Introduction

Woodblock prints of Nagasaki from the 1680s, such as the *Nagasaki dai eizu* (Great picture of Nagasaki), typically emphasized Nagasaki’s role as an international commercial entrepôt and center of foreign cultural exchange. These images accentuated the exotic other by situating the Dutch trading compound at Dejima in the foreground, offering insets of stereotypical foreigners in their native dress and magnifying the scale of Dutch East India Company merchant vessels. Such attributes proved attractive to a consumer of prints who might never visit the port but still aspired to vicariously participate in its cosmopolitan environment. Privileging the features that sold these panoramas, however, meant that important indigenous characteristics of the port were minimized. Even though trade was predicated on security, artists pushed the harbor garrisons to the margins of these seascapes and seemed to add the hillside forts as an afterthought. The gargantuan Dutch trading vessels were drawn up to three times larger than the military compounds, when in reality the proportions were reversed.¹ These deliberately rendered compositions suggested that the artists themselves, and the print-buying public in Edo and beyond, were more interested in evidence of the regime’s internationalism than in symbols of Tokugawa martial power.²

Yet within a few years of the publication of the first *Nagasaki dai ezu*, a new version of the print appeared, this time underscoring the military

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¹ *Nagasaki dai eizu* (1680s), housed in Tenri Central Library, Tenri University, Tenri, Japan, reproduced in *Kohan Nagasaki chizu chō*, p. 3.

² Nagasaki in the late seventeenth century was already emerging as a tourist destination because of the allure of the strange and exciting Chinese and Dutch residents. See Yamori, *Toshizu no rekishi, Nihon-hen*, pp. 176–79, 428–35.
character of Nagasaki. Although the image and its proportions remained virtually unaltered, newly added captions highlighted three key military features of the port. First, they identified the compounds of Kyūshū lords, whom the shogunate required to maintain residences in Nagasaki as a base of operations in case of military attack. Second, the captions noted the responsibility of daimyo domains for the harbor’s defenses, revealing local military actors as the cornerstone of Tokugawa security. The caption placed in the water space between the two primary garrisons of Tomachi and Nishidomari read, “Approximately 4 chō distance [roughly 442 yards] between batteries, manned by the lords of Saga and Fukuoka in alternating years.” Finally, whereas a grid of Nagasaki’s city streets occupied the lower right-hand corner, more than half of the image now featured the long, narrow harbor extending into the open sea. The inclusion of the distant reaches of the ten-mile-long bay introduced the informed viewer to the outer harbor islands, which had been increasingly fortified in the mid-seventeenth century.3

Short of redrawing these panoramas to put military functions first, however, these maps could not adequately convey the critical political significance of either the garrisons or the appointment of Fukuoka and Saga domains (territories of local lords) to manage them for the Tokugawa. After all, Nagasaki, the largest Tokugawa port until the mid-nineteenth century, served as the only permanently fortified harbor for the first two centuries of the early modern period in Japan. When the shogunate confined the Chinese and Dutch trade to Nagasaki in the 1640s, it also demanded that local domainal troops guard the port. This system of domain-executed coastal defense was later adapted to guard the Kantō region, home to the Tokugawa capital of Edo in central Japan, and to Ezo (later known as Hokkaidō), the northernmost of the four main Japanese islands. Indeed, the maritime security system first developed in Nagasaki became a touchstone for fortifying treaty ports throughout the realm in the 1850s.

This book examines the development of early modern Japan’s coastal defense by focusing on the role of domains in this system and the political implications of their involvement for Tokugawa state formation.

3. Second version (Kai ren rai chō zu, Nagasaki zu [1689–90]) reproduced in Kohan Nagasaki chizu chō, p. 5; Takeda, Sakoku to kokkyō no naritate, p. 158, argues for Nagasaki’s importance in the early seventeenth century not merely as a cultural and economic sphere but also as the center of a defensive zone facing the East China Sea.
Introduction

My thesis is that domainal autonomy in the execution of maritime defense increased across the Tokugawa period (1603–1868) so that daimyo ultimately challenged Tokugawa authorities as the primary military interface with the outside world. Excavating this story makes three main contributions to our understanding of Tokugawa history. Coastal defense reveals both the rise of unanticipated domainal autonomy in military affairs and, through it, the attenuation of the shogunate’s control of the monopoly on violence, which contributed to the Tokugawa fall from power. Third, this political evolution reflects how domain-managed coastal security comprised the critical third element—in addition to trade and diplomacy—of Tokugawa external relations. This trajectory first identifies control of the realm’s proximate water spaces as an extension of the Tokugawa monopoly on violence to domains once the domestic wars of Tokugawa unification, ending with the suppression of the Shimabara Rebellion in 1638, were complete. Empowering coastal domains with increased military agency to guard these littoral zones critically diluted the shogunate’s central control of the use of force. By the 1850s, troops in the central Kantō region and in Ezo would become soldiers for hire, instead of samurai merely fulfilling their lord’s military obligation to the shogun, turning the original early seventeenth-century daimyo-shogunate contract on its head. The foundational arrangement of early Tokugawa political consolidation—the daimyo’s promise of military service to the shogunate in time of crisis in exchange for daimyo autonomy in his home domain—was now fractured. Thus, the very political tool the first Tokugawa shoguns had thought would preserve their hegemony ultimately precipitated the shogunate’s dissolution. The story of Tokugawa maritime defense is the history of this undoing. The inability of the shogunate to combat these unintended consequences reveals important structural challenges in Japan’s transition from an early modern system of parcelized local maritime defense to one of centralized national security embraced by world powers in the nineteenth century.

This book is a study, then, of how the organization of coastal military forces and the decision making behind defense policy shaped the broader political culture of the Tokugawa period. Defensive arrangements in Nagasaki, where we begin our story, and later at Hakodate and Yokohama, have critical implications for our understanding of both coastal defense strategy and Tokugawa state formation writ large. In Nagasaki, and at later sites, the three central actors in military affairs were:
(1) the shogunate, the Edo-based architect of coastal defense policy; (2) the magistrate, who nominally supervised the domains’ defense activities; and (3) the domains, which interpreted and implemented the shogunate’s directives for defense with varying degrees of autonomy. Negotiations among these three key agents of Tokugawa maritime security reflected the bureaucratic turf battles within an early modern polity where lines of responsibility were fluid and situation dependent. These discussions, beginning in the 1640s, revealed that contrary to the predominant interpretation in extant scholarship, the desperate efforts of mid-nineteenth-century Japanese to shore up coastal security were not a new or reflexive response to Western pressure. Instead they were the culmination of two hundred years of deliberate strategies for securing the Tokugawa realm, beginning in Nagasaki.

The Nagasaki system of defense was not a formal blueprint, but rather an organically evolved arrangement for guarding Nagasaki harbor in which the two Kyūshū domains of Fukuoka and Saga alternated responsibility each year beginning in 1641 for posting troops to secure the port. Over the first century of their existence, these duties developed three interrelated functions—protection from Western attack, enforcement of trade restrictions (anti-smuggling campaigns), and guardianship of Dutch merchants in port—each of which augmented domainal military agency beyond the limits anticipated in the shogunate-domainal military contracts of the early seventeenth century. Not only the mechanics of fortifying seaside garrisons, but also the politics of troop mobilization and funding, were experimental arrangements in which domains gained increasing agency vis-à-vis the shogunate because of the diminishing authority of its regional proxies, the magistrates. By the late eighteenth century, and with the emergence of the Russian threat in the north, we see what was a singular, institutional anomaly become a prototype as Nagasaki’s military arrangement was replicated in Ezo and later in the Kantō region.

By employing coastal defense as a new analytical lens to examine how local actors, in negotiating external security, transformed larger Tokugawa political culture, this study addresses two critical lacuna in our understanding of Tokugawa state formation. First, by approaching maritime defense as a story of negotiated military authority, rather than merely (lack of) artillery and naval development, it recuperates maritime security as fertile ground for exploring the political landscape of early modern Japan. Tokugawa coastal defense has long been overlooked
as a productive topic for historical study because its lessons of technological inadequacy are assumed to be so obvious. Yet, viewed from the perspective of its own internal logic, the maritime defense culture of Tokugawa Japan was dynamic and malleable, and the key developments were organizational rather than technological. In Europe during this period, the Industrial Revolution and accompanying firearms development had made technological innovation the defining element of military progress, making “machines . . . the measure of man.”

Within such a framework, the fundamental Tokugawa military problem was guns, not soldiers, equipment more than strategy and leadership. Scholars, both Japanese and foreign, have accordingly dismissed the historical significance of Tokugawa defenses because of their technological obsolescence in the mid-nineteenth century. Analyzing Tokugawa inadequacies in this way illustrates a continuing explanatory prejudice in history, described by Jeremy Black as “technological bias . . . in accounting for military development.”

This book reclaims maritime defense as a critical arena for understanding Tokugawa political development.

Second, this study reveals how the system of maritime security emerged not in response to Western imperialism, as conventionally argued, but rather in the early seventeenth century as the third Tokugawa shogun, Iemitsu (r. 1623–51), became interested in extending military control into proximate water spaces. The two earliest shoguns, Ieyasu (r. 1603–5) and Hidetada (r. 1605–23), were preoccupied with indigenous, land-based threats to their hegemony in the form of rival lords rather than with potential attacks from the sea. By the late 1630s, however, Iemitsu had completed the construction of a stable, agrarian-based domestic order, in which new legal and financial institutions both disciplined recalcitrant lords and established a predictable stream of rice revenue to fund the shogunate’s bureaucracy. With internal affairs well managed, the 1640s became a decade of expanding Tokugawa control of the surrounding seas. The shogunate ordered coastal and island guard


posts erected across western Japan to watch for suspicious foreign sails, including twenty-one sites in Satsuma and multiple locations in the Ryūkyū Islands. But only with the fortification of Nagasaki harbor in 1641 did the shogunate define its sphere of proximate oceanic sovereignty by ordering dominal troops to permanently garrison coastal guard stations.

Within two years, the shogunate stretched the reach of its sovereign rights into the unclaimed waters of the larger East China Sea, beyond “sight of land,” which had previously delimited the boundary of Tokugawa jurisdiction at sea.7 In 1643, when Dutch officials asked the shogunate how it would respond if they attacked Chinese merchant vessels, the Japanese replied that this action would not be a problem so long as it occurred outside Japanese territory (ryōiki) and its immediate vicinity (shūhen), meaning the maritime border defined by Mejima Island, located some hundred miles southwest of Nagasaki, and its proximate waters in the East China Sea. Significantly, the term used to represent “territory” in this response—a compound of ryō (meaning “territory” or “dominion”) and iki (meaning “sphere”)—was usually employed to denote land-based authority. The transfer of this concept to oceanic spaces revealed the shogunate’s interest in controlling maritime regions as it had land-based territories. That same year, when a Dutch ship carrying Christian-related items approached Mejima, it hid these articles, demonstrating that it recognized Japanese authority to prohibit Christianity in the surrounding waters.8 Without a navy to enforce it, this projection of sovereign rights into the East China Sea basin well beyond the four main islands of the Japanese archipelago was short-lived. Yet it represented the

7. Yamamoto Hirofumi, Sakoku to kaikin no jidai, p. 110, observes that the notion of proximate water spaces as an integral part of Tokugawa territory emerged with the creation of a system of coastal defense in the early seventeenth century in which the shogunate ordered that foreign ships that violated sovereign oceanic boundaries (the limits of sight from coastal lookouts) proceed to Nagasaki. Adam Clulow has posited the notion of Hirado as a “maritime domain” because it focused so intently on cultivating oceanic trade between 1609 and 1641, the year the Dutch commercial post shifted to Nagasaki. Clulow, “From Global Entrepôt to Early Modern Domain,” pp. 4–7. By contrast, this study suggests that the shogunate’s creation of the Nagasaki defense system precisely in the year of the Dutch transfer reveals the creation of a broader “national” maritime orientation surpassing that proclivity held by particular domains.

8. Takeda, Sakoku to kokkyō no naritate, p. 160.
Introduction

The early Tokugawa regime had been a terracentric polity, privileging land-based agriculture and commerce over aquaculture and sea-based trade, a proclivity similar to the strategic worldview of Qing mandarins in neighboring China, who largely ignored maritime regions because challenges to power had historically originated from the continent. Yet unlike these Manchu rulers, who began to systematically defend coastal areas only with the advent of Western pressure in the 1840s, the Tokugawa focused on securing littoral regions fully two centuries earlier. The shogunate’s strict regulations limiting trade to Korea, China, and Holland did not arise because of a turn inward and disinterest in the maritime world. Rather they came out of a commitment to more effectively secure the external relations it wished to maintain. The system of Nagasaki defense was as much a vehicle for regulating interaction with commercial partners and guaranteeing their safety while in port as for repelling potential military threats to Japan itself. Indeed, it became the primary institution for enforcing the exclusion edicts of the 1630s. This early seventeenth century shift in the Tokugawa shogunate’s vision of the utility of the military potential of its subordinate domains—from agents to suppress internal revolt to instead military gatekeepers to the external environment—becomes apparent only when we consider maritime defense as a crucial facet of the role of the monopoly on violence in larger Tokugawa state formation.

9. For the military origins of these maps see Yonemoto, “Maps and Metaphors,” p. 117.
10. For Qing policy see Leonard, Wei Yuan and China’s Rediscovery of the Maritime World.
The Role of the Local in the Monopoly on Violence

The Tokugawa interest in, and growing ability to enforce, maritime sovereignty catalyzed an important shift from the fragmented, ad hoc manner in which proximate ocean spaces had been governed by local magnates in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Japan. Although state-sponsored maritime defense represented an important hallmark of the centralized military control of Tokugawa authority, it could be effective only if implemented by parties in the coastal areas with local knowledge. Even as the Tokugawa began to issue edicts from the 1630s, outlining for the first time how maritime defense would be incorporated into their centralized monopoly on violence, the domains referenced in these documents became the chief intermediaries through whom the Tokugawa negotiated their defensive relationship to littoral spaces.

The coastal defense system produced heightened domainal autonomy for two reasons. First, maritime security in Tokugawa Japan was entirely defensive. Tokugawa coastal installations guarded against anticipated maritime attack rather than mobilizing expeditionary forces for land campaigns. As an island nation, Japan did not face the constant possibility of assault that confronted polities surrounded by potentially antagonistic political units on land. This key distinction created a breathing space for the shogunate to devolve greater military authority to local elites. Second, since the Tokugawa control over the use of force comprised what Eiko Ikegami has termed a “collective monopoly on violence,” which was exercised by a social class of warriors, instead of civilian bureaucrats as in Europe, daimyo could claim relative autonomy over the mobilization of their troops even if their dispatch theoretically represented the will of the shogun. Historian Mary Elizabeth Berry identifies daimyo discretion over local military matters as a fundamental characteristic of the “mediated conduct of Tokugawa rule” through which the shogunate indirectly discharged its prerogatives, such as protection of the polity. She characterizes these mediations as “systemic features of the early modern state, rather than foils to its integrity.”

11. Shapinsky, “With the Sea as Their Domain.”
13. Berry, Japan in Print, p. 231.
of coastal defense as a permanent charge, rather than a periodic military levy (gun’yaku), granted Fukuoka and Saga domains at Nagasaki (and later other domains in Ezo and the Kantō region) a singular, standing military agency that implicitly challenged the shogunate’s Confucian claim to safeguard the realm. Although the structural ironies of this arrangement did not surface on a politically momentous scale until the 1850s, they pervaded the execution of coastal defense duties in subtle ways that gained increasing significance across time.

Coastal defense was not merely the product of hinterland functionaries implementing the orders of their superiors in Edo, but rather a more complex negotiation among the three agents of nested, and frequently competing, military authority: shogunate, magistrate, and daimyo. Nagasaki, where our story begins, possessed a distinct administrative structure. It was the only one of the four Tokugawa “gates” that was a direct shogunal territory (tenryō) and not a domanial land administered by a local lord, as were the other three portals of Tsushima, Satsuma, and Matsumae.14 This singular classification as the only portal before the nineteenth century that was a Tokugawa territory meant that a resident Tokugawa proxy, the Nagasaki magistrate (bugyō), de jure administered its commercial, judicial, and defensive responsibilities. The presence of this administrative intermediary, who was absent in the other three portals, placed the domains executing the port’s defense in almost daily contact with a direct proxy of the shogunate. Yet because of this very structure, domains were partially insulated from direct correspondence with Edo-based shogunal officials, giving them greater latitude to contest or resist the decisions of the magistrate. Scholars generally emphasize that the Nagasaki magistrate increasingly gained economic and diplomatic authority across the Tokugawa period.15 But examining the third category of the post’s administrative purview—harbor defense—reveals that the magistrate’s influence in military affairs in fact diminished over time as domains supplying troops acted with growing independence.

Evaluating the distribution of military authority in coastal defense rests on understanding how the shogunate’s putative monopoly on violence,

14. Matsumae, too, was a shogunal territory (tenryō) for two different periods in the late eighteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries, as discussed in chapter 5.

15. For example, see Suzuki, Nagasaki bugyō no kenkyū, and Earns, “The Nagasaki Bugyo,” pp. 68, 70.
identified by Max Weber as the foundation of political stability in the early modern world, was partitioned and delegated. Domainal actors have long remained absent from analysis of military force in the Tokugawa period because so few internal disturbances after the 1638 Shimabara Rebellion required the mobilization of daimyo-led troops.\textsuperscript{16} Yet the projection of this monopoly of the use of coercive force in Nagasaki, through Fukuoka and Saga domains’ garrisons, helped broadcast Tokugawa martial power to both foreign and domestic audiences. The locus of control of this power, however, was ambiguous. As early as the 1690s, the Dutch physician Engelbert Kaempfer remarked that the harbor’s domainal troops were “beyond the jurisdiction of the governors [magistrates],” even as they were mobilized “in the name of the shogun.”\textsuperscript{17} Although Nagasaki defense duty had been created to extend the reach of state-sponsored violence to foreigners, the actual level of central oversight varied. Whereas James White argues that the extent of shogunal “monopoly” increased across time at the “expense of other subnational actors—primarily the feudal lords or daimyo,” the incremental expansion of domainal military autonomy in Nagasaki, and later at treaty ports, suggests the opposite.\textsuperscript{18} By 1844, daimyo had definitively supplanted the Nagasaki magistrate as the preeminent military authority in Nagasaki, appropriating leadership of the port’s security. A parallel development emerged in the next decade in both Yokohama and Hakodate. Although this shift became most pronounced with growing concern about Western incursion after Russian envoy Adam Laxman’s arrival in the 1790s, it had begun as early as the mid-seventeenth century, as domains exploited ambiguities in the distribution of military authority to aggrandize their own power.\textsuperscript{19}

\textsuperscript{16} Anne Walthall and James White both emphasize the rarity of mobilizing domainal samurai troops to quell peasant protests. Walthall, \textit{Social Protest and Popular Culture}, pp. 36, 138; White, \textit{Ikki}, p. 48.

\textsuperscript{17} Kaempfer, \textit{Kaempfer’s Japan}, p. 153.

\textsuperscript{18} James White observed in his important study of state growth and popular protest that the “defining aspect” of the Tokugawa state was “the creation of a governmental monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force,” in sum, the classic hallmark of early modern state power identified by Max Weber as a “monopoly on violence.” White, “State Growth and Popular Protest,” p. 1.

\textsuperscript{19} Works such as Robert Hellyer’s examination of Kyūshū trade, David Howell’s analysis of Hokkaidō fisheries, and Brett Walker’s study of Ainu-centric
Coastal Defense and Tokugawa History

The paradigm of Tokugawa seclusion, or *sakoku* ("closed country")—the idea of an early modern Japan isolated and unengaged with the outside world—is long since disproved. Indeed, current histories frame Tokugawa foreign relations with some variation of selective engagement, emphasizing that tight state control of external affairs was not a reflection of xenophobia, but rather a deliberate, rational strategy to construct a Japan-centered regional diplomatic and economic order. Yet absent from this rich field of scholarship are studies of the construction of maritime defense installations and consideration of how these domain-managed coastal security initiatives comprised a critical third element—in addition to trade and diplomacy—of Tokugawa external relations.20

As early as the 1970s, historians such as Asao Naohiro began to explore Tokugawa maritime restrictions as a vehicle for modulating engagement with, rather than rejecting outright, the outside world. Yet as these scholars pieced together the details of state-to-state relations, they largely ignored local agency.21 Building on this pioneering work, Ronald Toby’s study of shogunal diplomatic relations identified the core of commerce have long challenged Edo-centric interpretation of Tokugawa diplomacy and economics, yet the shift of attention to the local has only recently reached maritime defense studies, predominately in work by Japanese scholars. See Helyer, *Defining Engagement*; Howell, *Capitalism from Within*; Walker, *The Conquest of Ainu Lands*. Representative Japanese-language scholarship includes Matsuo, *Edo bakufu no taigai seisaku*; Kuroda, “Shōhō yonen no nanban sen raikō jiken”; Miyake, “Kōkaki ni okeru Edo kinaki keiei.” A related influence creating an image of top-down defense has been the disproportionate attention given writings on coastal defense by Kantō-based intellectuals—such as Hayashi Shihei, Honda Toshiaki, or Aizawa Seishisai—who were largely unaware of on-the-ground fortification projects and troop rotations in Nagasaki. Studies such as Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi’s analysis of Aizawa Seishisai consider this scholar’s treatise as evidence of the frequent discussion of maritime defense in the abstract, but one without concrete action at the water’s edge. Wakabayashi, *Anti-Foreignism and Western Learning*.

20. Indeed, Mark Ravina’s important study of the nature of Tokugawa “lordship” asserts that “having ceded authority over diplomacy and foreign affairs to the shogun, the daimyo were dependent on his competence to defend the Tokugawa order.” The present study reclaims daimyo, and their troops, as critical actors in defending the realm. Ravina, *Land and Lordship*, p. 15.

seventeenth-century international affairs in East Asia as political and commercial negotiations among state actors.\(^{22}\) Even as this project highlighted the role of the Tsushima Sō daimyo (lord of the island domain situated in the strait between Kyūshū and the Korean peninsula) in mediating relations with Korea, its primary contribution to our understanding of Tokugawa foreign affairs was analyzing how the shogunate deliberately projected authority through formal diplomatic channels to legitimate a new regime. Toby explained part of the shogunal interest in constructing an image of state power through foreign relations as a response to an unstable East Asia, particularly the Chinese dynastic change, whose civil wars might destabilize Japan. Indeed, his analysis of Iemitsu’s intelligence-gathering network in Nagasaki, Tsushima, and Korea—managed by a “foreign policy control center” in Edo—defined regional geopolitics as the most critical security concern of the mid- to late seventeenth century.\(^{23}\) In Toby’s analysis, diplomacy, not military preparedness, was the linchpin of Japan’s security: “The ability autonomously to manipulate foreign states and foreign monarchs in the formative years of the dynasty served both to assure the physical security of the Japanese homeland and to prevent the subversion of the state from abroad, on the one hand, and to legitimate the new Tokugawa order on the other.”\(^ {24}\) From this diplomatic perspective, Nagasaki was a critical information conduit, but not significant as a fortified defensive zone.

This seminal vein of scholarship dismantled the “closed country” paradigm with studies that proved the vibrancy of Edo-centered seventeenth-century Tokugawa diplomacy. This revisionism then progressed to examine the specific local sites through which international exchange occurred. The reconceptualization of critical littoral zones as gateways rather than barriers produced the four-portals construct of Tokugawa foreign relations, first proposed by Arano Yasunori. Arano posited that international affairs occurred not primarily between Edo bureaucrats and representatives of foreign states, but rather through local agents at the four central ports of Matsumae in Ezo, Tsushima, the Ryūkyū Islands (southwest of Kyūshū), and Nagasaki.\(^ {25}\) Daimyo intermediaries at each of these sites interpreted and implemented Tokugawa

\(^{22}\) Toby, \textit{State and Diplomacy in Early Modern Japan}.
\(^{23}\) Ibid., p. 162.
\(^{24}\) Ibid., p. 242.
\(^{25}\) Arano, \textit{Kinsei Nihon to higashi Ajia}.
directives for commerce and diplomacy, including the Matsumae, the Shimazu in the Ryūkyūs, and the Sō in Tsushima, as numerous studies have explored.26

Building on this emerging field, Robert Hellyer analyzed the Tokugawa era as a period of increasing commercial and diplomatic engagement with the outside world, prompted by larger forces of globalization.27 By focusing on the role of Satsuma and Tsushima domains in mediating Tokugawa trade, Hellyer framed the early modern Japanese economy as integrated into world markets, an important corrective to the notion of a Tokugawa realm connected primarily to its regional trading partners. Yet in this study of Tokugawa “engagement,” maritime defense enters the narrative only in the 1860s, as a response to Western encroachment. Treating coastal defense as a significant policy concern starting only in the mid-nineteenth century obscures its role in the previous two hundred years of Japanese history, during which it was a critical element of mediating external relations.28

This book reframes our understanding of early modern Japanese coastal defense, challenging its previous portrayal as a xenophobic reaction to Western pressure in the nineteenth century and instead casting it as part of a longer-term process, both shogunal and domainal, to extend military control to water spaces. The story is divided into two parts. The first part explores the creation of Nagasaki defense as a complex system of external relations with three overlapping military goals between 1640 and 1840. The second half examines how the integration of Tokugawa Japan into an era of naval power in the nineteenth century both shifted “national” security beyond Nagasaki and adapted the harbor’s defense system as a template for the treaty ports.

Part 1, “The Evolution of the Nagasaki System,” focuses on the development of the Nagasaki defense system through the early nineteenth century. Although the creation of a defensive prototype was not a conscious goal of Tokugawa officials in 1640, or even labeled as such as it

27. Hellyer, Defining Engagement.
28. Kamishiraishi Minoru’s work Bakumatsuki taigai kankei no kenkyū is an important corrective to this tendency.
evolved, in this study the notion of a “Nagasaki model” is a discursive shorthand to represent the military arrangements in Nagasaki built on a fluid political relationship between shogunate, magistrate, and domains. In Nagasaki, we trace how a triad of local (Fukuoka and Saga domains), regional (Nagasaki magistrate), and central (Tokugawa officials in Edo) actors negotiated the evolving military and policy parameters of the harbor’s security. The in situ execution of defense developed three distinct but interlocking functions (each examined in a separate chapter): (1) defense against foreign military incursion, (2) enforcement of commercial restrictions, and (3) protection of Dutch traders. The overlapping nature of these duties revealed an early modern political culture of openness to institutional adaptability, while also exposing the debilitating limits of ambiguous expectations.

Chapter 1, “Localizing National Defense to Nagasaki,” lays out a novel spatial paradigm for understanding realm-wide defense by identifying the Nagasaki system as a prototype that would later be replicated across the polity. The refinement of this experimental blueprint between 1641 and 1685 reveals early Tokugawa conceptions of maritime sovereignty, as well as how the system originally functioned in its primary role as guard against anticipated Western attack. The second chapter, “Smuggling and the Chinese Interim of Coastal Defense,” examines the reconfiguration of the Nagasaki system to exterminate Chinese smuggling at the turn of the eighteenth century, when domestic economic upheaval required stricter regulation of the outflow of precious metals. The new fiscal threat relocated Fukuoka harbor guards and firearms from Nagasaki to the Genkai Sea in Northern Kyūshū, aggrandizing domainal military authority vis-à-vis the Nagasaki magistrate. Yet, while the tri-domainal coalition of forces sandwiching the Shimonoseki Strait—Fukuoka, Kokura, and Chōshū—received the first standing permission in the Tokugawa period to use mortal force against foreigners, imprecisely defined maritime borders there led domains to prioritize successful attacks in their own sovereign waters over effective policing of the trans-maritime region. This fundamental weakness highlighted the importance of designating core defensive nodes (such as Hakodate and Yokohama) as shogunal territories so that coalition domainal forces might avoid conflicts over disputed maritime sovereignty in the future.

Chapter 3, “Defending Dejima,” explores how the Tokugawa structured Nagasaki defensive rotations around the cycles of the Dutch trading season, integrating protection of these unarmed, commercial
guests as the primary, sustained incarnation of dominal military respons-
sibility in Nagasaki. “Guardianship” of the Dutch fostered singular semi-
private relationships between Fukuoka and Saga domains and the
Dutch merchants, which provided these lords prestige and information
available to no other domains on an equal scale. This history of privileged
access to the Dutch trading compound at Dejima convinced the Nag-
saki magistrate to allow the Saga lord, Nabeshima Naomasa (r. 1830–61),
to board the Dutch warship *Palembang* in 1844 for a tour of up-to-date
Western armaments that would catalyze Naomasa’s leadership of the
mid-nineteenth-century arms race.

Part 2, “Applying the Nagasaki System to the Realm,” shifts to exam-
ine new defensive nodes as the Tokugawa crafted a maritime security
plan that stretched the length of the archipelago, reflecting the emer-
gence of the nation in new spatial terms. The fourth chapter, “Pan-
Daimyo Collaboration and the Fortification of Edo Bay,” examines how
the extensive marital and political networks of Saga lord Nabeshima
Naomasa, cultivated through his domain’s core role in defending Naga-
saki, positioned him as the primary architect of the revolution in mari-
time defense in mid-nineteenth-century Japan. This chapter traces his
embrace of a new “inner harbor (*naime*)” defensive strategy and his con-
struction of Japan’s first reverberatory furnace to produce cast-iron can-
non, both of which were later adopted in the Kantō region. These two
interlocking projects illustrate how defensive reform in the years from
1845 to 1853 was a cooperative effort among key daimyo and scholars of
military science rather than an antagonistic, inter-domainal rivalry as
conventionally argued.

Chapter 5, “Reconfiguring Coastal Defense at the Treaty Ports,”
looks at how the creation of the treaty port system in the 1850s appro-
priated reformulated versions of the “Nagasaki model” throughout
Japan, most clearly in Yokohama and Hakodate. Comparing improvements
to defensive infrastructure and oversight at the three most important
ports at midcentury demonstrates that the military organization of the
maritime perimeter was dynamic, and not the “anachronistic space” it is
often depicted as being. Unlike when the Fukuoka and Saga lords first
embraced their 1641 Nagasaki duty as a vehicle for reconfirming their
loyalty to the Tokugawa, without the explicit promise of monetary or
political benefit, domains securing the Kantō region and Ezo between
1840 and 1862 obtained cash payments and new territories as direct com-
pensation for their maritime military service, turning the foundational
daimyo-shogunate contract on its head. In spite of the shogunate’s attempts to centralize military affairs with the creation of new bureaucratic posts, these officials ultimately focused on diplomacy as the key to Tokugawa security, further devolving coastal defense responsibilities to the domains.

Thus, the military defeat of the Tokugawa in 1868 was not primarily the product of the shogunate’s failure to build political consensus in a society wracked by both foreign diplomatic pressures and internal social fractures. It was the specific outcome of a military culture in which domains, over multiple centuries, had been increasingly encouraged to cultivate their own defensive capabilities. Although the shogunate permitted these semiprivate initiatives with the understanding that they would be used to secure the Tokugawa realm, the domains that experienced greatest success with them ultimately decided that Tokugawa hegemony was not worth protecting.