

Modern Japan: a history in documents, 2004, 223 pages, James L. Huffman, 0195147421, 9780195147421, Oxford University Press, 2004

The civilization of Japan is an ancient one, and by the time the first Western visitors arrived in 1542, the Japanese people were as highly educated as any in the world and enjoyed a sophisticated culture. From the sixteenth century on, the country's history was shaped by a tension between its people's thirst to understand foreign institutions and customs and their determination to assert and preserve its native traditions. In *Modern Japan*, James Huffman tells the rich and dynamic story of this history through a fascinating range of primary source documents. A picture essay is dedicated to the tumultuous decade and a half following the arrival of Commodore Matthew Perry and the U.S. Navy in 1853, which led to an unprecedented opening of Japan to the West and accompanying turmoil. While many Japanese welcomed the strangers, "men of zeal" signed blood oaths to drive out the barbarians. The picture essay explores this cultural clash, with American and Japanese portraits of Perry pointing up the differences in attitude toward this divisive figure, and a photograph of a Japanese diplomatic mission to Washington dramatically underlining the cultural differences between the Japanese and the Westerners. The essay also demonstrates the new mixture of cultures, as traditional Japanese art forms depict the lively foreign business district in Yokohama. This cultural clash led to peasant uprisings and a coup, illustrated in ink and paint, that brought an end to the stable, introverted Tokugawa rule and signaled the beginning of a new era for Japan. Other primary sources in this collection include memoirs, school textbooks, the prison diary of a woman involved in a plot to assassinate the emperor, political speeches, a chilling eyewitness account of the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima, and a comic book description of Adam Smith's economic theories. Taken with the author's illuminating commentary, these diverse voices trace Japan's history from its first uneasy interactions with the Western world to the point where Japanese culture, goods, and people—from sushi, ramen noodles, karaoke, videos, anime, and automobiles to major-league baseball players—have come to pervade the world as a part of the common international heritage.

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The Rise of Modern Japan, 3rd Edition Political, Economic, and Social Change Since 1850, W. G. Beasley, Jul 14, 2000, History, 322 pages. This clear and authoritative book surveys the history of Japan from the mid 19th century up to the present day. It charts the spectacular rise of Japan, a society which leapt.

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