

Christian Missions in Japan

Christian missionary expeditions date back to the mid-16th century, when Christians in Japan were mostly seen as infidels and often persecuted.

When western empires in the 19th century cast their sights of colonialism and imperial expansion toward Asia, Japan registered as a prime target. In 1853, as the Shogun's power declined, U.S. Commodore Matthew Perry arrived with a navy fleet. By reopening to international trading and American missionaries, Japan began the first chapter of the Meiji Restoration after two hundred years of national seclusion and subsequently a new form of society.

What was the Meiji Restoration?

When the Shogun (“great general”) Tokugawa lost his power in 1868, Japan's feudal era came to an end and the Emperor was once again the supreme head of state. He chose Meiji (“enlightened rule”) in his name of reign and subsequently began the national revolution and rapid transformation of Japan into an industrialized modern country, otherwise known as the era of Meiji Restoration.



As with any scenario of two distinctly different cultures coming together, there was inevitably both collaboration and collision...