



01

Causes of expansion, 1868–1930

This chapter examines the background to the rise of Japan as a modern military power in the period leading up to the invasion of Manchuria in 1931. Key events to be discussed include:

- the dramatic changes undertaken during the period of the Meiji Restoration and the attendant emergence of the notion of national unity
- the emergence of Japan as a significant influence on international relations, both in the Far East and on the world stage
- the impact of World War I on the Japanese economy, politics, and its imperial ambitions.

A group dressed as samurai pose for a photograph that was included in a booklet of Japanese costumes published in France in 1890. By that time, samurai were already part of history in Japan and had been replaced by a modern army.

1.1

The impact of Japanese nationalism and militarism on foreign policy

During the 1930s, Japan expanded its territory into Manchuria; it withdrew from the **League of Nations**; it invaded China; it signed a military alliance with Italy and Germany; in 1941, it launched an attack on the United States. To some extent, such aggressive policy-making was prompted by changes that Japan underwent after the late 1800s when it opened its doors to Western influences, abandoned its traditional military government, and elevated the emperor to a position of authority imbued with god-like status.

These changes were meant to transform Japan into a strong and modern nation able not only to defend itself against the encroachment of Western imperialism, but also to compete with and establish itself as a first-class power equal to the United States and the European Great Powers such as Britain, France, Germany, and Russia. To accomplish this, Japan needed a prosperous economy to fund and equip a strong military. It also needed to educate its population and instil a strong sense of nationalism. Between 1868 and 1930, many of these aims were achieved as Japan fought and won the Sino-Japanese War of 1894 and the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–05, signed a treaty of alliance with Britain in 1902, and entered World War I in August 1914.

This period of momentous change can be traced back to the arrival of Commodore Perry and what contemporary observers referred to as the ‘four black ships of evil’ in 1853 (Buruma, *Inventing Japan 1853–1964*, 2004, p. 11), an event that led to a crisis of seismic proportions as different political and military factions within Japan called either for the country’s continued isolation or, alternatively, for the rapid absorption of all knowledge that could be gleaned from the Western powers.

Before 1868, Japan was in theory ruled by an emperor but, in practice, power was wielded by a military government known as the **shogunate** or **bakufu**. Since 1603, the Tokugawa had been the dominant clan of military leaders. Its head was called the shogun, a title that translates as ‘chief barbarian-quelling generalissimo’ (Livingston et al, *Imperial Japan 1800–1945*, 1973, p. 13). Below the shogun in rank were the daimyo, the feudal overlords with territory that they ruled. The daimyo, together with samurai warriors who were loyal to them, lived by a strict code of honour known as **Bushido**.

As with many European countries in the 19th century, Japan also experienced economic changes that impacted the organization of its society and politics. The feudalistic system with its very strict hierarchy had started to break down because:

During the shogunate, Kyoto – where the imperial court was located – was the capital of Japan. However, the real seat of power was Edo, where the shogun lived. With the Meiji Restoration in 1868, Edo was renamed Tokyo (meaning ‘eastern capital’) and became the capital; the imperial court was moved there the following year.



CHALLENGE YOURSELF

ATL Thinking, research, communication, and social skills

Working with a classmate, find out about Francis Xavier and the Jesuits who went to Japan in 1543. How did the Japanese respond to the arrival of Christian missionaries on their shore? Why was there such a hostile reaction to Christianity in later years? Share your research with the class.

This Japanese print from around 1930 shows Commodore Perry's marines 'testing the girth' of a sumo wrestler.

- population growth created an increased demand for food and goods
- the merchant class, considered inferior to the samurai, grew in wealth and importance
- the various obligations of the samurai to attend the imperial court at Edo (later named Tokyo) led them into debt
- the emergence of the Satsuma and Chōshū clans, ambitious rivals to the Tokugawa clan, who saw opportunities to seize power.

Commodore Perry and the ‘black ships’

Commodore Matthew Calbraith Perry of the United States Navy sailed into Edo (Tokyo) harbour on 8 July 1853; under his command was a fleet referred to as the ‘four black ships of evil’ by the Japanese. Perry came to demand open trade with a country that, despite some early contact with Christian missionaries during the 17th century, had retreated into isolation from the West.

According to Ian Buruma,

“Japanese rulers, fearful of foreign aggression and worried that Christianity, promoted by European missionaries, would make their subjects unruly, had outlawed the Christian religion, expelled most foreigners and all priests, and forbidden Japanese to go abroad.

From Ian Buruma, *Inventing Japan 1853–1964*, Modern Library, New York, 2004, page 11

Activity 1

ATL Thinking and research skills

The source below is a contemporary Japanese print. Study the source and answer the question that follows.



1. What does this source convey about how the Americans were perceived at this time in Japan?

Perry brought the emperor a letter from US President Millard Fillmore demanding that American ships be allowed to trade with Japan. However, it was the shogun and not the emperor who would rule on such matters; this is just one example of how little Japan was understood by the West at this time. Perry's meetings were not very

successful as few Japanese could speak English, although some did speak Dutch, as the Netherlands was the only nation whose merchants were allowed to trade directly with Japan.

Perry returned to Japan once more in 1854, more heavily armed this time. He ordered his fleet to fire cannons to impress upon the Japanese that resistance was useless, as the United States had far greater force at its disposal. Concessions were made and, in 1858, a treaty giving further trading and residency rights to the United States was signed by a representative of the *bakufu*. The signatory, however, would later be assassinated by a samurai critical of the submission of Japan to a foreign power.

By the 1860s, it seemed that if Japan were to become not a colony but an equal of the Western powers, it would need to industrialize and modernize. To do so, it needed to cast off the centuries-old rule of the *bakufu*, and to replace the deeply traditional samurai warriors with a well-equipped and well-trained army that would fight not with swords but with guns. Not unexpectedly, factions emerged with some supporting and others resisting this proposed shift in Japanese culture and values. Eager to seize the opportunity to remove the Tokugawa shogunate, the Satsuma and Chōshū clans joined forces; with a modernized army, they challenged the *bakufu*. This was made easier by the death of Emperor Kōmei (Osahito) in 1866, given that his successor, Emperor Meiji (Mutsuhito), was a young man of fifteen who could be influenced by opponents of the *bakufu*.

In 1867, the Tokugawa shogunate ceded political power, although what followed was a short and bloody civil war, from 1868 to 1869, between the *bakufu* and the imperial army. This ended with the defeat of the samurai and the ‘restoration’ of the emperor whose place of residence was moved from Kyoto to Edo, now referred to as Tokyo. This two-year period was known as *bakumatsu* (which means ‘the end of the *bakufu*’). As Mikiso Hane argues, the population needed to be convinced that this was not a new system of government but the restoration of imperial rule. As stated in a public declaration, it was the restoration of the indissoluble link between the emperor and the common people:

“Our country is known as the land of the gods, and of all the nations in the world, none is superior to our nation in morals and customs... All things in this land belong to the Emperor...”

From Mikiso Hane, *Japan: A Short History*, Oneworld Publications, 2015, pp. 68–69

The Meiji era signalled the introduction of an elaborate personality cult of the emperor as the divine leader of the nation of Japan. He was to be revered as the descendent of the sun goddess and thereby treated as a ‘living god’. **Shintoism** briefly became the official religion of Japan; although this ceased in 1872, Shinto shrines remained under state control and the Shinto belief that the imperial family was descended from the sun goddess remained of great importance. In this way, religion, emperor worship, and nationalism were intertwined, and ‘... anyone who questioned the mythological origin of the imperial dynasty got into trouble’ (Hane, *Japan: A Short History*, 2015, p. 88). Among the new shrines erected was the Yasukuni shrine in Tokyo where the souls of those who had died for the emperor were worshipped.

CHALLENGE YOURSELF

Thinking and research skills **ATL**

In Chapter 2 of this case study, you can read about the response of militant young soldiers to the signing of the London Naval Treaty of 1930 (see page 34). See what comparisons you can draw with the response of the samurai to the concessions made to the United States in 1858.



Names of emperors

The emperors of Japan may be referred to either by their title and personal name (for example, Emperor Mutsuhito) or by the title and the name given to their era (Emperor Meiji). Throughout this case study, where the full name of an emperor is mentioned, his personal name will appear in brackets, for example, Emperor Meiji (Mutsuhito).

TOK

What ways of knowing did the Japanese population use to reconcile the process of modernization and the **deification** of the emperor?

CHALLENGE YOURSELF

ATL Thinking, self-management, social, and research skills

Today, the Yasukuni shrine remains controversial among the Japanese; it appears in the news almost every year. See what you can find out about it. Share your research with the class.

The Meiji Restoration – a period of social and political change

As the Tokugawa shogunate lost power, the authority of the emperor was enhanced. A new constitution was promised and, when complete, was referred to as *Bunmei Kaika* (meaning 'Civilization and Enlightenment'). According to Ian Buruma, an elaborate ceremony had preceded the presentation of the constitution to the people: Emperor Meiji entered the Shinto shrine at the royal palace and explained the new constitution to his divine ancestors, assuring them that it meant not the end but rather a restoration of imperial authority. A small percentage (just over 1.14 per cent) of the population, composed of men over 25 years of age who paid above a certain amount of tax, was now given the right to vote for members of the National Diet, a bicameral system made up of the House of Peers and the House of Representatives. The House of Peers was made up of nobility, senior civil servants, and high-ranking military officers, while the House of Representatives was made up of elected members. The purpose of the Diet was to assist the emperor in his decision-making; he could both veto legislation and enact his own imperial edicts when the Diet was not in session. In reality, the emperor was expected to accept the advice offered by the *Genrōin*, a group of advisors whose role was not outlined in the constitution but who were, nevertheless, very influential and 'acted as a link between the emperor and the government' (Hunter, *Concise Dictionary of Modern Japanese History*, 1984, p. 48). One very important aspect of the new constitution was that the military was responsible directly to the emperor. Supreme authority lay with the emperor, but as he was meant to be 'above' politics, decisions would be made in his name. This meant that although all his subjects owed him their loyalty, and although he held ultimate power, the emperor was not expected to make political decisions.

Activity 2

ATL Thinking and research skills

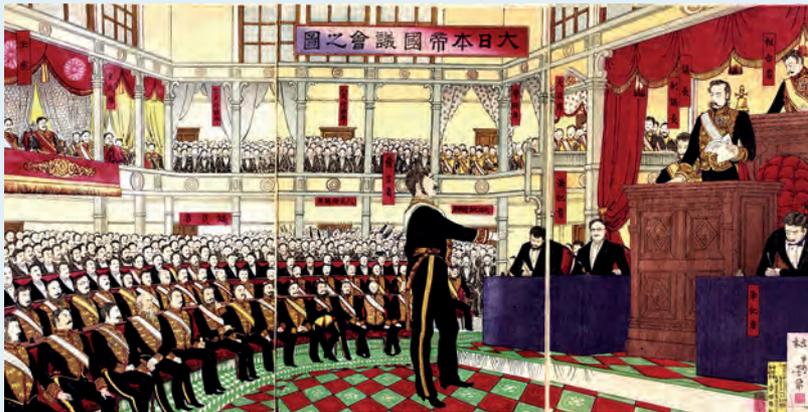
Study the sources below and answer the questions that follow.

Source A



An image of Emperor Meiji of Japan, from 1910.

Source B



1. When created, the cartoon in Source A would have been aimed at a European audience. What kind of image of the Japanese emperor do you think it was trying to convey?
2. Source B is a print of the Imperial Diet in 1890. What impression does this convey of the kind of body that governed Japan at this time?

A print of the Imperial Diet, from 1890.

Thinking and research skills



After reading about the new constitution, how democratic, do you think, was Japan at this time? Begin by listing the characteristics of a democratic state and check these against what you have learned about Meiji Japan. Compare this with a contemporary democratic state from a different region.

The inspiration for the new Japanese constitution had actually come from Germany. Officials, including Itō Hirobumi, president of the Privy Council (advisors of the emperor), were sent abroad to 'shop around' for a political system. They looked at several examples but decided that the US constitution was too democratic and 'smacked of disorder', and that the British system was unsuitable. So they opted for the rather more autocratic German style of government. An admirer of Bismarck, Itō not only imitated the way he held his cigar but also agreed with the German chancellor's opinion that 'popular sovereignty would be a very dangerous thing'. Ian Buruma describes the resultant constitution as 'a mixture of German and traditional Japanese authoritarianism' (Buruma, *Inventing Japan 1853–1964*, 2004, p. 38).



Social changes – education

Like Russia in the second half of the 19th century, reform was needed so that the military could be trained and equipped to rival the armies and navies of Western powers. Japan had to move quickly from centralized **feudalism** – with a privileged caste of samurai warriors – to a state in which ordinary citizens would be conscripted into its army. Soldiers would be recruited in large numbers and taught to obey only the emperor and their nation. A basic level of universal literacy was necessary as recruits needed to read basic orders and operate new technology. To aid this, a new system of elementary schooling was introduced in 1872. It was not free and, at first, attendance was relatively low. According to Mikiso Hane, by 1876, 46 per cent of boys, (though only 16 per cent of girls) attended school (Hane, *Japan, A Short History*, 2015, p. 85). Education would also be the means by which nationalism was instilled into the population. In 1890, the Imperial Rescript on Education was introduced; the rescript had to be memorized and recited each morning by teachers and pupils – an edict that remained in place until World War II.

The rescript began with the assertion 'Know ye, our subjects' and outlined the various obligations of Japanese subjects of the emperor including the following:

“... should any emergency arise, offer yourselves courageously to the state; and thus guard and maintain the prosperity of our Imperial throne, coeval with heaven and earth. So not shall ye be good and faithful subjects but render illustrious the best traditions of your forefathers.

From Livingston et al, *Imperial Japan 1800–1945*, Pantheon, 1973, pp. 153–54

According to Hane, the purpose of the rescript was that ‘... the minds of young children were moulded to ensure that when the time came they would go to battle shouting, “Imperial Majesty Banzai!”’ (Hane, *Japan, A Short History*, 2015, p. 90). Children were also taught that the Imperial Dynasty dated from 660 BCE – a date commemorated each year on 11 February – when Jimmu, the first emperor, had ascended the throne. The other important national holiday celebrated Emperor Meiji’s birthday, on 3 November.

Activity 3

ATL Thinking and research skills

1. Based on what you have read so far, in what ways was the authority of the emperor enforced and conveyed to the people of Japan?

The military

The armed forces of Meiji Japan swore loyalty solely to the emperor, which was a significant departure from the way things were during the Tokugawa shogunate when the samurai’s loyalty was to their daimyo or feudal overlord. Furthermore, with the introduction of conscription, all Japanese men had to serve three years in the army and four years in the reserves. Buruma argues that this was not only a way to defend the country but also a way to instil unification: ‘National unity was armed unity. National education was military education’ (Ian Buruma, *Inventing Japan 1853–1964*, 2004, p. 55).

The Rescript for Soldiers and Sailors was published in 1882 and this, like the Rescript on Education, established absolute loyalty to the emperor. It read:

“We (the Emperor) are your supreme Commander in Chief. We rely on you as Our limbs and you look up to Us as your head.

Ian Buruma, *Inventing Japan 1853–1964*, 2004, p. 55

Soldiers and sailors were not allowed to express political opinions, nor could they comment on imperial policies, even in private. Buruma sees this as the flaw in this system of absolute loyalty to the emperor as, in the 1930s, eager young officers could, and would, defy a civilian government if they suspected it of acting against the imperial will. This interpretation is supported by Eri Hotta who states that:

“... the 1882 imperial decree could be considered one of the latent underlying causes of Japan’s militarisation of the 1930s and, eventually, its attack on Pearl Harbor.

From Eri Hotta, *Japan 1941*, Vintage Books, 2014, p. 79

Activity 4

ATL Thinking and research skills

1. When you have read through this case study, come back to Hotta’s statement and see if you agree with its premise.

This, very briefly, has been an overview of the transition to the Meiji Restoration. It has explained how Japan, along with other countries at this time, made use of the ideology of nationalism and set in place a system that bound the people to their emperor. As with many European countries at this time, Japan began to look for opportunities to expand the territory under its control. It did so for a number of reasons:

- to elevate its status as an imperial power
- to access resources for a growing population
- to secure territory that might, otherwise, have fallen under the control of rivals, especially Russia, Britain, France, or the United States.

First stages of imperialism

Activity 5

ATL Thinking and research skills

Study the map below and answer the question that follows.



1. How does this map help to explain the following:
 - a) Japan's interest in Korea
 - b) Japan's potential rivalry with China and Russia?

This map shows the locations of Japan, Korea, China, and Asiatic Russia during 1904–05.

The First Sino-Japanese War, 1894

Japan had a long history of association with China dating back to 500–600 CE, when Chinese writing and culture were more widely disseminated by way of Korea. During the 19th century, China was weakened by its defeat in both of the Opium Wars with Britain and by being forced into a series of 'unequal treaties' with European powers. Korea lay between Japan and China, and, as Japan entered a new age of militarization, it aimed to establish its control of the Korean peninsula. Inevitably, this would bring Japan into direct conflict with China, seeing as Korea was a tributary state of the latter (meaning that the emperor of Korea paid homage to the emperor of China). In 1894, an uprising in Korea prompted its government to ask for assistance from China, but Japan sent troops before the Chinese army arrived, leading to conflict between the two armies. Ian Buruma argues that at the heart of this conflict was the question of which army had modernized most effectively and, accordingly, which country would dominate East Asia. Japan proved its dominance by pushing the Chinese back across the Yalu River, the border between Korea and China, while its navy secured victory in the Yellow Sea. The ensuing Treaty of Shimonoseki affirmed Chinese recognition of Korean independence and the cession of Formosa (known today as Taiwan), the Liaodong Peninsula, and the Pescadores Islands to Japan. China also granted commercial and trading rights to Japan.

In Japan, this victory was seen as confirmation of Japan's superiority over China, cementing its status as a 'higher civilization'. According to Buruma, this signalled a new epoch in Japanese history and confirmed the popular belief that Japan was now equal to the Western powers, living up to the Meiji slogan 'Rich Country,

Strong Army' (Buruma, *Inventing Japan 1853–1964*, 2004, pp. 50–51). Victory led to new tensions, however, as Russia also wanted control over Korea and the Liaodong Peninsula. Under pressure from Britain, France, and the United States, Japan was persuaded to relinquish the Liaodong Peninsula – an act that, to many Japanese nationalists, proved Japan was still regarded as inferior to the Western powers, despite its military prowess.

Activity 6

ATL Thinking skills

Study the source below and answer the question that follows.



Source: Art Object Photograph © 2016 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

1. What is the message of this source? Look carefully at the dress of the Japanese soldiers receiving the surrender of the Chinese. What impression does this give about the differences between the two groups?

The Russo-Japanese War (1904–05) and the Anglo-Japanese Alliance (1902)

The outcome of the First Sino-Japanese War displeased Russia as it wanted to secure its own interests in Manchuria and Korea. In 1898, Russia had secured permission from China to extend the Trans-Siberian Railway to Vladivostok as well as to build the South Manchurian Railway. Furthermore, it secured a 20-year lease on the Liaodong Peninsula and Port Arthur, all of which led to worsening relations with Japan. It seemed increasingly likely that conflict would break out; in anticipation of this, Japan signed the Anglo-Japanese Alliance in 1902. This stated that both Britain and Japan would 'maintain the status quo in the Far East' and one party would remain neutral in a conflict unless the other was attacked by more than one power (Hane, *Japan, A Short History*, 2015, p. 109).

Efforts to negotiate an agreement with Russia (whereby Russia would recognize Japanese interests in Korea, and Japan the interests of Russia in Manchuria) failed, and the Japanese navy attacked the Russian Pacific Fleet on 8 February 1904, declaring war on 10 February. The war was fought both on land and sea, with the sinking of the Russian Baltic Fleet in the Tsushima Straits probably being one of the most memorable events in this nine-month conflict that ended in October 1905. Famously, this turned out not to be the 'splendid little war' anticipated by Tsar Nicholas II and his advisors, and it made Japan a 'major player in the Far East' (Hane, *Japan, A Short History*, 2015, p. 110). Under the terms of the Treaty of Portsmouth, negotiated by US President

This print shows the Chinese surrendering to the Japanese.

Theodore Roosevelt, Japan acquired South Sakhalin, the leasehold over the Liaodong Peninsula and Port Arthur, as well as control over the South Manchurian Railway. Russia also recognized Japanese interests in Korea, which became a protectorate of Japan in 1906 and its colony in 1910.

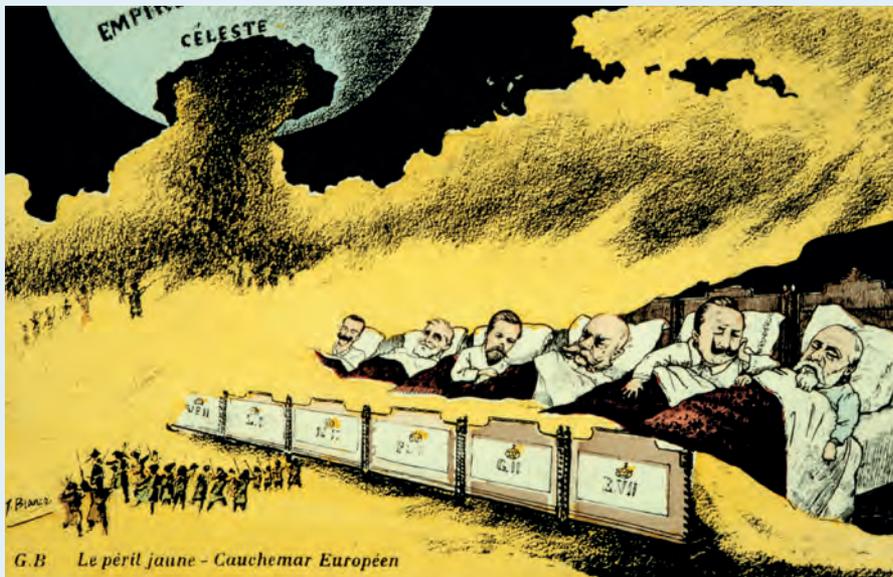
As with the European powers at this time, nationalism was boosted by imperialism. Japan's foreign policy was extremely successful in expanding its interests in Korea and Manchuria but, inevitably, this aroused a mixed response on the international scene.

Activity 7

ATL Thinking, research, and self-management skills

Study the sources below and answer the questions that follow.

Source A



Source B

Here is an extract from 'Why the Russians lost in the recent war', from the *New York Sun*. (Transcribed version reprinted in *The Army and Navy Register*, 11 August 1906.)

“ Our conclusion is that in the military operations of which Manchuria was the theatre the Russians were not signally outgeneraled by the Japanese, otherwise their losses must have been much greater than were actually experienced. As for the supposed superiority of the Japanese in naval strategy, Mr. Jane, for his part, concedes that Rojestvensky's [the Commander of the Russian fleet] formation in Tsushima Straits, in view that he expected only a torpedo attack, was not a bad formation at all, and that it is hard to conceive that Togo, with Rojestvensky's general orders and with the special problems to be solved by the latter, would have done anything materially different up to the hour of battle. Nevertheless, we cannot conceive of Togo as losing the ensuing fight, because every individual officer and every individual seaman would have died rather than forfeit victory. This brings us to the capital reason for the success of the Japanese. The Russians were not so much outgeneraled as they were outfought, and they were outfought because they were lukewarm and not wrought to desperation as they had been in the Crimea and in resistance to Napoleon's invasion; whereas every Japanese soldier and sailor believed, as was indeed the truth, that his country's fate was at stake and that his personal conduct might decide the issue.

'A splendid little war'

This phrase has been used many times in history to describe what belligerents had hoped would be a short and successful conflict. Vyacheslav Plehve, the minister of interior appointed by Tsar Nicholas II, is reported to have said that what Russia needed in 1904 was a 'little victorious war to stem a revolution'. Whether or not this is accurate is a matter of some speculation, but 'a splendid little war' (as a corruption of the above phrase) is commonly used to describe Russia's mistaken prediction of how the war against Japan would turn out.

This French cartoon is entitled 'Le péril jaune' ('Yellow Peril').

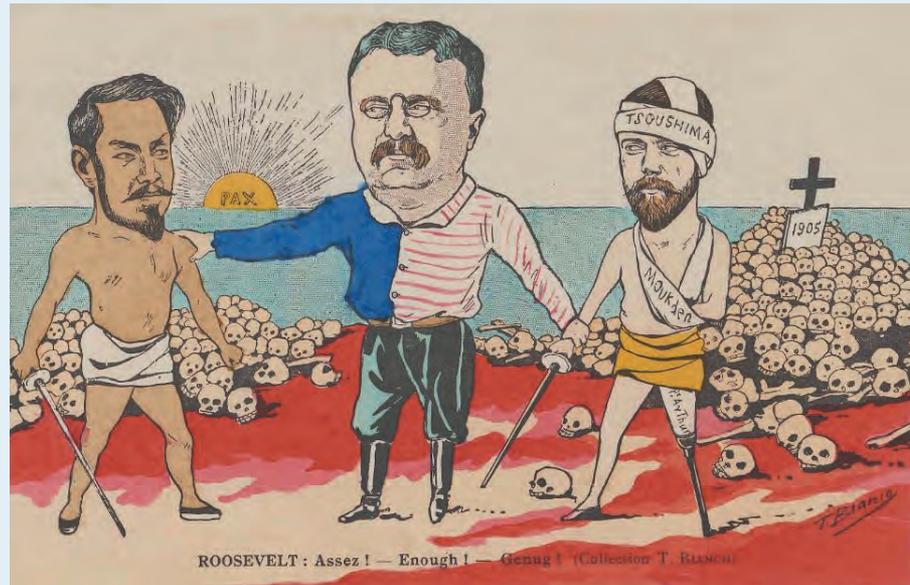
The text in the cartoon reads 'Roosevelt: Assez! Enough! Genug!' (All three words mean the same in French, English and German.)

Look carefully at every part of the cartoon in Source C, including the caption. Try to identify the main characters; pay attention to the heaps of skulls in the background as well as the setting sun. All of these are symbolic and help you to understand what the cartoonist was trying to convey.

Kanno Sugako

A socialist and feminist, Kanno Sugako opposed the Russo-Japanese War; she wrote many articles that criticized the status of women in Japan, who she felt 'were in a state of slavery'. Kanno also stated that, '(in) accordance with long-standing customs, we have been seen as a form of material property... Japan has become an advanced, civilised nation but we women are still denied our freedom by an invisible iron fence'. In 1910, Kanno was involved in a plot to assassinate the emperor. Along with 11 others, she was put on trial and sentenced to death. She was executed in 1911 (Hane, *Japan, A Short History*, 2015, p. 114).

Source C



1. Source A is a French cartoon of the 'Yellow Peril', a term that was used to describe the perceived threat of the Japanese as they grew in strength. What is the message of this cartoon? (See if you can identify the figures in the beds.)
2. According to Source B, why did the Russians lose the Battle of Tsushima Straits?
3. What is the message of the cartoon in Source C?



Yamamoto Isoroku was a Japanese naval cadet who was seriously wounded at the Battle of Tsushima. He went on to become one of the people responsible for planning the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 (Hotta, *Japan 1941*, 2014, p. 97).



The Taishō era: World War I and its immediate aftermath

The Meiji era came to an end with the death of the emperor in 1911. Emperor Meiji was succeeded by his son Prince Yoshihito, who became Emperor Taishō, and the Meiji era gave way to the Taishō era, meaning 'the era of great righteousness' (Hotta, *Japan 1941*, 2014, p. 86). Japan had, seemingly, become a successful modern empire with a modern army, a constitution, and a democracy of sorts. There were indications, however, that the changes were superficial: underneath this veneer of modernization Japan remained deeply traditional, with political power entrenched in the emperor and his circle of advisors. Freedom of expression was severely limited and political ideas such as **socialism** and demands for greater equality for women were swiftly suppressed.

In August 1914, almost immediately after the outbreak of World War I in Europe, Japan, in keeping with the spirit of the 1902 alliance it had signed with Britain (though not strictly necessary, as the latter had not been attacked by two powers) declared war on Germany. This was not entirely altruistic as the war offered opportunities for Japan to stand in for Britain in the Far East and, in particular, to take over German-leased territory in the Shandong province in China. The Japanese army moved quickly to surround the German port of Tsingtao and, after a two-month siege, received its surrender. Similarly, German colonies in the Pacific surrendered without many

casualties. When the Allied Powers asked for Japanese troops to be sent to Europe however, this request was denied, although some destroyers were sent to act as convoy escorts in the Mediterranean.

In 1915, Japan imposed what became known as the **Twenty-One Demands** on China, insisting on the following concessions:

- that German interests in China be transferred to Japan
- that Japanese interests in Manchuria be recognized
- that Japan be given an increased role in the administration and policing of China.

These demands reflected not only Japanese ambition but also Chinese weakness during this period of **warlordism** and weak central government. American and British support helped China to resist some of the more aggressive demands to share its governance, but the territorial demands were conceded. To some extent, this backfired on Japan as it aroused Chinese nationalism as well as American suspicions that Japan would seize any opportunity to impose its influence over China. Indeed, when civil war broke out in Russia in 1918 in the wake of the **Bolshevik** Revolution, Japan sent soldiers to Siberia to halt the progress of the Bolshevik Red Army. The United States also sent soldiers with the intention of ‘maintaining a limited Eastern front against Germany and limiting Japanese gains’ (Stone and Kuznik, *The Untold History of the United States*, 2013, p. 29).

The Paris Peace Conference

An armistice ended World War I in November 1918. It was followed by the Paris Peace Conference, during which the Japanese delegation sought occupation of the following German colonies in the North Pacific: the Mariana, Marshall, and Caroline islands. Of even greater importance to its foreign policy was Japan’s request to take over German interests in Shandong province, as had been outlined in the Twenty-One Demands. In China, the **May Fourth Movement** of 1919 protested vehemently against such a violation of the principle of **self-determination**.

For US President Woodrow Wilson, whether to accede to Japan’s demands or (preferably for him) champion those of the Chinese was among the most difficult of the dilemmas he faced at the conference. Japan did get Shandong but this decision was influenced by another event linked to the establishment of the League of Nations. A number of people, including Prince Konoé Fumimaro, a member of the Japanese delegation, were critical of the concept of the League, an organization that was believed to preserve the economic and political supremacy of the Western powers. The prince also railed against the racism inherent in the attitudes of the British and the Americans, who seemed to consider Japan, despite its military prowess, to be a second-class power. In particular, Japan was deeply offended by the treatment of Japanese immigrants to the United States and now demanded that the League should support racial equality. A proposal was made that the Covenant of the League of Nations, which already mentioned the equality of all religions, should also make reference to the equality of all races. In 1919, this was considered incendiary as it would have immediate repercussions in European colonies in Africa and Asia, as well as threatening the Australian whites-only immigration policy. Japan lost the debate and the racial equality clause was shelved. President Wilson also feared that denying Japan its claim on Shandong might result in Japan leaving the conference and refusing to sign the Treaty of Versailles; it was a risk he was not prepared to take. So Japan gained Shandong but, as Margaret Macmillan notes, it was not an easy decision for Wilson, who complained to his doctor: ‘Last night, I could not sleep, my mind was so full of the Japanese–Chinese controversy’ (Macmillan, *Paris 1919*, 2003, p. 338).



May Fourth Movement, 1919

A student-led movement that sprang up in May 1919, in response to the treatment of China at the Paris Peace Conference and its acceptance of Japan’s demands.



Whites-only policy

Australia had a whites-only immigration policy from 1902 onwards. This was finally ended in 1973 when it was stated that race could not be considered as a factor influencing immigration into Australia.

For question 3, don't forget that the best way to approach this type of question is to use a comparative structure. For instance, don't be tempted just to describe the content of Source A and then that of Source B. It is better to have one paragraph stating the similarities in the views and another stating the differences. It is also quite helpful to use certain phrases, for example:

- 'Both sources agree that...'
- 'Similarities between the sources include...'
- 'Whereas Source A says..., Source B says that...'
- 'The sources differ on...'

Beginning your answer with phrases like those above will help make it very clear to the examiner what you are comparing or contrasting.



CHALLENGE YOURSELF



Thinking, research, communication, and social skills

Disarmament was one of the most important aims of the world leaders who gathered in Paris in 1919. Work in groups to research the following topics and share your research with the class:

1. Why was disarmament considered to be so vital during the inter-war period?
2. What were the disarmament terms set out in the **Treaty of Versailles** and the **Treaty of St Germain**?
3. Japan was a victor, not a loser, in World War I. Why were Britain and the United States so eager to limit the growth of the Japanese navy?

Activity 8

ATL Thinking and research skills

Study the sources and answer the questions that follow.

Source A

Here is an extract from *The Deluge* (2014, p. 325), a book by British historian Adam Tooze.

“The idea that Japan might be speaking on behalf of Africans would no doubt have caused indignation in Tokyo. What was at stake were European–Asian relations and specifically the right of Asians to join Europeans in the settlement of the remaining open territories of the world.

Source B

Here is an extract from an article entitled 'Illusions of the White Race' (1921) by Okuma Shigenobu (1838–1922), a leading Japanese politician who served as prime minister in 1898 and again from 1914 to 1916.

“It is, of course, true that there are still peoples in this world who are so backward in civilisation that they cannot at once be admitted into the international family on an equal footing... What is needed by them is proper guidance and direction... Although most Asiatic nations are fully peers of European nations, yet they are discriminated against because of the colour of their skin. The root of it lies in the perverted feeling of racial superiority entertained by the whites.

1. In Source A, what is meant by 'the remaining open territories of the world'?
2. With reference to its origin, purpose, and content, analyse the value and limitations of Source B for a historian studying the impact of the Paris Peace Conference upon Japanese public opinion.
3. Compare and contrast the views expressed in both sources on Japanese views on racial equality.

The Paris Conference and the Treaty of Versailles were followed by the Washington Conference of 1921–22, giving rise to the term the 'Versailles–Washington System' to describe the new international order that 'had been organised to protect the interests of the two major victorious powers, Great Britain and the United States' (Duus, *The Cambridge History of Japan, Volume 6: The Twentieth Century*, 1995, p. 282). The outcome of the conference resulted in a sense of increasing disillusionment in Japan and a deepening of its inferiority complex for the following reasons:

- It confirmed the end of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance and with it, the loss of Japanese control over Shandong.
- It required the withdrawal of Japanese troops from Siberia.
- It imposed a 5:5:3 ratio in battleships (Britain: United States: Japan), thus limiting the size of the Japanese fleet in relation to that of the other two Western powers.

This was not all. In 1922, the Nine-Power Treaty 'liquidated all existing treaties between the powers and China and replaced them with the Open Door principles so long espoused by the United States' (Duus, *The Cambridge History of Japan, Volume 6: The Twentieth Century*, 1995, p. 283). Further limits on the Japanese navy would be imposed at the 1930 London Conference, when a 10:10:6 ratio (Britain: United States: Japan) was agreed for heavy cruisers and a 10:10:7 ratio for destroyers, although parity between the United States and Japan was allowed for submarines. Mikiso Hane notes that during the inter-war period, disarmament became a source of discontent among the ultra-nationalists, and the signatories of the London Treaty were all targeted for assassination by right-wing militants.

1.2

Japanese domestic issues and their impact on foreign relations

Between 1918 and 1932, Japanese politics went through a period known as Taishō democracy. In 1918, Hara Takashi formed the first party government as leader of the *Rikken Seiyūkai* (the Constitutional Society of Political Friends), later known only as the *Seiyūkai*, which had been established since 1900. The party's support had come mostly from rural areas and its aim, generally, was to improve the economy and Japanese standards of living. It was the majority party in the Diet until 1914, when it became the minority briefly; the party regained the majority in 1918, which was when it entered a golden age. Its leader at the time, Hara Takashi, was the first 'commoner' prime minister, so-called because he led the majority political party and sat in the House of Representatives.

Hara was assassinated in 1921: allegations of corruption as well as his suppression of left-wing groups were probably the main reasons for this, but his assassin claimed it was both 'to gain fame and to bring about revolutionary change' (Hane, *Japan, A Short History*, 2015, p. 120). Hara's assassination, however, paled in comparison with the catastrophe of 1923, when a severe earthquake led to the devastation of Tokyo and the deaths of 100,000 of its inhabitants. Around 700,000 of Tokyo's mainly wooden houses were rapidly destroyed in the fire that raged. Rumours quickly spread that the fire had been started deliberately by Tokyo's Korean population, with an estimated 2,613 people being killed in the ensuing riots. In this mayhem of fear and hysteria, labour leaders were also arrested and executed. Overall, this tragedy and its racist aftermath led to the enforcing of right-wing ideologies and demands for greater security.

Even so, the appointment of the leader of the majority party as prime minister had been established; this practice continued up until 1932. In 1924, the *Kenseikai* (Constitutional Government Party), a party that had long since called for universal suffrage and civil rights, came to power and in the following year a legislation was passed to grant universal suffrage to men over the age of 25. It also passed the Peace Preservation Law, however, which was intended to 'curb dangerous thought' and was directed against communists and anarchists. In 1927, a new party, the *Minseitō* (Liberal Party), was formed. It supported more liberal policies and depended on urban rather than rural support. It was closely allied with business interests, a conciliatory foreign policy, and the enforcement of the London Naval Treaty.

Political developments – from Taishō democracy to militarism

Although in the period following World War I political parties did multiply, the bureaucracy was so entrenched and the constitution so limited that they never established a strong presence in Japan's political landscape. Furthermore, they were weakened by a 'lack of popular support, rife factionalism, corruption, lack of any clear political ideology and failure to cooperate with each other to oppose antiparty elements' (Hunter, *Concise Dictionary of Modern Japanese History*, 1984, p. 169).

As we shall see, as economic conditions worsened and relations with China over Manchuria reached a critical point, Japanese democracy also faltered; prevented by constitutional limitations, or perhaps a lack of will, the country found itself failing to challenge effectively the growing right-wing ultra-nationalism.



Thinking, social, self-management, and research skills **ATL**

World War I marked a transition point in many different countries. For victors and losers, the cost of the war, both in economic terms and in human suffering, led to much reflection on whether or not the war was 'worth it'. Compare the social and economic post-war conditions of either Italy or Germany to those of Japan. Share your findings with your class.

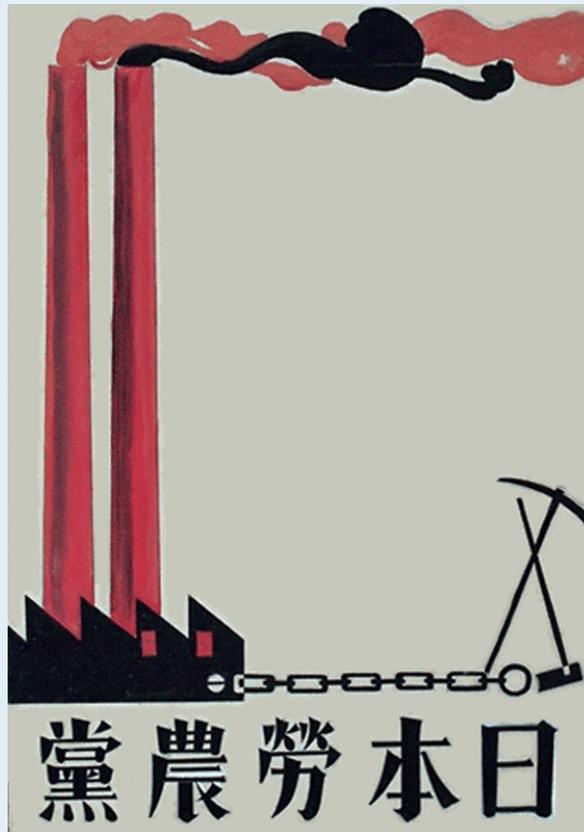
Left-wing movements

An interesting question to ask when looking at the political landscape in Japan after World War I is: where was the Left? Despite military incursions into Siberia during the Russian civil war, the Bolshevik Revolution did have an impact on Japanese politics: the Japanese Communist Party (JCP) was secretly established in 1922 but was closed down in 1924 after the arrest of its leaders. An attempt was made in 1926 to re-form the party, but the movement was harshly suppressed: its members, if uncovered, were arrested and often tortured. The JCP remained banned until after World War II. A socialist party had been established in 1906 but was banned in 1907. In 1920, the Japanese Socialist League was formed: it was split into different factions and finally emerged as the Social Mass Party in 1932. Although the expansion of suffrage in 1925 did make possible increased support for various labour-farmer parties, according to Christopher Gerteis ('Political Protest in Interwar Japan, Part 1', *Asia Pacific Journal*, 2014), it came at a time when political power was slipping away to the entrenched 'constitutionally independent state bureaucracy'. Also, the Peace Preservation Law of 1925 limited freedom of speech and was intended to limit the impact of universal male suffrage upon the status quo. The general election of 1928 did not see any significant increase in the number of left-wing representatives in the House of Representatives either. One reason for this was the financial backing of the **zaibatsu** for traditional parties; trade union activity was allowed, although the right to strike was blocked by the powerful business interests that were closely entwined with the major political parties. In 1940, trade unions were banned altogether.

Activity 9

ATL Thinking skills

An election poster from 1928 for the Japan Labour-Farmer Party (a radical left-wing party).



1. What is the message conveyed in the poster above?

Social and cultural change in the 1920s

During the 1920s, urban society was being particularly influenced by Western culture and customs. Not unexpectedly, this led to a deepening rift between life in the countryside and that in the city. Sophisticated city dwellers expressed contempt for rural inhabitants, as the latter were considered to be ignorant people leading desperate, poverty-ridden lives. Equally, for many rural farmers, the cities were dens of iniquity mired in corruption, their inhabitants dismissive of Japanese culture and tradition. Mikiso Hane notes that although literacy was improving across both groups as a result of compulsory elementary education, those who lived in towns and cities inevitably had better access to secondary and higher education. In the 1930s, ultra-nationalists found support in the countryside whose conservative and highly traditional inhabitants rejected Western cultural and political influences.

Economic challenges – industry and agriculture

World War I had a strong impact on the expansion of the Japanese economy, as the war offered immense opportunities to develop the country's arms and export industries. The preoccupation of the West's producers with the war effort also meant that there was less competition for Japanese producers. As a result, the consumption of Japanese goods increased not only at home, but also in nearby Asian countries, as well as across Europe and the United States.

Even though the production of industrial goods grew significantly in the 1920s, Hane notes that over 50 per cent of workers were still involved in the primary industries of farming, fishing, and mining (Hane, *Japan, A Short History*, 2015, p. 134). According to a government survey conducted in 1927, family income among farming communities was just 70 per cent of that of city office-workers, while urban workers' incomes were only slightly ahead of their rural counterparts. Even though urban and rural working families together comprised 84 per cent of the population, they accounted for less than 50 per cent of household income. What these statistics show is an unequal distribution of wealth, with much of it being the preserve of the top echelons of the business community, in particular the zaibatsu. At the top of this group were Mitsui, Mitsubishi, Sumitomo, and Yasuda. The heads of these economic powerhouses, with interests in everything from shipbuilding to mining, banking, and textiles, had close ties with the government and the major political parties. According to Hane,

“ [government] leaders did nothing to curb the monopolistic thrust of the zaibatsu. In fact, they were integral to the goal of building ‘a rich nation and a powerful military’, and military and political expansion abroad went hand in hand with zaibatsu control of markets and resources

Hane, *Japan, A Short History*, 2015, p. 136

Indeed, the 1927 Banking Crisis demonstrated that the Japanese economy was becoming more monopolistic. Many small banks went out of business, while control of much of the country's finances went to a few large and powerful banks, with the zaibatsu growing in size and authority. Then came the Wall Street Crash of 1929, a calamity that impacted not just the economy of the United States but that of all its trading partners.

The Great Depression and its aftermath

As with all other countries that depended upon the export markets for their livelihood, Japan suffered from the collapse in world trade associated with the Great Depression. The response of the government was an austerity programme, with a focus on

deflationary measures. Niall Ferguson argues that Japan's decision to pursue austerity and return to the gold standard in 1929, just before the Wall Street Crash, was ill-timed and only worsened the situation. Exports fell by 6 per cent between 1929 and 1931; unemployment rose to 1 million; and agricultural incomes slumped.

In the face of the overvalued Yen and increasing protectionism by the British Empire and American markets, the Japanese government took the wise decision to come off the gold standard in 1931. The Yen was allowed to float, meaning there would be no fixed rate of exchange. At the same time, the government abandoned its austerity programmes and started to spend money on military equipment. There was a shortage of raw materials that continued through the 1930s, squeezing the small to medium-sized producers, but benefiting the zaibatsu, whose political clout and economic power enabled them to direct scarce resources their way. Hugely dependent on the British Empire for imports of raw materials (such as jute, lead, tin, zinc, iron ore, and cotton) and on the Americans (for cotton, scrap metal, and oil), Japan needed good access to resources. As Ferguson notes, Japan's exports needed a strong world economy, but when protectionist measures led to a drawing in of world markets, Japan had to reassess its political and military position.

The weak demand in a protectionist world economy adversely affected Japan. In addition, Japan had a rapidly growing population that needed living space and more access to food. All this added weight to a call for what Hane refers to as the acquisition of its own 'imperial market' (Hane, *Japan, A History*, 2015, p. 153). According to Ferguson, imperial expansion led to the emigration of around 315,000 Japanese citizens between 1935 and 1940. However, Ferguson notes that the problem with imperial expansion was that '... it required increased imports of petroleum, copper, coal, machinery and iron ore to feed the nascent Japanese military-industrial complex' (Ferguson, *The War of the World*, 2006, p. 297). In other words, the more imperialistic Japan became, the greater its dependence on imported raw materials. At some stage, presumably, its empire would both provide the resources and absorb the goods it needed, but that time was yet to come.

The growth of ultra-nationalism and its threat to democracy

After becoming the leader of the *Seiyūkai* in 1925, General Tanaka Giichi was appointed prime minister in 1927. His policies were both repressive of left-wing movements and aggressive abroad. An important event was the assassination in 1928 of Zhang Zuolin, a warlord of Manchuria (for more, see page 30). Emperor Shōwa (Hirohito) had been angered by Japanese complicity in this event, and even though Tanaka had not been part of the planning of this event, his failure to provide an explanation for the emperor reflected the weakness of the government and made him feel compelled to resign. Tanaka was succeeded by Hamaguchi Yūkō, leader of the *Minseitō* whose government was responsible for signing the London Naval Treaty. According to Hane, the military officers who objected most vehemently to the treaty's restrictions on Japan's naval capability now accused the government of overstepping its authority, claiming it did not have the right 'to override the naval general staff in matters of defence' (Hane, *Japan, A Short History*, 2015, p. 139). Hamaguchi was shot in an assassination attempt; although he survived, he resigned as prime minister and died not long afterwards. Hamaguchi's successor, Wakatsuki Reijirō, was caught up in the Manchurian Incident (see Chapter 2, page 30) and resigned soon after; he was replaced by Inukai Tsuyoshi, leader of the *Seiyūkai*. Although he criticized the London Treaty, Inukai was also assassinated by ultra-nationalists in May 1932.

According to Hane, 'Inukai's assassination was the turning point in Japan's move towards militaristic extremism' (Hane, *Japan, A Short History*, 2015, p. 145). Buruma, similarly, equates this time with the end of party democracy and even compares it to contemporaneous events in Germany where the Weimar Republic was being buffeted by the combination of harsh economic circumstances and the rise of **fascism**. As Buruma points out, although Japan had neither a Nazi party nor a führer, it had an emperor whose political opinions are still, to this day, shrouded in mystery, while its rival power-grasping factions 'in the court, the military, the bureaucracy and the Diet... fought each other with almost as much zeal as they displayed towards external enemies' (Buruma, *Inventing Japan, 1853–1964*, 2004, p. 91). The period of Taishō democracy was drawing to a close.

Activity 10

ATL Thinking skills

Study the sources below and answer the questions that follow.

Source A

The following is taken from historian Mikiso Hane's book *Japan, A Short History* (Oneworld Publications, 2015, pp.141–42).

One of the officers arrested and put on trial for Inukai's assassination reflected the anguish felt by many soldiers who saw an enormous gap between the seemingly extravagant lifestyle in the cities and impoverished lives of the peasants in rural villages. He said,

In utter disregard of the poverty-stricken farmers, the enormously rich zaibatsu pursue their private profit. Meanwhile, the young children of the impoverished farmers of the north eastern provinces attend school without breakfast, and their families subsist on rotten potatoes.

Source B

Jonathan N Lipman is a professor of history. The following is taken from his essay 'Imperial Japan: 1894–1945' (2008).

Young men, both military officers and their colleagues in civilian organizations such as the Kokuryukai (Amur River Society), expressed their nationalist passions through assassinations of politicians, industrialists, intellectuals, and others who did not conform to their rigid standards of 'pure Japanese' behaviour and beliefs. Prime Minister Hamaguchi was murdered at Tokyo Station in 1930, and Prime Minister Inukai was killed in 1932. Both assassinations were perpetrated by ultranationalists impatient with the corruption of party politics and eager for Japan to be driven by their own heroic values, which were expressed most obviously in the military and the drive to dominate Japan's neighbours, especially China.

1. With reference to the origin, purpose, and content, analyse the value and limitations of Source A to historians studying post-World War I politics in Japan.
2. To what extent does Source A support the reasons given in Source B for the assassination of political leaders?

The Shōwa era

On the death of his father Emperor Taishō in 1926, and having served as regent for the previous four years, Crown Prince Hirohito ascended to the Imperial throne and became Emperor Shōwa. The new emperor was a young man who had rarely left Japan, with one exception being in 1921 when, warned beforehand about the 'poison of European liberal thought', he had been sent on a tour of Europe. According to Buruma, educated to believe absolutely in 'the myths of Japanese racial purity and the divine provenance of his own blood lines as though they were historical facts', the young Crown Prince Hirohito was apparently impressed by the 'informality of British

aristocratic manners, even at Buckingham Palace' that contrasted with the elaborate and strictly enforced code of behaviour at the imperial palace in Tokyo (Buruma, *Inventing Japan, 1853–1964*, 2004, pp. 82–83).

If Hirohito had wanted to introduce some informality, however, he would have been rapidly disabused of any such idea in a culture that had been built upon the veneration of the emperor. In accordance with Shinto rituals, the coronation on 14 November 1926 took place after Hirohito spent the night at Ise, the holiest of Shinto temples, communing with his ancestor, the sun goddess. The following morning, 'reborn' as a living god, Hirohito could assume his role as emperor and take Japan from the Taishō era to the Shōwa era, meaning 'a time of illustrious peace' (see Buruma, *Inventing Japan, 1853–1964*, 2004, pp. 83–84).



◀ A photo taken in 1925 of Emperor Shōwa (Hirohito) in his coronation robe.

One of the side trips made by Hirohito during his European tour was to the site of the Battle of Ypres, which was said to have contributed to his 'aversion of war'. According to Eri Hotta, the young prince was taken on a tour of the battlefield (remember that this was only three years after the end of World War I) by a Belgian officer who had lost a son in the war. Upon hearing about the plight of the officer, Hirohito's eyes 'welled up with tears' (Hotta, *Japan 1941*, 2014, p. 87).



CHALLENGE YOURSELF

ATL

Thinking, research, communication, and self-management skills

See what you can find out about the *Ketsumeidan* (Blood Brotherhood Society), a Japanese ultra-nationalist society similar to the *Sakurakai*. Compare the ideologies of these Japanese societies with those of the NSDAP (Nazi Party) in Germany. Share your research with the class.

Having read through this section, you can see how Japan emerged out of World War I as a modern and ambitious country, growing in prosperity and moving towards a more democratic system of government as it entered the Shōwa Era. Even so, there was a lingering disaffection with the outcome of the Treaty of Versailles, as well as the Naval Treaties. Many of its citizens felt that Japan was being denied its rightful place as an equal of the Western powers. Within the Japanese military, which owed allegiance only to the emperor, there were groups of militant nationalists wanting to purify Japan. One such organization was the *Sakurakai* (Cherry Blossom Society), established in 1930. Opposed to political corruption and disarmament policies, its intention was to set up a military government and to rid Japan of its corrupt politicians. According to a society pamphlet produced by the *Sakurakai*,

“... the poisonous sword of the thoroughly degenerate politicians is being pointed at the military. This was clearly demonstrated in the London treaties. It is obvious that the party politicians' sword that was used against the navy, will soon be used to reduce the size of the army. Hence... we must arouse ourselves and wash out the bowels of the completely decadent politicians.

Extract from a Cherry Blossom Society pamphlet, in Hane, *Japan, A Short History*, Oneworld Publications, 2015, p. 142

1.3 Political instability in China

The demise of the **Qing dynasty**, the last of China's empires, began on 10 October 1911 in what became known as the Double Tenth Rebellion. This was followed by a long period of weak government known as warlordism, when regional leaders (largely self-appointed) with their own private militias controlled whole provinces with scant regard for the nominal government in Beijing. As mentioned earlier, Japan entered World War I mainly to take over German interests in China, an aim it achieved and attempted to build on with the Twenty-One Demands it presented to the Chinese central government. Had it not been for the protection of the United States, motivated by both a long-established link to China as well as concern over Japanese expansion, it is likely that all 21 of the demands would have had to be conceded.

China and Japan, 1911–22

Sino-Japanese rivalry over Korea has already been discussed in the first section of this chapter; relations between the countries did not improve as World War I came to an end. Negotiations over the Shandong province and whether it should remain with Japan or be returned to China (which had also entered the war on the side of the **Allies** in 1917) led to heated debates in Paris. Presenting the case for China was Wellington Koo, the Chinese ambassador to Washington. American-educated with degrees from Columbia University, Koo was immensely engaging and erudite.

Activity 11

ATL Thinking skills

Taken from the book *Paris 1919* (Random House, 2003) by Margaret Macmillan, below is a description of Wellington Koo by Georges Clemenceau, the French prime minister:

“*[He is] a young Chinese cat, Parisian of speech and dress, absorbed in the pleasure of patting and pawing the mouse, even if it was reserved for the Japanese.*”

1. According to the quotation above, what is the 'mouse' meant to symbolize? What impression does this source give of Wellington Koo?

Despite his eloquence, Koo's arguments could not overcome the fact that it was pragmatic – at least in the short term – to give Shandong to Japan. This greatly incensed public opinion in China and the supporters of the May Fourth Movement (the latter mainly comprising students from Peking University), who condemned the Western leaders for deserting China during what they claimed was a 'life and death struggle' (Macmillan, *Paris 1919*, 2003, p. 340). Despairing over the lack of support from the West, many Chinese turned to an alternative system adopted by the Soviet Union; indeed, the Communist Party of China, set up in 1921, grew out of the May Fourth Movement.

Very soon it was clear that the resolution of the Shandong question was seen as a mixed blessing for Japan: it had aroused the hostility of many of its wartime allies, underlining that this was a prize given grudgingly. According to Macmillan, in China, resentment affected Japanese business, while Britain began to seriously rethink the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. Unsurprisingly, this concerned Japan greatly; discussions were initiated by the Japanese in 1920 to return Shandong to China, though China did not respond. The matter was eventually resolved during the Washington Conference in 1921–22, when it was agreed that Shandong should be given back China, albeit with economic concessions to the Japanese. (For more on the Washington Conference, see page 18).



Wellington Koo and his wife in a photograph taken in 1920.

According to Hane,

At the Washington Conference, a settlement between Japan and China was reached. Japan agreed to return the German holdings in Shandong Peninsula to China but it got China to agree to allow Japan to retain the railroad on the peninsula for fifteen years. Sino-Japanese relations grew increasingly strained however, as Japanese authorities intervened in Chinese political affairs during the 1920s when a power struggle between the different warlord factions was taking place.

From Mikiso Hane, *Japan, A Short History*, Oneworld Publications, 2015, p. 119

Activity 12

ATL Thinking and research skills

The countries that attended and signed the Washington Treaty also agreed on the Nine-Power Treaty signed in February 1922, which guaranteed the sovereignty of China and an open-door trading policy.

Below is the first article of the treaty.

ARTICLE I

The Contracting Powers, other than China, agree:

- (1) *To respect the sovereignty, the independence, and the territorial and administrative integrity of China;*
- (2) *To provide the fullest and most unembarrassed opportunity to China to develop and maintain for herself an effective and stable government;*
- (3) *To use their influence for the purpose of effectually establishing and maintaining the principle of equal opportunity for the commerce and industry of all nations throughout the territory of China;*
- (4) *To refrain from taking advantage of conditions in China in order to seek special rights or privileges which would abridge the rights of subjects or citizens of friendly States, and from countenancing action inimical to the security of such States.*

Addendum: [Elihu Root, a US statesman]... drafted the Nine Power Treaty. In the course of that Hughes [prime minister of Australia] produced the secret promise made by Japan as part of the Lansing–Ishii arrangement that she would not interfere with other nations in China and without saying anything to anybody this secret agreement was put into the Root draft... It became verbatim the corresponding obligation in the Nine Power Treaty. (File no. 500. A4d/240 1/2.)

1. With reference to its origin, purpose and content, analyse the value and limitation of this source to historians studying the postwar settlements.

Study closely the content of this source, in particular the addendum at the end that refers to a 'secret' agreement which Japan had accepted. This is an official document, but how reliable is this source for understanding what actually happened during the signing of the treaty or what was agreed by the nations?

While primary sources such as this may be useful in your studies, do not assume they are always more reliable or valuable than secondary sources!



The Guomindang and the Northern Expedition

Despite some attempts at unity, China in the 1920s was riven with discord. Back in 1923, following the advice of the **Comintern**, members of the **Communist Party of China (CPC)** had joined the **Guomindang** (Chinese Nationalist Party, or GMD for short) to form the United Front, aimed at ridding China of warlords. The year 1925 saw the death of Sun Yixian, founder and head of the GMD; he was succeeded by Jiang Jieshi, the vehemently anti-communist head of the National Revolutionary Army (NRA). In 1926, Jiang launched the Northern Expedition to end the rule of the warlords, beginning in Guangdong province and heading north towards Shanghai, Beijing, and Manchuria. One of Jiang's best-known sayings was to be 'the Japanese are a disease of the skin but the Communists are a disease of the heart': in 1927, he demonstrated the depth of his hatred of the CPC by launching a campaign known as the White Terror to purge the GMD of Communists.

The GMD advanced northwards. By 1928, they were moving towards the territory controlled by Zhang Zuolin (see page 22), who according to Jonathan Fenby was 'China's biggest warlord' (Fenby, *The Penguin History of Modern China; The Fall and Rise*

of a Great Power, 2009, p. 183). Known also as the Old Marshal, Zhang had actively cooperated with the Japanese who had controlled the South Manchurian Railway. For the Japanese army in Manchuria, known as the Guandong Army (Guandong is pinyin for Kwantung), the Northern Expedition posed a threat to Japanese interests in Manchuria. Increasingly, the Japanese doubted the loyalty of Zhang Zuolin, preferring to deal with his son Zhang Xueliang, known (unsurprisingly) as the Young Marshal. A plot was hatched to dispose of the Old Marshal by first killing him and then waiting for his army to take to the streets to seek revenge; the Guandong Army would then intervene to restore peace and, in doing so, establish control over Manchuria. The first part of the plot worked: a bomb was dropped on the Old Marshal's train carriage as he returned to Mukden in 1928. The critically injured warlord was taken to hospital where he died. Unexpectedly, however, Zhang's army did not respond, thus presenting no opportunity for the Guandong Army to 'defend' Japanese interests. To make matters worse for the plotters, the Young Marshal came to an agreement with Jiang Jieshi and, in return, was given autonomy over Manchuria. Fenby notes that, unlike his father, Zhang Xueliang refused to cooperate with the Guandong Army and showed every intention of seeking 'further integration' with China by building a railway to compete with the Japanese-run South Manchurian Railway. The Guandong Army did not try again to gain control until 1931 (Fenby, *The Penguin History of Modern China*, 2009, p. 232).

A review of Chapter 1

This chapter has focused on Japan's rise as a modern nation state from the late 19th century through to the 1920s. In particular, it has examined how the Meiji restoration established an economic and military basis for Japanese expansion and its aspiration to be regarded as a world power. It has also looked at the relationship between Japan and its neighbours, including its response to the decline of the Chinese Manchu Empire and growing rivalry with the Romanov Empire of Russia. The impact of World War I upon Japan – and the opportunities it offered – has been outlined, as has Japan's role in the Paris peace-making of 1919. The chapter has ended with an overview of the political and social changes that Japan underwent during the 1920s, as well as an analysis of its growing tension with Nationalist China over the future status of Manchuria.

Activity 13

ATL Thinking and research skills

Now that you have read through this chapter, answer the following question. This is very similar to the kind of mini essay that you would get asked to write in the fourth question of the Prescribed Subject exam paper.

Using the sources and the text in this chapter, examine the factors that influenced Japanese foreign policy between 1919 and 1931.



To access websites relevant to this chapter, go to www.pearsonhotlinks.com, search for the book title or ISBN, and click on 'Chapter 1'.



'Young Marshal' Zhang Xueliang (on the right) posing in 1929 with General Connell, an American officer, after he had joined forces with Jiang Jieshi against further Japanese and Soviet incursions in Manchuria. The United States had offered aid to help combat Soviet and Japanese raids in Manchuria.



It isn't a good idea to try and start your exam by answering the fourth question first (even though it carries the highest marks). Always answer the questions in the order they are written in the exam: in other words, start with the first question and work your way through to the last. By doing so, you become familiar with the sources and you are better prepared to tackle this mini-essay question. Don't forget that the question asks you to include references to the material in the sources as well as your own knowledge. To write a good answer, you need to include references to all the sources (there are always four sources included in the exam paper), and use your own knowledge as well as the sources to support your argument. Allow yourself around 20 minutes of the exam time to answer the fourth question – don't forget to plan your answer before you start writing.

For this particular question on Japanese foreign policy, you could list the following factors:

- the Treaty of Versailles and the treatment of Japan at the Peace Conference
- the Naval Treaties
- the Japanese economy that both prospered and faced crises in the 1920s.

Think of other factors you could add to this list. Once you have done this, go through the sources in the last section of this chapter and see if you could use some of them in your answer. Don't forget to include an introduction and a conclusion.