Japan: 1500-1800

12th Century: imperial system dissolved. Japan controlled by regional warlords ‘daimyo’
Warfare common
Hideyoshi invaded Korea (1592)

Korean and Japanese languages closely related, however Korea’s Yi Dynasty was
influenced by China

Korea did have military and technical skills, but Korea was still defeated by Japan
(China was Korea’s ally)

Hideyoshi died in 1598: Japan withdrew forces from Korea
1606: Japanese peace with Korea

Korea was in disarray
Manchus (Qing) strengthened greatly in Manchuria

Tokugawa Shogunate up to 1800:

Late-1500s: Ashikaga Shogunate lost control: wars among warlords
Tokugawa Ieyasu brought local warlords under his administration in 1600

Tokugawa Shogunate:
Gave loyal regional warlords rice lands close to capital (Edo) in central Japan
Non-loyal regional warlords were given undeveloped lands at Northern and Southern
extremes of Japanese Islands
Emperor in Kyoto – no political power
Political structure – important influence on the development of the economy
Decentralized system of regional warlords – limited Japan’s ability to regulate merchant
activities – but actually it led to stimulation of commercial activities
Japan became well-spaced urban centers in all regions
Regional warlords must visit Edo frequently – led to transportation infrastructure and
commerce
Example: wholesale rice exchanges
Tokugawa: regulations on:
price of rice
interest rates
moneylenders
Reason: Status of the Samurai was threatened

Samurai: became bureaucrats and consumers of luxury goods – led to independent
merchant class: alliances with regional warlords and shogun
By end of 1700s – wealthy political influence – key to modernization and development of industry

Japan and Europeans:

Jesuits came to Japan (1500s) – limited success in converting regional lords
Did convert many farmers of southern and eastern Japan
Rural rebellion (1630s) – blamed on Christians
Tokugawa Shogunate led persecutions and banned Christianity
1649: closed Japan to outsiders
Reason: prevent foreign influence, but still wanted to learn about foreign cultures
Small number of European traders (mainly Dutch) were allowed to live on small island near Nagasaki
Japanese could still read European books
New field of studies = Dutch Studies

“Outer lords” – Northern and Southern Extremes - relied on overseas trade with Korea, Okinawa, Taiwan, China, and Southeast Asia
Ignored policy of closing the country
Southern Japanese especially became very wealthy: had advantage over Shogunate and “inner lords”

Decline and Crisis:

Population and economic growth – reversal of fortunes between inner and outer lords
Population growth strained agriculture in central Japan
Economic growth outstripped population growth in outer provinces

Tokugawa Shogunate – undermined by changes in rice prices and interest rates
Samurai and regional lords – dependent on willingness of merchants to give them credit

Tokugawa – agriculture should be basis of state. Felt merchants should occupy a low social position because of immoral virtues (Confucian ideals)

Decentralized political system – made it difficult for Shogunate to regulate merchant activities

Standard commerce

(1600-1800) – economic growth faster than population growth so the merchants developed relative freedom, influence, and developed own culture

Tokugawa Japan:
Military to civil society
Example: Forty-seven Ronin Incident (1702)
-Ideological and social crisis of Tokugawa Shogunate
Difficult decision: military must obey the civil law in the interest of building a centralized, standardized system of law – state wanted to protect the interest of the Japanese people