

WEEK 3 INTRODUCTION TO READINGS

Galeote Pereira, "Certain Reports of China..." (1565)

Galeote Pereira traveled from Portugal to India in 1534. He was in Malacca in 1539, and apparently made one or more trading voyages to the coast of China between then and 1547. In 1548 he went to Siam, then to China. There, he and the Portuguese with him found that the new viceroy of the provinces of Chekiang and Fukien, named Chu Wan, had decided to stop the smuggling they had been conducting with coastal Chinese. Early in 1549, Pereira and about thirty other Portuguese were captured, along with their two ships of unsold goods, and taken to the provincial capital as prisoners. Some of Pereira's party and their Chinese customers were executed. However, Pereira and others escaped that fate because Chu Wan's enemies at the Court of Peking now sought his impeachment for failure to obtain permission for the executions. The Portuguese prisoners were distributed among several small towns, where they were allowed some freedom of movement, and some were able to contact Portuguese traders by way of Chinese intermediaries. Pereira was one of those who escaped in this way, and at some point afterwards he wrote down his recollections of his journey. The copy of his report that has survived was made by young Indians at a Jesuit seminary in Goa, India, in 1561.

Tokugawa Iemitsu, "The Edict of 1635 Ordering the Closing of Japan" and "Completion of the Exclusion, 1639"

At the end of the fifteenth century, the Japanese archipelago was an area of diffuse and shifting political domains. There was neither a unifying Japanese identity nor a centralizing state. During the last half of the sixteenth century, three powerful political and military figures—Oda Nobunaga, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, and Tokugawa Ieyasu—sought to forge a central ruling authority. They did so through conquest of and strategic alliances with local-level authorities known as daimyo. Many daimyo resisted. From

1598 to 1616, central rule was consolidated under Ieyasu's grandson, Tokugawa Iemitsu.

Portuguese traders began regular visits to Japanese ports in the midst of this dynamic struggle between local and centralizing authority. Along with the traders came Catholic missionaries of the Jesuit order. Initially, the priests and traders alike were officially encouraged. However, within a few decades daimyo opposed to central rule strengthened their position by obtaining firearms through alliances with the Christians/Portuguese. The two edicts here express the reaction by the centralizing state.

WEEK 3 QUESTIONS

Galeote Pereira, "Certain Reports of China..." (1565)

1. In what ways does Pereira regard society in China as equal to his own social order? In what ways does he regard it as different in merit and worthiness?
2. In what ways does Pereira regard people in China as being very much like himself? In what ways does he regard them as being very unlike himself?

Tokugawa Iemitsu, "The Edict of 1635 Ordering the Closing of Japan" and "Completion of the Exclusion, 1639"

3. These edicts are often described as having had the effect of "closing Japan." How did they actually leave Japan open?
4. To what extent were the edicts directed at non-Japanese, and to what extent were they directed at Japanese?