

Is it correct to identify
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west as the reason
for the fall of ...

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Is It Correct To Identify The Entrance Of The West As The Reason For The Fall Of The Tokugawa Shogunate? The fall of the Tokugawa Shogunate in Japan marked the beginning of a new and long lasting era for Japan. The fall of this shogunate saw Japan emerge to be one of the strongest and richest nations in the world. There are many attributes to the eventual downfall of the Tokugawa Shogunate. While the entrance of the West is mentioned in many accounts of this historic occurrence, it is not the main reason for the fall of the shogunate. As a matter of fact, it was only one of the many factors that led to the ultimate fall of the shogunate.

The entrance of the West into Japan may have not been a strong reason for the downfall of the Tokugawa Shogunate, but this incident played a great role in hastening the revolution that came to be known as the Meiji restoration. During this period, the emperor was reinstated on the throne and the shogunate was done away with forever.

Japan opening up to the western and the rest of the world could not by itself be held responsible for the developments that happened in Japan a short while after. For one, the people of Japan were growing restless with the ruling and elite class. Most of the Japanese were in the lower class, and since the leaders used a feudal system, their lives were almost unbearable. They were disgruntled with the manner in which they were treated and yet it was their labor that funded the nation and made their Samurai lords' wealthy. There was also a lot of internal disorder on the Shogunate government system. Japan would not have survived for a long time on the hands of a weak government. It was bound to change its leadership whether the Whites showed up or not. But they did show up, and this served as a catalyst for the

downfall of the ailing Tokugawa Shogunate. As history shows, it only took 15 years for the reigning Tokugawa to resign after the entrance of the west. There was also the threat of an imperial take over by the traditional emperors and dissatisfaction among the elite daimyo. While the royalists wanted to take over power from the Tokugawas, the daimyos wanted to be offered higher living standards. All this stress combined with the eventual coming of Europeans and Americans into Japan led to the downfall of the shogunate.

The entrance of the West into Japanese affairs only served to heighten the people's displeasure with how they lived and how they were ruled. The west helped to open up Japanese's eyes into the numerous opportunities that awaited them if they embraced modernity. The West therefore were not the sole reason for the fall of the Tokugawa dynasty, this was an inevitable event that could have happened even had the Whites not set foot in Japan.

Maybe it would have taken longer for Japan to take that step towards modernity. Maybe the other underlying factors may have led to a lot of fighting and bloodshed. The role the West played in the fall of the Tokugawa, the Meiji Restoration and the subsequent development of Japan as a powerhouse to reckon with cannot go unnoticed. However, this involvement should never be used as the sole reason for these events. Other factors such as those mentioned above were also instrumental in the collapse of the shogunate.