

# The Overthrow of the Tokugawa

# The Opium War

- In 1939 China tried to ban the socially disastrous opium trade.
- In 1842 UK defended “free trade” with force on China.
- UK forced China to open new ports to trade and to accept tariff levels set by UK.
- The war confirmed Japanese people’s fear of western nations as predators, disguising conquest as economic profit.

# The “Black Ships”

- In 1983 Commodore Perry of US arrived at Edo bay to bring a simple message: Agree to trade, or suffer the consequences in war.
- The four battleships of his fleet showing at Uruga beach frightened people living in Shogun's capital.

# Commodore Perry and His Fleet



# Unequal Treaty in 1858

- Bakufu reluctantly signed a trade treaty that nearly replicated the Opium War settlement with China.
- Bakufu opened eight ports to trade.
- The Japanese surrendered tariff autonomy and legal jurisdiction.
- (Extraterritoriality) Foreigners accused of crimes would be tried by foreign judges under foreign laws.

# “Barbarians” created Modern Japanese Nationalism

- The unequal treaties imposed a semi-colonial status on Japan.
- Japan became legally subordinate to foreign governments.
- In samurai society emerged a new concept of Japan as a single nation to be defended and governed as such.
- The Tokugawa's claim as Japan's legitimate defender began to wither.

# Impacts of Trade

- Gold was priced at 1/3 of the global rate. Then foreigners purchased gold at a cheap price and sold it for triple to obtain huge profits.
- Bakufu debased gold coins in line with world standards, which caused sharp inflation.
- Foreign demand caused silk prices to triple, while more finished cotton was imported from India.
- People responded to the economic change with violent protest.

# The Political Impacts

- Bakufu asked the daimyo to present their opinions on responding to Perry's first visit.
- Bakufu wanted to build consensus for a difficult decision, but it revealed bakufu's weakness.
- Until then no daimyo had been allowed to present political opinions to Bakufu.
- It also inspired the dream for power in key domains such as Satsuma, Choshu,...



# Bakufu fluctuate between terror and accommodation 1

- Shogun's chief counselor, *li Naosuke*, signed the trade treaty of 1858, with no approval by the emperor.
- He tried to revive the traditional Tokugawa dictatorship.
- He told outer daimyo to stay out of bakufu affairs and executed or imprisoned 69 anti-bakufu samurai activists (*Ansei Purge*).
- He was assassinated by Mito loyalists outside a gate to Edo castle.



# Bakufu fluctuate between terror and accommodation 2

- After Ii's death, bakufu took an approach to build consensus with daimyo and the court.
- Bakufu ended the venerable system of alternate attendance to help daimyo to save money and strengthen national defense.
- Samurai loyalists converged on Kyoto.
- They are willing to sacrifice their own lives in the names of expelling foreign barbarians and honoring the Japanese emperor.

# Satsuma-Choshu Alliance

- Satsuma domain and Choshu domain were both losers but survivors of the Sekigahara Battle.
- They modernized their military force through trade with British merchants.
- *Sakamoto Ryoma*, a Tosa ronin, was a former anti-foreign and now open-the-country reformer, influenced by bakufu reformer *Katsu Kaishu*.
- Sakamoto brokered a secret alliance between Satsuma and Choshu.
- With a secret help from Satsuma, Choshu defeated bakufu's expedition force.

# Sakamoto and Katsu

- In 1862 Sakamoto charged into the residence of Katsu, a bakufu official who were modernizing Tokugawa navy along Western lines, intended to kill him.
- Katsu persuaded the would-be assassin that modernizing reforms were inevitable.
- Over time, people like Sakamoto developed a profound understanding of Western ideas, which would become the engine for the Meiji Restoration.

# Sakamoto and Katsu



# Returning Ultimate Power

- Yamanouchi, the Tosa Daimyo, persuaded by Sakamoto and others, proposed a plan to replace bakufu rule with a roughly British model.
- He proposed a bicameral rule by a council of lords and second council representing lesser samurai and commoners.
- The last shogun, Yoshinobu, accepted the plan and returned ultimate power and sovereignty to the emperor in 1867.

# The Civil War

- The Satsuma and Choshu armies marched on Kyoto and took the control of the imperial palace.
- In 1868 the insurgents prompted new emperor *Meiji* to *announce an imperial restoration*.
- Yoshinibu's troops were easily defeated.
- Katsu, Bakufu's military commander then, turned over Edo to the insurgent forces without a fight.