1. Japan’s encounter with the Netherlands

The first Dutch ship came to Japan in 1600. While five ships had departed in 1598 from the Netherlands, heading towards Asia (which they called East Indies at the time) on a Western route that took them through the Strait of Magellan, only the Liefde arrived in Bungo Province’s Usuki Bay. Amidst its war of independence that had begun in the 1560s, the Netherlands had come to attempt ocean voyages to directly acquire the Asian products that they had previously bought in Lisbon. In the 1590s, multiple companies were established for this purpose, including the Rotterdam Company, which planned this voyage to Japan.

Around this time in Japan, the Tokugawa family was about to unify the country under their rule. In addition to domestic rule, it also was faced with the issue of how to enter into relationships with foreign countries’ states and control trade as the power representing Japan. In order to increase Japan’s trading partners outside of Portuguese ships, the Tokugawa authorities allowed contact to be made with Dutch and British ships in Asia to give them permission to come to Japan.

In the Netherlands, there were exceedingly numerous companies in Asian trade. Fierce competition led to a merger, forming in 1602 the United East India Company (Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie; hereafter VOC). From the Dutch Republic government, the VOC received a charter, which granted it not only the exclusive rights to travel to Asia, but also considerable authority similar to a state: to establish a fortress in East Indies, enter into treaties with local rulers, and carry out wars of self-defence. Its capital was over ten times that of the British East India Company that had been established two years earlier, and this gap was directly reflected in the difference in their power in Asia.

In 1605, a junk ship that had been prepared by Daimyo Matsura of Hirado Domain, set sail with the majority of the surviving crew of the Liefde carrying a letter conveying
that Tokugawa Ieyasu would allow ships to come to Japan. They headed for Patani, where the VOC had already opened a trading post.

Patani’s chief factor (trading post head) had the ship upon its return share with Japan his intention to dispatch Dutch ships. Two ships were dispatched in 1609, and, after arriving in Hirado, their representatives travelled to Sunpu and met with Ieyasu, who even after having relinquished his position as shogun to his son Hidetada continued to hold the actual power in the country. They received a document with his red seal (shuinjō) giving the VOC permission to come to Japan, and six staff members remained in Hirado to open a trading post.

Until the company’s dissolution in 1799, all officially recognized Dutch ships that came to Japan were prepared by the VOC.

The VOC finally established an Asian base in 1619 in Batavia (present-day Jakarta). The VOC is notable for not only trying to monopolize Asia-Netherlands trade but also intra-Asian trade. It was not only hostile with Spain, Portugal, and the British East India Company when it came to rights on the spice-producing Molucca Islands, but also was in conflict with multiple local regimes. At first it was lacking in all necessities, including hulls, personnel, capital, and food. Furthermore, the VOC could not directly trade in Chinese goods, which, along with spices, were key commodities in intra-Asian trade and also an indispensable part of the cargo sent back to the Netherlands. It therefore relied upon Chinese goods captured from enemy ships.

In this context, the major function of the newly opened Hirado trading post was not so much about trade, but to engage in trade as much as provide necessities (such as food, weapons, stones, and wood), supply Chinese and Japanese labourers and mercenaries. It also functioned as a military base to attack Portuguese ships going between Macao and Nagasaki. The Portuguese and Chinese complained repeatedly to the shogunate that the Dutch were pirates.

In 1622, the chief factor asked the VOC that an adequate amount of goods be sent to Japan, explaining that necessary capital for trade in Asia could be secured by being able to trade with China and injecting Chinese merchandise into the Japanese market, as well as that there was a need to demonstrate their true nature as merchants and wipe away their reputation as pirates so that the shogunate would continue to allow Dutch ships to come to Japan. At this stage trade with Japan was a low priority for the VOC.

In 1624 the VOC acquired a base on Taiwan. Through trade with the Chinese ships they encountered, they became able to acquire raw silk and textiles, and were thus fi-
Finally able to bring a rich set of goods to Japan, making it possible for the company to acquire silver. It is said that in 1637 profit from the trading post in Hirado made up 70 per cent of the company’s total profits. Japanese trade thus became indispensable for it.

Expanding throughout Asia, the VOC created a massive number of documents to support its operations. Important documents (information) in the organization were transmitted between the Netherlands, Batavia, and its outposts.

Two or three times a year a group of ships was sent from the Netherlands to Asia filled with not only merchandise and capital but also documents detailing orders for goods and instructions from its board of directors. The Governor-General and Council of the Indies in Batavia presided over Asian trade, receiving them and then sending necessary directions, product orders, and products to trading posts. Trading posts, in accordance with their own situations, carried out trade and operations-related work, created records of doing so, and send reports to Batavia. In Batavia general reports were created for the Netherlands based on this information, and subsequently entrusted to ships returning to the Netherlands along with related documents or copies of them.

Just like other trading posts, the one in Japan created documents that were both kept at the post and sent to Batavia. Thankfully, documents such as journals, records of resolutions, copies of sent and received correspondence, and accounting records, were stored extremely well at the trading post in Japan, most of which were in the late nineteenth century sent back to the Netherlands.

These sets of documents are now housed in the National Archives of the Netherlands in The Hague. From them, the Historiographical Institute has gathered photo reproductions of documents related to Japan, which serve as fundamental materials for carrying out research on Japanese-Dutch relations.

2. Japan’s only European trading partner

In the 1630s, the Tokugawa shogunate introduced a strict ban on Christianity and tight control on trade. They prohibited Japanese from going and returning from overseas, and restricted foreign trade ships to Nagasaki. This was accompanied by a distinction between the “Japanese” who domiciled in Japan and people who were not (“foreigners” or *ikoku*), as well as a clear demarcation—albeit in a different sense from its modern usage—of boundaries for the shogunate’s territory and people under its rule, that is, the reach of its sovereignty.
Portugal’s treatment was continually unsteady, with the prohibition of Christianity and trade interests pulling in opposite directions. Individuals who had invested in trade with Portuguese ships were spread out considerably, and it was not easy to stop it.

The 1637 rebellion by Christian farmers and local samurai (the Shimabara-Amakusa Rebellion) in western Kyushu dictated the shogunate’s policy in this regard. In 1639 Portuguese ships were banned and orders were given to create coastal defences against foreign countries’ ships.

The primary concerns when deciding to banish the Portuguese were how to secure imported merchandise and handle attacks by Portugal and Spain that could occur due to relations being broken off with the former. In the end, in April 1639 the shogunate reached the conclusion that they could make do with goods provided by other countries. One major reason for this was that the total value of items imported from the Netherlands finally surpassed that of Portugal in 1638.

In the following year all of the Portuguese envoys who had come from Macao hoping for the reopening of trade were executed and their ship was burned up. On the guard for retribution, the shogunate then further strengthened its defences.

When the Portuguese were expelled, it was completely unclear how the Dutch were going to be treated. The shogunate was fully aware that the Dutch were also Christians.

During the Shimabara-Amakusa Rebellion, the Dutch served the shogunate by participating in the attack on the castle in which the rebellion was holed up, with the trading post’s chief factor himself bringing around a Dutch ship to do so. However, the power of Western artillery that the Dutch demonstrated caused alarm. Furthermore, the shogunate, which had trouble with the firm resistance put up by the rebellion holed up inside the castle, was probably aware that Dutch’s newly constructed durable stone warehouse building could be changed into a fort. The shogunate was concerned about an alliance between domestic opposition forces and foreign countries, and thus kept the Christian Dutch under close watch.

In November 1640, the shogun sent a new messenger to the Hirado trading post, and ordered that the warehouse be demolished and the chief factor to be changed yearly. The pretext for the former was the use of the Christian calendar: ‘AD 1639’ was written on its gable. Displays of Christian religious belief were strictly prohibited.

In May of the following year (1641), the new chief factor, who had gone to Edo to have an audience with the shogun was ordered to move to Nagasaki. He was also urged to capture and turn in any galiot aiming to bring Christian missionaries ashore encoun-
tered on the sea route from Macao or Manila to Japan or near Japan’s coast, stressing the
importance of properly distinguishing between Christian missionaries and members of
other religions.

This transfer to Nagasaki was necessary in order to stop the decline of the shogunate-
controlled city of Nagasaki resulting from expulsion of the Portuguese, as well as to
ensure the importation of necessities. At the same time, the shogunate’s aim was to keep
an eye on the Dutch in Nagasaki (in a small artificial island called Deshima) since they
too were Christians.

In 1643, the Breskens, a ship exploring the ocean to the north of Japan, headed up
along the Tohoku region’s Pacific Ocean coast while firing blanks, searching for its con-
sort ship. Ten Dutch from the ship who then went ashore in Yamada-ura (Morioka Do-
main) were arrested. The shogunate thought that they might have been involved in the
smuggling of missionaries that had been discovered on the coast of Kyushu right around
this time. However, convinced by the chief factor’s explanation, the shogunate pardoned
them and provided a document giving the Dutch permission to come to Japan via ship
for commercial purposes. This document confirmed the position of the Dutch in the
country, and it appeared as if Japanese-Dutch relations would take a turn for the better.

On the other hand, the shogun Tokugawa Iemitsu thought that an envoy from not the
outpost of Batavia but from the Netherlands should come to express gratitude for the
leniency shown by him in this incident. This demand gradually became clearer and the
continued existence of trade was thrown into doubt. Members of the VOC’s board of
directors in the Netherlands did not see this as necessary at all, and preparations were
instead made in Batavia to send a special “envoy” to address the situation. This fake
deviation arrived in Japan in September 1649, and in the end was recognized by the
head of the shogunate, who had been seeking a resolution to this incident. While the
“envoy” himself died during the voyage, the delegation’s deputy had an audience with
the shogun’s son in Edo and presented gifts. Thus problems between the two countries
were more or less solved. For the subsequent two hundred years or so, the Netherlands
did not send an envoy to Japan, only trade ships. The Japan side also did not seek out any
relationship with the Dutch state. In exchange for their permission to engage in com-
merce, Dutch merchants were expected to send the chief factor as their representative to
Edo, who would have an audience with and present gifts to the shogun and then provide
information about developments in Catholic countries as well as about overseas affairs.

The shogunate did not adopt an outright “isolation policy” in the 1630s but, rather,
examined each case individually. When, in the process of the dynastic changeover from the Ming to the Qing on the Chinese mainland, surviving retainers and the like from the Ming sought reinforcements, the shogunate considered the possibility of doing so but, in the end, did not. England, which in 1613 opened a trading post in Hirado but withdrew in ten years, was on the lookout for an opportunity to relaunch trade with Japan. In July 1673, they sent a ship called the “Return” to Nagasaki, and asked that trade be reopened. The Nagasaki magistrate decided to refuse to accept the king’s letter, but was unable to provide an immediate answer on trade. He sought instructions from Edo, and, after deliberations, the heads of the shogunate rejected England’s request. When in 1675 the Dutch informed the shogunate that a Danish boat was planning on coming to Japan, it was decided in advance that permission to engage in trade would not be granted. It appears that from around this time the decision repeatedly arrived at after examining requests on a case by case basis—not to engage in trade with a new foreign country—had come to be seen as a rule. Around the end of the seventeenth century under the direction of the Tokugawa shogunate, a foreign relations regime was established characterized by a strict ban on Christianity, coastal defences, a rigid prohibition on the populace traveling overseas, and high level of economic independence due to thorough trade regulations. As a result, the only European country that could continually directly engage in trade with Japan was the Netherlands.

3. The structure of trade

In the first half of the seventeenth century the VOC was able to fully enter the Asian trade market. In the second half of the century it reached its peak, making considerable profits by constructing many hubs throughout Asia and sending its own ships between them. The trading post in Japan played a role in the VOC’s trading network as its most distant hub.

Trade in the shogunate-controlled city of Nagasaki was reshaped by the elimination of Portuguese ships—with which Japan had done considerable business—and the concentration of Dutch and Chinese ships in Nagasaki. Happenings on the Chinese mainland had a major influence on developments in Nagasaki trade.

Throughout the seventeenth century, Dutch boats mainly imported raw silk and textiles into Japan. In the latter half of the 1630s—around the time that the Dutch moved to Nagasaki—they were able to bring massive amounts of raw silk and textiles that they
had acquired in Taiwan from Chinese ships. However, due to the influence of battles in China, they were no longer able to acquire a stable supply, and in 1661 they completely lost their foothold in Taiwan. From 1642 onwards the Dutch primarily imported raw silk from Tonkin, and from 1650 onwards from Bengal. In the eighteenth century, they began importing more textiles than raw silk.

Japan had no notable export. Dutch boats heading out from Japan would primarily carry gold and silver, which served as important capital for trade in Asia. Money was primarily sent to the Coromandel region on the eastern coast of India in the form of oval coins called koban. These coins were also used as currency on Batavia. Silver was brought in the form of oval-shaped ingots called chōgin to Taiwan, Tonkin, and Siam, as well as Bengal, Coromandel, and Gujarat on India’s west coast. In Southeast Asia the cotton textiles acquired in India were changed into goods for Japan (such as deer leather, ray skin, sappanwood, and black lacquer), as well as pepper and spices for the Netherlands. Gold and silver were also able to increase value added by being recast into local currency.

From an early point the shogunate was concerned about the outflow of precious metals to overseas countries. It is said that a considerable amount of silver began going overseas due to an increase in imports and a rise in prices, and that thus new trade regulations became necessary. In 1664 the export of gold, which had been banned since 1641, was permitted. In 1668 restrictions were placed on goods that could be imported and exported and the Netherlands was prohibited from exporting silver. However, Chinese ships continued to export the latter because Japan did not have any other exportable items.

The latter half of the seventeenth century was a process of trial and error for the shogunate with regard to controlling the outflow of gold and silver from Japan. First, the shogunate tried to control prices by having goods be purchased in bulk at a standard price decided upon by the Japan side, which originally had only been done with raw silk. At the same time the shogunate controlled the circulation of imported goods by only giving recognized merchants in the country the right to purchase them, with the differences between import and domestic sales prices used to provide financial assistance to the trade city of Nagasaki (called shihō shōhō).

This method was successful to an extent in limiting the outflow of gold and silver. However, in 1685, it was abolished. This was because a new thorough policy was seen as necessary due to the expectation that, with the upheaval accompanying the dynastic
changeover from the Ming to the Qing having ended, there would be an increase in the number of Chinese ships coming to Japan.

In 1685 a new trade policy was presented. It restricted the volume of trade to an amount that is said to have been based on the yearly volume of trade at the time (jōdaka). It dictated that Chinese ships could trade 6,000 kanme (1 kanme ≈ 3.75 kg) of silver, and Dutch ships 3,000, equivalent to fifty thousand ryō.

In 1697 the Nagasaki Accounting House (Nagasaki Kaisho) was established. It was run by officials appointed from the merchant class (chōnin) under the supervision of the shogunate’s Central Accounting Office and the Nagasaki Magistrate. With the shogunate’s financial situation deteriorating, the Accounting Office directly managed Nagasaki trade and absorbed its profits into the shogunate’s finances, as well as put in place a mechanism by which profits could be distributed to Nagasaki residents, aiming to enable this trading city to survive.

In 1715 the Shōtoku Shinrei was issued, the culmination of 30 years of trade reforms. In addition to restricting the amount of yearly trade, the number of ships that could come to Japan was limited, and a maximum amount of copper—that could be exported was established. Furthermore, a barter system was adopted: the Nagasaki Accounting House would purchase all imported goods, and the total value of goods exported could not exceed their value. This managed trade accounting system basically was maintained until the end of the 1850s.

With the shogunate’s finances deteriorating, from 1695 onwards, currency was debased multiple times, and the quality of koban coins declined. This stopped the VOC’s profits from gold exports from rising, and the last time that gold was exported was in 1762.

Copper became the major export that replaced gold and silver. It was brought to South Asia, where it was used as funds for acquiring textiles. While copper can be used for a variety of purposes from weapons to pots and kettles, in India it was primarily used for casting low-value currency. Much of the VOC’s profit from Japanese trade was not from selling goods it imported into Japan, but from selling this copper.

Over half of the copper produced in Japan was exported overseas. Copper used for export was under the shogunate’s circulation controls. Domestic demand increased, and while production peaked the price of export copper was made to be lower than its market value.

The major imported goods during the eighteenth century were cotton textiles primar-
ily from India and sugar from Maritime Southeast Asia. One would have also found spices, Chinese medicine ingredients, hides, and dyes from Southeast Asia and China, as well as woollen textiles from Europe.

In order to suppress the export of copper, in 1743 the shogunate tried to limit the total trade volume of Dutch ships to 550 kanme of silver, and cut in half the maximum amount of copper that could be taken out of the country from 1 million kin (1 kin ≈ 616 g) to 500,000 kin. On the Dutch side, from the 1720s their decreased profits from trade with Japan due to the restriction of copper exports and the low price of goods imported into Japan became a problem. In 1735, the VOC’s board of directors in the Netherlands gave permission to halt trade with Japan if profits did not increase. After the shogunate ordered that trade be cut in half in 1743, intense negotiations were carried out yearly regarding the Dutch side’s demand to increase the amount of copper that could be exported and increase the price of imported goods. However, neither side wanted trade to completely stop. In 1752 an agreement was signed that both re-confirmed the existing transaction framework and made it so that the Dutch would import items ordered by the Japanese side.

In 1790, the shogunate again ordered that transactions with Dutch ships be cut in half. The number of Dutch ships was reduced from two to one and 600,000 kin was set as the maximum amount of copper that could be exported. While due to subsequent negotiations the maximum amount of copper that could be exported would be repeatedly increased on a temporary basis, 600,000 kin remained the basic figure.

The yearly ship sent by the VOC was generally filled with goods acquired with the company’s capital. However, there were some goods being brought to Japan by individuals. When interest would grow in a rare item brought by the Dutch ship that was small enough to be brought by an individual and could be sold for a high price in Japan—books, glass products, mirrors, watches, etc.—then it would begin to be imported by individuals. Unlike the company’s trade, in the case of these items profits mainly came from selling them in Japan. While ostensibly items brought by individuals also had to be sold through the Nagasaki Accounting Office, it appears that in reality there was a considerable amount of smuggling.

With no real indication that trade would increase and no new strong products being found, new customs arose for distributing limited trade profits as the rights of involved parties on both sides (this took the form of gifts, the right to purchase items at a low price before they went on the market, and so on). While in negotiations both the VOC and the
shogunate would make threats to cut off trade, neither ever did so; and Japanese-Dutch trade continued.

4. Changes in international circumstances

In the transition period heading into the nineteenth century, the circumstances surrounding both countries considerably changed. The VOC, which had reached its peak in the latter half of the seventeenth century, declined throughout the eighteenth century, and in 1799 was disbanded. When the French Revolutionary Army invaded Dutch territory in 1795, the Dutch Republic fell, having weakened during the eighteenth century. Great Britain, taking advantage of this opportunity, plotted to seize the Netherlands’ colonies. In 1811 Batavia was attacked by a British fleet and occupied. Contact between Batavia and Japan was cut off. After the end of the Napoleonic Wars, in 1817 regular ship travel between the two finally resumed.

It was hoped that the revival of trade with Japan under the supervision of Governor-General would help the economy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands recover. When the export of copper began under the same system as previously, the Dutch, having lost almost all of its trade in Asia, found it difficult to supply the quality and quantity of goods ordered by the Japanese side. They tried to find new items to import and export, limit individual trade as well as make it go through authorized channels, and so on, but it was impossible for them to drastically change the structure of trade.

From around the end of the eighteenth century, foreign country’s ships began to appear in waters near Japan due to changes in international circumstances. In 1792, the Russian envoy Adam Kirillovich (Erikovich) Laxman came via boat to Nemuro, seeking trade. Then, in 1804, the Russian envoy Nikolai Petrovich Rezanov came to Nagasaki via boat, and in 1808 the English ship Phaeton trespassed on Nagasaki Bay, seeking to capture Dutch ships.

The shogunate rejected Russia’s request for trade on the grounds that prohibiting ships from overseas besides those of China, Korea, Ryukyu, and the Netherlands was the “law of our ancestors” (sohō), making clear the basic position of the country’s foreign policy. Korea and Ryukyu had come to be seen as countries with which Japan had a state-based “communication” relationship, and China and the Netherlands as countries with which Japan had only a commercial trade relationship.

In the Pacific Ocean of the 1820s, the activities of Russia—which was seeking to
trade in fur—and of the US and European countries—which were seeking whale fishing grounds—heightened, and the number of foreign ships appearing along the Japanese coast increased, as did their contact with Japanese people. The shogunate felt that they were facing a crisis, and in 1825 issued an edict to repel foreign ships (ikokusen uchiharairei).

Amidst this, the Japanese side came to understand the importance of trade with the Dutch as well as of their role in providing information about overseas and interpretation services. “Dutch studies” (rangaku), a field that studied European knowledge through Dutch-language books, expanded from its focus on medicine to natural sciences, and then to sciences in general, geography, and international studies. Scholars in the field were incorporated into the establishment by, for example, having them do translation work at a shogunate institution.

After the Opium War broke out in 1840, the shogunate was informed of the conclusion of the Nanking Treaty and of the possibility that British ships would be coming to Japan. In 1842, it did away with the 1825 edict, and ordered that water and fuel be provided to foreign ships. The Kingdom of the Netherlands, thinking that this water and fuel provision order (shinsui kyūyorei) would encourage other countries in their demands for trade with Japan and could actually invite conflict, sent an envoy to warn the shogunate. However, this envoy was unable to bring about changes in Japan’s foreign policy, and in the subsequent processes the Netherlands did not play a leading role in Japan’s concluding treaties with the US and European countries and opening of her ports for trade.

5. The characteristics of Japanese-Dutch relations

The Netherlands and Japan met each other during a time of change for both of them: a war of independence and overseas expansion for the former, and a unified government bringing an end to a long period of civil war for the latter. Their political regimes and social systems were very different, and it was difficult for them to understand each other. During the first half of the seventeenth century, the heads of the shogunate asked many questions regarding Dutch religion and the country’s political system. When asked about the monarch of the Netherlands, the chief factor replied that as a stadtholder from Oranje-Nassau he was part of a supreme governing body comprised of seven provinces, and was not in a position to start wars or form alliances on his own. No one at the centre of the shogunate, a military regime, must have been unable to understand this. In 1649, on
the grounds that the form of government of the Netherlands (its republican system) would be scorned by the Japanese and seen as lacking a sovereign power and that explanations would lead to misunderstanding, the “envoy” was instructed to keep his replies to a minimum and offer the excuse that he was a merchant unaccustomed to political things. Even so, the Governor-General wanted the envoy’s title to be a well-educated “famous merchant.” To him, the Deshima chief factor explained that for a merchant to have such a position would make the Japanese feel something wrong with the appointment. The chief factor thus told the Japanese that the deceased envoy had been a doctor of law. Both sides were fully aware of the difficulty of envoys communicating between countries with considerably different cultural backgrounds.

For private citizens carrying out trade, however, such differences would not become much of a problem. While trade was strictly controlled by the Nagasaki Magistrate’s Office (a local agency of the shogunate), it was non-samurai chōnin officials who did the actual jobs including supervision, and their counterparts were employees of the VOC. Motivated by profit, the VOC had little resistance to assuming a subservient attitude to make trade go to their advantage. As far as the seventeenth century is concerned, trade with Japan made it in their interest to do so. The two countries’ subsequent trade-only relationship ended up being a suitable one for both sides.

With regard to religion, the VOC was an organization that pursued this-worldly benefits and from the beginning was unrelated to Protestant missionary activities. The Japanese side, on the other hand, was aware that the Dutch were Christians. However, insofar as the Dutch did not bring this to the forefront and provoke Japanese or assist missionaries in Japan, they overlooked this.

It was frequently claimed that the Dutch agreed to step on a tablet with Christian images (called fumie) in order to prove that they were not Christian. This was a smear tactic used by Catholic forces, or by other European countries, not happy about the Netherlands’ monopoly on trade. In fact, none of remaining historical records indicates that Dutch traders who came to Japan were made to tread on the fumie tablet. Only those whose affiliations and intention with regard to the propagation of Christianity were unclear, such as drifting men on a raft, were made to carry out the fumie. The Dutch were not forced to give up Christianity and, therefore, there was no need for them to prove that they were not Christian. When their ships entered a Japanese port, everyone on board had to hand over anything religion-related, which were then sealed in a tub. The city officials who were in charge of affairs in Deshima oversaw these tubs, ensuring that Chris-
Christianity was literally sealed away.

The VOC and the Tokugawa shogunate, albeit contrasting as organizations, kept maintaining their trade-only relationship with each partner placing the opposite in one’s own benefit-sharing framework in a flexible manner. When this system came into existence, trade had already passed its peak if measured in quantitative terms, but people sharing common interests were numerous inside and outside the organizations. Thus, this framework designed to share out limited amounts of benefits among the stakeholders remained more or less unchanged and, hence, the Japanese-Dutch relations kept maintained until the end of the Tokugawa era.

(Translated by Dylan Luers Toda)

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