



# Voices of Early Modern Japan: Contemporary Accounts of Daily Life during the Age of the Shoguns

By Constantine Nomikos Vaporis

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*Voices of Early Modern Japan* offers an accessible and well-balanced view of an extraordinary period in Japanese history, ranging from the unification of the warring states under Tokugawa Ieyasu in the early seventeenth century through the overthrow of the shogunate just prior to the opening of Japan by the West in the mid-nineteenth century. Through a close examination of primary sources from "The Great Peace," this fascinating volume offers fresh insights into the Tokugawa era--its political institutions, rigid class hierarchy, artistic and material culture, religious life, and more. Sources from all levels of Japanese society, from government documents and household records to personal correspondence and diaries, are carefully translated and examined in light of the latest scholarship. Constantine Nomikos Vaporis ably demonstrates how historians use primary documents and what can be uncovered from the words of ordinary people who lived centuries earlier. With robust reader resources and comprehensive coverage, *Voices of Early Modern Japan* is the perfect addition for students and interested readers seeking a fuller understanding of the Tokugawa period.

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#### Review

"Constantine Nomikos Vaporis'...is one of the top five historians of the Tokugawa period writing in the Western world, whose special expertise in social history is evident. But, the work is extremely well-balanced; it equally covers the period's political, economic, cultural, intellectual, and diplomatic dimensions as well. Moreover, it masterfully conveys how historians use primary documents and why this skill is important for uncovering the texture of life in a society remote from us in time and space. Vaporis does all of this in accessibly clear, plain language. As such, his book belongs not only on the reference shelves of public libraries, but also should be required reading in university-level introductory surveys of early-modern Japanese history. Even seasoned specialists in the field will find gems of new information here and there within the book's covers."

—**Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi, York University**

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"Filled with unusual and heretofore little known documents that bring us close to the lived experience of 17th through early 19th centuries Japan, this volume deserves to be widely used in the classroom to provide students with glimpses of another world."

—**Anne Walthall, University of California, Irvine**

#### About the Author

**Constantine Nomikos Vaporis** is professor of history and founding director of the Asian Studies program at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. Vaporis is the author of *Breaking Barriers: Travel and the State in Early Modern Japan*; *Tour of Duty: Samurai, Military Service in Edo, and the Culture of Early Modern Japan*; and *Nihonjin to sankin kôtai [The Japanese and Alternate Attendance]*.

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