foreign affairs in Kyoto and the stepping up of an ideological campaign designed to articulate Hideyoshi's legitimacy to rule "all under heaven," or the East Asian notion of *tenka*.

Hideyoshi, taking a page out of the missionary's own handbook, began to fantasize about his own vision of religion as a means to articulate a world hierarchy that legitimized overseas conquest. Herman Ooms, elaborating on the role of religion and thought, illustrates that Hideyoshi, in letters to the Portuguese Viceroy of Indies in Gao (1591) and the governor-general of the Philippines, explained that Buddhism in India and Confucianism in China both spoke of the same deities: the *kami* of Japan's Shinto. Therefore, it stood to reason that Hideyoshi's Japan had religious justification to physically, not just metaphysically, extend its power over the entire known civilized world. It was, as Ooms concludes, Hideyoshi's version of *kultur politik*.[9] The invasion of Korea, in other words, implemented a broader spiritual unity that already existed in Hideyoshi's imagination, albeit with Japan--*shinkoku*, or the Land of the Gods--as the sacred center. Hideyoshi's reorganization of foreign relations, then, was not necessarily, as Elisonas submits, "a matured antecedent to the

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[4] George Elison, *Deus Destroyed: The Image of Christianity in Early Modern Japan* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 54 and 63.

[5] On the "culture of lawlessness," see Mary Elizabeth Berry, *The Culture of Civil War in Kyoto* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 11-54.

[6] On the "Christian Century," see C. R. Boxer, *The Christian Century in Japan, 1549-1650* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967).

[7] Elison, *Deus Destroyed*, 117-18.

[8] Michael Cooper, *Rodrigues the Interpreter: An Early Jesuit in Japan and China* (New York: Weatherhill, 1974), 160.

[9] Herman Ooms, *Tokugawa Ideology: Early Constructs, 1570-1680* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 46.

Tokugawa construction, Sakoku," but rather a form of sixteenth-century Japanese expansionism, interwoven with a program of domestic pacification and legitimation, and rooted in nativist traditions of Japan as a divine land.[10]

Armed with this newly fashioned world order, Hideyoshi launched his infamous attack on the Korean Peninsula.   The invasion, skillfully narrated by Elisonas, resulted in Japanese defeat. Elisonas' moving account of Japan's "sanguinary excesses" during the invasion, the utterly horrific atrocities inflicted against Koreans of all stripes, ranks among the most disturbing scholarship on Japan.   On the one hand, the lurid 1597 threats by Japanese warlords to mass murder Korean officials and farmers illustrates that Japanese armies made few, if any, distinctions between combatants and noncombatants.   The Japanese collection of pickled noses, on the other hand, when such domainal contingents as Kikkawa Hiroie's and Nabeshima Katsushige's boasted the collection of some 23,794 noses in about two months, remains inexplicable even by modern standards. The *Chosen nichinichiki* (Korean days), the work of a Buddhist priest named Keinen, tells of Korean slaves being led by Japanese slave traders. In a section translated by Elisonas, Keinen wrote,

> Among the many kinds of merchants who have come over from Japan are traders in human beings, who follow in the train of the troops and buy up men and women, young and old alike.   Having tied these people together with ropes about the neck, they drive them along before them; those who can no longer walk are made to run with prods or blows of the stick from behind.   The sight of the fiends and man-devouring demons who torment sinners in hell must be like this, I thought.[11]

Simultaneous to orchestrating these hellish policies in Korea, Hideyoshi also extended Japan's northern border to include the Kakizaki family (the Matsumae family after 1599) of southern Ezo (present-day Hokkaido).   In 1593, when Kakizaki Yoshihiro met with Hideyoshi at Nagoya in Hizen Province, the staging area for the invasion of Korea, they discussed the possibility of a northern route through Orankai (north of the Korean Peninsula near Manchuria, home of the Tartar and Jurchen) onto the continent.   Maps in Hideyoshi's possession, and earlier maps attributed to Matteo Ricci, illustrated Ezo (that is, the island of Hokkaido) as part of North Asia.   It was widely rumored, moreover, that the Jurchen and Tartar carried on trade with the Ainu (at this time called Ezojin).   Kato Kiyomasa, after attacking Hamgyong-do, crossed into Orankai where he captured Goto Jiro, a Japanese native from Fukuyama (at this time only a fort, but later the castle town of the Matsumae family).   He had been living in the region for twenty years, spoke both Korean and Japanese, and told Kiyomasa that Fukuyama, in southern Ezo, was "close to Orankai [and hence Korea]."[12]

Chronicles describe Hideyoshi, after his meeting with Yoshihiro, as "extremely excited."   Obviously, the reasons for his excitement were twofold.   First, Hideyoshi sought to use Ezo as a possible northern route for his invasion of the continent.   Second, he sought to position the Kakizaki family as a bulwark against Jurchen and Tartar unification wars that were, according to descriptions offered by missionary Luis Frois, underway in Orankai, and that he and others believed might spill over into Ezo and possibly Japan.   It was foreign policy based on realm security, much like his expulsion of European missionaries was motivated (at least in part) by fears of imperialism.   To bolster Kakizaki authority, Hideyoshi granted the Kakizaki the exclusive rights to levy shipping duties in Ezo (*funayaku*): Kakizaki ports henceforth became the hubs of the region's economic activity.   Implicit within this arrangement was the fact that Kakizaki lords became obliged to recognize Hideyoshi's authority to grant such shipping duties, duties subsequently recognized by Japan's sometimes cantankerous political community.   When Yoshihiro returned

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[10] Elison, *Deus Destroyed*, 117.

[11] Jurgis Elisonas, "The Inseparable Trinity: Japan's Relations with China and Korea," in *The Cambridge History of Japan*, Vol. 4, ed. John Whitney Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 290-93.

[12] Brett L. Walker, *The Conquest of Ainu Lands: Ecology and Culture in Japanese Expansion, 1590-1800* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 29-35.

to Ezo after the 1593 meeting, chronicles trumpet that he gathered Ainu "from east and west" and read to them, in translation, Hideyoshi's vermillion-seal order granting the Kakizaki the right to levy shipping duties. If Ainu failed to observe these orders, the chronicle continues, a force of 100,000 warriors would be sent by the hegemon to crush them. With this, "Hideyoshi had extended his control beyond the confines of the traditional provinces of the realm, which suggests that not all his overseas ambitions ended in utter disaster."[13]

Recent writings, in other words, view Hideyoshi's policy toward the continent less as simply a bungled invasion of Korea that ended in the later Tokugawa withdrawal from the international arena, but rather as part of a broader process of state consolidation, the conversion of military power to political legitimacy, border demarcation, realm wide security, and the continuing formation of a Japan-centered epistemology in the form of *shinkoku*. In short, Hideyoshi's foreign policy set the stage for a proactive engagement of the Eurasian continent designed to strengthen domestic authority and, unless you view events from the singular perspective of Jesuits and Franciscan friars on ships departing Nagasaki, moved to protect Japan, a country he understood to be the sacred core of a more far-flung agenda of *kultur politik*.

## Diplomacy

The Tokugawa stance toward foreign affairs was initially shaped by Hideyoshi's invasion of Korea, and so, Ronald Toby, in his pioneering *State and Diplomacy in Early Modern Japan*, begins with a discussion of how the Edo shogunate attempted to patch up relations with Korea and China. Following the death of Hideyoshi, writes Toby, "the most urgent diplomatic business at hand was what in modern terms would be called the normalization of relations with East Asia." In concrete terms, this meant a withdrawal of troops from the peninsula; offering paddy lands to Tsushima to raise its status so that it could, under the protocol of the day, enter commercial relations with Pusan; and playing

host to a 1607 Korean embassy to "normalize" relations to the benefit of both countries, when a forged letter from King S? njo was given to shogun Hidetada. The 1607 embassy, argues Toby, "functioned to the advantage of both [Japan and Korea] as legitimating propaganda for the bakufu, and as a channel of political and strategic intelligence on continental affairs, as the political foundation for trade, and as one element in an emerging diplomatic manifestation of Japan's ideal vision of the structure of international order."[14]

Supported by this new political foundation, foreign trade flourished among those domains that the shogun authorized to trade. By the late seventeenth century, the profits from the private trade between Pusan and Tsushima domain, for example, exceeded 10,000 *kan* in silver, an amount, Toby notes, comparable to the *nengu* (annual tax) revenues of all but the largest early modern domains.[15] This diplomatic "normalization"--if such a term can be comfortably applied to conquest--also extended southward between the Ryukyu Islands and Satsuma domain. In 1609, Shimazu Iehisa, after receiving authorization from Edo, invaded Ryukyu with a force of 3,000 troops.[16] Essentially, Satsuma then incorporated the Ryukyu Kingdom: it ruled over the islands, conducted cadastral surveys, and eventually claimed Ryukyu's *kokudaka* (assessed yield) as its own.[17]

Gregory Smits, in *Visions of Ryukyu*, writes that Satsuma also proceeded to reinvent Ryukyuan history in the form of a pledge, signed by King Sho Nei, that acknowledged Satsuma's historical role in governing the islands. Smits concludes, "Satsuma's military power had transformed Ryukyu's past." From this point forward,

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[13] Walker, *The Conquest of Ainu Lands*, 34-35.

[14] Ronald P. Toby, *State and Diplomacy in Early Modern Japan: Asia in the Development of the Tokugawa Bakufu* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984; reprint, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), 23, 25, 26, 33-35.

[15] Ibid., 39-40.

[16] George H. Kerr, *Okinawa: The History of an Island People* (Rutland: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1958), 156-60. See also Toby, *State and Diplomacy*, 45.

[17] Toby, *State and Diplomacy*, 45-46. See also Gregory Smits, *Visions of Ryukyu: Identity and Ideology in Early-Modern Thought and Politics* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1999). 15-16.

despite the creative resistance of such Ryukyuan figures as Tei Do, Satsuma oversaw the kingdom's relations with China. Among the Fifteen Injunctions given to the king of Ryukyu, one forbade "any merchant ship to sail from Ryukyu to a foreign country" without Satsuma's approval. Smits points out, however, that a conflict quickly broke out between shogunal and domainal officials over the administration of Ryukyu, a conflict that the Shimazu family ultimately lost. In 1613, Satsuma had sought to assimilate the islands: one domainal order read that "[t]he various customs and practices of Ryukyu are not to differ from those of Japan." However, three years later, Shimazu Iehisa reversed Satsuma policy, arguing, as Smits paraphrases, that "for Ryukyu to follow Satsuma in every way would be detrimental to Ryukyu's continued existence as a country."[18] In time, Satsuma prohibited Ryukyu Islanders from wearing Japanese hairstyles and clothing. The reason that Ryukyu needed "continued existence as a country," even after its conquest, was because the island kingdom was more useful as a foreign country in the Tokugawa diplomatic order and more lucrative as a trading partner with China than it was as a newly assimilated province.

Toby also explains that in this competition between Satsuma and the shogunate over what to do with the conquered Ryukyu Islands, Edo won. In fact, between 1610 and 1850, Ryukyu kings, adorned in their intentionally preserved native and, more importantly, foreign garb, made twenty-one trips to Edo to visit the shogun.[19] Shogunal officials, moreover, manipulated these visits to serve as a powerful legitimizing tool for Tokugawa authority. This fact, Toby submits, "should serve to lay to rest some of the misconceptions that exist about the direction of early Tokugawa foreign policy: the bakufu actively sought contact with Korea and the rest of Japan's international environment, pulling back only when it perceived real danger."[20] In brief, immediately following the military victory at Sekigahara, the shogunate took an active interest in manipulating audiences in Edo, disputing sino-

centric calendars and era names, and crafting its own tally trade with China. In relations with China, the shogunate invented new diplomatic titles such as *Nihonkoku taikun*, Great Prince of Japan, rather than simply "king," which smacked of the Sinocentric order, because it correctly understood these aspects of political and diplomatic life to be an important part of extending its hegemony over the realm and bolstering its prestige abroad.

In this way, while foreign envoys visited Edo, ceremony was carefully constructed to create a Japan-centered world. As Toby explains, "the bakufu sought a set of protocols and norms for the conduct of foreign relations which would be acceptable to a sufficient number of foreign states to sustain the levels of trade and cultural contact deemed essential, and which might constitute a symbolic mirror of the structure of an ideal 'world order' of Japanese fantasy."[21] Specific diplomatic language, the manipulation of spatial hierarchy, the strict use of a Japanese-based schedule of ambassadorial visits, employing popular art as propaganda in the form of the *Edo zu byobu* [1637], ritualizing gift giving, and pushing notions of Japan as the "central kingdom" and foreigners as "barbarians"--or the *ka'i chitsujo*--all served to legitimize Tokugawa authority and set a standard for realm wide diplomatic practice.

In Matsumae domain's "barbarian audiences" with Ainu, for example, officials employed these realmwide diplomatic practices. Kakizaki Orindo's *Matsumae jonai nenju gyoji* (The annual events of Matsumae Castle), which includes a section on the protocol used in Ainu visits to Fukuyama Castle--visits called *uimamu*, a term, as David Howell observes, that was a reinvention of a native Ainu form of greeting[22]--illustrates that these Ainu visits were meticulously constructed to assert the military power and political authority of the Matsumae family, and hence Japanese rule, on the northern border. When Ainu participated in attendance at the castle, Kakizaki noted that the ceremony was held in the audience chamber, a room carefully adorned with the symbols of

[18] Smits, *Visions of Ryukyu*, 16-19.
[19] Toby, *State and Diplomacy*, 48-49.
[20] Ibid., 81.

[21] Ibid., 173.
[22] David L. Howell, "Ainu Ethnicity and the Boundaries of the Early Modern Japanese State," *Past & Present* 142 (February 1994): 80-81.

Matsumae authority, including armor and hanging curtains with the household crest. Spatial hierarchy dramatized Japanese power, moreover: the domain lord occupied a raised section of the chamber while Ainu sat in the outer chamber. A designated official mediated all edicts, while a translator made sure Ainu understood them. Even the gifts carried political nuances. Ainu offered *kenjobutsu*, or gifts presented upward, while the lord presented *kudasaremono*, or gifts bestowed downward. The *goyoban*, or master of ceremonies, then escorted Ainu elders to inspect the military hardware of the domain. This protocol shared several similarities with the seventeenth-century visits to Edo by Korean and Ryukyuan embassies.[23]

Only four decades after Sekigahara the shogunate found itself confronted by a major foreign-policy issue on the Eurasian continent. With the Manchu conquest of China, Edo realized what Toby calls (and all Japan specialists should recognize as) a manifest truth: "Japan is in Asia, and cannot isolate herself from it." To varying degrees, the shogunate, or domains under its authority, assisted continental allies in their fight against Manchu takeover. In 1627, anticipating a Manchu push, shogun Iemitsu ordered that gunpowder and swords, and possibly some firearms, be sent to Korea. Later, in 1645, Ming loyalist Cui Zhi, through the Nagasaki magistracy (*bugyo*) requested shogunal assistance in fighting the Qing. "[D]ozens of embassies," Toby explains, followed, all looking for Tokugawa aid.[24] However, the absence of a Ming state, the poor prospects of Ming pretenders, and other factors all pointed to a cautious stance by the shogunate. Finally, with the defeat of Zheng Zhilong, any hope of driving the Manchus out of China died, and shogun Iemitsu chose to stay out of the conflict. Still, by favoring anti-Qing merchants and serving as a haven for Ming loyalists, Japan had taken sides in a continental matter.

## Diplomatic Sham

Jurgis Elisonas, in *The Cambridge History of Japan*, leveled the first critique of Toby's thesis,

arguing that Korea and the Ryukyu Kingdom, the two countries with which Japan conducted so called "diplomatic relations"--that is, *tsushin*, as opposed to *tsusho*, or "commercial relations"-- were either reluctant participants in Japan's staged diplomatic sham or not really foreign countries at all. Turning the East Asian perspective against Toby and others, moreover, Elisonas points out that the model for the Tokugawa policy of *kaikin*, "maritime prohibitions," was Ming China, a country that, Elisonas insists, "constructed the model of an isolationist policy." "The means and motives of what the Chinese of the Ming period called *hai-chin* (J: *kaikin*), or maritime prohibitions," writes Elisonas, "were analogons to those of the Tokugawa period's *sakoku* directives."[25] Hence, the very spirit and historical precedent of the notion of *kaikin*, (strictly speaking, of course, there were no "*sakoku* directives"), spawned from the very East Asian context that Toby and others emphasize as being so important.

Elisonas continues by pointing out that Korea, "the only foreign country with which the Tokugawa regime maintained diplomatic relations," sent only twelve official embassies to Japan during the entire Tokugawa period, and that the first and most famous of these, the 1636 mission to visit shogun Iemitsu and the deified Ieyasu at the Nikko mausoleum, was in fact a "diplomatic mission" rather than a "return embassy," thus hardly constituting a tributary visit as understood by the rules of the East Asian diplomatic order. As for the Ryukyu Kingdom, between 1634 and 1806, the Ryukyu king dispatched some fifteen embassies to visit Tokugawa shoguns. Elisonas insists, however, that Ryukyu "could scarcely be called a foreign country insofar as Japan was concerned. Ryukyu was not an independent or even an autonomous state: it had been conquered in 1609 by the Shimazu and was no more than a dependency of the daimyo of Kagoshima, whom the bakufu enfeoffed with Ryukyu just as it did with Satsuma and Osumi."[26]

Elisonas is correct about Ryukyu. Nonetheless, remarks made by the German doctor Engelbert Kaempfer, whose seventeenth-century his-

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[23] Walker, *The Conquest of Ainu Lands*, 214-17.
[24] Toby, *State and Diplomacy*, 112, 114, 119.

[25] Elisonas, "The Inseparable Trinity," 237.
[26] Ibid., 299-300.

tory of Japan Beatrice Bodart-Bailey recently translated under the title *Kaempfer's Japan*, illustrate the complexity of the relationship between the Ryukyu Kingdom and Japan, as well as some noteworthy comments about Chosen (Korea) not mentioned by Elisonas but that support his critique. "Some centuries ago," Kaempfer wrote, the Ryukyu Islands "submitted to the king of Satsuma as a result of military force, and he keeps them subservient with *bugyo*, or commissioners and magistrates, strong military commanders, and guards." Kaempfer continued, "Even though they are not considered foreigners, but to some extent as Japanese subjects, they are, nevertheless, treated as foreigners and outsiders when it comes to trade." In the case of Chosen, Kaempfer remarked in his section on "Japanese Possessions Overseas" that, after Hideyoshi's invasion, "Ieyasu had the Koreans appear at court every three years with a delegation as proof of their submission. After that, they slowly came again under the sway of the Tartars and pushed the Japanese occupation to the furthest corner of their last province, which indeed is still subservient to the present Japanese ruler." Kaempfer explained that the Tokugawa shogun "is happy to own no more than the Korean frontier as safety for his own country and has it guarded by the lord of Tsushima, who maintains a military guard of sixty people under the command of a *bugyo*. The Koreans are ordered to appear at court only at a time of shogunal succession to take an oath of loyalty to the new ruler."[27]

Herein lies the crux of the debate between Toby and Elisonas. If we follow Kaempfer's line that Ryukyu Islanders "are not considered foreigners," then we can accept the rather sharp critique of Toby leveled by Elisonas: "Japan had a government that barely pursued foreign relations at all." That the "sham played with Ryukyu enforced participation and the facsimile of a formal relationship in which Korea acquiesced sufficed to create for the bakufu its own international order, in which Japan ranked first, even if it had to be *prima in vacuo*."[28] Regarding Chosen,

although Elisonas never questioned its authenticity as a foreign country in trade and diplomatic exchange, some Japanese historians, such as Yamamoto Hirofumi, float the notion that southern Korea was part of the administrative frontiers of the early modern Japanese state or, as Kaempfer mentioned, that the shogun oversaw part of the Korean frontier "as safety for his own country."[29] Hence historians raise questions regarding even Chosen's authenticity as a real diplomatic partner.

If we return to Kaempfer's earlier remarks, however, we learn that Ryukyuans were "treated as foreigners and outsiders when it comes to trade," which was, if we understand Kaempfer's use of the word "trade" to mean both economic and diplomatic exchange, precisely Toby's point. That is to say, the Tokugawa shoguns partly manufactured such foreigners to fit within its version of diplomatic exchange to bolster its political power at home and abroad, even if such diplomatic exchange was largely the product of the Japanese imagination.

## Others

By retelling a fascinating story from Ezo, David Howell demonstrates that Matsumae policy toward the Ainu shared similarities to the shogunal and, later, the Satsuma strategy of what might be called mandated difference toward the Ryukyu Islands. That is, Ainu were, like the Ryukyuans, "treated as foreigners" by Matsumae domain, even when the status of their actual foreignness, at least in the area called Wajinchi (Japanese land) was less clear. Howell points to an Ainu named Iwanosuke, of Kennichi village in Wajinchi, the Japanese occupied section of southern Hokkaido, who was thoroughly assimilated to the everyday customs of Japanese life: he had a Japanese name, lived in a Japanese village, and wore his hair in a Japanese fashion. During New Year's ceremonies, however, Iwanosuke underwent what Howell calls a "curious metamorphosis." "As a representative of the Ainu people," writes Howell, Iwanosuke went to Fukuyama Castle to participate in an audience with the Matsumae lord. Iwanosuke's metamorphosis was cast by contemporary Japanese observers as

[27] Engelbert Kaempfer, *Kaempfer's Japan*, ed. Beatrice M. Bodart-Bailey (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1999), 42-43, 228.

[28] Elisonas, "The Inseparable Trinity," 300.

[29] Yamamoto Hirofumi, *Sakoku to kaikin no jidai* (Tokyo: Azekura, 1995), 1-9.

a "remnant of old Ezo customs." However, as Howell argues, the opposite was true: "Iwanosuke assumed what had become for him a false identity for reasons that had little to do with old Ainu customs and everything to do with the institutions of the Matsumae domain."[30]

This invention of tradition and fabrication of foreignness, Howell points out, served several purposes. Most pertinently, it demarcated "ethnic boundaries" which in turn served to establish "political boundaries." At the same time, it cast the Japanese domination of the Ainu "in history and the 'timeless' traditions of Ainu culture." Howell observes of the Tokugawa shogunate that it "was the first regime in Japanese history to draw clear physical borders for itself." Qualifying this assertion, however, he continues that "rather than establish a dichotomy between Japan and the rest of the world, it surrounded itself with peripheral areas that were neither fully part of the polity nor completely independent of it." Howell submits that this "spurred the formation of a Japanese identity even before the emergence of a modern nation-state in the mid-nineteenth century."[31]

Similarly, Tessa Morris-Suzuki points out that even the assimilation policies aimed at the many "societies on the periphery" of the early modern polity "involved a sharpening of the official definition of what it meant to be Japanese." Scrutinizing the place of the "frontier" in mapping out what was spatially "Japan," Morris-Suzuki asks important questions regarding "the whole way in which we deal with space in history." "The eye of the historian," she writes, "tends to look for change over time rather than diversity across space." Through investigating Japan's relationship with its neighbors, Morris-Suzuki argues for a sensitivity to "spatial diversity" as well as "temporal change."[32]

Following an analysis of the 1713 *Wakan sansai zue* (An Illustrated Japanese-Chinese encyclopedia), Morris-Suzuki conjectures that the "feeling conveyed by this work is of a world made up of concentric circles of increasing strangeness, stretching almost infinitely outwards from a familiar centre." She points out how this model was born from the *ka'i chitsujo*--or the model of the "civilized center" and "barbarian periphery"--although it remains not entirely clear whether Japan or China served as the hub in this first work (it being modeled after earlier Chinese encyclopedias). Bruce Batten, though more concerned with comparative models of frontier and boundary creation, emphasizes a similar frontier theme, albeit on a more state-centered level, in his Japanese-language history of premodern Japanese boundaries and frontiers. Rather than identify "concentric circles of increasing strangeness" which stretched out from a "familiar centre," as Morris-Suzuki did, Batten draws on Robert Gilpin's state-centered model of "loss-of-strength gradient," wherein premodern frontiers are defined by their distance from the political core and by their political strangeness.[33]

Morris-Suzuki argues that in the late Tokugawa period, other popular encyclopedias drew on the increasingly important nativism of Motoori Norinaga, "in which Japanese identity was defined in terms of spontaneous virtue and creativity, as opposed to the rigidity and sterility attributed to Chinese learning," and the civilized hub was clearly identified by an "urbanized samurai encountering a group of Geisha in a city street." "Moral rectitude" emerged as one of the defining characteristic of being a Japanese.[34] Like Howell, Morris-Suzuki writes that the "cornerstone" of the *ka'i chitsujo* was "the logic of difference," even if it was sometimes trumped up. She explains that the "relationship with the Ainu and the Ryukyu kingdom were important precisely because they represented the subordination

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[30] Howell, "Ainu Ethnicity and the Boundaries of the Early Modern Japanese State," 79-80. See also David L. Howell, "Kinsei Hokkaid? ni okeru midoru-gurando no kan? sei," in *Basho ukeoisei to Ainu*, ed. Hokkaido-Tohokushi Kenkyukai (Sapporo: Hokkaido Shuppan Kikaku Sento, 1998), 417-18, 420.

[31] Howell, "Ainu Ethnicity and the Boundaries of the Early Modern Japanese State," 69, 71, 83.

[32] Tessa Morris-Suzuki, "The Frontiers of Japanese Identity," in *Asian Forms of the Nation*, ed. Stein

Tønnesson and Hans Antlöv (Richmond: Curzon, 1996), 42, 44. See also Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *Re-Inventing Japan: Time, Space, Nation* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1998), 11-20.

[33] Bruce Batten, *Nihon no 'kyokai': Zenkindai no kokka, minzoku, bunka* (Tokyo: Aoki Shoten, 2000), 35.

[34] Morris-Suzuki, "The Frontiers of Japanese Identity," 48.

of foreign people to Japanese dominion. Everything about the relationship, therefore, had to be structured in such a way as to magnify the exotic character of the peripheral societies." The embassies dispatched to Edo from the Ryukyu Kingdom, for Morris-Suzuki, were an "extravagant and elaborately staged dramatization of the logic of *ka'i*," or mandated difference.[35]

Later, with late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth-century contact with European nations, Japan was forced to grapple with a modified notion of the frontier. Morris-Suzuki explains that Japan needed to adjust to the idea of a frontier as a "line marking the boundary between one nation and another, instead of the idea of a series of frontiers marking gradually increasing degrees of difference." (Pointing to a later transformation of frontiers to national boundaries, Batten picks up this theme as well, arguing that actual boundaries failed to emerge in the north until around 1855 with the Shimoda Treaty between Japan and Russia.[36]) But for Morris-Suzuki, evidence of boundary creation earlier than 1855 include the formulation of an assimilationist discourse in Japan, a discourse that forced Edo officials and intellectuals to sharpen their definition of what was, and what was not, the Japanese realm. The geographer Honda Toshiaki, for example, following the intrusion of Russian trappers into the North Pacific, believed that Ainu should be made more Japanese.[37] "[W]e must establish a mutual frontier between Japan and other countries and create a fortress to withstand foreign enemies," he wrote on one occasion. Thus, even the slow absorption of "peripheral societies" into the early modern polity (and hence the clean delineation of borders between Japan and other nations) further helped clarify what it meant to be Japanese.[38] For Morris-Suzuki and Batten, one of the hall-

marks of modernity in Japan was the transformation of once "concentric circles of increasing strangeness" or "loss-of-strength gradient" emanating from the political center to political borders and the ultimate assimilation of foreign peoples who found themselves living within these newly drawn lines.

In 1857, in a different kind of example of this spatial and ethnic demarcation of the boundaries of the early modern polity, the Edo shogunate sponsored medical treatment and Jennerian smallpox vaccinations for all Japanese and Ainu in Ezo. With this policy, shogunal officials, working through the Hakodate *bugyo*, placed medical treatment and smallpox vaccinations in the same context as the other forms of assimilation discussed by Howell and Morris-Suzuki. State-sponsored medicine in Ezo "sought to transform the place of the Ainu, even at the level of the individual Ainu body, in relation to the early modern Japanese polity." Like the Foucauldian relationship between public medicine and state power that emerged in modern Europe, medicine in Ezo was employed by the shogunate to protect what it viewed as "a newly acquired appendage of the body politic--or something to be integrated into the national whole--as well as demarcate, at the level of the individual body, the borders of the Japanese state in the north."[39]

Beginning in 1799, with the Tokugawa attainder of lands and administrative powers once under Matsumae control, officials in Ezo mandated that Ainu infected with disease report to administrative posts throughout Ezo. In other words, in the same context as ordering Ainu to change their hairstyles, conform to Japanese customary norms, use the Japanese language, or to abandon the practice of polygamy, Ainu were forced, via shogunal policy, to recognize Japanese-based notions of health and medical culture. The ultimate manifestation of this was the 1857 vaccination project. Physicians on Tokugawa payroll set out to vaccinate people increasingly thought to be wards of the early modern state, even if they were ethnic Ainu, and conscious decisions were made

[35] Ibid., 51.

[36] Batten, *Nihon no'kyokai'*, 21, 50.

[37] On Honda Toshiaki, see Donald Keene, *The Japanese Discovery of Europe, 1720-1830* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1952); George Alexander Lensen, *The Russian Push Toward Japan: Russo-Japanese Relations, 1697-1875* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959); Morris-Suzuki, "The Frontiers of Japanese Identity," 54.

[38] Morris-Suzuki, "The Frontiers of Japanese Identity," 54-56.

[39] Brett L. Walker, "The Early Modern Japanese State and Ainu Vaccinations: Redefining the Body Politic, 1799-1868," *Past & Present* 163 (May 1999): 126-27, 128-29.

at the outset about who and where to vaccinate. In short, in the arena of public medicine, the Edo shogunate consciously mapped out the ethnic, spatial, and administrative boundaries of the early modern body politic before the rise of the modern nation-state.[40]

The emergence of an early modern Japanese identity, and the delineation of modern state boundaries, was not confined to the political arena, but extended into the popular consciousness as well. As Toby illustrates in several articles on the topic, images of "foreign others," ones usually built on strongly held, and sometimes state-sponsored, stereotypes -- or "codes of Other"[41] -- of Koreans and other outsiders, galvanized the imagination of urban commoners in Japan. He writes that along the routes of Korean embassies, "rich and poor; courtier, daimyo, and commoner, competed--and paid dearly--for the best vantage point from which to watch the passage of an embassy." To preserve and profit from these embassies, "artists and printmakers recorded virtually every stage of a Korean embassy's progress through Japan, from first landfall in Tsushima, to passage by ship through the Inland Sea and riverboat up the Yodo River, and overland through Kyoto, and along the highways to Edo, and occasionally beyond." Toby's highly original analysis of these visual sources illustrates that the tropes of alterity (or "codes of Other") employed by Japanese served to affirm what it meant to be Japanese. "Through reenactment and representation," writes Toby, "the alien embassy became permanent and omnipresent, an enduring element in contemporary culture. It was an instrumentality for the construction of 'Korea', and implicitly of all 'others', in Japanese culture, and by extension it was a means for creating 'Japan'."[42]

The symbolic meaning of Korean embassies also altered the nature of the Tokugawa status system. When townspeople undertook their own *Tojin gyoretsu*, or foreigners parades, and crafted *Chosen yama*, or Korean floats, common people asserted an "identity radically different from that sanctioned by official social ideology," and by masquerading as foreigners, they "licensed themselves temporarily to step outside the tightly controlled behavioral requirements of role and status demanded of them by the norms of their society." In other words, participants stepped from the realm of the Japanese self, and its implicit rigid status categories, to the realm of stereotyped-ethnic alterity, appropriating the "codes of Other" which remained alien enough to serve as a commonly perceived liminal space for escaping the officially endorsed social norms of the day. Common people, Toby concludes, masquerading as foreigners, brought the political center, that lavish capital where embassies visited, to themselves, thus "asserting their own, communal parity with the shogun."[43]

Ultimately, however, confronting foreigners forced early modern Japanese to, as Toby explains, "reorder not only their cosmology, but their imaginings and imaging of the range of human variation that they encountered in the wake of Columbus."[44] The greater the number of outside people Japanese witnessed in the early modern period, the less blanket terms used to describe this outside world, such as *Sangoku*, or the Three Realms, remained meaningful. Prior to what Toby describes as the "Xavierian moment," the tripartite framework Japanese employed to describe the outside world was the Three Realms of Wagachu ("Our Land," or Japan), Shintan or Kara (usually "China," but also other continental peoples such as Koreans), and Tenjiku (rendered as "India," but more of a theologic term that meant "Land of the Buddha"). Toby writes that for early-sixteenth-century Japanese, "the real world consisted largely of two possible identities: peo-

[40] Walker, "The Early Modern Japanese State and Ainu Vaccinations," 141-58.

[41] Ronald P. Toby, "The 'Indianness' of Iberia and changing Japanese iconographies of Other," in *Implicit Understandings: Observing, Reporting, and Reflecting on the Encounters Between Europeans and Other Peoples in the Early Modern Era*, ed. Stuart B. Schwartz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 331.

[42] Ronald P. Toby, "Carnival of Aliens: Korean Embassies in Edo-Period Art and Popular Culture."

*Monumenta Nipponica* 46, no. 4 (Winter 1991): 416, 418, 423.

[43] Ibid., 445, 452, 454.

[44] Ronald P. Toby, "Imagining and Imaging 'Anthropos' in Early Modern Japan," *Visual Anthropology Review* 14, no. 1 (Spring-Summer 1998): 19.

ple of 'Our Land', and people from China-- comprising 'the Continent', with which there was a long history of contact and commerce."[45] (Perhaps for this reason, when Kaempfer traveled to Edo, he was called Tojin, or Chinese, by onlookers.[46]) After the 1550s, however, in the wake of the "Xavierian moment," Japanese were, argues Toby, "inundated with a bewildering array of new-found Others," people who "came in hitherto inconceivable variety of colors, shapes, hirsutenesses, and habiliments." These were the people not of *Sangoku*, but rather of the more broadly cast *Bankoku*, or "Myriad Realms."[47]

The notion of *Bankoku* required a new way of construing the world, one riddled with unfamiliar geographies and taxonomies, demanding that Japanese artists, who rendered these new cartographies visually, move beyond distinguishing between Japanese and others, now distinguishing Japanese from among a vast variety of human kinds--*jinrui*. In his analysis of such works as the 1645 *Shoho bankoku jinbutsu zu* (Shoho illustration of the peoples of the myriad realms), Toby describes a "groping toward an 'anthropology' of sorts," or what he later refers to as the "anthropology of representation." Moreover, Toby cautions against dismissing this type of early modern "anthropology of representation" as overly imagined by pointing out that "European 'knowledge' of the foreign was not consistently empirical, either. . .." The principal medium for representing foreigners became the visual image and, as Toby argues, "each image was a specimen, much like museum dioramas or specimen villages at a World's Fair."[48] This explosion of anthropos in the Japanese world view engendered new knowledge of "other" and "self," and visual sources, unlike texts, provide a rare glimpse into this world of the early modern imagining and imaging of the outside world.

### People

Focus on the formation of an early modern identity, one which required casting foreigners as

"others," has had its dangerous interpretive pitfalls. Fine tuning this notion of an early modern Japanese identity has meant casting foreign peoples, both real and imagined, as reflexive or reflective "others," with little or no historical agency. More often than not, such foreigners and the places where they lived have served the purposes of either Japan or those who write its history, which is, of course, a biased vantage point from which to view any country's foreign relations and frontier experiences. New research reveals that relations with foreigners not only transformed the Japanese idea of self, but that these foreigners themselves--the "others" with whom the Japanese interacted--also witnessed political and cultural changes as a result of their contact with early modern Japan. Outside important observations related to missionaries, or brief discussions of seventeenth-century Korean politics, this point has only been made by Elisonas, Smits, and Bodart-Bailey, but nonetheless it should be considered central to our discussion. Really, this lesson is simple yet critical: vantage point, or the temporal, spatial, and human perspective from which history is construed, shapes our rendering of the past.

When Boxer and Elisonas argued that Japan was isolated under the Tokugawa regime--the "*sakoku* directives"--their vantage point and temporal site stemmed from European experiences in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Of course, for these Europeans, Japan *was* a "closed country," and so not surprisingly, historians most reliant on this European perspective most passionately pushed the *sakoku* thesis. Reinier Hesselink, who actually bridges the Japanese and European perspectives, has most recently made this point in *Prisoners from Nambu*. In July 1643, when Japanese authorities from the northeastern domain of Morioka (overseen by the Nanbu family) cleverly lured ashore and then incarcerated ten crew members of the *Breskens*, a yacht out of Batavia that Dutch officials had dispatched along with the fluyt *Castricom*, these Dutch sailors correctly came to the conclusion that Japan was a country run by paranoid and at times even sadistic rulers. What else could they possibly have concluded as they watched as the Christian hunter Inoue Masashige and others subjected Catholic missionaries to horrific tortures

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[45] Ibid.
[46] Kaempfer, *Kaempfer's Japan*, 285.
[47] Toby, "Imagining and Imaging 'Anthropos' in Early Modern Japan," 19.
[48] Ibid., 36.

such as the *anatsurushi* (the legendary "pit torture")?[49] By contrast, it stands to reason that historians illustrating the pervasiveness of East Asian contact in the early modern period should depend on an Asia-centered perspective. These historians argue that some foreign groups understood Japan to be an altogether too-open country. In other words, if certain Europeans understood Japan to be closed, then Ryukyu Islanders, Koreans, and Ainu had a different opinion. Japan was not only open, but slowly expanding and at times highly intrusive.

In his introduction to *Visions of Ryukyu*, Smits stakes out a decidedly Ryukyuan vantage point. He writes that his study "seeks to center Ryukyu as a historical agent, examining Ryukyu history mainly from the vantage point of Shuri (capital of the Ryukyu Kingdom), not Edo or Beijing." Smits accomplishes this largely through the person of Sai On, a Ryukyuan ideologue and statesman who believed that the small island kingdom must strive to reach a "moral parity" with Japan and China. Smits explains that Sai On understood that "Ryukyu's long-term survival and prosperity. . . depended in large part on its adoption and adaptation of the Confucian way."[50] Thus, in an ironic twist, the idea of the dominant Japanese forcing the acculturation and assimilation of neighboring people is cast in a fresh (and slightly uncomfortable) light: some of these neighbors also advocated a policy of assimilation--of assimilating themselves--through the adoption of certain aspects of Japanese life in order to assure their country's survival.

To begin with, Sai advocated a Confucian agenda for Ryukyuan officials that would have brought a grin to even the face of his stoic hero, Kaibara Ekken. He believed officials should thoroughly familiarize themselves with the Classics; nurture a Confucian-based notion of sincerity of will; employ geomancy in the construction of sacred and political sites; adopt Confucian notions of family relations; replace certain "native" Ryukyuan rites with Japanese ones; and recast the

king as a Confucian sage.[51] In one polemic, Sai inferred that the Satsuma conquest of the Ryukyu Islands had in fact benefited his kingdom. Ryukyu, under Satsuma rule, now practiced what he identified as "fundamental principles of the Way of Government." Smits illustrates that Sai expressed his indebtedness to Satsuma in largely Confucian terms, believing that even the rice tax extracted by the powerful Kyushu domain, which no doubt pained the Ryukyuan countryside, had led to better agriculture among farmers, in turn leading to a "rectification" of Ryukyuan customs.

Moreover, Sai oversaw important policy initiatives that in today's world might be viewed as traitorous to his country. In the mid-eighteenth century, for example, Sai oversaw widespread forestry reform and the Genbun survey. Smits points out that the Genbun survey, based on Japanese cadastral practice, "established the basic economic framework for early modern Ryukyu," and resulted in a revision of the original cadastral numbers and a tightening of the central government's control over rice-producing districts. However, as it did in Japan, the survey went further than just the realm of agronomics. As Smits argues, in Ryukyu it provided the government with a means to regulate everyday life in the districts, which extended into the realm of "moral behavior" and ceremonial practice. With increased central control, Sai was able to oversee a crackdown on "native" Ryukyuan festival life, assert a ban on shamanism, and reinvent the original meanings of such rites as worshiping the hearth deity. Of course, these measures met with mixed results; but the point is that some of the deculturation and assimilation of the Ryukyu Kingdom was generated internally.[52] Oddly, while Tokugawa officials pushed to preserve Ryukyuan foreignness, Sai On and others advocated that country's move in the opposite direction.

In the far north, Shakushain's seventeenth-century struggle against Matsumae domain serves as another example of the historical agency of foreigners. A survey of the twenty some years leading up to Shakushain's War demonstrates that

[49] Reinier H. Hesselink, *Prisoners from Nambu: Reality and Make-Believe in 17th-Century Japanese Diplomacy* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002).
[50] Smits, *Visions of Ryukyu*, 3, 8.

[51] Ibid., 75, 76, 97, 101, 103.
[52] Ibid., 109-16.

the roots of this conflict lay planted in the soil of cultural and ecological change brought about by trade with Japan. By the late sixteenth century, Ainu notions of political power, social prestige, and ritual practice had become tied to trade with Japan. That is, like the example of Sai On's reform policies, Ainu generated political and cultural change internally. Everything from the clothing that adorned powerful chiefs, to the lacquerware cups and saké used in ceremonies, Ainu acquired in trade. To obtain these items, Ainu brought dried fish, animal skins, and certain pharmaceuticals to trading posts. Consequently, as certain chiefs maneuvered to extend their hegemony through acquiring more emblems of prestige, they positioned themselves to extend their control over the land that produced the animals whose skins purchased these goods. Early on, this led to border conflicts between Ainu chiefdoms, including the construction of Ainu fortifications called *casi*. In the case of Shakushain's War, the two main chiefdoms involved were the Hae, under Onibishi (and his territory known as Haekuru), and the Shibuchari (or Menashikuru), under Shakushain.[53]

In the 1660s, Shakushain defeated Onibishi, but not before forcing Matsumae domain to take sides in the conflict. Just prior to the outbreak of full-scale war, Hae Ainu sought assistance from Japanese miners and Matsumae domain, and Shakushain, viewing these events from his fortified position in eastern Ezo, believed himself to be boxed in by hostile neighbors. So he lashed out, killing just under 300 Japanese in two well-planned assaults. Matsumae domain dispatched troops to Kunnui, in eastern Ezo, to stem a potential Shakushain-led march on Fukuyama Castle, and at Kunnui a stalemate ensued. Ultimately, the shogunate, in an unqualified example of how it viewed its role on the borders of the realm, dispatched a retainer, Matsumae Yasuhiro, to take over local command of military activities in Kunnui and see to the "subjugation of the barbarians." Indeed, "Campaigns to 'subdue the barbarians' were urgent prerogatives of the shogunate; after all, it was the imperial duty of the Barbarian Subduing Generalissimo (*seii taishogun*; the formal imperial title of the shogun) to defend the

realm."[54]

However, Shakushain's War also forged strong ethnic identities among the participants, leading some Japanese historians to call the conflict a "greater ethnic war." Once underway, Shakushain's War served to strengthen ethnic identities in Ezo. Although competition for resource sparked the conflagration, the two sides of the conflict, with some important exceptions, were drawn along ethnic lines. Matsumae commanders, such as Kakizaki Hiroshige, went so far as to threatened to "destroy all the Ainu." Shakushain, by contrast, boasted that his forces should "slash their way to the Matsumae" stronghold. In short, Shakushain's War took on a disturbing us-against-them mentality, prompting the shogunate to assert its duty to defend the realm by conscripting support among northeastern domains under the already arcane *gunyaku* (military conscription) system.

The important point is that trade with Japan, and the incorporation of Japanese-manufactured items into Ainu politics and culture, was a powerful ingredient in this war and the formation of pan-Ainu alliances. Moreover, at the same time that Japanese probably viewed themselves as "Japanese" while facing tenacious Ainu fighters, Ainu probably formed broader conceptions of their Ainu-ness while facing Japanese warriors as well. Before and after this point in 1669, Ainu society remained fragmented among patrilineal political alignments called *petiwor*, or river-based villages and chiefdoms. However, as Shakushain watched his hunting and fishing grounds transform into *akinaiba chigyo*, or trade fiefs, under Matsumae's economic expansion, it forced him to think more bilaterally about ethnic relations on the island. Importantly, for these Ainu, Japan must have been a country all too actively engaged with the outside world, or from Shakushain's vantage point, actively conquering his homeland.

Situated on the southern and northern edges of Tokugawa hegemony, Sai On and Shakushain faced the ensuing complications of an expanding early modern Japanese polity at different periods of time. Sai On, on the one hand, resisted the Edo shogunate's attempts to mandate Ryukyuan

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[53] Walker, *The Conquest of Ainu Lands*, 53-54.

[54] Ibid., 66.

difference on an intellectual and political level, pushing the small kingdom in the direction of Japanese-style Confucian reform. On the other hand, Shakushain resisted Japanese economic designs on the cold, harsh battlefields of eastern Ezo by attempting to create an united Ainu front to expel the Japanese from his homeland. For these two non-Japanese societies situated on the fringes of the Japanese realm, Japanese expansion resulted in nothing less than their ultimate conquest and acculturation, and so, consequently, any characterization of early modern Japan as a "closed country" would have come as some surprise to them.

Such a characterization would not have surprised other foreigners, however, proving once more that vantage point is critical to understanding early modern Japanese attitudes about the outside world. As mentioned, Engelbert Kaempfer was stationed on Deshima Islet near Nagasaki, (like Ryukyu and Ezo, Nagasaki was also an ambiguous space, with Chinese temples and the Chinese factory, not to mention the Dutch presence at Deshima). He viewed seventeenth-century Japan not as an expanding country but as a closed and highly paranoid one. Given a chance, he speculated, the Japanese people would have lavished "the best possible treatment on us [Dutch visitors]," but owing to the strict prohibitions against Christianity, the Edo shogunate kept Europeans under a watchful eye.[55]

Even a superficial reading of Kaempfer's writings related to his stay in Japan (between September 1690 and October 1692) expose the extreme steps taken by the Edo shogunate to immunize Japan from any potential Christian infection. It is hard to overestimate the shogunate's fears of the monotheistic religion. Like antibodies scurrying around an alien, and quite threatening, virus, trying to protect the larger body from infection, attendants and translators followed Kaempfer throughout his stay in Japan, making sure that he did not infect people, and hence the Tokugawa body politic, with the toxins of Christianity. Those Japanese who dealt with the "imprisoned visitors," as Kaempfer called the Dutch, were "bound by an oath and sign with their blood not to talk or entrust to us information about the

situation of their country. . . ." In others words, as Kaempfer concluded--in many ways setting the tenor in Japan and the West for nearly three centuries of historiography related to early modern Japan's foreign affairs and frontiers--Japan was a "secluded world apart from the rest of the world."[56]

Offering much needed details on the nature of the Nagasaki trade, Kaempfer wrote that when European ships first entered the waters off Japan, their arrival was announced by guards called *tomiban*. They manned watch towers to warn of European invasion (an invasion thought immanent, incidently, after the expulsion of the missionaries). In the case of such an invasion, signal fires would be lit in succession until the fires, and hence the news of the European attack, had reached Edo. Later, as European ships entered Nagasaki harbor, they were assisted (or accosted, depending on your perspective) by guard boats called *funaban*. Kaempfer described the city of Nagasaki as having an international flare, a product of late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth-century trade. Three Chinese temples (the Nankin, Chokushu, and Hokushu temples) graced the port city and upwards to 10,000 Chinese merchants had once visited Nagasaki every year in well over 200 ships. Some Chinese, according to Kaempfer, had even set up permanent residences in the city. After 1688, however, following shogunal suspicions that the Qing state had accommodated the Jesuits (the Tokugawa family's "sworn and banished enemy"), and that Christian books "printed in China were hidden among the other Chinese volumes that annually arrived in the country," the Chinese trade was restricted and Chinese merchants themselves, much like Dutch merchants at Deshima, were forced to reside at the Chinese factory. Although the Chinese were allowed to intermix with the Japanese population for a longer period of time, in the case of the European presence, "No Japanese who treats the Dutch with sincerity is considered an honest citizen," observed Kaempfer.[57]

Kaempfer described Deshima as a "jail" or a "fortified compound," one where Europeans were

[55] Kaempfer, *Kaempfer's Japan*, 285.

[56] Ibid., 27, 56.
[57] Ibid., 186-88, 153-54, 224-25, 199.

"sealed off and guarded like thieves." Japanese who worked with the Dutch were inoculated from foreign influence through a "Letter of Acceptance," wherein a guarantor promised that the new employee would not "listen to any talk about the banned Christian sect" and not "have any secret discussions with the Dutch." Even when traveling to Edo for a shogunal audience, Japanese attendants watched over Kaempfer's every move, "even when stepping aside to follow the call of nature." At the inns where they stayed along the Tokaido Circuit, "the Dutch must rely on the small walled garden during the day and, if it pleases them, the bath at night." While traveling, "young gentlemen" followed Kaempfer and his entourage shouting, "tojin bai bai!" (or "Chinaman, haven't you got something to peddle!"), illustrating a curious clumping of all foreigners under one category of "other" in the Japanese mind, hardly a quality that one expects from a country really open to outside contact. Once at Edo Castle, much like infected people in need of quarantine, "Our rooms were isolated from all other human beings," wrote Kaempfer. Following the audience, Kaempfer returned to Nagasaki in time to witness the execution of Japanese who had smuggled with the Dutch (a common occurrence). For the crime of illegal trade with the Dutch, "with neither a word nor ceremony," an executioner "cut off the heads of their charges as soon as we arrived and turned our eyes upon the scene." Although the Japan trade was lucrative for the Dutch, their treatment at the hands of paranoid Tokugawa attendants and translators was the conduct of people who had, in Kaempfer's opinion, "closed their mouths, hearts, and souls" to their foreign guests.[58]

## Places

Where early modern Japan did actively engage the outside world it often reshaped such places through prolonged ecological and cultural exchange. John Hall, for example, has illustrated the importance of the copper trade in commercial relations between Japan and China.[59] Robert

Innes, in his unpublished dissertation on the economic value of such trade, argues that the continental trade led to technological advances in mining in some Japanese communities. Trade spurred an expansion of mining in Japan to meet the foreign demand. The main reason for this expansion was that the major Japanese export specie in the early Tokugawa years (as Hall pointed out) was precious metals: gold, silver, and copper. Facilitating the expansion of the mining industry, and the exploitation of these valuable resources, were technological innovations in excavation techniques, drainage, surveying, and smelting. In short, Innes concludes that foreign trade "speeded the pace of innovation by increasing the demand first for silver and later for gold and copper."[60] Toby echoes this point, explaining that the influence of foreign trade on the early modern domestic economy was several fold: it fostered a general advancement of the market economy, sparked regional industries such as sugar and silk, facilitated an expansion of national transportation networks, and led to market competition which improved the quality and increased the quantity of goods.[61]

Economic and technological advancement also transformed Japanese commercial activity beyond the traditional provinces. In *Capitalism From Within*, Howell illustrates how the intensification of cash-crop farming in the Kinai led to increased demand for herring-mulch fertilizer. This demand, in turn, sparked a massive expansion of merchant-run fisheries in Ezo, transforming the production habits of local Japanese and Ainu. It was not long until Japanese were searching out fresh supplies of herring on southern Sakhalin, hoping to fill the large merchant vessels, or *kitamaebune*, which followed the Japan Sea coast to ports such as Tsuruga or Obama.[62] Along with engendering depend-

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[58] Ibid., 142, 187, 234, 282-83, 285, 355, 396, 27.

[59] John Whitney Hall, "Notes on the Early Ch'ing Copper Trade with Japan," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 12, no. 3-4 (December 1949): 444-61.

[60] Robert Leroy Innes, *The Door Ajar: Japan's Foreign Trade in the Seventeenth Century* (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1980), 533, 543.

[61] Ronald P. Toby, "Ikinai shi no naka no kinsei Nihon no kokushi--meshita kadai." In *Ajia koeki ken to Nihon kogyoka, 1500-1900*, ed. Hamashita Takeshi and Kawakatsu Hirao (Tokyo: Riburopoto, 1991), 235.

[62] Robert G. Flershem, "Some Aspects of Japan Sea Trade in the Tokugawa Period," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 23, no. 3 (May 1964): 405-416; David L. Howell,

ency in Ainu communities by forcing them to labor in fisheries, however, the herring industry depleted fishery yield throughout Hokkaido and beyond. At one point, explains Howell, herring shoals which migrated from the Sea of Okhotsk to the west coast of Hokkaido to spawn had been so dense that "a pole could almost stand unsupported." At these sites, gams of whales and flocks of seagulls gathered to feed off the concentration of fish. However, with advances in fishing technology, such as the invention of the pound-trap, not only were small family fisheries unable to compete with the proto-capitalist firms which owned this equipment, but the environment witnessed a drastic decline in fishery yield by the Meiji period.[63]

This type of environmental degradation and ecological change occurred throughout Ezo (and other places in Asia) with the expansion of Japanese markets and trade networks. In the early seventeenth century, large quantities of deer skins were imported into Japan from Asia, an early trade largely ignored by Western scholarship. Once in Japan, these skins were used to make armor and other specialty crafts such as brushes for calligraphy or *tabi*, a kind of sock worn with traditional Japanese footwear. Deer-skin items became so popular that Japanese merchants traveled to Southeast Asia in search of more skins to import. Dutch records from 1624 lament that European traders could not get their hands on any decent deer skins because Japanese had bought them all up. That year alone, 160,000 skins were imported. It reached the point where Spanish observers (no doubt motivated by their own greed) worried that deer herds were disappearing from Southeast Asia.[64] John Shepherd, in his history of early Taiwan, points out that the deer skin trade with Japan also became an important part of that island's economy under early Dutch and Chinese rule.[65] Thus Japanese had an

appetite for animal skins, and as certain Asian markets were increasingly closed off, or as deer became scarce, Ezo began to supply deer skins in their place.

Ainu trapped and hunted deer throughout Ezo, exchanging the skins with Japanese at trading posts. Matsumae Norihiro, in an eighteenth-century memorandum to Edo officials, remarked that trade in deer skins had depleted herds in Ezo. (These herds, it should be mentioned, along with healthy salmon runs, were closely tied to Ainu subsistence systems.) Norihiro was not the only observer to note the depletion of deer herds, however. Five years earlier, Matsumiya Kanzan had briefly remarked of deer pelts that "in recent years none are traded." Likewise, in 1717, a shogunal inspector wrote that "in past years deer pelts were mainly taken in the Saru River and Yubetsu areas, but in recent years few pelts are taken at all." These are important observations because healthy deer herds were central to Ainu survival.[66]

In 1792, Kushihara Seiho, a local observer in Ezo, offered hints as to how deer had come under so much pressure. He wrote that in the fall deer from the mountains of the southern section of the Ishikari region crossed the Ishikari River and migrated southeast to Shikotsu. Illustrating ecological trends in fauna distribution, he observed that in western Ezo the snow became very deep in the winter, and deer found it difficult to forage for food. During this migration, when deer crossed the Ishikari River, Ainu concealed themselves and their boats behind reed blinds and waited for deer to cross the river so that they could overtake them in boats and kill them. "In recent years an increasing number of deer have been taken, and none are left. Those deer that did remain have swum across the straits to Morioka domain," wrote Kushihara. Now, "there are very few if any deer in eastern Ezo."[67]

Finally, maritime prohibitions, and Japan's geographic isolation from the Eurasian continent, shaped the disease ecology of the archipelago, and hence the rhythms of life and death in early modern Japan. In her research on disease and mortality crisis in the early modern period, Ann

*Capitalism From Within: Economy, Society, and the State in a Japanese Fishery* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 38; and Walker, *The Conquest of Ainu Lands*, 138-44.

[63] Howell, *Capitalism From Within*, 50, 117.

[64] Walker, *The Conquest of Ainu Lands*, 120-21.

[65] John Robert Shepherd, *Statecraft and Political Economy on the Taiwan Frontier, 1600-1800* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), 57, 73-79, 100.

[66] Walker, *The Conquest of Ainu Lands*, 119-20.

[67] Ibid.

Bowman Jannetta argues that with the establishment of the Edo shogunate few new diseases actually entered Japan. Pointing to evidence such as the absence of bubonic plague and epidemic typhus, Jannetta argues that "Japan's geography and her isolation from the major world trade routes provided a *cordon sanitaire* that prevented major diseases from penetrating Japan until the mid-nineteenth century."[68]

That is not to say, however, that certain diseases did not spread outward from Japan. Similar to the scenario outlined by William McNeill in *Plagues and Peoples*, Japanese contributed to the dissemination of deadly contagions in Ezo as their commercial and political interests advanced into Ainu communities.[69] In Ezo, Japanese traders brought diseases such as smallpox and syphilis, incorporating the northern island into the disease ecology of early modern Japan and sparking demographic havoc in Ainu communities.[70] Ecologically speaking, viewed from the perspective of the epidemiologic range of Japan's disease ecology, Ezo was incorporated into the Japanese Archipelago in the early modern period via forms of "ecological imperialism."[71] Not only were people moving beyond the traditional confines of the realm, but it seems pathogens were as well.

## Conclusion

I should offer at least a brief explanation as to why this historiographical essay concludes prior to the rise of the "unequal treaty" regime negotiated between the Edo shogunate and the early Meiji state with the Western powers. Quite simply, in my opinion, such forms of international interaction and diplomatic order no longer resemble early modern forms and so are beyond the scope of this narrative. As W. G. Beasley and, more recently, Michael Auslin point out, after 1855, Japan was forced to navigate within a new logic of foreign relations and international order, one not premised on the notion that Japan-- or even China for that matter--stood at the center of a real or imagined global community, but rather one that exposed that Japan sat precariously on the edge of modern civilization. As Auslin cautions, this is not to say that between 1858 and 1872 the Japanese were completely unable to assert some political and diplomatic agency when negotiating with the Western powers. For example, Japanese diplomats did succeed in shifting the location of some key treaty ports (along with other minor diplomatic successes) during this early phase.[72] However, the mere advent of such ports, not to mention the "unequal treaties" that made them legally binding and the "extraterritoriality" that made them sting, meant that Japan, whether it liked it or not, had joined the dog-eat-dog international climate of the late nineteenth century.

As for the early modern period, three points stand out after surveying new literature on its foreign affairs and frontier experiences. The first comes in the form of (not altogether unbiased) praise: with the exception of John Whitney Hall's *Government and Local Power in Japan, 500-1700* and Thomas C. Smith's *The Agrarian Origins of Modern Japan*, possibly no single monograph on the early modern period has spawned the kind of explosion of historical writing as has Ronald Toby's *State and Diplomacy in Early Modern Japan*. To different degrees, the writings of Howell, Morris-Suzuki and others expand on Toby's point that the notion of *sakoku* was highly Eurocentric and that historians need to focus on the Edo shogunate's relations with Asia. With the thesis that Japan isolated itself from all

[68] Ann Bowman Jannetta, "Disease Ecologies of East Asia," in *The Cambridge World History of Human Disease*, ed. Kenneth F. Kiple (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993): 476-482; Ann Bowman Jannetta, "Diseases of the Early Modern Period in Japan," in *The Cambridge World History of Human Disease*, ed. Kenneth F. Kiple (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993): 385-389; and *Epidemics and Mortality in Early Modern Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 5.

[69] William H. McNeill, *Plagues and Peoples* (New York: Anchor Books, 1976).

[70] Walker, "The Early Modern Japanese State and Ainu Vaccinations,"102-7; Walker, *The Conquest of Ainu Lands*, 177-93.

[71] Alfred W. Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

[72] Michael Auslin, *Negotiating with Imperialism: Japan and the Unequal Treaties, 1858? 1872* (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2000).

foreign contact wiped clean from the deck (although, as the case of Kaempfer shows, certain important issues clearly have yet to be swept away), Japan specialists have started to navigate entirely new waters. For this reason, some of the most interesting work in early modern Japanese studies relates to the subfield of foreign affairs and frontiers. At the same time, however, so much still could be done: multiethnic communities in Nagasaki, Japanese-trading stations in Korea, foreign trade and environmental degradation in Japan, early-seventeenth-century Japanese trading communities in Southeast Asia and their environmental impact, and many other topics cry out for investigation by talented scholars.

Second, an interpretative gulf exists among scholars of early modern Japan. Those who study domestic-centered topics, ranging from literary studies to domainal politics and economics, often sound like they are talking about a different country than those writing on foreign affairs and frontiers. Increasingly, historians such as Philip Brown, Luke Roberts, and Mark Ravina paint a picture of an early modern polity where local domains remained the most pervasive manifestation of the political and economic country. However, in the realm of foreign affairs, few would dispute the idea that the Edo shogunate maintained tight control over contact with the outside world, a concrete manifestation of a state in the process of centering power. These two ideas are not mutually exclusive, but Japan specialists have yet to integrate them into one convincing narrative of Japan's early modern experience. To date, in the collective scholarship of Japan specialists, two political countries coincide and sometimes collide in one temporal and spatial frame. One aim of future research should be to reconcile some of these differences.

Third, the new writings on early modern foreign affairs and frontiers have failed to convince historians of the modern period of the complexity of Japan's pre-Meiji relations with the outside world. Many modernists still slavishly use the "closed country" (sakoku) and "open country" (kaikoku) dichotomy to explain Japan's plunge into the modern age. It is still common to talk of the "opening of the country" with Matthew C. Perry, and how in the 1850s Japan was forced to confront for the first time the practice of international diplomacy. This is, of course, highly misleading, but it does make the task of writing about the Meiji years easier. With sakoku, we can be told that only in the Meiji period did Japan master diplomacy, conduct foreign trade, conquer foreign lands, and develop collective philosophies similar to what might be described as a "national" identity. The next step, it seems to me, is to have a broader penetration of the complexity of early modern foreign affairs and frontiers into the other sub-fields of Japanese studies. This would require the onerous process of rethinking topics such as modern Japan expansionism, but it would surely enrich our understanding of Japan's past and present.