

Lesson 101: China and Japan Reading Notes

World History

Imperialism in China

China was not interested in trade with the outside world because they were totally self-sufficient – they did not need to trade. British merchants began secretly trading opium with Chinese merchants. The Chinese government begged the Queen to stop this trade but she refused – this resulted in the Opium War. Britain easily defeated China and forced them to sign the Treaty of Nanking. This treaty forced China to open up and trade with Britain.

Imperialism in Japan

Japan had also remained closed to trade with the outside world because they were self-sufficient. In 1853, Matthew Perry (an American) sailed to Japan. The Japanese saw the American ships and weapons and agreed to a treaty which opened Japan to trade with America. The Meiji (ruling family of Japan) took advantage of this situation and traded for goods that would industrialize and modernize Japan.