Edo Japan: A Closed Society
Chapter 14

The following Exclusion Laws supported isolation:

I: Foreign objects, such as any book containing a Christian message, and any scientific books, are banned.
II: Japanese ships able to make long, ocean voyages must be destroyed, and new ships may no longer be built.
III: All Christian missionaries and foreign traders must leave Japan, and may not return. Newcomers were no longer allowed to enter.
IV: Japanese are not allowed to go abroad; any Japanese out of the country will not be allowed to return.

A modern challenge for the first law above would be to ban the internet.
- What are other modern challenges for laws 2-4? -

Modern Challenges
I: ban internet
II:
III:
IV:

Why did the government make the Exclusion Laws?

- to prevent threats to the Shogun’s power
  (remember how the Spanish Explorers conquered the Aztecs…)
- to preserve Japanese culture
- to prevent the rapid spread of Christianity
  - between 1614 and 1640 all Christian churches were destroyed in Japan and many thousands of Japanese Christians were put to death
  (remember the Spanish Inquisition…p.310 text story shared by an Englishman in 1600)

These laws and the geographical advantage of being an island helped keep Japan isolated from all European traders, except the Dutch. (They were interested strictly in Japanese trade and not in converting the Japanese religion to Christianity)
Isolation brought peace and stability, but Japan missed out on technological advances, the knowledge explosion, and the Age of Exploration.

This isolation also produced great cultural and artistic traditions in Japan called the Golden Age of Creativity.

Political leaders should use their power to ensure the security and stability of the nation they rule. Both Edo Japan and Renaissance Europe agreed on this fact.

Advantages of Isolation

- no war; peace
- isolation unified Japan
- Confucianism influenced the shoguns to rule in a caring manner
- metropolises developed
- popular culture diversified and increased (art, theatre, literature)
- internal infrastructure was developed (ex. Roadways)
- new agricultural techniques

Disadvantages and Changes toward the end of Isolation

- Peasants suffered from natural disasters and famines
  (a third died of starvation)

- The class system changed:
  -Samurai were unable to fill their traditional roles so they had no jobs
  -Merchants gained wealth and power because people needed their services of storing rice and handling financial loans
  -Peasants needed money to pay their high taxes
  -many Daimyo were near bankruptcy

- Other countries (Russia, England, United States) began to pressure Japan to allow trade. To begin with, these countries only wanted water and coal so their ships could continue voyages past Japan.