

Prompt: Using the documents, analyze the reasons for varying attitudes towards foreigners during the 16th & 17th centuries.

Document 1

Source: Bartolome de Las Casa, Dominican friar, social reformer, and historian, *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*, 1540's

And of all the infinite universe of humanity, these people are the most guileless, the most devoid of wickedness and duplicity, the most obedient and faithful to their native masters and to the Spanish Christians whom they serve. They are by nature the most humble, patient, and peaceable, holding no grudges, free from embroilments, neither excitable nor quarrelsome. These people are the most devoid of rancors, hatreds, or desire for vengeance of any people in the world.... They are also poor people, for they not only possess little but have no desire to possess worldly goods. For this reason they are not arrogant, embittered, or greedy. ...They are very clean in their persons, with alert, intelligent minds, docile and open to doctrine, very apt to receive our holy Catholic faith, to be endowed with virtuous customs, and to behave in a godly fashion.

Document 2

Source: Cosme de Torres, Spanish Jesuit, one of the first Christian missionaries to Japan, c. 1550

These Japanese are better disposed to embrace our holy Faith than any other people in the world. They are as prudent as could be desired and are governed by reason just as much as, or even more that, Spaniards; they are more inquisitive than any other people I have met. No men in the wide world like more than they to hear sermons on how to serve their Creator and save their souls.

Document 3

Source: Toyotomi Hideyoshi, Japanese daimyo and politician, *Edict on Expulsion of Missionaries*, 1587

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...
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. The padres cannot be permitted to remain in Japan. They must prepare to leave the country within twenty days of the issuance of this notice. However, the vassals must not make unreasonable demands on the padres, which shall be considered as a blameworthy offense.

Document 4

Source: Thomas Heriot, English mathematician, ethnologist, and translator, *A Brief and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia*, 1590

In respect of use they are a people poor, and for want of skill and judgment in the knowledge... do esteem our trifles before things of greater value. Notwithstanding in their proper manner considering the want of such means as we have. They seem very ingenious; for although they have no such tools, nor any such crafts, sciences, and arts as we; yet in those things they do, they show excellence of wit. ...They upon due consideration shall find our manner of knowledge and crafts to exceed theirs in perfection...by so much the more it is probable that they should desire our friendships and love...Whereby may be hoped if means of good government be used, that they may in short time be brought to civility, and the embracing of true religion.

Document 5

Source: Mateo Ricci, a Jesuit missionary, from his personal journal, late 1500s

The Chinese are a most industrious people, and most of the mechanical arts flourish among them. They have all sorts of raw material and they are endowed by nature with a talent for trading, both of which are potent factors for bringing about a high development of the mechanical arts...

Document 6

Source: John Mildenhall, letter to M. Richard Straper, on his conversation with Mughal emperor Akbar the Great, 1606

The third day after, having made before a great man my friend, [Akbar] called me into his council and coming into his presence, he demanded of me, what I would have, and what my business was. I made him answer, that his greatness and renowned kindness unto Christians was so well known through the World, that it has come to the furthestmost parts of the Western [Atlantic] Ocean, and arrived in the court of our Queen of England's most excellent Majesty; who desired to have a friendship with him, and as the Portuguese and other Christians had trade with his majesty, so her subjects might have the same, with the like favors; and farther, because there have been long wars between her and the King of Portugal, that if any of their ships or ports were taken by our nation, that he would not take it in evil part, but suffer us to enjoy them to the use our Queens majesty.

Document 7

Source: Xu Guangqi, *A Memorial in the Defense of Teaching*, written as a response to an Anti-Christian letter written to emperor Wanli, 1616

In fact, your servant for many years has studied with and learned from these [Western] tributary officials, and I know that they are most honest and solid. There is nothing whatsoever about them that is dubious. Truly they are all disciples of the sages. Their way is very correct, their discipline strict, their learning very broad, their knowledge superior, their affections true, and their views very stable....

Now in their countries, men of the church all cultivate personal virtue in order to serve the Lord of Heaven. They heard that in China [the adherents] of the teachings of the sages also cultivate personal virtue and serve Heaven. Because of this correspondence of principles, they [braved] hardship and difficulties and toiled through dangerous and unsafe places in order share their truth, hoping to make everyone good, to the end that they will declare that Heaven-on-High loves men.

Document 8

Source: Yang Guangxian, Chinese scholar and official, *I Cannot Do Otherwise* from a series of essays denouncing Christianity, mid-1600s

Our Confucian teaching is based on the Five Relationships (between parent and child, ruler and minister, husband and wife, older and younger brothers, and friends), whilst the Lord of Heaven Jesus was crucified because he plotted against his own country, showing that he did not recognize the relationship between ruler and subject. Mary, the mother of Jesus, had a husband named Joseph, but she said Jesus was not conceived by him.

Those who follow this teaching [Christianity] are not allowed to worship their ancestors and ancestral tablets. They do not recognize the relationship of parent and child. Their teachers oppose the Buddhists and Daoists, who do recognize the relationship between ruler and subject and father and son. Jesus did not recognize the relationship between ruler and subject and parent and child, and yet the Christians speak of him as recognizing these relationships. What arrant nonsense!