

Religion in the early modern age

Early modern age

- ✦ Warring States Period [Sengoku] (c.1460-1573)
- ✦ Azuchi-Momoyama (1573-1603)
- ✦ Edo (1603-1867)

The Coming of Christianity

Encounter with Catholicism

- ✦ In 1549 St. Francis Xavier arrived in Japan with a party of fellow Jesuits.
- ✦ He visited Kyoto via Kagoshima and Yamaguchi.
- ✦ He studied Japanese religion. At first he translated the biblical God as "Dainichi." Afterwards he changed it to "Deus."



Spread of the Christians

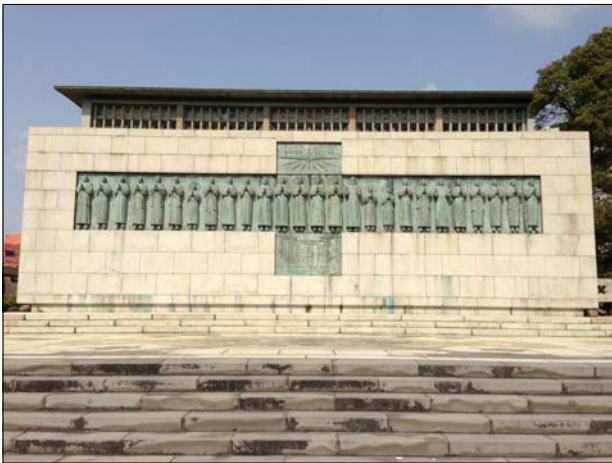


- ✦ Some lords were baptized; by the death of Nobunaga, less than thirty-five years after the missionaries first came, as many as 150,000 Japanese were Christians.
- ✦ Nobunaga allowed the Catholic missionaries to build a Catholic church (Nanban-ji) in the middle of Kyoto in 1576.



Persecution of Christians

- ✦ At first Toyotomi Hideyoshi seemed complacent toward religion, without the vindictiveness of Nobunaga.
- ✦ In 1587 he suddenly turned against the missionaries in an edict forbidding their activities.
- ✦ In 1597 the twenty-six martyrs of Nagasaki, both European and Japanese, both Franciscans and Jesuits, perished on crosses at Hideyoshi's order.



Spread and extermination

- ✦ The number of the Catholic believers reached about 700,000 in the early 17th century.
- ✦ The Tokugawa regime enacted increasingly harsh decrees against Christianity.
- ✦ Christians were tortured until they recanted or died, and were forced to stamp on crucifixes.



Rebellion in Shimabara

- ✦ In 1637 a rebellion broke out in Shimabara in Kyushu, a Christian stronghold, but it was finally suppressed.
- ✦ Secret/Hidden Christians (Kakure Kirishitan)
 - ✦ They, without priests, had kept alive sometimes garbled versions of the Lord's Prayer, the Hail Mary, and the Creed, and worshiped by such ingenious devices as placing a crucifix behind a Buddhist image.



Shinto and Nationalism

Motoori Norinaga (1730-1801)

- ✦ Canonizing *Kojiki* (Chronicle of Ancient Times)
- ✦ Connecting *Amaterasu* (Goddess) to the genealogy of the Emperor's family



Hirata Atsutane (1776-1843)

- ✦ The revival of Shinto
- ✦ He tried to absolutize the emperor based on the ancient chronicles.
- ✦ He criticized the Shinto mixing with Confucianism and Buddhism.



Rediscovery of the ancient Japan

- ✦ Finding the in-depth ancient layer of Japan and resisting Western civilization
- ✦ Re-canonization of the ancient chronicles
- ✦ The renewal of Shinto in the late Edo period provided the ideological foundations of the Meiji Restoration's imperial monarchism.