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(出版者 / Publisher)

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(雑誌名 / Journal or Publication Title)

GIS journal : the Hosei journal of global and interdisciplinary studies /
GIS journal : the Hosei journal of global and interdisciplinary studies

(巻 / Volume)

2

(開始ページ / Start Page)

59

(終了ページ / End Page)

86

(発行年 / Year)

2016-03

(URL)

<https://doi.org/10.15002/00012847>

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Abstract

The horrific conduct of the Japanese military during the Second Sino-Japanese War and World War Two has left us the standard understanding that Imperial Japan's military has always and everywhere been savage and brutal. However, there was a time when it was celebrated not only for bravery but for chivalry, a time when - striving to catch up with the West - it actually surpassed the West in applying to the conduct of war the rules of International Law, of the Geneva Conventions, and of general decency. During the 1920s and 1930s, though, Japan's military made an abrupt about-face. We look here at the two phases of Japan's military conduct, the "chivalrous" and the "brutal," and consider why and how the change happened. Then we consider what lessons a deeper and more complete understanding of Japan's military may have for East Asia and for the conduct of war in general.

Key Words: militarism, imperialism, racism, atrocities

Introduction

The liberal world order came to a fiery end with the First World War. A new way had to be found to insure that such a hell on earth would never happen again. The war had to be made, in President Wilson's oft quoted words (borrowed from H. G. Wells), "the war to end all wars." Since liberal ideas had not worked, a new way born of the new man – civilized and scientific – must be devised. The progressive and scientific elite, versed in the new discoveries for organizing large systems to the greatest efficiency, would lead the way. Their tool would be a government empowered to carry out their directives for the purpose of both preventing wars and lifting the masses from their cruel poverty. In America, anyway, the "new man," as he was called, would eventually take for himself the label of "liberal," forcing us to relabel the earlier kind of liberal "classical liberal."

Of course there never had been a real liberal world order. Yes, liberal ideas on free markets and the hidden hand had dominated the intellectual speculations of the economics profession.

Markets had often been free enough in much of the West that the hidden hand could, in fact, direct scarce resources to where they were most needed, thereby engendering the growth in wealth that lifted the ever shrinking number of poor into the ever growing middle and upper classes. And government, infused as always with a multitude of contradictory forces pushing in contradictory directions, did have pockets of classical liberalism within it. But the power and inertia of pre-liberal ideas still dominated a large part of most western governments. In fact, it was a complex of those ideas, made up of authoritarianism, imperialism, and racism, which brought about the war that seemed to signal the end of the liberal world order. In other words, power politics caused the war. Liberalism took the blame. And a new, “enlightened” conception of power politics arose to replace the old.

Epoch-smashing changes, though, generally take several generations to work themselves into both the belief systems of individuals and the structures of society. So, even if the war marked the demise of liberalism, classical liberal thinking still dominated economic thinking for a time. But it was challenged by the younger generation, who proposed that a humane and scientific government, rather than the cold and soulless market, be the agent of change. This new wave had long been important, but somewhat towards the fringes of intellectual thought. With the Great War, though, the fringe suddenly found itself in the vanguard. The vanguard came in a variety of overlapping types, among them populism, progressivism, social gospel-ism, Christian socialism, regular socialism, communism, and fascism (modern translation: crony-capitalism).

Still, when the tremendous destruction of wealth during the war inevitably brought negative economic adjustments (i.e. recession), and when new wave thinking on the role of government in solving such downturns exacerbated the problem, the decade-long Great Depression devastated the world economy and led straight into a second great war. The entire period from 1914 to 1945, then, might, as Churchill proposed, be considered a single great event, a second Thirty Years War, as it were, which transformed the world as much as the first had transformed Europe three centuries earlier.

Liberal economics had survived World War One with at least its chairs in the great universities intact. But it could not survive the entirety of the Thirty Year Event. The intelligentsia, politicians, and people in general supported some form of global government as the mechanism for preventing a reoccurrence of war, and supported giving national governments more power to cure poverty and solve domestic problems. The young guard within the economics profession, raised in the midst of the Thirty Year Event and disillusioned with the world that had led to it, inevitably moved into positions of prestige in academia, where they would build magnificent intellectual structures of exquisite intricacy to explain why government had to be

deeply involved in curing poverty and solving society's problems. Classical liberalism, on the other hand, emerged from the Thirty Year Event on its deathbed, at least among the intelligentsia. The new wave had won.

Success, though, is often the parent of failure. Once you get what you want, you will eventually be confronted with the true meaning of what you want, something that is often far different than what you intended. Since the end of the Second World War, the nations of the West – and more recently most of the rest of the world – have advanced greatly with a mixed system that is comprised of roughly equal parts of free marketism, socialism, and fascism (that is, crony-capitalism). Each of the three parts, naturally, takes credit for whatever good has happened and blames the other parts for the bad. But few people actually listened to the explanations of the discredited free marketers, largely excluded from both academia and the media as they were. With a few exceptions, they labored in obscurity for long decades until the Internet gave them an opening. They then found credibility and even some penetration into the mainstream after predicting and explaining the Great Recession of 2008.

Now, a perfect century after the commencement of the Thirty Year Event, the brave new way has built, among other things, unsustainable towers of debt and unfunded mandates so high they can never be paid down according to any real world calculations. Greece might be the harbinger, but there is little essential difference between what has happened in Greece and what is happening in most of the advanced world. Greece has been one of the first to hit the wall of unsustainability, but the same fate awaits all nations with similar towers of debt. When the epoch is no longer sustainable, the epoch is at its end. We can only hope that, in the last century, we have advanced enough as people that this time we can manage to avoid a fiery conclusion, that we can nurse the world through the end of the epoch with “mere” financial collapse rather than war.

Whether we are faced with collapse or war, the ideological foundations and structures of the epoch have been loosened enough by approaching crisis that we can consider questions and answers about the preceding century left heretofore largely unconsidered. In that spirit, we will consider here aspects of war in hopes that such an examination can help us negotiate an end-of-epoch (if, in fact, end-of-epoch it is) without war. In particular, we will consider first the reality, hushed over following Japan's catastrophic defeat in 1945, that the Japanese military behaved with extraordinary honor and chivalry during most of the first fifty years of its aggressive imperialism, exhibiting a humanity towards enemies that was not only celebrated in the West but recognized even by those enemies. And then we will consider the sudden about-face and descent into an unspeakable brutality during the Second Sino-Japanese War and the Pacific War, a descent that wiped from historical memory the earlier conduct of the Japanese military. We

will consider the earlier chivalry and the later brutality within the context of how imperial armies typically act. And we will consider how the era of brutality has left a legacy in Japan and the rest of Asia that still drives perception and foreign policy. Finally, we will consider how a more mature or complete understanding of imperialism in Asia, which recognizes both phases of the Japanese military's conduct, as well as the conduct of other imperial powers, might lead towards a reconciliation of ancient hatreds and therefore a lessening of the possibility of another Asian war.

Looking at all this through the lens of classical liberalism will lead us to consider how imperialism and racism – two fundamentally unliberal mindsets – play a greater role in the explanation of war than is normally given them. That might sound slightly odd since all progressive ideologies seem to deal with both imperialism and racism ad nauseam. From a classical liberal perspective, though, they do so incorrectly. They conflate imperialism with free market capitalism, and they apply selective amnesia to their own important role in creating the racist societies and ideologies that have done so much to facilitate savagery and war.

The Japanese Military in Modern Times

Closed to the world for two centuries, Japan was awakened by the Opium Wars. It watched as small and faraway England easily dismantled China, which had always been Japan's steady symbol of power and civilization. Among the tiny group with an eye on the outside world and the ear of the ruling class, initial shock at China's utter inadequacy settled into vague fears that grew with each subsequent confirmation of European technological and military superiority. Then the black ships of Commodore Matthew Perry brought the threat home in 1853. Japan, defenseless, would have to buy time by acquiescing to unequal treaties and opening certain ports to trade in order to stave off either outright colonization or the kind of quasi-colonization happening in China.

Threat precipitated crisis, and crisis precipitated the understanding that Japan could only stand up to the West by adopting the technology and military methods of the West. Japan was ultimately able to do that, something no other non-Western country had ever come close to, because of its rare flash of insight that technology and military might were not merely self-contained special skills but integral parts of the entirety of Western culture and its ideological systems. Japan, then as ever, was unafraid of seemingly impossible challenges. It set about “learning Western technology.” But it did so not simply by “learning Western technology.” It set its sights on the entirety of Western learning in which Western technology was embedded.

So far, so good. But part of the entirety, and a critical part according to the standard

understanding of the time, was the mercantilist thinking which justified imperialism. Another part was a warped misapplication of the new theory of evolution, which held that the nations and races of the world were locked in a Darwinian struggle for supremacy. Nations and races could rise or fall; they could not remain stationary. It was the righteous duty of all patriots of all nations and races, then, to work for the betterment of nation and race. The white races believed this, and also believed their economic and military dominance confirmed their evolutionary fitness to dominate. Within their finely delineated hierarchy, the group that would come to be labeled first “Anglo-Teutonic,” then “Anglo-Saxon,” and finally “Nordic” in America and England, and “Aryan” in Germany, were at the top. “Alpines” and “Mediterraneans” (terms popularized by American scientists) followed, with the various other races strung out below. So explained “scientific racism,” which had captured the intelligentsia, universities, and politics of the United States, Great Britain, and Northern Europe. Only a relative few, led by Franz Boaz, opposed scientific racism.

Historical amnesia has erased from common knowledge the earlier chivalry and humanity of the Japanese military. Similarly, it has erased the British and especially American contribution to racial ideology after the death camps of Nazi Germany revealed the horrific depths that underlay such thinking. History is, after all, a winner's history that instinctually protects the winners. Such history is not easily reconsidered until some cataclysmic event like, say, an end of epoch, loosens the hold of standard thinking. Until that happens, Germany and Japan are destined to take more than their fair share of the blame for the horrors of the last great war. By no means should their blame be lessened. But fair history requires that the winners, too, join them in responsibility for the unspeakable acts of war and savagery waged against civilians. Focusing exclusively or excessively on the German and Japanese atrocities of the last great war is, in fact, nothing more than a modern version of the old racial thinking in that it says, “We are the good guys, they are the bad guys.” In truth, there are few good guys in any fair and honest history of war. Courage and heroism, yes, on a personal level. But few good guys.

Those developments, however, still lay in the future. In the nineteenth century, Japan had that aforementioned rare and subtle flash of insight into what was needed to westernize. Japan also had a rare confidence that it could be fully equal to the best of the West. Japan's confidence grew from its insight, certainly, but also, paradoxically, from a sense of inferiority. It was, however, not the regular inferiority of the inferior, but the inferiority of the child or student who truly believes that, with growth, future success awaits if one exerts oneself. Japan had long felt this “child's” or “student's” sense of inferiority towards China. It now replaced China with the West.

Deep insight (which gave it vision) plus a sense of inferiority (which gave it focus) plus

belief in the future (which gave it determination) drove Japan to be the best of students. Before long, it was exerting its military and economic power beyond its borders, as the West did, and doing so with the Western justifications it had assiduously learned. A great nation needed colonies to provide raw materials and a market for finished goods. It needed lebensraum to accommodate the growth natural to vigorous races. And it needed buffer zones and spheres of influence to protect itself. In addition, for Japan, the racial hierarchy that had “Nordics” at the top and “Mongoloids” quite a ways down obviously needed to be tweaked.

Korea, as one Prussian diplomat put it and Japanese liked to repeat, would be a “dagger pointed at the heart of Japan” if colonized by a European country. Of course, for China and Russia, Korea looked more like a bridge leading from Japan into the continent. In any case Korea, xenophobic and backward (much as Japan had been so recently) not to mention unstable, was ripe for European colonization. This threatening geopolitical reality would lead westernized and imperially-minded Japan into a series of wars. The present consideration of the conduct of the Japanese military during those wars will be divided into two phases. Following the terminology (though not necessarily the time frames) of Robert Edgerton in *Warriors of the Rising Sun: a History of the Japanese Military*(i), the period from 1876 to 1922 will be the phase of “chivalry,” and the period from 1931 to 1945 the phase of “brutality.” First the wars of each phase will be summarized to build a frame of reference. Then, the conduct of the Japanese military in each phase will be examined. Next, we'll consider the reason for the change. And finally, we'll speculate on how understanding this history might help us avoid repeat of the savage bits.

Military Conflicts During Phase One: 1876-1922

The Korean Intervention

Russia, France (in a way), and America had already tried to duplicate in Korea Perry's forced opening of Japan, but to no avail, despite separate invasions and occupations of Ganghwa Island at the mouth of the Han River by France and America. Then, in 1876, Japan succeeded. It intentionally drew Korea into attacking one of its ships, and used that incident as pretext to do to Korea what had been done to it by America. It forced an opening of three Korean ports to Japanese trade, and imposed on Korea unequal treaties that gave Japanese citizens the rights of extraterritoriality. The treaty also weakened Korea's traditional tributary ties to China by requiring that Korea declare itself a fully independent country.

The First Sino-Japanese War

The weakening of Sino-Korean ties and growth of Japanese influence in Korea led ultimately to the First Sino-Japanese War in 1894-5, whereby Japan established for itself a European style sphere of influence and a buffer zone against invasion. Buffer zones eventually need their own buffers (which then need further buffers) and Japan made its first tentative moves towards establishing Manchuria as a buffer to its Korean buffer during this war, an ominous portent.

The Treaty of Shimonoseki concluding the war made Japan an explicit, formal empire by requiring China to cede it Taiwan. China was also forced to cede to Japan the Liaotung (modern: Liaodong) Peninsula west of Korea, with its strategic and heavily fortified Port Arthur (modern: Lüshunkou) at its tip. But, through the machinations of Russia, Germany, and France with their Triple Intervention, the Liaotung Peninsula would be returned to China the following year. Two years after that, Russia forced China to lease it the warm water Port Arthur, and grant it a concession to build a railroad from Port Arthur to Harbin, thus connecting the port to Russia's Chinese Eastern Railway and through that to the Trans-Siberian Railway.

For Japan, the Triple Intervention was both a humiliation in that it virtually stated that only European countries had the right to be empires, and a threat in that it established an aggressive, imperialistic Russia at the foot of Japan. The Russian presence made the Liaotung Peninsula a lesser dagger, as it were, threatening both the greater dagger of Korea and Japan itself. Still, Japan had replaced China in the eyes of the West as the main Asian power in the region.

The Boxer Rebellion

In 1899, with anti-foreigner feelings fed by a severe drought, diffuse fighting known as the Boxer Rebellion broke out on the Shantung (modern: Shandong) Peninsula. The fighters – or “Boxers,” as they were named for their skill in martial arts – were often uneducated and unemployed youth recruited by secret societies. The actual fighting, though, was often instigated, encouraged, and used by anti-foreigner, anti-modernization elements within the faltering Qing Dynasty.

The Boxers committed horrendous atrocities against both the foreign community and Chinese Christians, which were well-publicized in the West. Westerners were reviled by the Chinese for using their privileged status to prohibit traditional practices such as ancestor worship, and reviled because of rumors spread by xenophobic traditionalists of horrendous practices carried on in churches. Chinese Christians were reviled as beneficiaries of special advantages from what was, in effect, an arm of Western imperialism.

On the Liaotung Peninsula and north into Manchuria proper, Russians dominated the

booming economy built around their Chinese Eastern Railway, which crossed Manchuria, and its southern branch connecting Harbin to Port Arthur. In order to strengthen its hold on the region, Russia took advantage of the rebellion to wage a war in Manchuria, a war which was mostly ignored and unreported outside of Russia itself, though of course Japan was watching closely. The uneducated Russian soldiers despised the Chinese before the war, as did their Tsar, and felt no compunctions about committing daily mini-humiliations, crimes, and attacks. Once the fighting started, the Chinese retaliated with modes of humiliation and prolonged torture quite beyond description. Russians then reacted with looting, rape, arson (sometimes of entire villages), large-scale massacres, and brutalities against not only soldiers but civilians, including women and children. Cossacks were the worst, reportedly killing children for the fun of it. Though less dramatic in the telling, Cossacks also insured death among the villagers in the harsh region by eating their essential crops and farm animals, and stripping houses and barns of wood for fuel. Compensation was occasionally promised, rarely paid. Educated Russians back west were shocked at reports of the atrocities, but the intelligentsia was irrelevant to what was happening in Manchuria.

The three provinces of Manchuria came out of the fighting a single de facto province of Russia, with a greatly increased Russian military presence. Russian crony-capitalist aristocrats, including members of the Tsar's family, were already too involved in Manchuria to even consider international demands to remove its troops. Of particular relevance here, crony-capitalist Aleksandr Bezobrazov's Yalu Valley lumber scheme would contribute to war with Japan.

Meanwhile, Westerners and Chinese Christians in Shantung were chased into the foreign precincts and legations of Tientsin (modern: Tianjing) and Peking (modern: Beijing). The first attempt at rescue bogged down under fierce Chinese resistance, forcing the besieged Westerners to protect themselves.

Around the foreigner compound in Tientsin, unlike that of Peking, the fighting was intense and real, with European regulars reinforcing civilian fighters among the Westerners, and Chinese regulars reinforcing Boxers. For the besieged Westerners, the civilian defense was organized by young Mandarin-speaking mining engineer Herbert Hoover. The women who served as nurses were organized by his pistol-packing Mandarin-speaking wife, Lou Henry Hoover, herself an expert mining engineer.

Boxers swarmed into Peking in pursuit of the fleeing Westerners, who found refuge in the substantial and well-provisioned grounds of the fortified foreign legations, and in pursuit of fleeing Chinese Christians. Excluded from the foreign legations for their high numbers, the Chinese were isolated nearby on an aristocrat's grounds and then largely ignored by their

erstwhile benefactors to become the targets of further violence and the victims of starvation. Boxers mostly stayed away from the legations. Rather, they roamed the city killing and mutilating, or immolating, Chinese Christians as well as those merchants who had dealt with Westerners. Unknown to the Westerners, regular Chinese troops, though seemingly in alliance with the Boxers, were ordered to protect the foreigners in order to avoid a future retaliation. When, after several days of rampage, Boxers threatened to get totally out of control, Chinese troops chased them out of Peking and took for themselves the role of besieger, sometimes staging apparent bombardments, though always exercising care not to actually harm anyone.

After the first rescue of foreigners in Tientsin and Peking collapsed in the face of intense resistance, the Eight Power Alliance organized a second, much larger one. The eight consisted of six European countries, the United States (now, with its acquisition of the Philippines, a major player in China), and Japan, with the Japanese military playing the major role in the recapture of Tientsin and then the difficult fighting from Tientsin to Peking. The Eight Nations witnessed incredible brutalities along the way, and were themselves often the victims. They would take their revenge in the two cities.

Upon suppressing the rebellion, each of the Eight Powers were given the right to a military presence to protect the train line connecting Tientsin and Peking.

The Russo-Japanese War

In the age of empire, none of the great powers denied there was a natural right to the possession of colonies, spheres of influence, or buffer zones. Even traditionally anti-imperial America could no longer strongly oppose the imperial status quo after its acquisition of the Philippines and Guam in 1898, and Hawaii and American Samoa in 1899. America, too, was now an explicit empire. All sides, then, understood the need for Russia (now ensconced in Port Arthur and Manchuria) and Japan (with Korea a de facto sphere of influence or even a quasi-colony) to negotiate what was, in essence, the boundary between empires. Japan proposed the Yalu River, which separated Manchuria from Korea. Russia proposed a boundary deep within Korea, which would provide a buffer for its de facto province of Manchuria, as well as protection for its crony-capitalist lumber scheme in the Yalu Valley, which had already crossed the river into Korea. The Russian proposal was unacceptable to Japan as it would eat into its quasi-colony and bring the expanding Russian Empire that much closer.

Russia refused to compromise for the same reason as America refused to compromise in 1941. It believed that Japan would never dare initiate hostilities. Talks collapsed, and the epic Russo-Japanese War broke out in 1904, four days after diplomatic relations had been severed,

with a Japanese surprise attack on Port Arthur. The reaction, though, was different than it would be after Pearl Harbor. It was praised in England and America as a legal and “masculine” action⁽ⁱⁱ⁾ taken by David against Goliath⁽ⁱⁱⁱ⁾, though condemned by Russia's ally France. As always with humans, perspective shaped perception.

Though rather overshadowed by the Great War a decade later, the Russo-Japanese War was one of the larger two-nation wars in history, nudging Russia to its first revolution and bringing Japan to the brink of bankruptcy. It was also the first time a non-European country had beaten a European country in war since the beginning of the modern age of empire. Japan's victory, then, was an astounding reversal of heretofore unchallenged European supremacy.

Even while Japan's victory garnered admiration in Europe and America, it planted seeds of concern. It fed the amorphous fears in the West of the Yellow Peril, and also added kindling to the smoldering popular expectations of a coming global race war in which the “great race” might be overwhelmed by the sheer numbers of yellow, black, and brown races. Two highly influential American books a few years later expressed the new mood perfectly in their titles: *The Passing of the Great Race* by Madison Grant and *The Rising Tide of Color* by Lothrop Stoddard. Grant and Stoddard seized on the mood of the times to convincingly construct a Black Peril and Brown Peril emanating from the teeming masses of Europe's colonies throughout Africa and Asia, as well as from within the African American community, that would augment the Yellow Peril as it rose to overthrow the white race.

Stoddard not only gives shape to amorphous white fears but documents the thrilling birth of hope among non-whites following the Japanese victory, hope that white domination could realistically be challenged. Whatever the significance, he even presages modern political correctness in identifying the American portion of that challenge when he summarize the new confidence:

"As colored men realized the significance of it all, they looked into each other's eyes and saw there the light of undreamed of hopes. ...fear of white power and respect for white civilization together dropped away like garments outworn. Through the bazaars of Asia ran the sibilant whisper: 'The East will see the West to bed!'

The chorus of mingled exultation, hate and scorn sounded from every portion of the colored world. Chinese scholars, Japanese professors, Hindu pundits, Turkish journalists and Afro-American editors, one and all, voiced drastic criticisms of white civilization and hailed the war as a well-merited nemesis on white arrogance and greed." (iv)

The Portsmouth Treaty, mediated by President Theodore Roosevelt, ended the war. It established that Korea would be within Japan's sphere of influence. It ceded to Japan Port Arthur and the southern half of Sakhalin/Karafuto. It gave Japan most of the concession for the

South Manchurian Railway, that part running from Port Arthur through Mukden (modern: Shenyang) as far as Changchun, to be patrolled by the Imperial Japanese Army. It required that Russia leave Manchuria. And, for good measure, Roosevelt warned European nations off of any repeat of the Triple Intervention.

The Great War

Japan had long had close relations with Great Britain. Japan's navy was very much an English navy with officers trained in England and warships bought from England. The British government had long respected Japan's civilized standards and its role in maintaining stability in East Asia, which was, we cannot forget, an imperial stability beneficial to Great Britain. It's no surprise that Britain was the first European nation to abrogate unequal treaties with Japan, which it did in 1894, to take effect in 1899. Nor did it participate in such humiliations as the Triple Intervention. Then, in 1902, Great Britain and Japan became formal allies by signing the Anglo-Japanese Alliance.

With outbreak of the Great War, the British government called on Japan to assist it. Japan jumped at the chance to pursue its growing imperial ambitions and confirm its status as a great power. It used the pretext of alliance to go beyond what alliance required in Asia - capturing German possessions in China and the Pacific - even while it refused to offer more than limited support in Europe. From its new position of power, it issued its infamous Twenty-One Demands, which would have made Manchuria and indeed China a vassal state. It retracted some of the demands under pressure from the United States and Great Britain, but still signed a treaty with China giving it expanded rights in southern Manchuria. The Twenty-One Demands affair was a turning point that infuriated China while decreasing America and Britain's trust in Japan.

The Siberian Intervention

In 1918, following the Bolshevik Revolution, allied nations asked Japan to join them in sending troops into Siberia to rescue besieged Czechoslovak troops and support the anti-Bolshevik White Army. Japan initially saw this as an opportunity. It intended to send a force large enough to occupy Siberia as far west as Lake Baikal in order to encourage a breakaway Siberia that would serve as a buffer against any Russian threat to Manchuria. The plan was severely scaled back due to American pressure. Still, Japan left its substantial army in Siberia until 1922, even though other Allied nations withdrew in 1919.

Interim

During the Versailles Peace Conference and over the duration of the next two decades, several events and circumstances led to a further souring of relations between Japan and the U.S. as well as between Japan and Great Britain.

Blatantly racist theories, rhetoric, popular movements, and laws emanating from California and Washington D.C. had long been a source of friction between Japan and the U.S. Friction was exacerbated by the refusal of the great powers to accept Japan's proposal that the Versailles Treaty denounce racism. Then, Congress passed the Immigration Law of 1924, which was specifically designed to exclude from the U.S. undesirable races such as Jews, eastern and southern Europeans, and Orientals. Meanwhile, the ideology of "scientific racism" had become mainstream, formalizing the assumption of Anglo-Saxon (or Anglo-Teutonic, or Nordic) destiny to lead the world, a theory firmly established in American universities and much of its intellectual class in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. However, formalization of the theory shifted the focus of race thinking from the quasi-religious goal of racial destiny to the quasi-scientific goal of race preservation and improvement through the agency of "eugenics." In the U.S., eugenicists wrote textbooks which became standard in universities, contributed to new eugenics legislation in a number of states, provided the testimony and justification for the Immigration Law of 1924, and initiated a vigorous collaboration with similarly-minded scientists in Germany. (v) There, eugenics (renamed "racial hygiene") found particularly fertile soil after the rise of the Nazi Party in the early 1930s.

The Washington Naval Conference of 1921-22, which intended to nip an expensive and dangerous naval arms race in the bud, produced a series of treaties among the nine nations in attendance. One key provision of the main treaty restricted the building of warships by the United States, Great Britain, and Japan to a proportion of 5-5-3. This was humiliating to Japanese militarists and xenophobic ideologues.

The formalizing and strengthening of racism as science, along with the perceived insult of the Washington Naval Treaty, inspired in Japan a heightening of anti-Western rhetoric, a strengthening and formalization of its own native racism, a purge of pro-Western army and naval officers, and an ideology of assassination sprung from the potent concept of "purity."

"Purity," for sophisticated neo-Shintoist philosophers such as Ikki Kita and simple-minded idealistic young officers such as those of the Sakurakai, was the killing of ego-self and all its base desires in the service of something far greater, devotion to the Emperor and the Land of the Gods. Purity by definition requires cleansing. The way of purity required that the truly pure, in other words those devoted heart and soul to the Emperor, cleanse the land of foreign

corruption. They would be the agents of "tenbatsu" - heaven's justice - assassinating selflessly and with a pure mind politicians and industrialists infected with that corruption. That would clear the way to a militaristic state socialism, or fascism, which would allow Japan to achieve its ordained greatness. It certainly achieved the militarism and fascism.

Military Conflicts During Phase Two: 1931-45

The Meiji Constitution had placed the Japanese army and navy directly under the authority of the Emperor rather than the civilian government. This gave them a great deal of independence and also untoward influence within the government, as the Minister of the Army was virtually chosen by the army.

1931 was the fateful year in which the army, now rife with ultranationalist neo-Shintoists among the younger officers, began to assert its independence. It staged an explosion along the South Manchurian Railway near Mukden, blamed it on the Chinese, and used that as a pretext for a full-scale invasion of Manchuria. The following year, it established a puppet state in Manchuria called Manchukuo, ruled by Puyi, the infamous Last Emperor.

When the Lytton Commission, sent by the League of Nations, concluded Japan was responsible for the explosion, the Japanese delegation to the league walked out, winning enthusiastic support back home for its dramatic display of Japanese assertiveness. Japan officially withdrew from the League of Nations soon after.

The Second Sino-Japanese War

We've seen that after the Boxer Rebellion, the "Eight Nations" had been given the right to station troops along the railway connecting Tientsin to Peking. By July, 1937, Japan had built its force to ten thousand soldiers, give or take a few thousand, many more than any of the other nations, and many more than allowed by the agreement ending the rebellion. With tensions running high after the creation of Manchukuo, fighting broke out between Japanese troops and Chinese troops along the railway near Marco Polo Bridge. After Japanese commanders broke several ceasefire agreements and then ignored Prime Minister Konoe's attempt to negotiate a settlement, the fighting escalated into all out war, spreading from the Tientsin-Peking corridor to Shanghai to Nanking (modern: Nanjing), and then throughout much of China.

The Japanese army's expectations of a relatively easy victory were dashed by ferocious Chinese resistance as the war developed into a widespread and bloody quagmire that would last for eight years and ultimately suck Japan into the Second World War.

Undeclared Russo-Japanese Border War

In 1938 and 1939, Japan (and Manchukuo) fought Russia (and Mongolia) in an undeclared border war. Unlike previous Russian armies Japan had faced, this one was well-equipped and well-trained, and led by the soon-to-be war hero General Georgy Zhukov. Japan's Kwantung Army of Manchuria, operating independently of the civilian government, and even against the wishes of the civilian government, was decisively defeated at the Battle of Nomonhan.

Though the Kwantung Army was ready to continue the fight, the government, already opposed to it, was not. It signed a non-aggression pact with Russia on September 15, and this time the army felt it had no choice but to comply. With no need now to worry about Japan, Stalin, who had signed his non-aggression pact with Germany the previous month, felt free to invade Poland on September 17.

The Pacific War

With the non-aggression pact, the Japanese and Russian empires were safe from each other and free to consider other places for expansion. Russia took its ambitions into Poland. With the land and resources of Siberia now off limits, Japan looked south for resources and also to cut off the flow of support to China. To the south, though, were more European empires: the French, English, Dutch, and even the Portuguese. And then there was the newest empire, potentially the most dangerous, and the one (other than the Portuguese) least distracted by the war in Europe: the American.

The U.S., in support of China and Great Britain, sought to restrain the Japanese Empire. Not believing Japan was willing to fight it, the U.S. used its imperial presence in the Pacific to close the tap on all resources for Japan. In a desperate bid to avoid a humiliating retreat from all its hard won territorial, economic, and psychological gains of the last sixty-five years (or, more succinctly, “enslavement to America”), Japan attacked Pearl Harbor and then the European empires to the south, bringing down on itself war with not only the British and American empires but, ultimately, the Russian empire. Catastrophic as the war would be for Japan, it would be worse for much of Asia.

Military and Imperial Conduct During Phase One: 1876-1922

For much of history, the world over, looting, pillaging, and rape were perks of military service. Sometimes, more than mere perks, they were the primary source of income and sustenance. Torture and killing of both enemy combatants and civilians was sometimes a tactic, but sometimes indulged in just for fun. At the turn of the twentieth century, all this was still true in

both Siberia and China. Russians and Chinese were free to devise all manner of torture and death for their enemies, the more painful, public, and humiliating the better. Virtually all Russian soldiers and many Chinese soldiers were unwashed illiterates with no knowledge of Enlightenment ideals or interest in treating either the enemy or other races with anything but the utmost contempt.

The same held for Europe until the late seventeenth century, when Enlightenment thinking fitfully and inconsistently began to extricate the continent from a horrible contradiction that had turned it into a sea of blood: war in service of the Prince of Peace. Philosophers trained in both classical Greco-Roman and Christian philosophy rethought the meaning of political systems and warfare. They formulated the idea of rights for individuals and then applied those rights to large groupings of individuals, in other words, nation-states. The resultant “Law of Nations,” later renamed “International Law,” defined higher standards of conduct for relations between states. Theoretically, the Law of Nations generally precluded offensive warfare and empire. Of course empires did not disappear just because Enlightenment philosophers said they should. Rather, empires tried to justify themselves by incorporating Enlightenment ideals into, among other things, how they fought wars. The extent they did this depended on innumerable variables, but European countries did occasionally conduct themselves in war according to higher standards following the Enlightenment.

Japan had learned these standards and, actually, surpassed Europe in applying them during Phase One of its imperial era. It had learned from the West that great nations require empires, and that the technological, entrepreneurial, organizational, political, and military superiority of successful empires indicated racial superiority. But it had also learned that with empire came responsibility towards lesser races, and that responsible empires must enforce higher standards. For example, the greatest empire of them all, that of Britain, Japan's closest ally, had been the first to call for an end to slavery in the world, and was the most important enforcer of that higher standard. Once Japan had “proven its worth” by making itself an empire, it outlawed slavery, which was endemic throughout its new possessions. It also introduced standards of sanitation that saved countless lives, and built the irrigation, transportation, and distribution systems without which progress was impossible and famine a regular event. Japanese colonial education was a mixed blessing, sometimes desired, sometimes detested. Where it was desired, for example in Taiwan, Indonesia, and Burma (modern: Myanmar), it brought education to people who previously were without it. Where it was detested, for example in Korea, Malaysia, and Singapore, it was seen as a tool of colonization by people who had other education alternatives. (vi)

The British did not treat wounded Chinese soldiers with the same care that they treated

wounded European soldiers, nor did they treat dead Chinese soldiers with much respect. But, they did not generally engage in rape, looting, and casual massacres. The same could not be said for other European armies, which felt few inhibitions. They justified brutality as retaliation for Chinese brutality, or simply did it because they could. For a joint British/French operation in 1860, the British were under strict orders to avoid all looting or harm to civilians. The French, though, after letting the British do much of the fighting, moved happily into Sinho City to loot a king's ransom in gold, jewelry, and silk. (vii)

The Japanese military, influenced by the British model and by standards of international law, does not seem to have engaged in much looting or brutality during its limited early forays into imperialism between 1876 and 1894. Still, Chinese and Koreans were generally objects of contempt. Traditional Japanese racism was not yet formalized, as it was becoming in the West, but it would affect attitudes during this period and actions later. (In fear of leaving an opening here for demagogic history, the obvious point must be made that Chinese and Koreans, like virtually everyone, were generally racist, too.)

The First Sino-Japanese War

Japan went into the First Sino-Japanese War in 1894 with the announced intention of conducting the war in accordance with the articles of the Geneva Convention of 1864. (viii) For the most part, it was able to do that even if, like the Russians, Japanese had nothing but contempt for the barely trained and ill-led Chinese soldiers, and indeed little but contempt for Chinese in general. But it was national policy for Japan to show that it was behaving according to civilized Western standards in order to first win repeal of the unequal treaties and then gain recognition as a great country.

Strategically located Port Arthur had excellent fortifications, built by Germany's Krupp Industries, which looked down on a vibrant international city filled not only with Chinese and Russians, but businessmen, entertainers, tourists, and even prostitutes from all over the world. The Chinese defenders of Port Arthur, made overconfident by their superior fortresses, felt free to engage in the typical torture of captured enemy soldiers and the exhibition of their heads, genitals, and mutilated bodies once they had died. These were displayed prominently around town where they could be seen through Japanese binoculars. When the city fell, rage and contempt within the Japanese army boiled over into the Port Arthur Massacre, an orgy of rape, looting, and the killing of several thousand Chinese that went on for most of a day. This would be the only important exception to the rule that the Japanese army conducted itself with more honor than any of the other armies, including the British and American, during Phase One. It was, however, an unfortunate exception for the Japanese in that Port Arthur was filled with

Western observers and reporters. Worse had been done many times by other armies in Manchuria, but usually without much notice. The Port Arthur Massacre became international news.

The Boxer Rebellion

During the Boxer Rebellion, the Eight Nations made their way against fierce resistance to Tientsin and Peking. They suffered from and witnessed continuous brutalities before reaching their destinations. Once there, they responded in kind, killing, raping, and looting with abandon. The thousands of bodies which littered the streets were those of shop owners not happy about having their stores looted, or women bayoneted after rape, or simply victims of a bit of fun. But they were all labeled “Boxers” with a wink and a laugh, even though Boxers had already been driven from Peking by Chinese troops. Easily forgotten is Chinese on Chinese massacres. General Yuan Shih-k'ai and his troops, hired by Britain and America to clear the countryside of Boxers, killed (and, we may well assume, raped and looted) upwards of fifty thousand civilians. (ix)

Each of the Eight Nations, however, did not act this way. The diaries of soldiers, as well as reports by numerous missionaries and western journalists, tell the same story. Russians (bringing their desire for revenge with them from Manchuria) and Germans (carrying out the Kaiser's command to act like avenging Huns) were the worst. Americans, British, and Japanese behaved with honor. Which is to say, Americans and British did not rape and murder, they only looted. The Japanese, on the other hand, though they relieved the treasury building of silver ingots, mostly left homes and shops alone. At one point, a brief firefight broke out between Americans and Germans as the former tried to stop the rampaging of the latter. One bewildered Japanese officer, observing the murderous bedlam throughout the city, asked an American reporter if international law had changed since he had studied it. (x)

And what of those Chinese Christians who, once they reached Peking, had been isolated and left to suffer starvation and attack? Edgerton reports they remained ignored except by the Japanese, who, soon after entering the city, rushed to their enclosure to offer whatever food and assistance they could.

Order and safety were restored by assigning responsibility for different sectors of Peking to different nations. The Japanese sector was the first that Chinese felt safe in returning to. One reason was that Russians who entered the Japanese sector to loot and rape were arrested. The Chinese asked that Japan mediate negotiations between China and the Eight Nations. In doing so, Japan was the only one of the eight to make a case for some of China's interests. (xi) After the negotiations, Japan became the first of the eight to remove its troops.

The Russo-Japanese War

One of several important advantages Japan had over Russia in the Russo-Japanese War was accurate intelligence. (xii) Russians were just not interested in such mundane pursuits as intelligence gathering. But there was another reason for the gap. Villagers preferred the Japanese. Russians had always treated villagers with contempt and worse. Japanese officers, on the other hand, soon got the army's limited looting in the early days under control. Nor did Japanese soldiers rape, as evidenced both by reports from the field and lack of venereal disease. (xiii) Japanese officers and businessmen in Manchuria often learned Mandarin, a concession to the humanity of the other unthinkable for most Russians. (xiv)

Russian reservists were often uninterested in this war for the glorification of the Tsar and the profit of his cronies. They were sent into Manchuria on boxcars provisioned with vodka but no food. Food they stole along the way, and, fueled with vodka, raped aplenty while they were at it, greatly increasing venereal disease both within the local population and among themselves. (xv)

At the naval battle of Chemulpo (modern: Incheon), a trapped Russian cruiser was sunk during a gallant escape attempt. Japan provided excellent care for the survivors at an improvised Red Cross hospital staffed by both Japanese Red Cross nurses and wives of Japanese officers. In appreciation, the Russian government contributed to the Japanese Red Cross. The Russian navy behaved differently. A Russian cruiser squadron led by the *Rurik* sank two unarmed Japanese merchantmen when they refused to surrender. That's legitimate. But then they sailed away leaving most survivors to drown. When a Japanese squadron later found the now hated *Rurik* with two other cruisers, it sank the *Rurik* and then let the other two escape into order to rescue 625 sailors in the water. (xvi)

We know quite a bit about the intimate details of this war as there were, on both sides, a great many military observers and reporters from all over the world, as well as diarists among the troops. We know that Russian soldiers and sailors were usually undertrained and ill-led, but that Japanese soldiers recognized the typical bravery of the Siberian units (though usually not the reservists) and the ethnic units (though usually not the Poles, who hated the Russians and their war), and honored them for it. Japanese treated wounded Russian soldiers with the same care they treated their own, often sharing water, food, and cigarettes.

The Japanese had witnessed firsthand Russian brutality against the Chinese during the Boxer Rebellion and expected the same treatment. Except for a few isolated incidents, they soon discovered that Russian troops also treated captured Japanese soldiers well. It almost seems as if each side was responding to the humane treatment by the other.

Russian POWs were treated exceedingly well once transported back to Japan. Officers were

virtual guests, common soldiers were taught to read, and wounded patients received such excellent care that only six out of six hundred died at one hospital. (xvii) The Empress donated personal funds for artificial limbs. (xviii) The treatment belied the Japanese attitude towards those who were not wounded, or who had surrendered before being captured. These were held in low regard. That distinction, of little consequence in 1905, would feed war crimes during Phase Two.

At the Battle of Tsushima, Japan achieved an overwhelming victory over Russia's Baltic fleet, ill-led, ill-maintained, and crewed by severely undertrained sailors as it was. Crews of some Russian ships fought with skill and valor, but most did not. Admiral Togo was disinclined to show the crews of the latter much humanity, and was slow in rescuing those in the water. His actions, though hardly commendable, were not unusual in war, but did reflect an attitude that would lead to horrors in Phase Two.

The Great War

The weeklong Battle of Tsingtao (modern: Qingdao) was the only significant battle between Japan and Germany during the Great War. Though they occupied a strong defensive position, the outnumbered Germans surrendered before sustaining many casualties, which left Japan with a larger number of prisoners than expected. Therefore, transfer to Japan on overcrowded boats was uncomfortable, and POW facilities were lacking. Even so, and despite the inevitable disdain by the Japanese for the Germans' early surrender, prisoners were treated well. Though not to the extent of Russian POWs in 1905, they were often free to wander towns during their five years of captivity, and even strike up friendships and romantic relationships with the townspeople. Of 4,592 German prisoners, 82 died, most from the influenza pandemic raging across the world. Upon release at the end of the war, 171 chose to stay in Japan. (xix)

At the insistence of the British government, there were a small number of British troops in the battle, who had been considered a nuisance by their Japanese commander and little used. They reported some small scale looting by Japanese soldiers soon after the fall of Tsingtao, but nothing else untoward.

The Siberian Intervention

Japan's Siberian Intervention in the Russian Civil War accomplished basically nothing. Japan had its eye on establishing a pro-Japan, anti-communist government in Siberia and gaining lebensraum for itself. Neither would come to pass.

To its credit, Japan withdrew support for one White Army general, the "Mad Baron" Ungern-Sternberg, and left him to dangle and die. He had taken advantage of Japanese

decimation of Bolshevik troops to engage in several major massacres and the murder of as many Bolsheviks and Jews as he could find before proclaiming himself the emperor of all Russia.

There was bloodlust on the Bolshevik side, too. The Japanese army had a garrison of only 350 to protect the town of Nikolatevsk and its 2,000 Russian and 450 Japanese civilians. When the Red Army's Yakov Triapitsyn arrived with four thousand troops, the Japanese concluded they had no choice but to allow his army to enter the town under a flag of truce. When it proceeded to round up and kill White Army supporters, the severely outnumbered Japanese garrison marched out to oppose the four thousand. Before it was over, all but 122 of the eight hundred Japanese and most of the two thousand Russians had been killed. Many of the men were tortured first and most of the women raped first. On protest by the Japanese government, the Russian government, to its credit, captured and executed Triapitsyn.

Military and Imperial Conduct During Phase Two: 1931-45

Imperial Rescripts were, in effect, the equivalent of commandments from God, coming as they did from an emperor descended of gods. The Imperial Rescripts issued at the beginning of the Russo-Japanese War and World War One required that Japanese officers strictly follow international law. The Imperial Rescript issued for World War Two contained no such command. (xx) The mood of the times had changed. The conduct of the Japanese military during new-mood Phase Two is neither forgotten history nor false history. Therefore, a brief summary should suffice.

Except for the Port Arthur Massacre, it was armies other than Japan's that committed atrocities in Phase One. In Phase Two, the Rape of Nanking, an organized six-week orgy of indescribable cruelty, is only the worst of Japanese atrocities during the Second Sino-Japanese War. The Rape of Manila at the hands of retreating Japanese soldiers is only the worst of Japanese atrocities during the Pacific War. And each of those represent only a small fraction of the brutal death and destruction inflicted by Japan on innocent civilians during those two wars.

In 1904, Japan had sacrificed military advantage to rescue enemy sailors from the Russian warship *Rurik*. In the Pacific War, it was policy to machine gun enemy sailors or airmen in the water. Alternatively, the Japanese navy "rescued" them only for torture and interrogation before tossing them back into the sea.

During Phase One, Russian and German prisoners had been treated with the utmost care and consideration. During the Pacific War, the Bataan Death March is only the most famous example of extreme barbarism and sadism in the treatment of prisoners. Everywhere, POWs of

the Japanese military – victims of slave labor, starvation, and torture – died at much higher rates than those of any other army.

During Phase One, Japan outlawed slavery throughout its empire. After 1941, Japan used not only POWs but millions of non-Japanese civilians for slave labor in mines, in factories, for the building of infrastructure, and as sex slaves.

Whatever they thought of Japanese imperialism, people throughout the empire benefitted from improved standards of medicine during Phase One. After 1941, “medicine” was the pretext for the casual exercise of organized sadism whose equal is hard to find outside of Nazi Germany or Communist Russia, China, Cambodia, or Korea. The horrific experiments conducted by Unit 731, sometimes to test the efficacy of biological or chemical warfare, and always as an excuse to inflict extreme pain, are the most famous example. But “experiments” involving vivisection were performed on POWs at Kyushu University, on Moro tribesmen in the Philippines, and elsewhere.

There was cannibalism, too. Sometimes it was a tool for control of uneaten prisoners, sometimes a simple expression of contempt, but sometimes, as the war turned bad for Japan, it was simply to stave off starvation. (xxi)

We can't let this be a one-sided winner's history. America, too, surprisingly often gunned down Japanese soldiers or sailors before they could surrender, and certain American officers had a no-prisoner policy. Charles Lindbergh, sent to the Pacific as a civilian observer, records that such brutalities and worse were the norm. (xxii)

John Baptist Crasta writes of an incident in December 1942, likely not part of the larger historical record. Three groups of Indian POWs – he was in the third – were scheduled to be shipped out to camps. The transport ship carrying the first group was sunk by a U.S. submarine, which resurfaced numerous times to search out and machine gun Indian POWs floating in life vests, who were assumed to be Japanese soldiers or sailors. Only half the five hundred survived to tell the story. (xxiii) Often, these American (and Australian and British) outrages were in response to or in revenge for similar Japanese outrages, a standard excuse we've seen throughout this study by other armies to justify other outrages.

Though Germany at Guernica and Japan at Chongqing were the first to experiment with large-scale strategic bombing of civilians, Britain and America took the technology to another level. The fire-bombings of Germany and especially Japan were every bit as horrendous as the atomic bombings, aside from their lack of radiation. If less personal than some forms of war on civilians, the brutality is not lessened by such winners' vocabulary as “strategic bombing.” The winners, though, were not charged with war crimes. War crimes are for losers.

Other European empires in Asia with a claim on a winners' version of history – the Dutch

and the French – have likewise largely erased from history their war era atrocities. Atrocities were also inflicted by natives on colonial masters when the chance arose, just as native populations had inflicted atrocities on each other before the age of European empire. This is, again, a story without good guys, except in patriotic and nationalistic retellings.

Why the Change From Chivalry to Brutality?

Japan showed potential in the 1920s. It could have gone either way, expanding to all people the humanity it had shown Europeans, or constricting the circle of humanity to include Japanese people alone. By the 1930s, it became clear that it had chosen the latter. In searching for the reason, though, we need to keep in mind that Japan was not unique. Constriction of the circle of humanity was the wave of the times throughout the world.

Joseph Grew was the American ambassador to Japan from 1932 until Pearl Harbor, precisely the period when Japan descended into barbarity. It was also the period when America and Japan each embarked on roads that would lead to war. For the duration of the decade, Grew endeavored to explain Japan sympathetically to America while struggling heroically to find a way to turn either or both countries from their fateful course. In his diary-record of the period, *Ten Years in Japan*, published in 1944, he explained most succinctly what had happened to “the Japanese military caste and machine.” He wrote, “...there is fresh evidence of the medieval character of the Japanese military mind and temperament.” (xxiv) Is it as simple as that? Maybe so. If, minus the Enlightenment, barbarity is the human norm, then a pre-Enlightenment “mind and temperament” would lead to barbarity. And let's not forget that pre-Enlightenment mind and temperament were not without virtue. Feudalistic systems, for example, sometimes cultivated chivalry, honor, and loyalty. Still, some speculation is in order as to why a nation that strove assiduously to maintain Enlightenment standards suddenly reverted to the older kind of “mind and temperament.”

Robert Edgerton proposes several explanations. (xxv) For example, it was in part a combination of a sense of inferiority to the West and a sense of the superiority as the Yamato race. That is a volatile mix, which was fed by Japanese successes and ignited by Western racism and betrayals.

Edgerton touches on the John Dower thesis explicated so thoroughly in *War Without Mercy* (1986). Both America and Japan used the media to control the perceptions of their people. For the Japanese, Americans and Westerners in general were arrogant, degenerate, corrupt, effete, soft, and devil-like. For Americans, Japanese were duplicitous, sneaky, fawning, unimaginative, barbaric, and ape-like. Obviously, when people are pictured in such terms, they are easily turned

into a less-than-human enemy deserving of ill-treatment.

The control over Japanese society by the military mind and indeed the military itself led inevitably to censorship. The media could not espouse ideas or images not conducive to the state's ideal: the people united as one – heart and mind – behind a single glorious vision. Though he doesn't emphasize the fact that this is *state* education, as a classical liberal would, Edgerton does point out that state education meant that history must be taught so as to support both the state and its vision. State education also facilitated the introduction of actual military training into the schools.

Japanese society, as Edgerton points out, is a highly regulated hierarchical society controlled by powerful social strictures. This makes it not merely difficult, but even immoral, and sometimes actually insane, to consciously do or think differently than the norm. In fact, though Edgerton doesn't take the idea this far, maybe Japanese followed international law because, for them, rules are *not* made to be broken. When they saw, firsthand, Europeans breaking the rules over and over, their sense of betrayal for having naively followed the rules may have led first to wholesale renunciation of the rules and then return to the native “purity” of traditionalism, including pre-Enlightenment traditionalism.

And there's one more explanation maybe too obvious for Edgerton to actually postulate. Years of war will not only militarize your ideology but brutalize your sensibilities. Japan had been fighting wars, or been on a war footing, for well over half a century when the Second Sino-Japanese War broke out.

This last, in fact, is why classical liberalism is, more than anything else, anti-imperialistic and antiwar. Defenders of particular wars answer liberalism by explaining that “war is hell.” A war which is fought to win must be “total war.” Well, that's generally only true for offensive war, not the defensive war condoned by classical liberalism. And offensive war is not simply war; it's the foundation of empire. We've looked in particular at the actions of the Japanese Empire, the American Empire (and remember, at the time, it was an empire by any definition), the Russian Empire, and several other European empires. Restricting ourselves to East Asia during our time frame, one can argue that the war crimes of some of these empires were fewer than those of others. Weak as that argument is, it becomes weaker when you consider that each of the “better” empires, at other times and places, has been as bad as the “bad” ones. Empires, by their nature, make war, and it is often war on civilians. A truly post-imperial world, a world full of Switzerlands, would be a mostly peaceful world and one with less need or opportunity for war on civilians.

The Lens of History

History is often a Winner's History, but there are other kinds, too. There is Ideological History, promulgated by academia and the intelligentsia and designed to prove the validity of a particular thought system. There is Demagogic History, promulgated by politicians and social leaders, and designed to prove such assertions as "That piece of land is ours" or "We are victims; you are at fault" or "You owe us this." In truth, just about all histories are combinations of the three, and all three have driven foreign policy in East Asia.

Classical Liberal History is a fourth kind of history. It tells us that we have all done terrible things. We've done them for profit, for revenge, and for fun, and then we have spun the story of our deeds for our own benefit and glorification. If the story is one of good guys and bad guys, or victims and victimizers, you can be certain it is this: a tiny part of the true story presented as if to represent the whole for the purpose of some kind of gain.

Could this fourth kind of history relieve Japan of ideological, demagogic, and even psychological imperatives that prevent it from fully facing up to its brutality during the 1930s and 40s? Might Japan find in facing up a cleansing self-forgiveness since, after all, its soldiers were not acting like inhuman beasts but rather like all people everywhere have acted from time to time? Can a classical liberal history help Japan's victims realize that that they, too, have been equally as brutal, and through understanding find forgiveness of both self and Japan?

If we are, in fact, at the end-of-epoch, we have an opportunity for something different. Instead of viewing history in the way that winners, ideologues, and demagogues do, we might use the lens of classical liberalism. But isn't classical liberalism, too, an ideology? If so, it's the anti-ideological ideology, the unCola among colas, a minimalist system that claims nothing for certain but a strictly limited set of fundamental principles. Let's call this fourth kind of history a let-it-be history, good to know but not to use, except to forgive the past.

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- x *Ibid.*, 81.
- xi *Ibid.*, 95.
- xii *Ibid.*, 116.
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- xiv *Ibid.*, 131.
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- xvi *Ibid.*, 122-123.
- xvii *Ibid.*, 213.
- xviii *Ibid.*, 213.
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- xxi Crasta. 1998. Kindle location: 1412-1446.
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Grant, Madison. *The Passing of the Great Race; or, The Racial Basis of European History*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1916. Adolf Hitler's great admiration for Henry Ford and his long anti-semitic rant, *The International Jew*, has long been relatively well known. Largely ignored until recently is the fact that Hitler studied *The Passing of the Great Race* in depth and apparently called it his personal bible. The cynical view might be that this disparity in historical memory is because Ford can be laughed off as a typical, uneducated, bigoted capitalist. In fact, the influence of highly educated progressives such as Madison Grant was much more important both within America and between America and Germany in establishing racist ideologies, legislation, and institutions. Unlike Ford's, Grant's book, is erudite and subtle in its use of history, anthropology, biology, and linguistics, while breathing not a word about such bogus claptrap as *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. Rather, it captured the intellectual class with apparent science and seeming objectivity.

Before the Sierra Club, there was the Boone and Crockett Club, a highly exclusive group of rich big game hunters and dedicated outdoorsmen led by Madison Grant and his mentor, Theodore Roosevelt. With Roosevelt's support, Grant shepherded the

legislation that established the principle of federal control over the protection of wildlife. Grant's laws became the model for similar legislation in Canada and then throughout the British Empire. One of Grant's legacies, then, is a continent and indeed a world that still has large mammals and a multiplicity of birdlife. But Grant also shared with Roosevelt, as well as with several other presidents he counted as friends, another legacy, one much much darker. They all believed in racial hierarchies and eugenics. Grant led the movement, which was infused with movers of society including scientists, presidents of the top universities, and leaders of various socialist and progressive organizations.

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Lee, Yeounsuk. *The Ideology of Kokugo: Nationalizing Language in Modern Japan*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2010. Translator: Maki Hirano Hubbard (listed as: Hubbard, Maki Hirano). Translated from the Original: *Kokugo to Iu Shiso: Kindai Nihon no Gengo Ninshiki*. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1996. One part of Lee's book examines the origins of language education in the Japanese colonies. Japan studied the ideology of colonial education in both France and Prussia. Both countries, as did Japan, believed that "language was spirit." The key to making second tier Frenchmen out of North African children and second tier Germans out of Polish children, therefore, was to rebuild their Arabic and Slavic minds into French and German minds on the foundation and frame of language. They were provided with education, and the education was always and only in French or German. In order to make second tier Japanese out of the children in its empire, Japan did the same.

Stoddard, Lothrop. 1921. *The Rising Tide of Color Against White World Supremacy*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1921. (First published in 1920 under a slightly different name.) *The Passing of the Great Race*, so influential among the intelligentsia, was never a bestseller. The popularizer among the general public was Lothrop Stoddard, who wrote a number of bestsellers on the importance of scientific racism, most of which warned of the coming of a great worldwide war of the races. He also warned of race suicide, as the white races extinguished each other in war instead of uniting to preserve their natural superior position in the world order. As was Grant, Stoddard was highly educated, his books similarly erudite and intelligent. *The Rising Tide of Color* essentially formalized and intellectualized the "The Yellow Peril" and added to it the brown and black perils. Its preface was written by his friend and inspiration, Madison Grant.

Though erased from history by the discovery of the Nazi death camps, to which they greatly contributed, scientific racism and eugenics were once mainstream in America. They were vigorously opposed by almost no one except some scattered Jewish intellectuals and the Catholic Church.