

The Edicts of Toyotomi Hideyoshi
Excerpts from Expulsion of Missionaries, 1587

Name: _____
Date: _____ Block: _____

Directions:

- A. Read and annotate – be sure to understand what each excerpt means (own words). Use a dictionary to understand words you are not familiar with.
- B. Answer questions that follow.

1. Japan is the country of gods, but has been receiving false teachings from Christian countries. This cannot be tolerated any further.
2. The [missionaries] approach people in provinces and districts to make them their followers, and let them destroy shrines and temples. This is an unheard of outrage. When a vassal receives a province, a district, a village, or another form of a fief, he must consider it as a property entrusted to him on a temporary basis. He must follow the laws of this country, and abide by their intent. However, some vassals illegally [commend part of their fiefs to the church]. This is a culpable offense.
3. The padres, by their special knowledge [in the sciences and medicine], feel that they can at will entice people to become their believers. In doing so they commit the illegal act of destroying the teachings of Buddha prevailing in Japan. These padres cannot be permitted to remain in Japan. They must prepare to leave the country within twenty days of the issuance of this notice.
4. The black [Portuguese and Spanish] ships come to Japan to engage in trade. Thus the matter is a separate one. They can continue to engage in trade.
5. Hereafter, anyone who does not hinder the teachings of the Buddha, whether he be a merchant or not, may come and go freely from Christian countries to Japan.

Fifteenth year of Tenshō [1587], sixth month, 19th day

1. What do you know about Toyotomi Hideyoshi?
2. Based on these excerpts, how did Hideyoshi view Christian missionaries/Japanese converts?
3. Why do you think so many Japanese converted to Christianity during this particular time period?
4. Why did Hideyoshi feel it necessary to issue edicts (laws) limiting the spread of Christianity and the activity of Christian missionaries?