

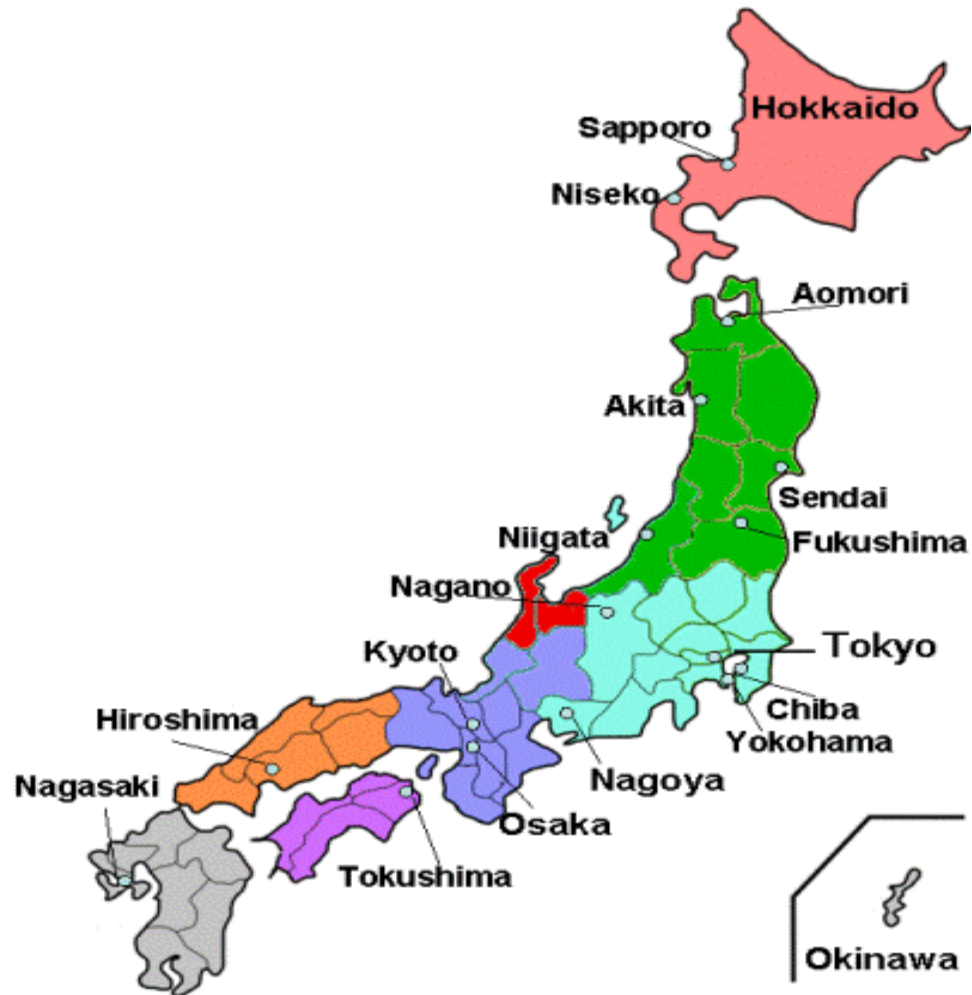
Geographic Factors Influencing Japan

Location

- Consists of four major and many smaller islands in the northern Pacific, with a land area about the size of California;
- The islands extend in an arc-like shape off the Asian mainland, some 100 miles from Korea and 500 miles from China.
- Even before modern transportation Japan was close enough to China to be affected by its history and culture.
- But Japan was still distant enough from China for the Japanese to remain a homogenous people able to develop a distinct way of life and retain a sense of isolation.



Japan

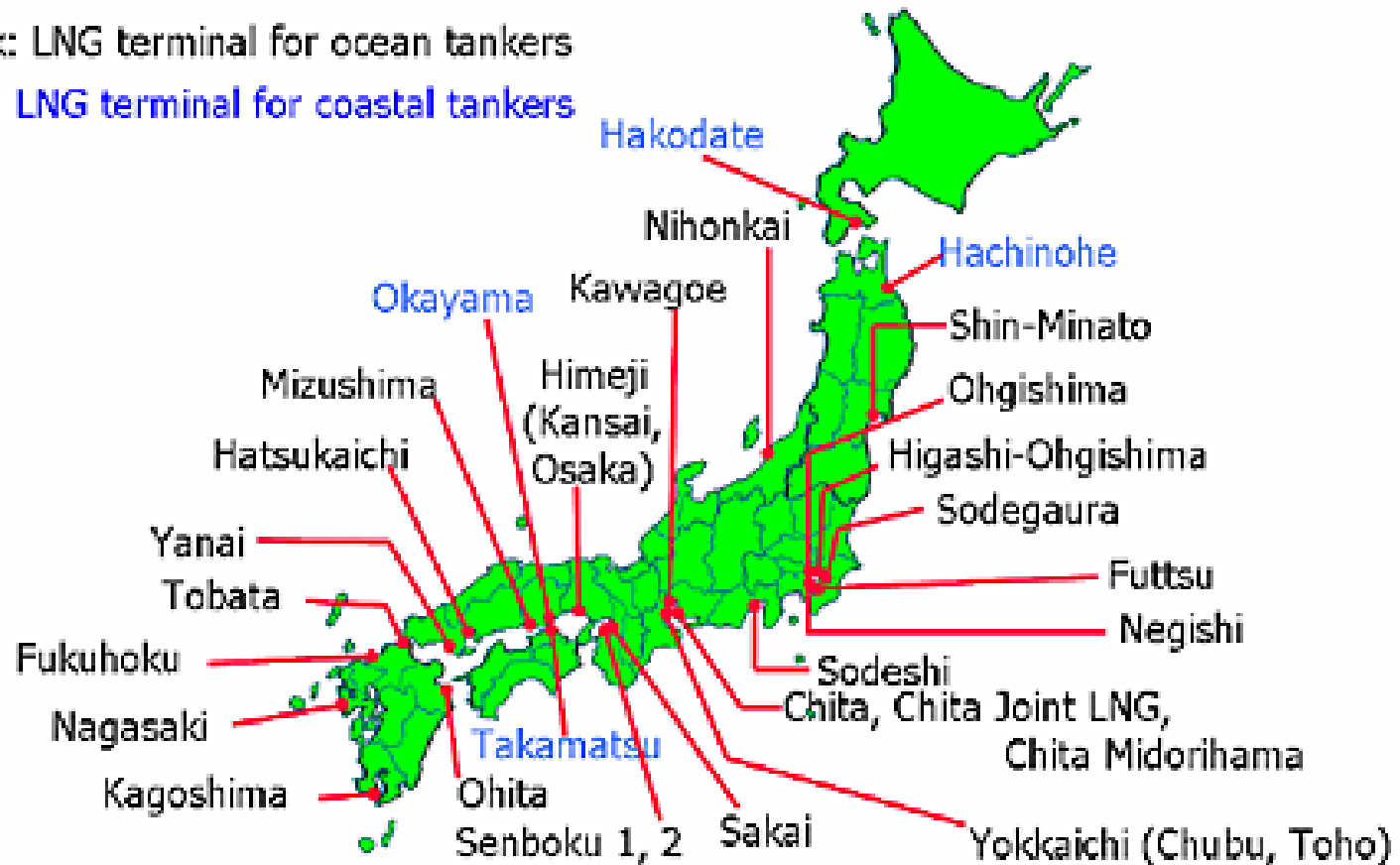




Many Ports

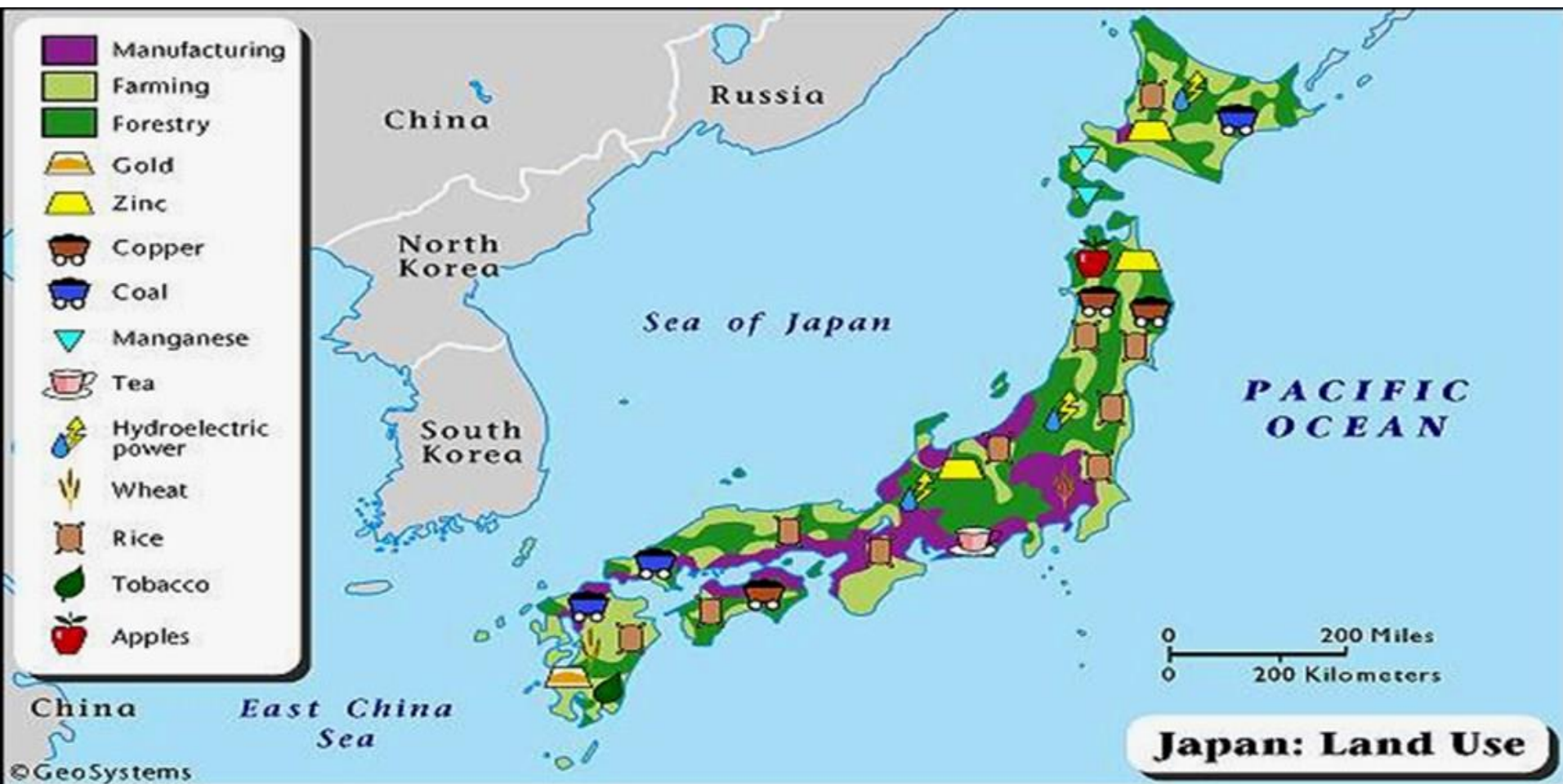
Black: LNG terminal for ocean tankers

Blue: LNG terminal for coastal tankers



Mountains

- The mountains of Japan provide great natural beauty but restrict the farming area to less than 20% of the land surface.
- This lack of farmland limited the number of Japanese who could earn a living from farming.
- It also compelled those who did farm to expand land areas suitable for crops by building terraces. These are a series of flat areas, rising one above the other , created by digging into the mountainside.
- Except for a meager supply of coal, Japan is poor in mineral resources. In the 19th century, when Japan turned to industry, the country had to depend heavily on imports for foodstuffs and basic raw materials.



History of Japan



Earliest Times

- Little is known about Japan's early history because the Japanese developed writing at a late date.
- Until the 6th century A.D., the Japanese had no accurate written records.
- According to legend, the gods created Japan, and their descendant, Jimmu, became the first emperor of Japan in 660 B.C.

Earliest Times

The modern Japanese were probably immigrants who came in prehistoric times from northeastern Asia by way of Korea.

Also, some early immigrants probably came from southern China and the Malayan Peninsula.

These early Japanese formed a number of small states, each headed by a ruling family, or clan.

By the 4th century A.D., the Yamato clan established a vague leadership over the other clans and became Japan's first imperial family.

Japan Adopts Chinese Culture (6th to 9th centuries).

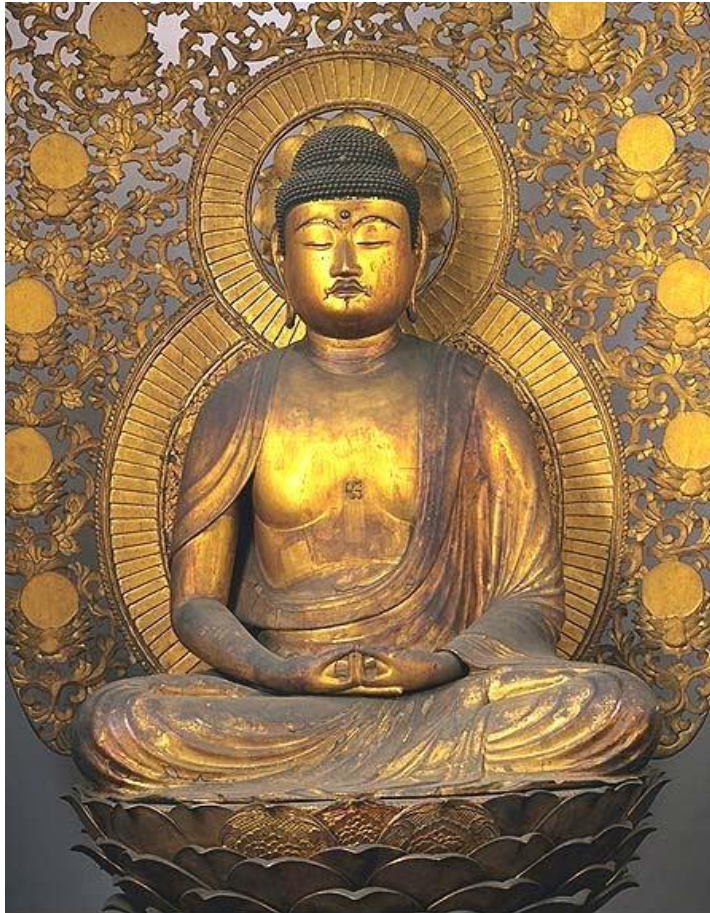
- For three centuries, the Japanese enthusiastically absorbed the advanced Chinese civilization, mainly of China's brilliant Tang Era.
- Most aspects of Japanese life were affected.
 - A. Religion. Buddhist missionaries, coming from the Asian continent, gained converts, especially among the aristocracy. By the 8th century Buddhism was widespread in Japan.

Japan Adopts Chinese Culture cont.

Also brought from China to Japan was the philosophy of Confucius. Japanese society approved the Confucian ideal of strong family ties.

B. Art. Buddhist missionaries introduced Chinese artistic achievements: Buddhist temple architecture, sculptured figures, and religious paintings.

Buddhism in Japan



www.japanese-buddhism.com



Japan Adopts Chinese Culture

C. Writing and Literature:

The Japanese adapted the complex Chinese writing system to the Japanese spoken tongue. Also, they shared in China's rich literary heritage and imitated Chinese writings: poetry, history, and the Confucian classics.

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Japan Adopts Chinese Culture

D. Government:

Following the example of Tang China, the Japanese

- exalted the position of the emperor;
- established a centralized government, and
- adopted a modified civil service examination system.

Feudalism in Japan Under the Shogunates

By the 12th century, Japan's imperial central government proved too weak to maintain law and order.

The country thereupon entered a 700 year feudal period of rule by the warrior class.

Feudalism in Japan

- A. Organization of Feudal Japan.
 - 1. The **mikado** or emperor ruled in theory but in reality was powerless.
 - 2. The **shogun**, or most influential lord, controlled military affairs as well as justice, lawmaking and finance; a military dictator
 - 3. The **daimyos**, or local lords, held landed estates and maintained private armies.
 - 4. The **samurai**, or warriors, served in the lord's armies. They observed a warrior's code, bushido. This code emphasized obedience to the feudal lord, compliance with daily etiquette, contempt for physical danger.
 - 5. The **peasants**, who worked the land, were at the bottom of this feudal society. Commoners could not advance to aristocratic status because of rigid class distinctions.

The feudal government and society of Japan in many ways resembled the feudal system of western Europe.

Feudalism

- As in all feudal societies, land is important; all wealth based upon the production of rice;
- Clan leader received land from a provincial governor;
- Provincial governor appointed by emperor or Shogun to rule over a specific region of Japan;
- Theoretically, the emperor ruled over all of Japan;



Samurai



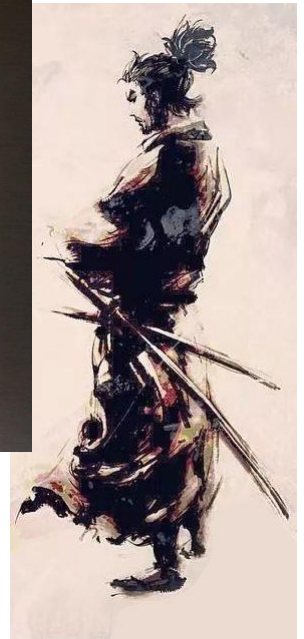
The warrior class of Japan; for more than 700 years, they were the soldiers, peacekeepers and rulers of Japan;

The samurai lived violent, exciting and often short lives;

In war, fierce fighters, battling to the death in the service of their masters;

In peacetime, gentlemen who appreciated poetry, philosophy, and finely crafted works of art;

Samurai



Samurai

Unlike many of the part-time warriors who came before them, the samurai usually did not work as farmers in times of peace; the samurai was a full-time warrior; usually from well-to-do families;

trained in the arts of war; riding horses and using weapons;

Samurai

- More than just good fighters, samurai lead their lives according to the code of ***bushido*** (way of the warrior). With its roots in Buddhism, bushido stressed **loyalty, self-discipline, respect, and ethical behavior**.
- he was also expected under bushido to be well-educated. At a time when very few could read, **samurai literacy was extremely high**.
- Bushido held that it was the man **whose inner soul was strong** that would succeed in combat. Samurai, as noblemen and rulers, also needed an education to rise to those tasks. Because they strove to be a complete man, the samurai class **participated in cultural and artistic endeavors**. Poetry, calligraphy, painting, and the tea ceremony were common aspects of samurai culture.
- This was particularly true near the end of the samurai's historic rule, when chances to fight were scarce and their weapons became largely ceremonial.

Samurai

- used a variety of weapons, including bows and later, even firearms, but it was their swords that made a samurai a samurai.
- What most people broadly refer to as a “samurai sword” is called a ***katana*** (long sword). Each katana was made by hand, handed to a specific samurai in a coming-of-age ceremony, named, and expected to become part of him for life.
- Samurai always carried a second, shorter sword called a *wakizashi*. Wakizashi were designed for close quarter combat, and were often used to deliver the killing blow to an enemy already struck by the katana.
- Finally, many samurai also carried a *tanto*, a type of dagger, often concealed and used in surprise attacks and as a last-ditch defensive weapon.

Weapons



Samurai

- The concept of honor is deeply embedded in bushido, and every samurai was expected to understand that life itself was a journey seeking the right way, time and place to die.
- Many samurai died by their own hand, suicide, known as *seppuku*. The term *hara-kiri*, popular in the West, is considered vulgar and crude, more akin to the English word “gutting” than anything as elegant as honorable death.
- Seppuku can be either a voluntary act or ordered as a punishment for some sin so egregious that it cannot be forgiven. Nonetheless, the act itself is the same, properly carried out only one of two ways.
- The practitioner uses his short sword to pierce his stomach, moving the blade left to right until he has disemboweled himself. An attendant then quickly decapitates the disemboweled samurai to forestall an extremely long and painful death.



Harakiri of Lord Asano.

Seppuku

- A proper seppuku is an elaborate process. It begins with a ritual bath. The samurai then dresses in a white robe and eats a last meal. His sword will be laid out on the table in front of him, so he may contemplate death during the meal. After eating, he will then write a death poem, a traditional short *tanka* to express his final thoughts. After the poem is finished, he grabs his short sword and follows through as above. His attendant then decapitates him, but is expected to not fully slice through the neck. The goal is to leave the head barely attached by a flap of skin so that it will not fly off, or touch the floor.

Rival Samurai Clans

- Two large Samurai clans – the **Minamoto and Taira** - had helped the emperor defeat clans threatening the government. In return for their service, the emperor rewarded these clans with large amounts of land;
- These clans became rivals for power and influence;
- The **Gempei War (1180-1185)** Minamoto clan is victorious and becomes the strongest clan in Japan; breaks away from the imperial government and forms its own government; the leader is more powerful than the emperor – the **shogun**;

Shogun

The Shogun now owned all of the land;

Land loaned by the Shogun to powerful samurai known as shugo;

The shugo, in turn, loaned land to less powerful samurai who served under them;

As long as the Shogun was strong enough to control the shugo, he could control all of the samurai of Japan.

Frequent Warfare

From 12th to 17th centuries, samurai from different clans struggled to gain power over one another.

Hard to keep control over the shugo and their samurai.

Shogun often keeps family members of shugo as hostages.

Shogun forced many shugo to live at his capital city every other year;

Feudalism in Japan

Major Shogunates

1. Kamakura Shogunate(1192-1333)

The Kamakura shoguns, representing various aristocratic families, ruled from the military capital of Kamakura. They shaped Japan's feudal system of land grants in exchange for military services.

2. Ashikaga Shogunate(1338-1573)

The shoguns of the Ashikaga family exercised only vague control and proved unable to prevent recurring civil wars.

Feudal Japan

3. Tokugawa Shogunate(1603-1867). The shoguns of the Tokugawa family maintained peace and furthered prosperity. Tokyo, their political capital, became the nation's leading economic and cultural center. The Tokugawa accustomed the people to centralized military control, but their strong rule delayed Japan's evolution from a feudal structure to modern nationhood.

Foreign Relations

Important Foreign Developments of Feudal Japan.

1. Withstood the Mongols. In the late 13th century, Japanese warriors withstood two separate Mongol invasion attempts. The second invasion fleet was destroyed in 1281 with the help of a typhoon. Hailing this typhoon as the “protector of the sacred homeland,” the Japanese named it the “divine wind,” or **kamikaze**.

2. Failed to Conquer the Mainland

Hideyoshi, a feudal general, gained control of Japan in the late 16th century and determined to conquer China. As a first step, Hideyoshi invaded Korea, but his death soon ended Japan's first attempt at overseas conquest.

3. First Welcomed, Then Excluded Western (European) Influence