



Japan Club 将軍 (Shōgun) Screening

LaGuardia Community College

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Summary of the TV Show "Shōgun"

- **Title:** Shōgun
- **Based on:** The novel "Shōgun" by James Clavell
- **Air Date:** 2024 (remake of the 1980 original)
- **Plot:**
 - Set in early 17th century Japan.
 - Follows the journey of navigator John Blackthorne, a stranded English sailor.
 - Blackthorne becomes embroiled in political intrigue between feuding samurai lords.
 - Cultural clash, adaptation, and power struggles.
 - Based on the true story about William Adams (a.k.a., Miura Anjin)
- **Awards:** the most Emmy Awards won by a single season of television



The Protestant Reformation (1)



The Protestant Reformation (2)

The Protestant Reformation

- Martin Luther's 95 Theses in 1517, challenging the Catholic Church's practices and authority.
- Europe was divided along religious lines: Protestant (England, Netherlands etc.) vs. Catholic (Spain, Portugal etc.)



François Xavier (1506-1552)

- François Xavier (1506-1552) was a Spanish Jesuit missionary.
- Known for his missionary work in India, Sri Lanka, Japan, and China
- Arrived in Japan in 1549, Introduced Christianity to Japan, and adopted a strategy of engaging with the ruling class (*daimyō*) in Japan.



Sengoku Jidai in Japan (1)

Sengoku Jidai

- **Sengoku Jidai** (戦国時代): Also known as the "Warring States Period."
- Timeframe: Roughly from the mid-15th century to the early 17th century (1467 - 1603).
- Characterized by: Social upheaval, political intrigue, constant military conflict, and development of the samurai code, Bushido.
- Power vacuum: Emergence of regional *daimyō* (feudal lords) vying for power.



Sengoku Jidai in Japan (2)



織田信長 / Oda Nobunaga (1534-1582)

- Began the unification of Japan after nearly 100 years of civil war
- Allowed Jesuits to proselytise Christianity in Japan (in exchange of advanced technology such as firearms)
- Known for the Battle of Okehazama and decisive victories with firearms
- Assassinated in 1582 during the Incident at Honnō-ji
- The model of **Kuroda** in Shōgun (only briefly appeared)



豊臣秀吉 / Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537-1598)

- Born as a son of a peasant and become a foot soldier for Nobunaga
- Completed the unification of Japan by 1590
- Initiated major construction projects, including Osaka Castle.
- Died in 1598, leaving a young son, Hideyori, and the Council of Five Elders as his guardians
- The model of **Taikō** in Shōgun



徳川家康 / Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543-1616)

- One of the Council of Five Elders appointed by Hideyoshi
- Edo Castle (in Tokyo) as his base
- Gained control after *the Battle of Sekigahara* in 1600
- Given the title of sei-i taishōgun (a.k.a., shōgun) in 1603, marking the beginning of Tokugawa Shōgunate which lasted until 1868
- William Adams, the model of John Blackthorne, served Ieyasu as his direct vessel (*hatamoto samurai*)
- The model of **Toranaga** in Shōgun



The first episode (1)

- Key characters
 - **John Blackthorne** - An English navigator who finds himself shipwrecked in Japan.
 - **Toranaga** - A powerful daimyo (feudal lord) who plays a significant role in Blackthorne's fate.
 - **Lady Mariko** - A Christian noblewoman, serving Toranaga.
 - **Father Alvito** - A Jesuit priest in Japan.
 - **Kashigi Yabushige** - A samurai serving Toranaga, but switching loyalties to survive
 - **Ishido Kazunari** - A member of the Council of Regents, a rival of Toranaga



The first episode (2)

- What to watch in the first episode
 - **Visuals representations of the 16-17 centuries in Japan**
 - The elaborate sets and costumes, providing an authentic portrayal of the period.
 - The tension between Japan's isolationist policies and European interests.
 - **Philosophy on life and death**
 - Bushido: The samurai code of honor, which influences how life and death are perceived.
 - In bushido, death is depicted as an accepted, even honorable, aspect of life.
 - **Cultural Context**
 - Depictions of the samurai culture, Zen Buddhism, and the political dynamics of feudal Japan.
 - Themes of loyalty, honor, and the conflict between and within Western and Eastern values are central.

Bibliography (1)

This slide deck was created with the assistance of ChatGPT (<https://chatgpt.com>) and Imagen 3 (<https://imagen3.org>).

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