



Commodore Perry and the Opening of Japan: Narrative of the Expedition of an American Squadron to the China Seas and Japan, 1852-1854


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On March 31, 1854, Commodore Matthew Perry signed the Treaty of Kanagawa on behalf of the United States' government. This moment signalled the end of the ruling Shogunate's policy of isolationism, which had been in place since the early 16th century. Although foreign nations—the Portuguese, the British, and Spanish—had once traded there, the perceived threat from the spread of Christianity led to Japan's borders being closed, a policy rigorously enforced by the Shogunate, who signified their resolve through systematic expulsion, detention, and execution. Perry's success, however, contrived to open up what had once been "the curiosity of Christendom" to the nations of the world. *Commodore Perry and the Opening of Japan* is the official account of this historic expedition. Written in a fluent and engaging style, this first-hand report details the colorful minutiae of the voyage to "terra incognit," while situating its enterprises and motivations within a wider social and cultural context.

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