Notes: Japan in Asia

**Japan’s Ascendancy in Asia**

In the mid 19th Century European and American traders were looking for new markets in East Asia and began to put increasing pressure on both China and Japan.

Because of an imbalance in military power the Asian countries were forced to come to terms with the desires of the European and American interests.

**Background to Modern Asia: Western Imperialism**

After the British invasion of China (1837-1842) the Chinese were forced to give up the island of Hong Kong and grant the British exclusive trading concessions in 5 port cities. Opium War CNN

The British were given extraterritorial rights in these regions which made them immune to Chinese civil authority.

Inside these enclaves or “Treaty Ports” the British were protected by British military forces and lived under their own laws.

This success by the British engendered a desire in the other imperialist nations to gain similar concessions in Asia.

**Western Imperialism - the Missionaries’ role**

The expansion of the economic powers of the western Empires was not the only force behind the desire to spread European influence into Asia.

There was a huge feeling that it was the responsibility of the “Western” world to spread their culture and the Christian religion to the Asian world.

This movement was not sponsored by any one government, it was born of the spontaneous desire to impose the political, economic, cultural and religious systems of the west on the “less fortunate” nations of the world.

This was meant to provide the “advantages” of Western industrialized society to the “less developed” parts of the world

Questions/Main ideas:

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Questions/Main ideas:

**Still more Western Imperialism**

The Chinese government attempted to stop the expansion of western influence into their country.

In response British and French forces occupy Guangzhou (Canton) and later capture Beijing (Peking) and burn down the summer palace.

Every time the European forces succeed in defeating the Chinese they force the Chinese to accept more concessions to western influence.

The Europeans never destabilize the Chinese government to the point of civil war against the imperial family, as that would negatively affect their profits  (See Chapter one and two notes for more detail on China and European imperialism)

**European Influence in Japan: The early years**

Unlike China, Japan had remained largely isolated from the outside world since 1642 When the dominant Tokugawa family largely cut off contact with the outside world.

This changed when Commodore Matthew Perry led an American squadron into Edo (Tokyo) Bay in 1853. Perry was ordered to establish a trade relationship (concession) between Japan and the USA.

Later senator William  Seward announced the American policy toward Japan would be “reforming their laws, customs and constitution in order to civilize the island people whose land greets the rising sun.”

The American Civil War interfered with the American’s ability to consolidate their position inside of Japan  and allowed Britain and France the opportunity to wring their own concessions from the Japanese.

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Questions/Main ideas:

**The Impact of European involvement in Japan**

The impact of European influence combined with internal tensions, led to revolution in Japan.

In 1867 the last of the Tokugawa shoguns was replaced by Meiji Mutsuhito a boy emperor supported by a council of samurai.

Under this leadership Japan began a rapid modernization initiative

They bought Warships and technology from the British and acquired  German, Russian  and French officers to modernize their military.

They also embarked on a series of economic and social changes. Small farms were consolidated and feudal privileges were abolished

Industry was expanded and a host of young students were sent abroad to become educated in the west, and return with the skills necessary to allow Japan to compete as an industrialized nation.

**Japanese Imperialism**

As Japan grew into an industrial nation its need for resources also expanded.

Japan began to cast an eye to the Chinese mainland.

The First war between China and Japan (Aug. 1894 – Apr. 1895) ended in victory for Japan (it captured the islands of Formosa and the Pescadores, and some economic interest in Korea.)

Japan’s desire for expansion on the Asian mainland would be a continued source of conflict well into the next century.

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**European influence on China: the Boxer Rebellion and the Open Door Policy**

As we learned in earlier power points  European influence in China led to the Boxer Rebellion of 1900. In the aftermath of the conflict the Americans proposed adopting the “Open Door Policy” regarding trade in China. This policy adopted the idea that no nation would have a sphere of influence in China. This idea was not well received by the other nations interested in the vast wealth of China and with existing and well established interests already their. As a result the British and the Japanese signed a treaty in 1902  agreeing to recognise and support each other’s interests in China. This resulted in Britain pulling most of her fleet out of Asia and back to Europe and left the Japanese to expand both their military strength and their position on the Chinese mainland

**The Russo-Japanese War**

The most immediate threat to Japanese interests in Asia was the Trans-Siberian Railway and the Russians. This expanded Russia’s interests south from Harbin to Lushun (Port Arthur on the Huang Hai (Yellow Sea).At the same time the Russian interests in timber concessions along the Yalu River were viewed with suspicion by Japan. While in the middle of negotiations the Japanese attacked and destroyed the Russian Far East Squadron in Lushun (1904). This was followed by an outright invasion. This was followed by more Japanese victories (Admiral Togo sank the Russian Baltic fleet in the Straits of Tsushima, the Japanese captured Shenyang). The Japanese were quite successful in the Russo-Japanese war. In the end when both parties agreed to American mediation, the Japanese had acquired, under the Treaty of Portsmouth in 1905, Lushun, half of Sakhalin Island and economic interests in the southern Manchurian railway system. The Japanese victories in the Russo-Japanese war proved to Japan that they could successfully compete with the western powers in a military capacity Japan in Manchuria

Questions/Main ideas:

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Questions/Main ideas:

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**Japan in World War I**

Japan was allied with Britain during WWI and occupied Germany’s colonies in Asia.

Most of these colonies remained with Japan when the war ended as mandates under the League of Nations. The possession of  the Carolina, Marianna and Marshal island chains, left control of the sea lanes between North America and Australia and the Philippines in Japanese hands.

When the Revolution in Russia pulled it from WWI, in 1917, the Japanese took the opportunity to expand it’s military forces further into Russian territory and pushed into Siberia (in a military action apparently intended to support the Tsarist regime and with the support of 13 other nations.)

The Japanese forces remained in the region until 1922.

**Japan in the Inter War Years**

During the inter-war years their was an attempt by the world powers to maintain a balance of power by limiting military expansion

The worlds major powers met in Washington in 1921 to attempt to disarm and stabilize the Pacific region. Both the Americans and the British wanted to limit naval expansion by the world powers, by limiting the size and tonnage of the world’s battleships. The Japanese were forced to accept a fleet size of 60% of that allowed to the US and Britain, in exchange for an agreement that those nations not fortify their possessions in the Pacific excepting Singapore (British) and Hawaii (US)

This 5:3 ratio left Japan the dominant naval power in the Pacific as both the US and Britain had to protect their interests outside of Asia and Japan did not

Further attempts were made to limit naval expansion . However limiting Japan’s expansion failed when the Japanese walked out of international negotiations in 1934.

Questions/Main ideas:

**American involvement in Asia**

The American’s attempted to stabilize the situation in Asia by looking to China.

They spearheaded the Nine Power Treaty that ended “Treaty Ports,” implemented a modified Open Door policy and guaranteed China’s borders (effectively halting Japanese expansion into China.)

However they stopped short of enforcing China’s possession of Manchuria, and so avoided directly challenging Japan’s existing position on the Asian mainland. Both sides continued to mass military forces, Britain and the US in gunboats on Chinese rivers and the Japanese by reinforcing its army in Manchuria

**Immigration laws and worsening relations between Japan and the Western world**

Due to increasing immigration to North America from Asia, the Anglo-Japanese alliance of 1902 was allowed to lapse. The US followed this by passing the Exclusion Act designed to severely limit Asian immigration. Canada also passed immigration laws in 1923 almost halting Asian immigration to Canada.

This was done as a result of racial tensions and prejudice on the part of N. Americans and was a grave insult to the peoples of Asia. The Anglo-Japanese alliance was replaced with the Four Power Pact in which Japan, Britain, the US and France agreed to respect each other’s interests in the Pacific. The Washington Treaties of 1921 were the final in a series of insults to the Japanese.

Japan felt that the US and the Europeans would never view them as equal partners on the world stage and turned their attention to consolidating their power in Asia. Japan became determined to force Western imperialism out of the Pacific and thereby assure its own power This left the rising nationalist movement in China the only real threat to Japanese dominance in the Pacific

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Questions/Main ideas:

**The Guomindang**

The Manchu Dynasty ruled China from 1644 until 1911. When it collapsed China fell into civil War.

Military leaders fought over power and territory in an attempt to set up their own power bases.

Of these competing military interests the Guomindang (Chinese Nationalist Party) became dominant

The Guomindang was founded in 1912 and grew out of an earlier movement started in 1905 by Dr. Sun Yixian, (Sun Yat-sen) which was based on the principles of socialism, democracy, and nationalism.

By 1927, the Guomindang (or nationalists) proclaimed themselves the Republic of China

**Communism in China: the early years**

The Communist party of China (founded in 1921) was included in the new Republic’s government.

There was a good relationship between the USSR and China, particularly because the USSR had returned all claims and concessions that tsarist Russia had controlled in China before the Bolshevik revolution.

There appeared to be a spirit of co-operation between the new USSR and the new Chinese republic

Any resurgence of a Nationalist China presented a huge threat to Japan’s interest in Manchuria

Although the budding relationship with the USSR would change upon the death of  Sun Yixian in 1925, the threat to Japan’s interest in Manchuria would be far from removed with the take over of the movement by Generalissimo Jiang Jieshi (Chiang-Kai-shek)

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**Jiang Jieshi tries to purge Communism from the Guomindang**

Jiang Jieshi expanded the Nationalist’s control over the military in the center and north of the country.

Under Jiang Jieshi the Guomindang became dominated by generals and landowners. There is much supposition regarding why (many think Jiang Jieshi was bankrolled by business people and bankers on the understanding that he wipe out the communist elements in the Guomindang.) however, after the Nationalist forces captured Shanghai in 1927 Jiang began a vicious purge of the communists in the Guomindang. The communists who learned of the purge early enough fled to take refuge with the peasants in the countryside. The Communist party would be taken over and led by Mao Zedong (Mao Tse-tung) who drew in the masses of poor in China with promises of equal rights, land reforms and a better life. Through out this period Jiang pursued Mao and the communists. He recognized the threat they posed to his power. In the end however Jiang badly misjudged the popular mood of the majority of the Chinese people. The Long March and related events

**Japan in China: Manchuria**

As nationalist China grew in strength the Japanese attempted to gain recognition of their claim to Manchuria before the Guomindang became more powerful. In order to achieve this Japan went to war in 1931. After the 1911 revolution the 3 provinces in Manchuria north of the wall were given to a Japanese controlled military leader named Chan Tso-lin. Chan Tso-lin agreed to turn the lands he controlled to the south of the wall over to the Guomindang in 1927. In 1928 Chang Tso-lin was killed when his train was blown up. He was succeeded by his son Chang Hsueh-liang. Unlike his father Chang Hsueh-liang was a nationalist who supported the Guomindang by agreeing to surrender all of Manchuria to Guomindang control.

Japan could not afford to lose Manchuria. They used a bomb blast on the railway near Shenyang as an excuse to occupy all of Manchuria

Questions/Main ideas:

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Questions/Main ideas:

**Japan and the Manchurian incident**

Japan’s economy had been hit hard by the Great Depression. Tariff barriers had devastated their foreign trade revenues and the silk trade with Britain and the US was very vulnerable. The collapse of world markets left Japanese industry in danger of complete collapse. They needed Manchuria’s resources. By 1932 Manchuria was completely under Japanese control and called Manchukuo. Jiang was too busy trying to wipe out Mao’s forces in the interior to start fighting with the Japanese over Manchuria so he appealed to the League of Nations to take action against Japan. The League responded with the Lytton commission, which recognised Japan’s interest in Manchuria, however they did label Japan as the aggressor in the incident. Japan responded by leaving the League.

The American’s response was the Stimson Doctrine (refusing to acknowledge boarder changes achieved by force of arms) However a lack of Congressional support  left the Americans with little opportunity for military involvement

No one really did anything of consequence to halt the Japanese presence on the mainland The Manchurian Incident

**Communism in China: The Long March**

During this time, Jiang massed a million troops against Mao’s Communist forces trying to force a decisive battle.

In 1934 Mao broke free of Jiang’s forces and took 90 000 followers westward toward the Himalayas on what would become known as the the Long March.

This was to become an epic feat of endurance and entrenched in the Chinese Communist history as a great victory for Communism among the common people

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Questions/Main ideas:

**The Long March**

During the Long March Mao’s forces were constantly battling Nationalists.

Against the odds they fought their way across to the cold plateaus of Tibet and then north to Yan’an.

In Yan’an Mao regrouped his forces and refined his overall strategy

Mao began a civil war using the disaffected landless peasants at the bottom of China’s system Mao began a protracted Guerrilla war beginning in the Rural areas.

Mao also fiercely opposed the presence of the Japanese and called for them to be driven from China.

**The War in the Pacific 1937**

In 1937 the Japanese invaded northern China and began the War in the Pacific.

It started on July 1, when a Japanese patrol fired upon Nationalist soldiers . The soldiers thought that a missing comrade (who was really going to the bathroom) had been captured by the Japanese and shot back .

This event was used to justify a full scale invasion by the Japanese.

This action was taken out by the Army, against orders from the government, it showed how the government of Japan was losing control of it’s armed forces. It was a huge military successes

The Japanese Army moved up costal China , to Beijing and began to besiege Shanghai

By December the capital (Nanjing) was under siege.

Jiang responded by moving his capital up the Yangzi River to Chungking, where he pleaded for help Japan invades China

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Questions/Main ideas:

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**The China Lobby**

The West did not intervene directly in the initial phases of the Sino-Japanese war. Jiang was however able to raise a significant amount of money from Britain and the USA through the China Lobby. The US also donated war materials to aid Jiang’s government in exile at this time. Japan in Asia leading up to WWII The Burma Road and the Flying Tigers

**The Rape of Nanjing**

In an attempt to force Jiang to surrender and recognise Manchuria as a Japanese possession. General Matsui led the Japanese army into Nanjing.

While the Japanese were in Nanjing (with the support of the armies officers) the Japanese soldiers embarked on one of the worst war crimes of WWII, this became known as the Rape of Nanjing. The Japanese army took part in the systematic murder of the civilian population. This did not demoralize the Chinese population as Matsui had intended. Instead it created a rage in the Chinese population that still echoes today. The Nanjing Massacre, commonly known as the Rape of Nanjing, was committed by the Japanese military in Nanjing (Nanking), then the capital of the Republic of China, after it fell to the Imperial Japanese Army. The duration of the massacre  lasted approximately four to six weeks. Japanese officials still refuse to be completely clear about civilian deaths. During the occupation of Nanking, the Japanese army committed numerous atrocities, such as rape, looting, arson and the execution of prisoners of war and civilians including children .The executions began under the pretext of eliminating Chinese soldiers disguised as civilians, It is claimed that a large number of innocent  men were intentionally misidentified as enemy combatants and executed as the massacre gathered momentum. A large number of women and children were also killed, as rape and murder became more widespread. Some estimates of civilian deaths top 300,000 people.

The Japanese government has given numbers as low as a couple of hundred deaths. The Japanese Invasion

Questions/Main ideas:

**Jiang’s response to Japanese aggression**

In an attempt to slow the Japanese armies advance, Jiang ordered the dykes along the Yangzi cut.

This resulted in the flooding of the low lying plains regions and resulted in the deaths of over one million peasants.

This destruction only slowed the Japanese for a few days

**Stalemate on the Asian Mainland**

The war was halted when the Japanese came to the Yangtze gorges where the river comes out of the mountains and into a series of narrow canyons.

The passage was too heavily defended and out of range of the Japanese aircraft.

This resulted in a six-year undeclared truce.

Significant conflict would not resume on the Chinese mainland until 1944.

Jiang felt secure in his mountainous retreat, and continued to receive aid from Soviet, American and British sources. Consequently Jiang felt that he could concentrate on the threat of Mao’s communist forces, which were gaining power and popularity

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Questions/Main ideas:

**War with the West**

By 1939 Japan controlled most of eastern China. Japan in the 1930's

If they could have exploited the resources and labour that this represented they could have consolidated their power base in Asia

However the Japanese were never able to force the Guomindang to surrender and Mao’s Communists also remained firmly against Japanese involvement in China.

In order to consolidate their power the Japanese planned to cut off supply links t Chongquing, by capturing the caravan routes in the north through Xinjiang and the Burma Road.

There was some question of which direction this attack should take.

The Army wanted to pursue a land strategy of striking the USSR.

The Army took maters into its own hands by attacking the Soviets guarding Vladivostok.

They counted on German support promised to them in the 1936 Anti-Comintern Pact and Soviet forces being weak and unprepared.

This however was not to be as the Soviets were prepared and their counterattack drove the Japanese forces back.

A few months later the Japanese were again defeated in Mongolia. After a loss of over 20 000 men the Japanese decided not to push North.

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Questions/Main ideas:

**Soviet Japanese non-aggression pact**

The Japanese navy supported a plan in which it would strike south across the Pacific Islands to capture the mineral wealth of Southeast Asia.

Hitler expressed a desire to see Japanese armies attack the USSR in Siberia at the same time as Germans would attack from the west.

The prize of the wealth of the northern colossus called Siberia was tempting but Japan declined to make any firm commitments.

Japan’s foreign minister, Matsuoko Yosuke, visited both Germany and the Soviet Union in the spring of 1941. While visiting Stalin, Matsuoko became convinced that in a prolonged war with Germany, the Soviets would win.

Matsuoko then agreed to a non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union.

Stalin considered this pact one of his master moves as he was now able to move his Siberian armies to fight against Germany in the West.

**Japan’s worsening relations with the Western world**

The British and Americans were alarmed at Japans warlike intentions and increased their military presence in the Pacific to try and dissuade Japan from aggression.

With war in Europe, neither country could afford to open another battlefront in Asia

British and Americans then enacted economic sanctions against Japan, cutting off shipments of metal, aviation fuel, and crude oil

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Questions/Main ideas:

**Japan and the start of the war in the Pacific**

With the sanctions, Japan would have to attack to seize oil resources in Southeast Asia.

After the fall of France in 1940, Japan had taken over most of the French air bases in Indo-China from which they could attack American and British bases.

The US demanded that Japan respect the territorial integrity of China and withdraw from their occupation zones.

The USA refused to recognize Japan’s right to large parts of China

On November 25th 1941, President Roosevelt sent a final ultimatum to the Japanese demanding their withdrawal from the Asian mainland.

The president had learned that the Japanese invasion fleets had been put to sea.

Little could be done now to avert a war in the Pacific.

American bases in the Pacific were put on high alert but little did anyone suspect that the Japanese were going to attack all the major cities in the Pacific including Pearl Harbour itself.



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