

# Reactions to imperialism in asia

Government



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Japan's attitude toward foreign domination changed drastically over the years. Since the early 17th century, during the reign of the Tokugawa dynasty, the shogun made every effort possible to enforce a rigid Isolation policy. He closed all ports except for one to foreigners. Anyone who left the country or allowed foreigners in were sentenced to death. However, by the mid-1800s, Japan began to reconsider their seclusion from the rest of the world. In 1850, Commodore Matthew Perry arrived in Japan, accompanied by a small naval squadron of American merchants and diplomats.

He wanted to work out a trade agreement with the shogun. When he refused to accept Perry's terms the commodore left, only to return a year later with a much larger, highly intimidating fleet of steamships. He gave the shogun two options: either the shogun could open up Japan to diplomatic and trade relations with the United States or Perry would attack. Knowing that they did not have the resources, technology, or military might to defend themselves against such an attack, they reluctantly agreed to accept the terms of the Treaty of Kanagawa. The treaty ultimately ended Japan's Isolation foreign policy.

It opened up the entry to Western Influence and forced the Tokugawa government into accepting trade agreements that were not in their favor. The noblemen in Japan observed the shogun's inability to stand up to the West and that, combined with the unequal terms of the treaty, fueled a civil war. The noblemen believed they needed a more powerful government that would not allow Japan to be bullied by the West. In 1868, the daimyo put aside their differences and came together to overthrow the Tokugawa shogun

and reestablished the Meiji government. The Meiji took an entirely different approach to Western domination.

They were eager to modernize and they did so rapidly. Japanese officials traveled to the West to study their methods of industrialization, as well as their health, financial, and education systems. They set up a modern bank modeled after those in the United States and installed telegraph lines, as well as thousands of miles of railroad tracks. They also built up a military strong enough to rival those of the West. Their rapid and successful industrialization made Japan power hungry and they began to set their sights on foreign lands that they could use for raw materials and a place to set up new markets. Thus began Japanese imperialism.

As Japan's population increased, so did their need for raw materials and land. Their solution was found in Korea, who was currently under attack by China. Japan helped Korea win victory in the Sino-Japanese war, which allowed them to dominate Korea and forced China to cede Taiwan. This gave Japan access to the resources they desired and a place to sell their manufactured goods. Their success in the war fueled their appetite for more land and materials, so in 1904 they went to war with Russia. They came out victorious, gaining territory in the south of the Sakhalin Island and southern Manchuria, and the Liaodong Peninsula.

Their success in these wars only further increased their desire for Japanese domination and they began to set their sights on the rest of Southeast Asia. These events showed the rest of the world just how much Japan's response to foreign domination underwent perhaps the most drastic change than any

other nation. It went from being completely cut off from the rest of the world, intolerable of foreign influence, and uninterested in Western technology to becoming a great imperialistic power in just half a century. They would remain one of the major powers in the world until their defeat in World War II.