

II

THE AWAKENING

JAPANESE historians speak of the era of the Tokugawa regency (1600-1867) as "the Great Peace," because during that period Japan was practically free from civil war, a condition sharply in contrast to the preceding 1,000 years of almost continuous strife.

Recent Japanese writers and public speakers, however, commonly refer to the same period of 250 years as the "Long Sleep," and to the Meiji era as the "Awakening." While Japan slept, they say, western nations forged ahead, acquired knowledge, power, wealth, and world-wide possessions. When at last Admiral Perry knocked at her doors (1853), disturbed her slumbers, and showed to her ships that moved without sails and against the wind, the insignificance of her own knowledge and power was evident. She rubbed her sleepy eyes and wondered with vague fear what it might signify.

The Tokugawa Shogunate was the first to