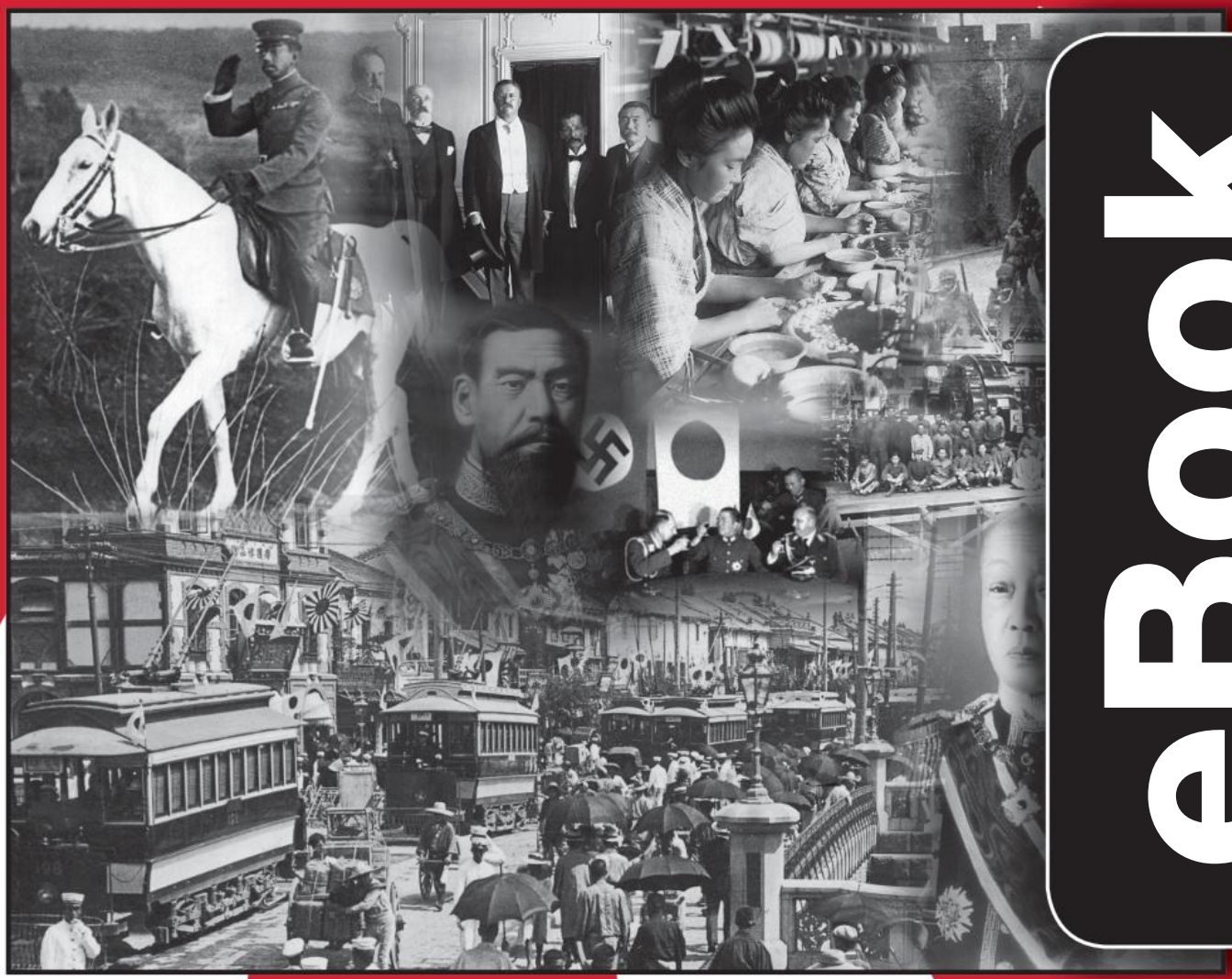
Japan 1904 to 1937

by Ken Webb

Here it is: the factual detail, the historiography, revision exercises and advice on how to write responses on Japan 1904-1937



eBook

"Everything you wanted to know about JAPAN 1904-1937, but were afraid to ask."

www.kenwebb.com.au

GET SMART EDUCATION

Japan 1904 to 1937

by Ken Webb M.A. (Oxon), C.Ed

"Everything you wanted to know about 'Japan 1904-1937', but were afraid to ask."

www.kenwebb.com.au
1st Edition

GET SMART EDUCATION

About the author

Ken Webb was educated in the United Kingdom and graduated from the University of Oxford. He taught in several state schools before moving to Pymble Ladies' College where he taught Modern, Ancient and Extension History. He later moved to Ravenswood School for Girls where he also taught the International Baccalaureate course in History. He is a member of the Independent Schools Examination Committee for Modern History. He frequently lectures and runs workshops for Year 12 and teacher groups in Sydney and Regional NSW. In addition to his own work, Ken Webb has contributed to colleagues' work and to newspapers and periodicals. He has also been a consultant on various history video documentaries. Ken Webb is a past NSW winner of the "National Excellence in Teaching" award.

Over the years, Ken Webb has written a wide range of study guides and textbooks for NSW, Victoria and Australia wide, including *"Power and Authority in the Modern World*" (Nelson Cengage Learning), *"Discovering Australian History"* (CUP), *"The Augustan Age 44 BC – AD 14"* (Get Smart Education), *"World War 1: From Sarajevo to Versailles"* (Nelson Cengage Learning), *"Extension History: The Historians"* (HTA of NSW), *"Russia and the Soviet Union 1917-1941"* (Nelson Cengage Learning), *"Spartan Society to the Battle of Leuctra 371 BC"* (Get Smart Education)

"Japan 1904-1937" is one of twenty-one titles available in the "Everything you wanted to know about… but were afraid to ask" series *written specifically* for the NSW Modern and Ancient History syllabuses. Other titles in this series include:

- *Power and Authority in the Modern World 1919-1946*
- *Russia and the Soviet Union 1917-1941*
- *USA 1919-1941*
- *Conflict in the Pacific 1937-1951*
- *Conflict in Europe 1935-1945*
- *The Cold War 1945-1991*
- *Conflict in Indochina 1954-1979*
- *Civil Rights in the USA 1945-1968*
- *Apartheid in South Africa 1960-1994*
- *The Cultural Revolution to Tiananmen Square 1966-1989*
- *The Decline and Fall of the Romanov Dynasty (preliminary course)*
- *The French Revolution of 1789 (preliminary course)*
- *World War I (preliminary course)*
- *The Fall of the Roman Republic 78 BC–31 BC*
- *The Augustan Age 44 BC–AD 14*
- *The Julio-Claudians AD 14-AD 69*
- *Agrippina the Younger*
- *The Greek World 500-440 BC*
- *Spartan society to the Battle of Leuctra 371 BC*
- *Hatshepsut*

First Edition Published 2021 by
© Get Smart Education Pty Ltd
PO Box 684 Mona Vale NSW 1660
Tel: 0425 235 442 Fax: 9012 0988

ISBN 9780648841951

Printed by Razer Graphix

Contents

Author's note

The purpose of this book – as with all titles in the *"Everything you wanted to know about… but were afraid to ask"* series – is to make life easy for students and teachers working their way through the 'National Studies Topic' topic: *Japan 1904-1937*. It is not intended to be the final word on Japan 1904-1937; nothing beats wide-reading and going back to the primary sources!

However, neither teachers nor students always have the time for such luxuries. Teachers have several other classes to worry about, not to mention a growing multitude of administrative and bureaucratic tasks to fulfill! Students have other subjects to study, and may also be burdened with a series of major works. Thus, *"Everything you want to know…"* steps in to make life easy.

The principal aims of this book are to:

- provide the essential factual detail needed to understand the topic;
- provide references to written and visual sources;
- provide an introduction to the essence of historiographical debate;
- provide ideas for approaching the types of essay questions that might appear when examined on Japan 1904-1937.

Rationale for the structure of this book

"Japan 1904-1937" is one of eight topics in the 'National Studies' section of the Modern History syllabus.

The syllabus divides the topic *Japan 1904-1937* as follows:

- Survey: Japan as an emerging power
- Focus of study:
  - Challenges to traditional power and authority in the 1920s
  - Rise of militarism in the 1930s
  - Japanese foreign policy to 1937

These broad headings have been used to structure the book and have been broken down into chapters based on the layout of the syllabus to make the topic more accessible to students. The "impact of Japanese expansion: Russo-Japanese War, annexation of Korea" topic in the syllabus has been broken into three separate chapters. The "status as a great power: 21 Demands, role in World War I, Washington Conference" topic in the syllabus has been broken into two chapters. All other chapters match the bullet points as laid out in the syllabus. Additional sections have been included on advice for writing essays and approaching the types of questions that could be set on *Japan 1904-1937* in the HSC examination.

Think as historians

Key problems historians have in studying *Japan 1904-1937* – or indeed any major historical issue – are that we know what happened. Hindsight allows us to look back and isolate those developments which we can now see, from our current perspective, as the key issues. We can isolate the mistakes, criticise the leaders of the time and ask in incredulous tones:

- How was Japan able to transform itself into a major world power by the 1930s?
- Why was it Japan's democratic leaders were so ineffectual in the face of the militarists?
- Why did Emperor Hirohito not use his position and prestige to limit the militarists?

However, when one is living in the middle of events there is no hindsight.

Chapter One
Impact of Japanese expansion to 1904

Introduction

By the end of World War I, Japan had emerged as a great power. It had become a major industrial producer, had defeated its near neighbour China in a war, humiliated a European great power, Russia, in another war, and had steadily built up an empire. As an ally of the world's greatest naval power, Britain, it participated in the war against Germany, emerging victorious and dominant in its region.

Traditional Japan was a feudal, strictly hierarchical society, with the divine emperor (*Mikado*) at its apex and the despised merchant class (the *chonin*) at its base.

- The emperor reigned but did not rule. Political power was in the hands of the Shogun, the most powerful of the clan leaders.
  - Since 1603, the *Shogun* came from the *Tokugawa* clan.
- Japan shared China's distrust of the west. As western interest in the Far East grew in the late 16th/ 17th century, Japan became concerned about possible western political interference in its internal affairs, foreign Christian ideas and the threat of invasion.
  - As a result, in 1638, the Seclusion Decrees were passed which would effectively cut off the country from the west.

The arrival of the west

Japan's isolation was brought to an abrupt end in 1853 with the arrival of United States Commodore Perry and his 'black ships'.

- Perry demanded concessions from Japan on his promised return the following year. In 1854, Japan and the US signed the Treaty of Kanagawa:
  - Consular relations were established, the ports of Shimodu and Hakodate were opened up and the United States received 'most favoured nation' status. [1]
  - The US forced the further opening of Japan in 1858 with the Treaty of Edo (the Harris Treaty).The US also gained 'extra-territoriality'. [2]
- Other western nations soon followed the US example and forced similar concessions from Japan:
  - these included Britain, the Netherlands, France and Russia.

1 This meant that any trading concessions Japan granted to any other country, automatically applied to the US.
2 This gave US citizens the right to be tried under US law for any offences committed in Japan.

- This opening up was often not peaceful:
  - In 1862, British ships bombarded Kagoshima following the murder of a British merchant.
  - In 1863, a Japanese attack on foreign ships led to a western bombardment of Shimonoseki.

The end of the Shogun and civil war

The Japanese refer to the period 1853-1868 as the *bakufumatsu* or the fall of the *bakufu* (the rule of the Shogun). The Shogun's hold on power was already weakening before the arrival of Perry. The arrival of the US and other western powers placed the shogun in an impossible situation:

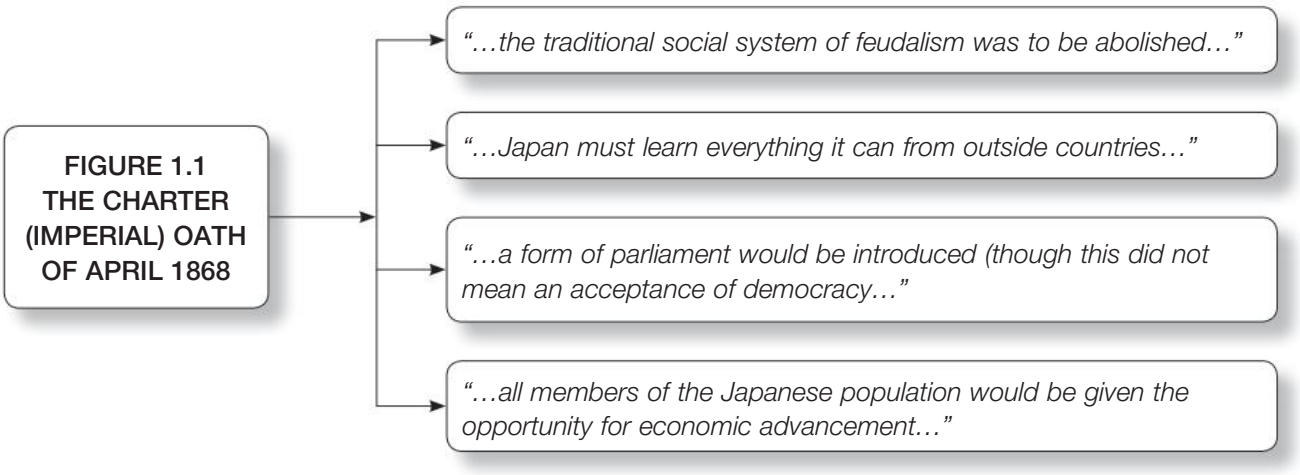
if he stood up to the west and refused to negotiate (as most clan leaders and the traditionalists wanted), Japan would be attacked by the technologically superior west; Japan would follow China's humiliating path;

if he compromised with the west, he would be seen as weak and would face certain strong opposition within the country.

In the 1860s, the cry became *"sonno-joi"* – 'restore the Emperor, expel the barbarian'. Politics inside Japan in the 1860s became extremely complicated. A brief civil war resulted which showed the country the dangers of internal division, as French forces supported the Shogun, while British forces supported the Emperor. The turmoil of the 1860s resulted in the political transformation of Japan:

- in November 1867, the Shogun surrendered his power to the Emperor;
- in January 1868, the leading clans announced the end of the shogunate and the restoration of the Emperor's power;
- in February 1867, the death of the Emperor Komei saw the accession of the fifteen year old Mitsuhito (Meiji).

The reign of the Emperor Meiji began the period which is known as "the Meiji Restoration". In April 1868, the Emperor took an oath whose purpose was to announce to the Japanese people the future direction of the country. This was the "Charter (Imperial) Oath". Its main ideas are summarised in Figure 1.1 below.



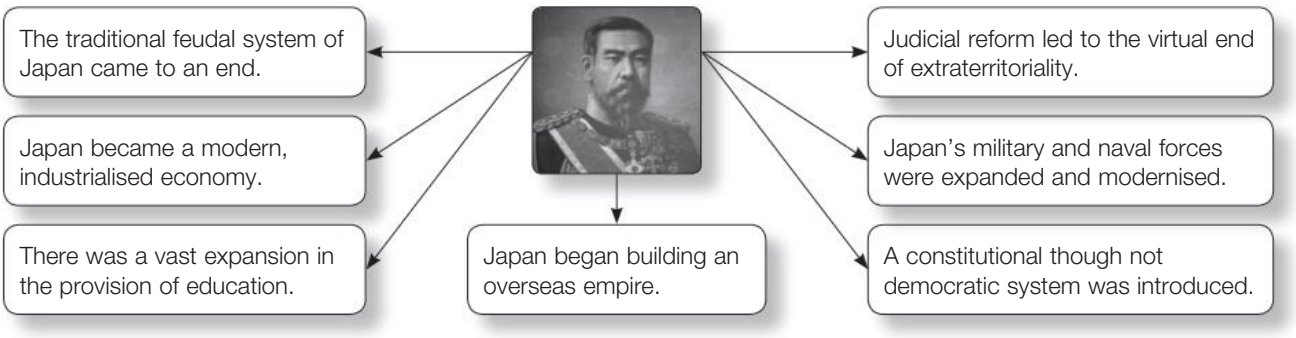
Exercise 1.1 Match the description on the left with the term listed on the right.

1	Term used to indicate the regime of the Shogun		shogun
2	Ensured I was tried under my own country's laws for any offence		chonin
3	The lowest class in traditional Japanese society		Seclusion Decrees
4	Name given to the fifteen year-old Emperor from 1867		Charter Oath
5	Laws passed to prevent any western presence in Japan		bakufu
6	I was the Emperor of Japan who reigned but did not rule		most-favoured nation status
7	Ensured my country received any benefits given to another country		Meiji
8	Emperor's declaration about the future goals of Japan		Mikado
9	I held the real power in traditional Japanese society		sonno-joi
10	Restore the Emperor and expel the barbarians		extraterritoriality

The Meiji Restoration

The period of Emperor Meiji's rule from the Charter Oath to his death in 1912, is referred to as the Meiji Restoration. In this period, Japan was transformed from a predominantly agricultural, insular society to a leading industrial, military and imperial world power. Figure 1.2 outlines the key areas where such changes occurred.

Figure 1.2 Key areas of change during the Meiji Restoration



After 1868, Japan underwent a major political, social and economic change. These changes continued on up to the 1930s. The development and impact of modernisation and urbanisation, and the social tensions that these processes gave rise to, will be brought together in Chapter Twelve.

Japanese imperial expansion to 1904

By the time of the Russo-Japanese War of 1904 [3], Japan had been transformed into a modern industrial power. Japan had already become a major military and imperial power. In the 1880s and 1890s its main interest was Korea. [4] Though nominally independent, Korea was a vassal state of China. Japan's interest in Korea would lead to war between Japan and China – the **Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95**.

Background to the Sino-Japanese War

- Japan feared Russia which was steadily expanding eastwards and had made a series of trade and port agreements with Korea:
- Japanese control of Korea would prevent an enemy power having easy access for any possible attack on Japan.
- Korea could provide Japan with raw materials, a market and a military campaign in Korea could also stimulate Japanese nationalist feeling.
- Inside Korea, the religious/ political Dong Hak rebelled against the government. The rebellion was put down, but the Korean king asked for Chinese troops to help restore order:
  - China sent 3000 troops;
  - Japan sent 18 000 troops to Korea to 'protect its nationals';
  - Japan deposed the Korean king and forced the puppet regent to break off relations with China and invite Japan to expel the Chinese troops.
- Following mutual attacks on each other's shipping, war between China and Japan was formally declared on 1 August 1894.

The war was brief and Japan's victory was never in doubt.

- The Chinese fleet was defeated at the Battle of the Yalu.
- The Chinese were driven out of Korea and in October, Japanese troops crossed into Manchuria. Port Arthur was captured in November.
- Chinese forces surrendered in February 1895.

On 17 April 1895, China and Japan signed the Treaty of Shimonoseki.

- Korea was to be independent of China.
- China had to pay a 200 million tael indemnity to Japan.
- Japan received "most favoured nation" status and extraterritoriality.
- Formosa (Taiwan), the Pescadores Islands and the Liaodong Peninsula were ceded to Japan. [5]

3 See Chapter Two.
4 See Chapter Two for a map of the Far East region.
5 The issue of the Liaodong Peninsula would seriously harm Russo-Japanese relations. This issue will be examined in Chapter Two.

Exercise 1.2 Place each event in the correct chronological order.

1st event		The Harris Treaty
2nd event		Treaty of Shimonoseki
3rd event		Arrival of Commodore Perry
4th event		Dong Hak rebellion
5th event		The Treaty of Kanagawa
6th event		The Seclusion Decrees
7th event		Battle of the Yalu
8th event		The Charter Oath
9th event		End of the Bakufu
10th event		Western bombardment of Shimonoseki

What do the historians have to say about "Impact of Japanese expansion to 1904"?

1. Edwin P Hoyt

Hoyt suggests that Japan was eager to impress westerners and show that it was a thoroughly modern and civilised nation. However, when the Chinese Viceroy, Li Hung-Chang, arrived to discuss treaty terms after the war, a Japanese assassin attempted to kill him. Li was unhurt but the incident caused Japan to "lose face". The Emperor sent his personal physician to examine Li, and the Japanese Prime Minister, Prince Hirobumi Ito, gave a personal apology. One effect of this incident was that the harsh treaty terms were scaled down. However, Japan had still done very well out of the war.

"…by any standards, the terms had to be satisfactory to a nation just embarking on the road to imperialism… China renounced all claims to Korea, which gave Japan a free hand to move in the future. It was a very small war for a very big gain…" [6]

2. Gwenneth Stokes and John Stokes

Stokes and Stokes argue that the enormous success of Japan's military in the Sino-Japanese War had a major impact on the future of Japanese government practice. In 1900, only five years after the conclusion of the war, a decree was passed that stated from now on, only generals and admirals "on the active list", were eligible to serve as the ministers of the army and the navy in a Japanese cabinet.

"…As no cabinet could be formed without these ministers, the army and the navy exercised great influence over the formation of cabinets…" [7]

The Last Samurai

For students and teachers who might want to pursue the period of the *Meiji Restoration*, and who enjoy movies based on historical themes, *"The Last Samurai"* is well worth a look. As a movie, it is entertaining, well-acted, has a strong screenplay and replicates the time period effectively. As history, it shines a light on the internal impact of modernisation in Japan in the 1870s, in particular the impact it had on the samurai. As Japan's military embraced modern methods, and brought in conscription and modern weaponry, the traditional privileged role of the samurai warriors was at an end. In 1877, samurai warriors, led by Saigo Takamori, rose up in rebellion against the changes. The film is loosely based on this episode. The final twenty five minutes or so, though rather violent, bring out clearly the inevitable superiority of western technology over the samurai tradition.

The film came out in 2003. It was directed by Edward Zwick, and stars Tom Cruise and Ken Watanabe. Screenplay was by Edward Zwick, John Logan and Marshall Herskovitz. "The Last Samurai" was nominated for four Academy Awards.

6 Hoyt, E P, Japan's War: The Great Pacific Conflict, Guild Publishing, London, 1987, p 27
7 Stokes, G, and Stokes, J, The Extreme East: A Modern History, Longman, London, 1971, p 215

Chapter Two
The Russo-Japanese War 1904-1905

Introduction

By the turn of the 20th century, Japan was being recognised as a significant rising power. The process of modernisation that was embraced during the period of the Meiji Restoration had transformed the country into a major industrial power. Its convincing victory over China in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95 was noted, as was its first foray into empire-building with its territorial gains from the Treaty of Shimonoseki in 1895. [1]

However, when Japan and Russia found themselves at war in 1904, it was taken for granted that Russia would emerge victorious. How could an Asian nation possibly defeat a great European power? The key reason for this thinking was the notion of white, European racial superiority that was accepted without question at the time.

By the middle of 1905, Russia had been humiliated, both its army and navy totally outfought by better-equipped and more skilful Japanese forces. The consequences for Russia were to be dramatic as the country lurched into revolution in 1905, a revolution that came close to bringing down the regime of Tsar Nicholas II. [2]

By the end of the war, economic strains meant that both powers were keen to bring the conflict to an end. However, for Japan, it was a monumental success. Victory over Russia heralded its arrival on the world stage as a great power.

The causes of the Russo-Japanese War

During the late 19th century, imperialism was a dominant factor in the thinking of all major powers. For most nations, imperialism involved overseas expansion, especially Africa. The term *'the scramble for Africa'* was used to describe the efforts of European nations to gain their 'bit' of the 'dark continent'.

Russia's imperial interests took it in an easterly direction towards central Asia, Siberia and the Pacific coast.

- Russia had gained control of Tashkent and Samarkand [3] by 1868.
- By the 1870s, Russia had a port at Vladivostok on the Pacific coast and had taken control of the island of Sakhalin, north of Japan's island of Hokkaido.
- By the 1890s, Manchuria was Russia's main focus of interest:
  - Manchuria was nominally under Chinese control but China's ongoing decline made such control problematical;
  - Russia sought the region's minerals, had extended its Trans-Siberian railway into the region and set up a Russo-Chinese bank;

1 See Chapter One for details of these events.
2 For the collapse of The Romanov Dynasty in Russia, see: Webb, K, The Decline and Fall of the Romanov Dynasty, Get Smart Education, 2018.
3 Both cities are in modern-day Uzbekistan.

- Russia had taken land along the Amur River and the Sea of Japan, and in 1898 it annexed the Liaodong Peninsula (see below).
- Following the Boxer Rebellion in China in 1900, [4] Russia stationed a large number of troops inside Manchuria.

Russia's ambitions in the region clashed with those of Japan. Japan's interests and its growing antagonism against Russia are outlined in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1 Background to the Russo-Japanese War: Japan's perspective

Japan's economic and military transformation during the years of the Meiji Restoration increased its international confidence. It also added to its determination to avoid the humiliating fate that had befallen China throughout the 19th century.

Japan was becoming alarmed at **the growing Russian presence in the Far East**. The building of the Trans-Siberian railway and the stationing of Russian troops in Manchuria were seen as direct threats to Japan's own interests in the region. and its involvement in Korea.

Up to the mid-1890s, **Japan was primarily concerned with Korea** (see Chapter One for details). This would lead to war with China in 1894-95, a war easily won by Japan. The **Treaty of Shimonoseki** which ended the war granted to Japan: Formosa (Taiwan), the Pescadores (Penghu) Islands and the Liaodong Peninsula with its major port of Lushun (known as Port Arthur to Europeans).

JAPAN'S AMBITIONS

Several European powers had become alarmed at Japan's military success against China and its territorial expansion. **As a result, Russia, France and Germany jointly pressured Japan to hand back to China the Liaodong Peninsula**. Japan did not feel confident enough to oppose this joint action and so complied with the demand. Japanese pride was hurt, and its anger raised, when **Russia itself annexed the Liaodong Peninsula in 1898** and proceeded to build up Port Arthur.

Russia's growing influence in Manchuria and its annexation of the Liaodong Peninsula could not be tolerated. **Patriotic/ nationalist and militarist forces inside Japan** were agitating strongly for a showdown with Russia.

Following its poor showing in the Boer War (1899-1902), Britain realised the danger of its continued 'splendid isolation'. Thus, in 1902, Britain and Japan signed the **Anglo-Japanese Alliance**: (1) each promised neutrality if either power was involved in a war with one other power; (2) each promised assistance to the other if either was involved in a war with two or more powers. With this alliance Japan gained **diplomatic security** and was assured that the humiliation of 1898 would not be repeated. It also added greatly to **Japan's international prestige** that the world's greatest naval power had sought Japan out as an ally.

The attainment of diplomatic security abroad, nationalist pressures at home, and continuing concern about, and distrust of Russia, **all combined to encourage Japan to remove the Russians once and for all**. Added to this were Japanese concerns at Russian rearmament and possible completion of the Trans-Siberian railway. Talks between Russia and Japan broke down in early 1904. On 6 February, Japan broke off diplomatic relations with Russia. **On 8 February Japan attacked Russian forces at Port Arthur**. War was not formally declared until 10 February.

4 A rising against the ruling Chinese dynasty metamorphosed into the violent Boxer Rebellion against foreigners. It was eventually suppressed by a combined foreign force. This episode further weakened China.

The course of the Russo-Japanese War: 1904-1905

1904:

8 February – Japan attacks Port Arthur. Port Arthur will be under siege by Japanese forces for ten months

18 April – The Japanese army defeats a Russian force of 20 000 under General Zasulich at the Yalu River

September – Russian forces are heavily defeated at Battle of Laioyang

October – Russian forces are heavily defeated at the Battle of Shaho

1905:

January – Led by General Nogi, Japanese forces capture Port Arthur, with the loss of 20 000 dead. Almost 25 000 Russian troops surrendered. The Japanese captured 500 guns, 35 000 rifles, 2.25 million rounds of ammunition, 4 battleships, 2 cruisers, 14 gunboats

March – Russian forces numbering 320 000 are defeated by a Japanese force of 250 000 under Field Marshal Oyama at Mukden [5]. The battle covers a 50-mile front and lasts four weeks. Japan captures Mukden on 10 March; 40 000 men had been lost.

May – The Russian Baltic fleet is destroyed in less than an hour in the Straits of Tsushima. It had taken eight months for the Russian fleet to get there. Under Admiral Togo, the Japanese lose only 116 men and three torpedo boats. Russian losses include: 12 000 men, 6 battleships, 5 cruisers and several destroyers and various smaller craft.

Figure 2.2 Location of the Russo-Japanese War 1904-05

5 This was one of the biggest land battles in history, up to this point.

Exercise 2.1 Indicate whether the following statements are true or false.

1	It was widely expected at the time that Japan would achieve an easy victory over Russia.	TRUE / FALSE
2	Unlike most European powers, Russia's imperial ambitions were predominantly land-based.	TRUE / FALSE
3	Russia extended a branch of the Trans-Siberian railway into Manchuria to consolidate its position there.	TRUE / FALSE
4	Japan was not concerned at Russia's presence in Manchuria because its interests lay elsewhere.	TRUE / FALSE
5	The European powers were keen on Japan maintaining its presence in the Liaodong Peninsula after 1895.	TRUE / FALSE
6	Russia's annexation of the Liaodong Peninsula in 1898 seriously harmed Russo-Japanese relations.	TRUE / FALSE
7	The Anglo-Japanese alliance of 1902 guaranteed that Britain and Japan would assist each other in any war.	TRUE / FALSE
8	Apart from the gain in prestige, Japan gained diplomatic security from its alliance with Britain in 1902.	TRUE / FALSE
9	Feeling inside Japan was strongly against taking any military action against Russia.	TRUE / FALSE
10	The Japanese siege of Port Arthur lasted for almost a year.	TRUE / FALSE
11	Japanese military forces proved to be far superior to Russian forces, as evidenced in the Battle of Mukden.	TRUE / FALSE
12	Russian naval forces proved to be far superior to Japanese naval forces.	TRUE / FALSE

The consequences of the Russo-Japanese War

Why did Japan win the war? Japan's outstanding military success in the war with Russia was the result of several key factors:

- of major importance was the issue of geography:
  - the battle ground areas were all very close to the Japanese mainland and so Japan's lines of communication were very short; it was much easier for Japan to get reinforcements and supplies to the front;
  - the distance from Moscow to Vladivostok is almost 10 000 kms;

- it could take weeks for men and supplies to reach the front;
- the Trans-Siberian railway had not yet been completed and so men and supplies would have to be moved on vehicles, or often horses for part of the journey.

- Japan's modernisation of the economy and aping of the west had paid off:
  - Japanese industry was able to produce vast amounts of modern supplies;
  - methods of army training and tactics had been learned from Germany;
  - naval construction and methods had been learned from Britain.

However, it should be noted that by mid-1905, despite its successes, Japan was both militarily and financially exhausted, hence its eagerness to engage US President Theodore Roosevelt in arranging peace talks.

- In contrast, Russia's economy was unable to provide the needs of a 20th century war;
  - this deficiency would become even more apparent during World War I;
  - the standard of Russian leadership was poor with field commanders often in place because of nepotism;
    - "the Russian officer corps was over aged and undereducated"; [6]
    - General Nikolai Linevich, who commanded Russia's armies in Manchuria for much of the war, admitted he did not know what a howitzer was and could not read military maps;
  - major domestic unrest inside Russia hindered the war effort.

The war finally came to end in September 1905 with the signing of the Treaty of Portsmouth.[7] Japan made significant territorial gains in the treaty:

- its supremacy in Korea was accepted by Russia;
- Japan was given Port Arthur and the Liaodong Peninsula which it had been forced to give up in 1895 after the Sino-Japanese War;
- it also gained the South Manchurian Railway and the Karafuto (the southern half of the island of Sakhalin).

Russia was ordered to pay an indemnity to Japan. However, this was never done, and Japan did not press the issue. Both sides had been exhausted by the war.

Apart from the military success and the territorial gains from the post-war settlement, Japan's international position and prestige were boosted:

- Britain was quick to renew its alliance in 1905, and again in 1908. Japan would become an ally of Britain and France during World War I. [8]

6 Paine, S C M, The Japanese Empire, CUP, 2017, p 60
7 Portsmouth is in the US state of New Hampshire. US President Roosevelt had intervened to bring the two sides to the negotiating table.
8 See Chapter Four.

- Japan gained concessions from China in Manchuria and felt confident enough to annex Korea in 1910. [9]

There were also domestic implications for both Japan and Russia:

- inside Japan, the prestige and influence of the militarists and nationalist politicians was significantly increased:
  - however, Japan's decision not to press for a Russian indemnity, after the sacrifices which had been made during the war, led to widespread rioting in Tokyo;
  - such was the level of public anger, the cabinet of Prince Katsura was forced to resign in January 1906.
- inside Russia, defeat at the hands of an Asian power added to the revolutionary situation which came close to bringing down the tsarist regime.

Exercise 2.2 Select "fact or opinion" for each of the following statements

1	Russia's annexation of the Liaodong Peninsula in 1898 caused great anger inside Japan.	FACT/ OPINION
2	Most observers expected a Russian victory when war broke out between Russia and Japan in 1904.	FACT/ OPINION
3	The war showed that Japanese soldiers were clearly more courageous than their Russian counterparts.	FACT/ OPINION
4	Russian losses in the Battle of Tsushima were far greater than those experienced by Japan.	FACT/ OPINION
5	Japan's success against Russia meant a future clash with the west in Asia was inevitable.	FACT/ OPINION

9 See Chapter Three.

What do the historians have to say about "The Russo-Japanese War 1904-1905"?

1. Louis Allen

Allen makes the point that the Battle of Mukden put paid to any chance that Russia might have had in achieving victory. However, he argues that the Japanese success at Mukden had an even greater significance. European observers took note, not only of the stubborn bravery of the ordinary Japanese soldier, which had been in evidence throughout the war, but also the skill of the Japanese staff. The Battle of Mukden put on display not only the courage of Japanese soldiers.

"…The military attachés of foreign armies witnessed a Japanese staff launching, directing and maintaining a quarter of a million men over a vast front in a country with poor communications. It was a feat of which any European army would have been proud…" [10]

2. S C M Paine

Paine makes the point that a Japanese victory was never a certainty and that Japanese strategy had been risky. He suggests that the Russians could have won the war, if they had made a handful of different decisions, *"all well within their grasp, if not their imaginations".* However, he argues that the destruction of Russia's fleet at the Battle of Tsushima had a crushing impact on Russian morale, even though Tsushima had no direct effect on the main battle front which was Manchuria.

"…The effect was purely psychological but politically debilitating and therefore decisive. A decisive battle leads directly to war termination. While many battles are key, critical or crucial, very, very few are actually decisive. This was one…" [11]

10 Allen, L, Japan: The years of triumph – From Feudal Isolation to Pacific Empire, Purnell and sons, London, 1971, p 61
11 Paine, S C M, The Japanese Empire: Grand Strategy from the Meiji Restoration to the Pacific War, CUP, Cambridge, 2017, p 69

Notes

Chapter Three
The annexation of Korea

Introduction

The annexation of Korea by Japan took place in August 1910. The annexation was based on the Japan-Korea Annexation Treaty of 22 August 1910 (see below for details of the treaty). Article 1 of the treaty stated that: *"The Emperor of Korea makes the complete and permanent cession to His Majesty the Emperor of Japan of all rights of sovereignty over the whole of Korea."* At the time Japan would claim that this article of the treaty showed that the annexation had taken place by mutual consent. However, resistance to the action was significant inside Korea.

Japan had been showing interest in Korea since the 1870s. As was explained in Chapter 1, several factors combined to stimulate Japanese interest:

- economically it was seen as a source of raw materials and a potential market;
- it was seen as a possible location for Japan's growing population;
- nationalists and militarists were eager for expansion;
- strategically, Korea was very important:
  - enemy control of the peninsula could threaten Japan itself;
  - the main threat at the time was seen as Russia;
  - control of Korea would facilitate a Japanese move into the far more valuable region of Manchuria, nominally under Chinese control.

The Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95, was fought essentially over Korea and resulted in Korea becoming independent of China. [1] In the Treaty of Portsmouth which ended the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05, Russia formally recognised Japan's supremacy in Korea. [2]

The path to annexation

At the start of the Russo-Japanese War, Japan forced Korea to accept the Japan-Korea Protocol:

- this allowed Japanese interference in Korean domestic affairs;
- it allowed Japan to control certain strategic locations in the country.

Once the war was over, and the Treaty of Portsmouth had been signed, Japan was able to focus its attentions on Korea. In November 1905, Japan and Korea signed the Japan-Korea Treaty. By this, Korea became a protectorate of Japan and lost its diplomatic sovereignty.

1 See Chapter 1.
2 See Chapter 2.

Following the treaty, Japan proceeded to introduce a series of "reforms" into Korea:

- the Korean army was reduced from 20 000 to 1000 as all garrisons in the provinces were disbanded;
  - the army now had just a single garrison in Seoul;
- all police matters were now controlled by the Japanese police;
  - a Japanese police inspector was placed in each prefecture.

Despite the superiority of Japanese forces, Koreans did not meekly sit back and accept the takeover of their country. Between 1890 and 1910, there had been many examples of armed Korean resistance to the Japanese presence. Groups such as the *uibyeong* (righteous armies) challenged the Japanese, though they were easily defeated in the 'Righteous Army Wars'.

Japanese security forces compiled a detailed report on disturbances inside Korea between 1907 and 1910. [3] It stated:

- in these three years there were 2819 clashes between the Japanese army and the Righteous Army forces;
- of the 140 000 Righteous Army forces, almost 18 000 were killed;
- Japanese losses were 130;
- In 1909, the Korean resistance was finished off in the "Massive Subjugation of Southern Korea".

In June 1907, the Second Peace Conference was held in The Hague (Netherlands). The Korean Emperor of the time, Gojong, used the conference to bring the issue of Japanese encroachment in Korea to world attention. He secretly sent three representatives to lobby on behalf of Korea. The three envoys were denied access to the public debates of the delegates who had gathered. [4]

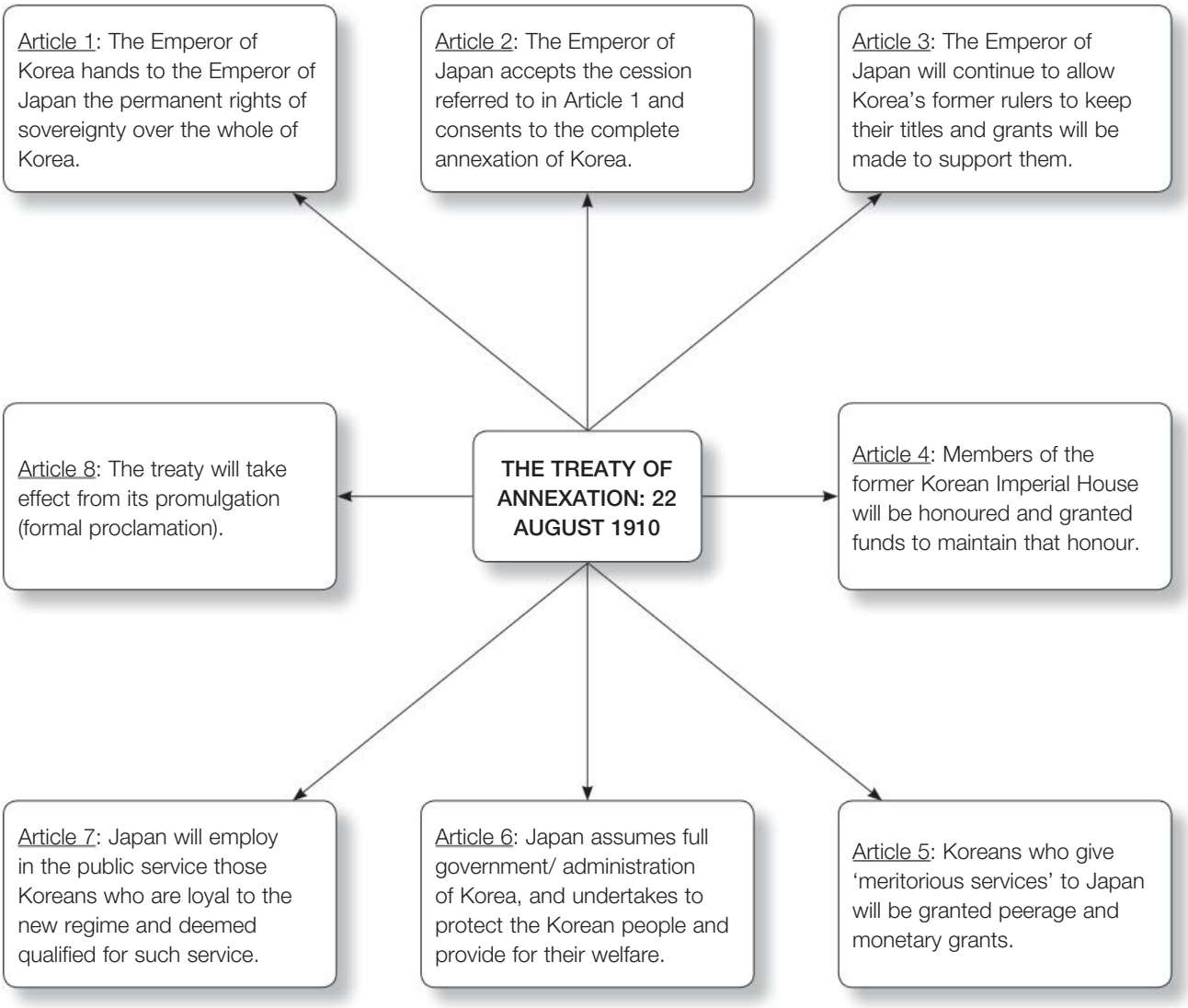
- After The Hague episode, the Japanese Resident-General inside Korea forced Emperor Gojong to give up his royal authority on 19 July 1907:
  - the sickly Crown Prince, Sunjong, was appointed regent.
- Japanese officials then forced Gojong to abdicate in favour of Sunjong. Neither Gojong nor Sunjong was present at the accession ceremony. [5]

By now, Korea was effectively under Japanese control. Korea would become Japanese in name as well as in fact with the formal Japanese annexation of the country in 1910. The excuse used to justify the annexation was the murder of Prince Ito by an alleged Korean assassin. [6] The treaty was concluded following "negotiations" between the Japanese representative, Resident-General, Viscount Terauchi Masatake, and the Korean Prime Minister, Yi Wan-Yong.

The details of the Treaty of Annexation are outlined in Figure 3.1. [7]

3 This was the Chosen boto tobatsu-shi.
4 Out of despair, one of the Korean envoys, Yi Tjoune, committed suicide while in The Hague.
5 Sunjong would be the final ruler of the Joseon dynasty which had been founded in 1392.
6 See Historian 1 at the end of the chapter.
7 Korea would remain under Japanese control from 1910 until Japan's defeat in World War II in 1945. Japanese rule was strict. Even in the 21st century, relations between South Korea and Japan experience strain because of the legacy of harsh Japanese rule.

Figure 3.1 The Treaty of Annexation: 22 August 1910



Exercise 3.1 Rewrite the following passage so that it follows on logically.

However, there was opposition to Japan's presence inside Korea, seen in the activities of the uibyeong. The Treaty of Annexation, placing Korea under formal Japanese control and ownership, was signed in August 1910. During the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-05, Japan forced Korea to accept the Japan-Korea Protocol. Japan had long been interested in Korea for both economic and strategic reasons. Emperor Gojong attempted to bring the issue of Korea to the world's attention at The Hague Peace Conference in 1907. After the war with Russia, Japan and Korea signed the Japan-Korea Treaty. Korea had been the main issue that had prompted the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95. This led to his forced abdication and he was succeeded by the Crown Prince, Sunjong. Following its defeat in the war, Russia formally accepted Japan's supremacy in Korea.

What do the historians have to say about "The annexation of Korea"?

1. Edwin P Hoyt

Hoyt relates how Prince Ito, representing the Japanese Privy Council, was visiting Harbin in October 1909. He was assassinated and the Japanese police were quick to arrest a Korean nationalist for the crime. There was a suspicion at the time that the extremist (General) Yamagata element in the army were behind the crime as it was keen to be rid of Ito who was opposed to their influence. The government of Prime Minister Katsura used the assassination to annex Korea. General Masatake Terauchi, who was a tough military man, became Resident-General in Korea.

"…The country was placed under martial law. The Koreans were informed that they were now Japanese. A special throne room was set up in the capital for the use of the Japanese emperor…" [8]

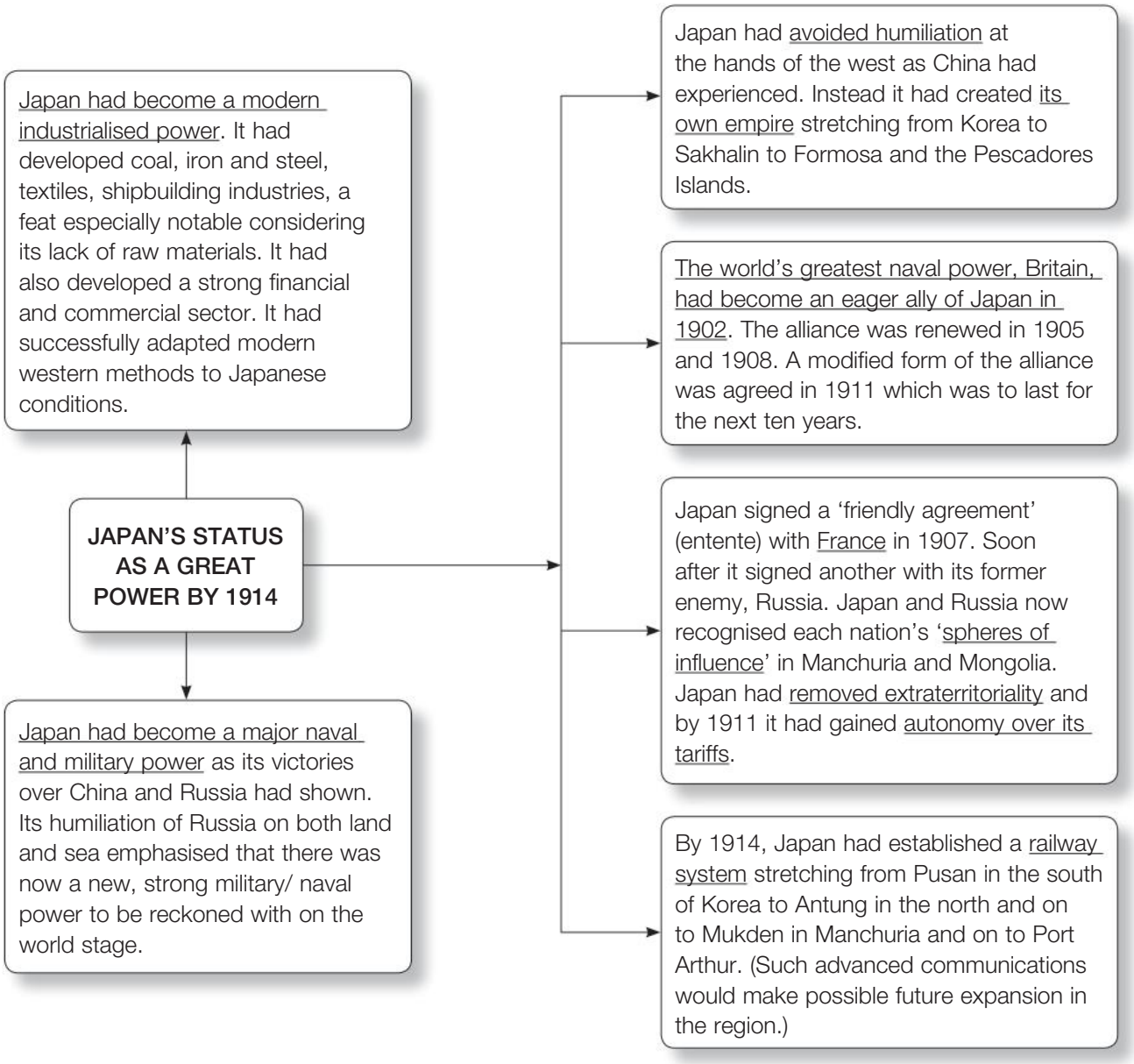
8 Hoyt, E P, Japan's War: The Great Pacific Conflict, Guild Publishing, London, 1987, p 42

Chapter Four
Status as a great power: 21 Demands, role in World War I

Japan's status as a great power

On 30 July 1912, the Emperor Mutsuhito died after a short illness, and so the Meiji era, the era of 'Enlightened Government', came to an end. [1] The Meiji period had seen Japan transformed from a small, unimportant medieval state to equality with the great world powers. Figure 4.1 outlines Japan's status as a great power on the eve of World War I.

Figure 4.1 Japan's status as a great power by 1914



1 General Nogi, the hero of Port Arthur in the Russo-Japanese War, who had loyally served the Emperor, believed that it was his duty to follow his Emperor 'to the shades beyond'. Thus, in the privacy of his own home, he committed *hara-kiri* (ritual suicide) as the Emperor's funeral cortège passed by his home. General Nogi's wife took her own life at the same time in the traditional manner expected of women.

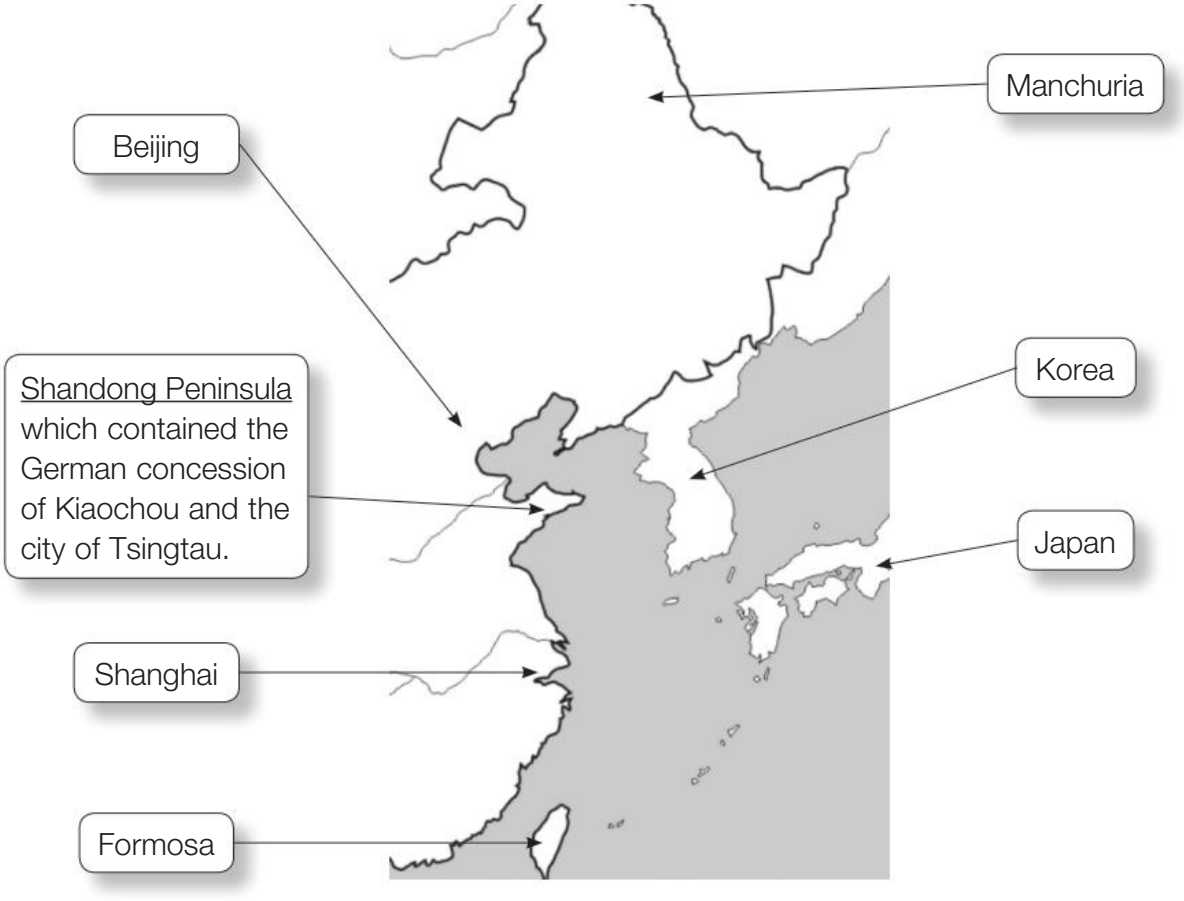
Japan enters World War I

Austria's Archduke Franz Ferdinand was assassinated on 28 June 1914. In just over five weeks, the major powers of Europe were at war. [2] Under the terms of its modified 1911 alliance with Britain, Japan was not obligated to enter the conflict unless Germany attacked British possessions in the Far East. However, Japan was keen to become a belligerent for several reasons:

- participation in the war as an ally of the entente powers (Britain, France and Russia) would add to Japan's international prestige;
- the Japanese Foreign Minister stated that helping Britain, Japan's ally, would be a *"voluntary expression of friendship"*;
- there were territorial gains to be made:
  - Germany had concessions in China that were for the taking, as well as several colonies in the north Pacific.

In 1898, Germany leased from the Imperial Chinese regime the Kiaochou Bay territory in the Shandong Peninsula, eastern China. The centre of administration was the city of Tsingtau. It was due north of Shanghai and about 400 kms due west of Korea, as show in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1 Shandong Peninsula



2 Italy did not enter until May 1915. The USA would enter the war in April 1917.

On 15 August 1914, Japan sent an ultimatum to Germany demanding the surrender of Tsingtau and the removal or disarming of all German warships in Chinese waters. No reply was forthcoming, and so on 23 August, Japan declared war on Germany.

Japanese naval and military action in World War I

Japan laid siege to Tsingtau; its German defenders eventually surrendered on 6 November. Japanese forces were to occupy not only Kiaochou but also the Tsingtao-Tsinan railway which stretched a further 400 kms past the leased area. The rights formerly enjoyed by Germany were passed on to Japan, including the ninety-nine year lease, and the right to build railways and work coal mines.

The capture of Kiaochou was also significant for other reasons:

- it was an indication of Japan's rising status that a small British force fought under Japanese command:
  - Vice Admiral Kato Sadakichi commanded combined naval forces;
  - General Kamio commanded combined military forces.
- Kamio's forces suffered 1500 casualties but this was the last time that Japanese army forces fought in World War I.

However, the Japanese navy played a more significant role in the war:

- the presence of the Japanese navy in Far Eastern waters allowed Britain to remove some of its warships to be used in other naval theatres;
- Japanese naval forces escorted ANZAC troops across the Indian Ocean to Egypt (preceding the ANZAC involvement in the Gallipoli campaign);
- later in the war, Japanese naval forces carried out patrol and escort duties in the Mediterranean at the height of Germany's submarine campaign.

Japan also took possession of Germany's north Pacific colonies – the Caroline, Pelew, Marshall and Mariana groups. Control of these islands gave Japan a valuable position for any potential future defensive or offensive actions.

Exercise 4.1 Complete the following passage using the terms in the box below.

In _____, Emperor Mutsuhito died. The era of _____ was now brought to an end. In this fifty year period, Japan had achieved great power _____. It had defeated _____ and _____ in war, and had commenced its path of creating a Japanese _____. Imperial possessions included _____ and the island of _____. In _____, Britain had become an ally of Japan. When World War I broke out in _____, Japan was not obliged to join _____ in the conflict but it was keen to do so. On 23 August 1914, Japan declared war on _____. It laid siege to _____, and by November had gained

control of all the German leased territories in _____ Bay. Japan's _____ forces were not very active in the war after 1914 but its _____ was. Japanese naval craft provided escort for _____ troops heading to _____. Later in the war, Japanese naval forces patrolled the _____. Japan was quick to take possession of _____ colonies such as the _____ island groups in the _____ Pacific Ocean.

FORMOSA – CHINA – EGYPT – TSINGTAU – BRITAIN – MARSHALL – STATUS – 1902 – 1912 – 1914 – GERMAN – NORTH – EMPIRE – NAVY – ENLIGHTENED GOVERNMENT – KIAOCHOU – MEDITERRANEAN – ANZAC – CAROLINE – RUSSIA – KOREA – GERMANY -

The 21 Demands

On 18 January 1915, the President of China, Yuan Shih-kai, was presented with a set of 21 Demands by the Japanese Minister to China. Japan was effectively trying to turn China into a 'protectorate'. Its goals regarding China included:

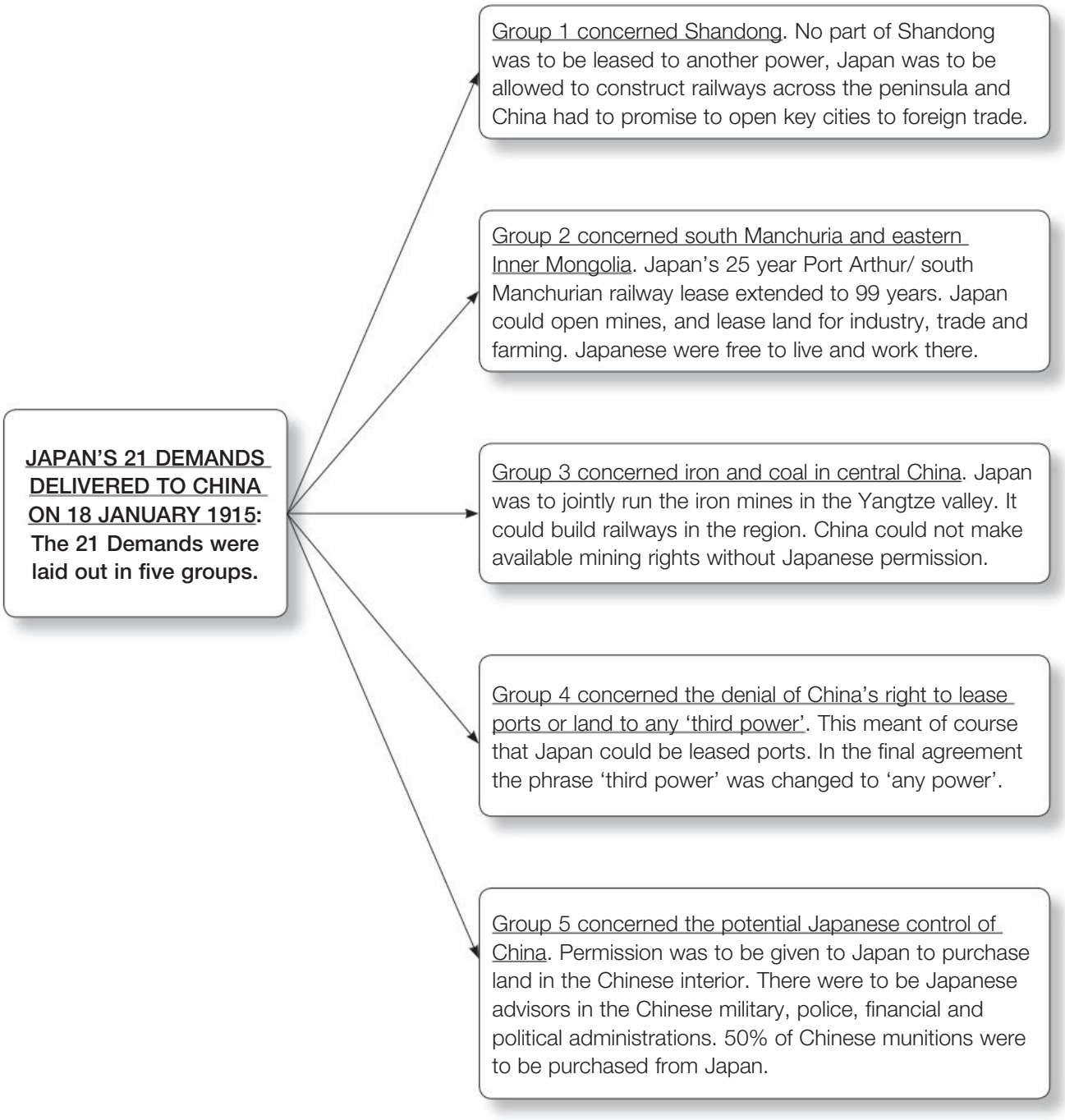
- the economic exploitation of China, both its raw materials and its market;
- an expansion of Japanese territorial control;
- primary influence over China and a virtual right to control its affairs.

Yuan was told to keep the 21 Demands secret but knowledge of them was soon available to the press in China and Japan, and in the United States. The key elements of the 21 Demands are outlined in Figure 4.2. Amended proposals were offered by the Japanese during ensuing talks. On 7 May, Japan delivered an ultimatum to the Chinese government: accept the amended proposals or 'necessary steps might have to be taken'.

Diplomatically isolated, China was left with no choice but to accept:

- the European powers were bogged down in the war;
- the United States was preoccupied with the sinking of the liner, the Lusitania, by a German submarine. 128 US lives were lost;
  - the sinking occurred on the same day as Japan issued its ultimatum.
- Agreement was finally reached on 9 May. Reaction inside China was immediate. Across the country there were boycotts of Japanese goods and Japanese business men.

Figure 4.2 Outline of the 21 Demands



The United States protested at not being given warning of all the demands (Group 5 was omitted from Japanese communications). Japan replied that the demands in Group 5 were really only 'suggestions'. At this stage, protests from the US were mild, and restricted to its demand for respect for China's territorial integrity and maintenance of the 'Open Door' policy. [3]

3 The Open-Door Policy referred to US China policy at the time which sought to stop foreign powers taking possession of parts of China, and keeping the country open to trade with all nations.

The Lansing-Ishii Agreement

Now that they were 'allies', Japan was keen to improve relations with the United States. In November 1917, a Japanese diplomatic mission, led by Viscount Ishii, visited Washington to confer with US Secretary of State, Robert Lansing. The result of the meeting was an 'exchange of notes':

- Ishii agreed to respect China's territorial integrity and uphold the 'open door policy';
- Lansing accepted that Japan had 'special relations and interests in China' due to its proximity.

It remained to be seen if Japan and the US understood the phrase 'special relations and interests' in the same way.

Japan and the Paris Peace Conference of 1919

World War I ended in November 1918. The victorious allies met in Paris throughout 1919 to formulate a post-war settlement. The settlement comprised several treaties, the most important of which was The Treaty of Versailles, signed on 28 June. Japan was affected in several ways by the peace settlement.

- It was allowed to retain control of the former German colonies in the north Pacific which it had occupied early in the war.
  - Japan received the islands as 'mandates';
  - as the mandate power, Japan was expected to 'prepare the islands' to be able to rule themselves; this never happened;
  - Japan was not supposed to fortify the islands but its control over them was unlimited. [4]
- China demanded the return of the Shandong concession. Japan's refusal led to a massive outpouring of Chinese nationalism and anti-Japanese feeling which crystalised into the 'May 4th Movement'.
  - Japan eventually returned the concession in 1922.
- Part of the Paris Peace Agreement was the establishment of a League of Nations of which Japan became a founding member:
  - the League was an international organisation (precursor of the UN) whose aim was the maintenance of world peace;
  - it was the brainchild of US President Woodrow Wilson;
  - as a major power, Japan became a member of the Council, along with Britain, France, Italy and the US;
  - the US never joined the League of Nations and so the Council was restricted to four of the major powers;
  - Japan would leave the League of Nations in 1933 following its invasion of Manchuria. [5]
- One element of the post-war treaties which rankled with Japan was the refusal to include a clause recognising racial equality. Japan viewed this as racism on the part of the west. [6]

4 Australia and New Zealand took control of former German colonies south of the equator.
5 See Section Four.
6 The main opponent of the racial equality clause was Australian Prime Minister, Billy Hughes. He feared such a measure could weaken his nation's 'white Australia' immigration policy.

Japan and its intervention in Bolshevik Russia

The November 1917 revolution in Russia brought to power the Bolsheviks led by Lenin. Lenin's first goal was to pull Russia out of World War I; this was achieved with the Treaty of Brest Litovsk between Russia and Germany in March 1918. The allies were distressed at this development, as it meant Germany could now send its Eastern Front troops to the Western Front. Following its Spring Offensive of March 1918, Germany was in striking distance of victory on the Western Front.

By mid-1918, Russia was experiencing Civil War between the Bolshevik 'reds' and their opponents, the 'whites'. Several allied nations (Britain, France, the United States, Japan) supported the 'whites', in the hope that Russia could be brought back into the war. When World War I ended in November 1918, some allied forces remained in Russia, suggesting that the goal all along had been to bring down the new Bolshevik regime. Japanese troops joined the allied intervention, landing troops in Vladivostok in August 1918.

- In August 1918, an Anglo-Japanese force defeated the 'reds' on the Ussuri River and took control of the Russia Maritime Province.
- By the end of 1918, Japan had 70 000 troops in eastern Siberia and the Maritime Province.

As the Civil War turned in favour of the 'reds', allied forces left Russia. However, Japanese imperialists jealously eyed Russia's far eastern territories and so Japan maintained a presence in Russia until October 1922 when pressured to leave by the United States.

- Japan withdrew from its last Russian territory, northern Sakhalin, in 1925.
- In 1925, Japan finally recognised the Bolshevik (Communist) regime.

Exercise 4.2 Answer the following questions in the spaces provided.

1	What action did Japan take regarding China on 18 January 1915?	
2	What was Japan's motivation behind its action of 18 January 1915?	
3	Why were China and other powers most concerned about Group 5 of the 21 Demands?	
4	What was the reaction of China to Japanese interference in its affairs?	
5	What was the Lansing-Ishii agreement of November 1917?	

6	What was arguably Japan's principal gain from the Paris Peace Conference?	
7	What was Japan's involvement in the League of Nations?	
8	What issue angered Japan most during Paris Peace negotiations in 1919?	
9	What reason was given by the allied powers for becoming involved in the Russia Civil War?	
10	What was Japan's real reason for becoming involved in Russia? When had Japan finally left Russian territory?	

What do the historians have to say about "Status as a great power: 21 Demands, role in World War I"?

1. Richard Storry

Storry makes the point that up to 1915, Japan-US relations had been fairly positive. However, the 21 Demands changed everything. Even when Japan behaved in a friendly, cooperative manner towards China, which was often the case during the 'liberal' years of the 1920s, it never gained any credit for this.

"…The unfortunate 21 Demands were a turning point in American-Japanese relations… From now on it was Japan that was cast in the role of the bully…" [7]

2. S C M Paine

Paine argues a similar line to Storry, arguing that the 21 Demands alienated both Britain and the US. Not only that, they outraged the Chinese, despite the modifications that were made to the original demands. Paine suggests that:

"…To this day, the 21 Demands remain a watchword in China for infamy…" [8]

7 Storry, R, A History of Modern Japan, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1973, p 153
8 Paine, S C M, The Japanese Empire: Grand Strategy from the Meiji Restoration to the Pacific War, CUP, Cambridge, 2017, p 92

Chapter Five
The Washington Conference

Background

The Washington Conference was held from 12 November 1921 to 6 February 1922. It was attended by 'the Big Five' – the United States, Britain, Japan, France and Italy – along with China, Belgium, Portugal and the Netherlands. The key issues to be considered were disarmament, and Pacific and Far Eastern problems. The leading figures at the Conference were US Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes, the British Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour, and Japan's Baron Kato. Kato would soon become Prime Minister of Japan (1924-26).

- The United States had always been opposed to the policy of European powers establishing concessions and spheres of influence in China:
  - in 1899, Secretary of State, John Milton Hay, introduced the 'Open Door Policy' towards China.
  - the US was opposed to European territorial control of China and argued that trade with China should be open to all powers.
- China itself had entered the 'warlord period':
  - across the country, rival military leaders (warlords) were establishing themselves in different regions and in conflict with each other;
  - China would not gain any semblance of national unity until the late 1920s under the rule of the Guomindang (GMD) led by Jiang Jieshi. [1]
- Japan at this time was in its 'liberal phase': [2]
  - Japanese political leaders were briefly keen to play a moderate, cooperative international role and work with China;
  - however, such policies were not unanimously supported inside Japan and there was significant opposition from nationalist politicians and army figures.
- US-Japanese relations were becoming strained:
  - Japan resented what they saw as racist, anti-Japanese immigration restrictions in the US;
  - the US was becoming nervous about growing Japanese power and influence in the Asia-Pacific region following its takeover of German concessions in China, the 21 Demands and Japan's continuing presence inside Russia;
  - the US was keen to bring the Anglo-Japanese alliance to a close as it felt that it emboldened Japan;
    - Britain argued that the alliance had a restraining influence on Japan.

1 Chiang Kai-Shek
2 See Section Two.

From the first day of the conference, Secretary of State Hughes stated that action was needed, rather than vague wordy resolutions. Delegates worked hard at the conference and by its end had produced seven treaties and twelve resolutions. The key agreements were:

- The Four Power Treaty (concerned with the mutual interests of the major powers)
- The Nine Power Treaty (concerned with the position of China)
- The Five Power Treaty (concerned with naval disarmament)

The Four Power Treaty

The Four Power Treaty was signed between the United States, Japan, Britain and France. Its purpose was to maintain the status quo in the region but it was in no sense a security pact:

- the signatories agreed to respect mutual rights to island possessions;
- talks were to be held immediately if problems in the region arose;
- the treaty brought the US into greater involvement in the region;
- it brought an end to the Anglo-Japanese alliance.

Richard Storry [3] describes the Four Power Treaty as *"an empty agreement"* and merely an American *"device, which quite failed to deceive the Japanese, for winding up (the Anglo-Japanese) alliance."* He argues that the Americans were very keen to bring the Anglo-Japanese alliance to an end and that the British cabinet found the alliance *"in some ways more of an embarrassment than an asset"*. [4]

The Nine Power Treaty

The Nine Power Treaty was signed by the United States, Britain, Japan, Italy, France, China, Belgium, the Netherlands and Portugal:

- each of the powers recognised the independence of China;
- each of the powers accepted the territorial integrity of China;
  - these two provisions fitted in closely with the US 'Open Door Policy';
- the powers agreed that none of them would attempt to take advantage of any possible crises in China:
  - this provision was particularly relevant considering the chaotic and anarchic situation inside China at the time.

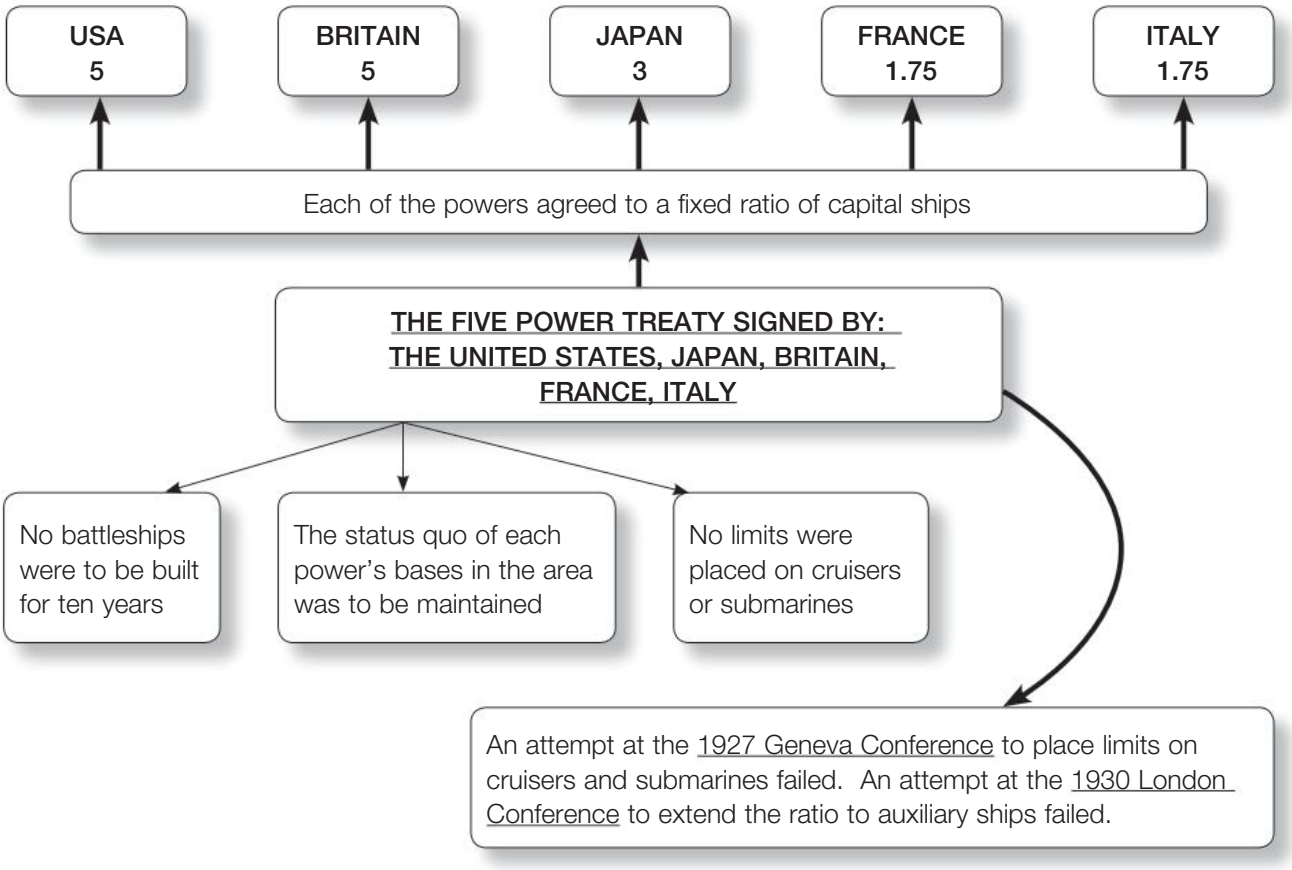
The Five Power Treaty

This treaty tackled the thorny issue of naval disarmament. Its key provisions are outlined in Figure 5.1.

3 Storry, R, A History of Modern Japan, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1973, p 163

4 It could be argued that had Britain remained Japan's ally, some restraining influence might have been brought to bear on Japanese aggression in the 1930s

Figure 5.1 The Five Power Treaty of the Washington Conference



Exercise 5.1 Match the provision on the left with the Washington treaty.

1	No limits placed on cruiser and submarine construction	
2	Each of the powers agreed to respect China's territorial integrity	
3	Japan agreed to have 60 per cent of the capital ships that each of the US and Britain could have	
4	Each of the powers agreed to respect mutual rights in their island possessions	
5	No battleships were to be built during the decade after the Washington Conference	
6	This treaty fitted in very much with the United States' 'open-door' policy	
7	This treaty brought an end to the Anglo-Japanese alliance	
8	France and Italy agreed to an equal ratio of capital ships	

THE FOUR POWER TREATY – THE NINE POWER TREATY – THE FIVE POWER TREATY

The significance of the Washington Conference

1. The Anglo-Japanese alliance that had been in existence since 1902 was finally brought to an end.
   a. This was a goal of the United States as it viewed the alliance as a 'political shield' behind which Japan was able to hide its ambitions in Asia and the Pacific.
   b. Canada had been unhappy with the alliance. If a conflict arose between Japan and the United States, and Britain honoured alliance arrangements with its ally, as a member of the Empire, Canada was concerned about its position as it had a long border with the US.
   c. Some historians have argued that had the alliance remained in place, Britain might have a had a moderating impact on Japan in the 1930s.

2. The Washington Conference took place at a time when Japan seemed to be heading in a more democratic and liberal direction at home. Failure in the Siberian campaign had hurt the prestige of the military.
   a. To the outside world, the conference, Japan's behaviour at the conference, and its conciliatory policy towards China, seemed to presage that Japan was becoming a cooperative international power.
   b. However, domestic factors, such as the impact of the depression and the growing influence of the military, would steadily work against such a development.

3. Sino-Japanese relations improved briefly.
   a. On 4 February 1922, Japan and China signed a treaty that returned Shandong to China.
   b. The return of Shandong and the limitation of demands of foreign powers on China helped to improve Sino-Japanese relations in the 1920s.

4. The conference eased Pacific tensions in the Far East. It also showed that the US was willing to become far more involved in the region, seen obviously in Hughes' initiative in calling the conference.
   a. This did mean though the potential for a future US-Japan clash was increased.
   b. However, in the short term, relations were cordial, despite continuing Japanese resentment over US immigration restrictions. This could be seen in the rapid and generous aid that the US sent to Japan at the time of the disastrous 1923 Tokyo earthquake.

5. Some historians have argued that in the area of naval disarmament, the Washington Conference was a disaster. [5]
   a. The US had lost the chance of gaining naval supremacy, scrapping fifteen ships, valued at $300 million.
   b. The decision not to fortify bases between Singapore and Hawaii, virtually rendered these places defenceless.
   c. These actions virtually doubled the value of Japanese tonnage quotas for naval operations in the Far East.

5 Morison, S E, and Commager, H S, The Growth of the American Republic Vol II, OUP, New York, 1969, p 429

Exercise 5.2 Indicate whether the following statements are true or false.

1	Washington was a productive conference that led to many agreements and at which delegates set about producing real results right from the start.	TRUE / FALSE
2	At the time of the conference, Japan was going through a liberal-democratic phase and its leaders were willing to play a moderate international role.	TRUE / FALSE
3	A fundamental result of the Washington Conference was to limit and pull back US influence and involvement in the Far East region.	TRUE / FALSE
4	In the Nine Power Treaty, Japan agreed that it would not seek to take advantage of the chaos and anarchy that was plaguing China at the time.	TRUE / FALSE
5	The Five Power Treaty brought in measures to limit not only capital ships but also battleships, submarines and cruisers.	TRUE / FALSE
6	The success of the Washington Conference in naval disarmament was clear as the disarmament process continued at the 1927 and 1930 conferences.	TRUE / FALSE
7	A key result of The Four Power Treaty was the ending of the Anglo-Japanese alliance that had been in existence in various forms since 1902.	TRUE / FALSE
8	Despite the Washington Conference, relations between China and Japan remained in deep freeze and conflict between the two nations was frequent in the 1920s.	TRUE / FALSE
9	The Washington Conference eased Far East tensions and during the 1920s, US-Japan were generally quite cordial.	TRUE / FALSE
10	Historians are agreed that the Washington Conference was a great success and had produced great strategic benefits for the United States.	TRUE / FALSE

What do the historians have to say about "The Washington Conference"?

1. Brett L Walker

Walker offers a different take on the significance of the Washington Conference. He suggests that US racism affected international negotiations, starting at the Paris Peace conference where US President Wilson and others scuttled Japan's attempt to have a racial equality clause inserted in the founding documents of the League of Nations. For the Japanese, western rhetoric about racial equality was mere words. The Washington Conference forced Japan to begrudgingly accept the 5/5/3 naval tonnage ratios for capital ships with the US and Britain, placing them at a disadvantage. [6]

"…Increasingly, Japan began to realise that the new international order was a racially dominated one, and the fledgling Japanese empire would struggle to find a seat at the table of the Great Powers…" [7]

2. Louis Allen

Allen comments on the impact of the Four Power Treaty which brought the Anglo-Japanese alliance to an end. (It was formally ended in August 1923). The Japanese would have preferred the alliance to continue, and they were not impressed with the empty Four Power Pact which took its place. Allen says that The Four Power agreement offered only joint consultation instead of friendship. Of perhaps greater significance was the view of Lord Chatfield who stated at the time:

"…we had weakened most gravely our Imperial position. We had turned a powerful friend into a potential and powerful foe…" [8]

6 This point might be contested as Japan was able to concentrate its naval strength in one region, whereas the US also had the Atlantic and the Caribbean to consider, while Britain had a world-wide empire to protect.

7 Walker, B L, A Concise History of Japan, CUP, Cambridge, 2015, p 223

8 Allen, L, Japan: The years of triumph – From Feudal Isolation to Pacific Empire, Purnell and sons, London, 1971, p 80

Chapter Six
Political, social and economic issues in Japan by 1921

A new Emperor and a new era

Emperor Meiji died on 30 July 1912. Meiji Japan had been a period of enormous change and achievement for Japan as the nation embraced modernisation and had taken its first steps to establishing an empire. The new Emperor was Meiji's first son, Yoshihito. He took the name Taisho, thus bringing in a new era.

- Taisho was born in 1879. As a child he had contracted cerebral meningitis. Throughout his life he was plagued with physical weakness and bouts of mental instability.
- Gradually, Taisho was unable to perform even basic duties and so in November 1921, his son, Hirohito, was named as Prince Regent. Taisho never appeared in public again. [1]

The early part of the Taisho period has sometimes been referred to as "Japan's Golden Years", or "the Taisho democracy". Modernisation continued, there was a greater openness in political life and a growing desire for representative democracy. There was a noticeable increase in the influence of western culture, ranging from fashion to European-style cafes to film and theatre. However, Japan at this time was not without its problems. Industrial unrest was on the rise, there were widespread rice riots in 1918 and major post-war economic problems. It remained to be seen if the tentative steps towards liberal democracy could be maintained.

Political issues by 1921

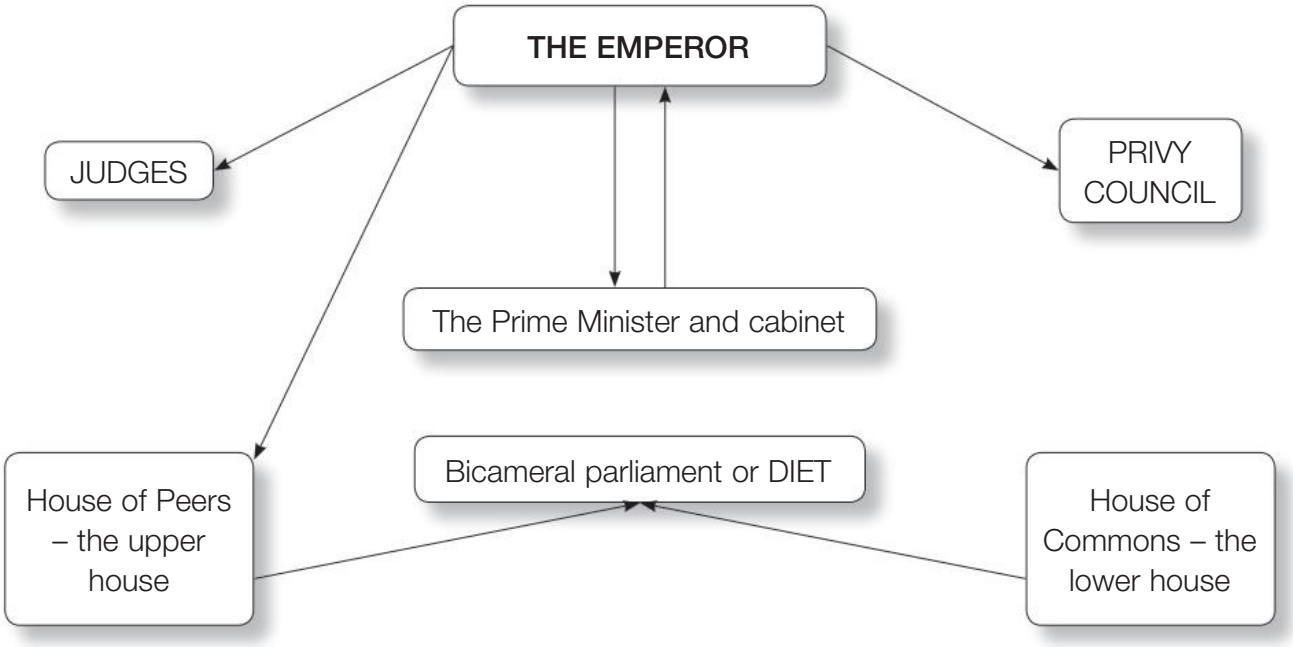
From 1885, Japan had had a cabinet system whose members were responsible to the Emperor. In 1889, the Emperor "handed to his people" a constitution, thanks in large part to the efforts of Ito Hirobumi, Prime Minister four times between 1885 and 1901. The constitution had not been demanded by the people: it was a 'gift' from the Emperor. It was based on the German model of the time and was not meant to be more than superficially democratic. Its structure is outlined in Figure 6.1.

- 'On paper' the Emperor retained his power and influence:
  - judges, the Prime Minister, the cabinet and the House of Peers were responsible to the emperor not the Diet (parliament);
  - only the Emperor could amend the constitution;
  - if the two houses of the Diet disagreed, the Emperor decided the outcome;
  - the Emperor could dissolve the Diet at any time.
- The franchise was extremely limited:
  - in 1889 only 2% of people could vote;
  - this rose to 3.9% (1902), 4.8% (1917), 10.2% (1920);
  - universal male suffrage was achieved in 1925.

1 Taisho died on 25 December 1926.

- From 1900, both the war and navy ministers were required to be in active service, giving the senior officer (Yamagata) de facto control over cabinet appointments and policies:
  - if either service refused to appoint a minister or forced one to resign, this forced the resignation of the Prime Minister and the formation of a new cabinet;
  - from 1907, army and navy ministers could bypass the Prime Minister on some issues by issuing an imperial order in the emperor's name. [2]

Figure 6.1 The constitution of 1889



Though the Emperor had been "restored" in the Meiji Restoration, little had really changed in the style of Japanese government. Under the Shogun, Japan was an oligarchy, ruled by key members of his family. After 1868, and after the constitution of 1889, Japan was still an oligarchy, ruled by elder statesmen known as the **genro**. These men came principally from the Choshu and Satsuma clans. The oligarchs were the key political players in Japanese political life.

- they appointed the Prime Minister, held cabinet positions, comprised the Emperor's advisory body, the Privy Council, and established overall policies in a consensual manner;
- their power was informal and not outlined in the constitution;
- the constitution did not specify the responsibilities of the Prime Minister and cabinet – governments operated on the basis of its members' personal ties.

Apart from its undemocratic nature, the power and influence of the genro raised the issue of 'succession'. By 1921, nearly all the genro were dead. They had held their positions on the basis of their prestige which had allowed them to function autonomously. Prestige could not be passed on and as a result their special status died with them. Where would power now reside? Time would show it would reside in the military.

2 See Historian 1.

It was not until 1918, that a commoner, a man who was not a former samurai or an aristocrat, became Prime Minister. This was Hara Takashi. Hara would be the only pre-1945 Japanese Prime Minister who had been elected and was the leader of the largest party in the Diet. Hara's term as Prime Minister was one of mixed fortunes. [3]

- His government could be credited with some successes:
  - it extended the franchise;
  - progress was made in education;
  - Hara was relatively successful keeping the various factions in business, the bureaucracy, the military and parliament under some sort of control;
  - under Hara, the office of Prime Minister grew in prestige and he proved adept at handling the House of Peers and the Privy Council.
- However, he faced growing difficulties in the post-World War I period:
  - there was growing radicalism inside the country seen in the increasing strength of trade unions and the spread of Marxist ideas;
  - Hara's government willingly used tough police action to curb strikes and socialist activities;
  - the government faced charges of being corrupt and of working with the Zaibatsu. [4]

Hara's government became steadily more unpopular. He was assassinated at Tokyo station on 4 November 1921.

Exercise 6.1 Complete the following passage using the terms below.

In _____, the son of Emperor Meiji, _____, succeeded his father, taking on the name _____. He suffered from poor health, and so his son, _____, assumed the regency in _____. The early part of the reign was known as Japan's _____ years. Modernisation continued and a desire existed for representative _____. Japan had a cabinet system since _____, and in 1889, the Emperor granted his people a _____. However, the Emperor retained his _____ and the _____ was extremely limited. In reality, Japan's style of government remained an _____, that was controlled by elder statesmen known as the _____. These elders came mostly from the _____ and the _____ clans. They made up the Emperor's key advisory body the _____ Council. It was not until _____ that a commoner became Prime Minister. This was _____. He led the largest the party in the _____ . He remained as Prime Minister until his assassination in _____.

DEMOCRACY – PRIVY – DIET – GOLDEN – OLIGARCHY – CONSTITUTION – CHOSHU – HIROHITO – YOSHIHITO – HARA TAKASHI – TAISHO – FRANCHISE – 1921 – 1912 – 1918 – 1921 – 1885 – POWER – GENRO – SATSUMA

3 For more on the premiership of Hara Takashi, see Chapter 7.
4 The importance of the Zaibatsu will be covered more fully in Chapter Eight.

Social and Economic issues by 1921 [5]

During its modernisation, Japan continually faced **raw materials problems**. The country was blessed with only silk and labour. The war dislocated international trade and Japan was forced to produce what it previously imported. This increased its focus on mainland Asia as a source of raw materials (and as a market). Manchuria was a key source of raw materials, especially coal and iron ore. **Lack of oil supplies** was consistently a major issue for Japan's economy. 90% of Japan's oil had to be imported.

Before WWI, Japan was a **debtor nation** with a trade deficit of 65 million yen. By the end of the war it had a trade surplus of 352 million yen, becoming a **creditor nation**. Despite this, Japan needed to inflate its currency to assist its manufacturing expansion, following the US gold embargo, imposed in 1917, and Japan's failure to make use of the 'London money market'. The resultant **inflation** caused the price of rice to rise considerably, leading to the **1918 rice riots** which brought down the Terauchi government.

FIGURE 6.2: ECONOMIC ISSUES FACING JAPAN BY 1921

During the war there was a massive expansion in Japan's **textile industry**. Over 2 million families were part of the **silk** industry, with 90% of output being exported to the US. **Cotton** also expanded, despite the reliance on imported raw materials. The war had put Japan at the forefront of world textile production. By the mid-1930s, 30% of total Japanese manufacturing profits were derived from the textile industry.

Between 1905 and 1920, the number of industrial companies in Japan grew from 10 000 to over 46 000. This expansion was the result of protectionist policies, foreign and domestic loans, and direct foreign investment. The war had given a major boost to Japan's **heavy industry**, in particular **iron and steel, and chemicals**. In 1905, Japan had produced 6000 tons of steel; in 1917 it produced 417 000 tons. A lack of German dyes during the war provided a stimulus to the chemical industry. Japan's commercial and financial business ensured that the balance of payments could stay positive despite the reliance on raw material imports.

Agriculture by 1921 was experiencing mixed fortunes. Yields had increased due to the use of fertilisers, more land being brought under cultivation (only about 15% of Japan's land was suitable for agriculture), and crop diversification. However, farming methods failed to progress and the mechanisation of farming was greatly limited. This was partly the result of capital being directed towards industry, and the plentiful supply of cheap labour in the land. As a result, small-scale cultivation tended to still be the rule by 1921. (See Historian 3 for more on the plight of farmers at this time).

5 See Historians 2 and 3 for additional points on this topic.

Population

Though there had been gains in agriculture, these barely kept pace with Japan's rising population. In 1920, Japan's population was about 56 million, increasing at almost half a million a year; the rate steadily increased over the next two decades.

- Government efforts to encourage emigration had very limited success:
  - the problem was exacerbated by US federal and state immigration laws aimed directly at Japanese migrants.
- As a result, living standards barely changed for most people.

The Rice Riots of 1918: The rice harvests of 1917 and 1918 were very poor and as a result the price of rice rocketed. Government attempts to restrain the price of rice failed and soon a few large exchange houses were able to monopolise the market. The riots started in a small northern village but soon spread to 33 cities and 201 villages. The government shipped in rice from Korea and called out the troops, though some refused to march against people with whom they had strong sympathies. The government finally shipped in supplies from South East Asia, and the riots died out almost as soon as they had begun once there was enough, reasonably priced rice to be had. However, the impact of the rice riots had been great enough to bring down the government of Prime Minister Terauchi.

Trade Unions and labour unrest

Factory working conditions were marked by low wages, long hours, extensive use of female labour and the farming out of work to small establishments. Working conditions in factories and mines echoed the worst of early Industrial Revolution England. Poor housing, disease and widespread industrial accidents were commonplace.

The government realised that workers might try and organise strikes and took early measures to prevent this happening.

- In 1898, 400 members of the Japanese Railways Workers' Union undertook a successful strike, and within three years had 1000 members.
- In 1900, the Public Order and Police Law was passed which threatened any person from going on strike, or who encouraged another person to strike:
  - this law, plus police pressure and the natural conservatism of the many rural people who had moved into factories meant that trade unions remained weak;
  - there were strikes but these were local and spontaneous.
- The trade union movement revived during and shortly after the war:
  - in 1919, the government recognised trade unions, and granted the right to strike;
  - a government commission was set up in 1920 to prepare laws regulating industrial relations.

However, unions made little progress compared to other countries. Workers certainly had grievances but union activism and socialism did not take off. This was mainly due to long-standing institutions and ideals such as Shinto, Emperor-worship, Bushido and nationalist thinking that was strongly promoted. For many workers, unionism and socialism were seen as unpatriotic.

What do the historians have to say about "Political, social and economic issues in Japan by 1921"?

1. S C M Paine

As a result of changes introduced in 1900 and 1907 (see above), navy and army ministers were able to bypass the prime minister with imperial orders in the name of the emperor. Through this system, General Aritomo Yamagata was able to remove opponents and promote those loyal to him into key positions. By doing this, he was able to place a check on popular influences on Japan's government. Yamagata died in 1922, and by the time of his death:

"…his consistent appointments over a lifetime had thoroughly skewed government institutions in favour of army domination and the narrow perspective of army officers without broad education or broad career experience in nonmilitary institutions…" [6]

2. Brett L Walker

Walker highlights the fact that the years after the war produced very mixed fortunes for the Japanese economy and Japanese society.

- With Europe bogged down in the war, Japan was able to grab markets previously supplied by the likes of Britain and France.
- Between 1914 and 1918, Walkers estimates that Japan's industrial output increased almost sevenfold, with cotton exports alone growing by 185%.
- With a shortage of skilled workers, wages rose but this gain was cancelled out by high inflation which saw rice and consumer good prices skyrocket.
- A banking crisis in 1920 hit the economy and led to massive redundancies. Japanese prosperity was being unevenly spread across the population. Walker makes the point that the number of millionaires in Japan increased by 115% between 1915 and 1919.

"…profound economic disparity characterised this period, with Japan's industrial nouveaux riches rising to prominence…" [7]

3. Franz Michael and George Taylor

Michael and Taylor point out the plight of tenant farmers by war's end. Tenant farmers sometimes had to pay up to 50% of their main crop to their landlord as rent. Old attitudes remained as, despite the end of feudalism, landlords still expected to control the villages, and they usually did. The tenant farmer always stood to lose:

"…for he had been deprived of traditional rights and protection and forced to compete for land under capitalist rules…" [8]

6 Paine, S C M, The Japanese Empire: Grand Strategy from the Meiji Restoration to the Pacific War, CUP, Cambridge, 2017, p 86
7 Walker, B L, A Concise History of Japan, CUP, Cambridge, 2015, p 229
8 Michael, F H, and Taylor, G E, The Far East in the Modern World, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, 1964, p 274

Chapter Ten A *will bring together the various elements of Sections 1 and 2 to offer an explanation for the failure of democracy by the time of the Great Depression.*

Section Two focusses on Japanese political life in the 1920s. There will inevitably be some overlap between the four chapters. Clearly, the political influence of the Zaibatsu cannot be separated from the impact of political parties; the challenge of the army to party politics cannot be separated from the attempted exercise of liberal democracy, and so on. It is often difficult to disentangle the elements of one chapter from one another. There will be some duplication of information. ***However, a four-chapter structure has been used to match the layout of the syllabus.***

Chapter Seven
The introduction of limited liberal democracy

Introduction

The signs were looking good for the development of liberal democracy in Japan as the decade of the 1920s opened. In 1921, Hirohito, the Prince Regent, took over imperial responsibilities from his ailing father, Taisho. Hirohito was believed to have liberal views. He was educated, with a deep interest in science, in particular marine biology. He became the first Japanese Emperor to travel outside of the country and his golfing activities with the Prince of Wales in England were widely reported, as was his practice of preferring western attire. The Prince of Wales returned Hirohito's visit in 1922. Following the death of Taisho in 1926, Hirohito became Emperor, beginning the "The Showa Period" – 'enlightened peace'.

There was an air of modernity throughout Japan, at least in the cities:

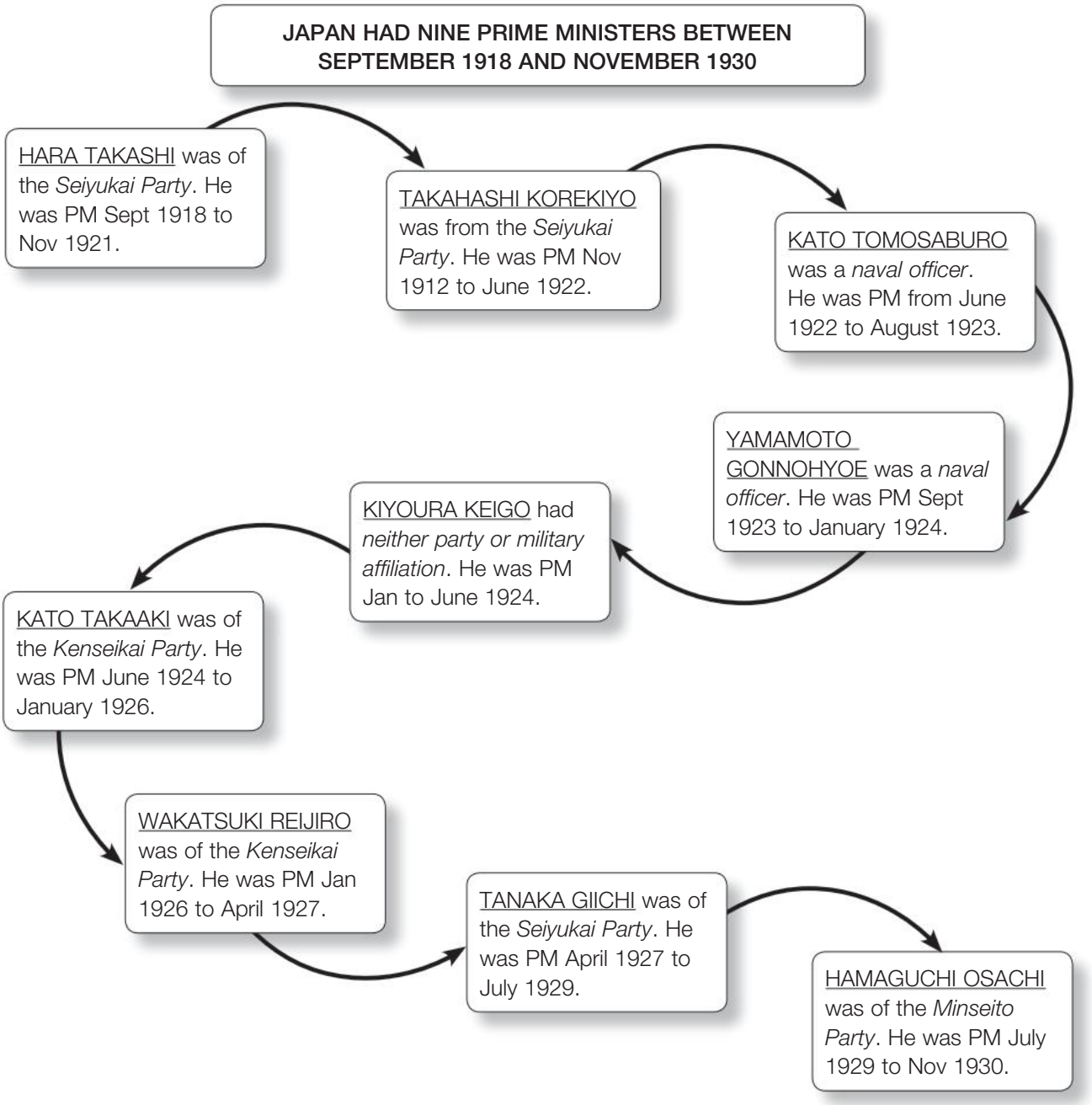
- modern technology had become widespread and increasingly accepted;
- jazz music was heard, cinemas were operating, taxis were beginning to clog up Tokyo streets;
- modern young girls assumed the *moga* style with its cloche hats, bob hair-cuts and short skirts; the shapeless kimono was discarded;
- modern young boys were assuming the *moba* style with its trendy Oxford bags, floppy ties and coloured shirts;
- young people frequented European-style cafes in Tokyo districts like Ginza;
- a popular song of the time was *Tokyo March* which described love lives in four Tokyo areas – Shinjuku, Ginza, Asakura and Marunouchi – such things would have been unheard of a generation earlier;
  Dancing to jazz, drinking in the small hours/ And with the dawn, a flood of tears for the dancer…/ Vast Tokyo is too small for love… [1]

1 Quoted in Harding, C, A History of Modern Japan, Tuttle, Singapore, 2020, p 121

The politics of the 1920s

Japan had nine Prime Ministers between 1918 and 1930. Several of these had specific party affiliations. For a while it seemed that a western-style, liberal democratic system might be evolving. Several Prime Ministers came and went without having any impact; others were of more significance. Figure 7.1 provides a prime ministerial chronology.

Figure 7.1 Japan's Prime Ministers and their parties 1918-1930 [2]



Hara Takashi: Prime Minister September 1918 to November 1921

Since 1918, Japan had had its first 'commoner' as Prime Minister, Hara Takashi. Hara was the first Prime Minister to hold a seat in the lower house, to be the head of the majority party and the first to lead a cabinet comprised almost entirely of party men. (The War and Navy

2 The Kenseikai was renamed Minseito in 1927. Wakatsuki Reijiro would be PM a second time April to December 1931. Hamaguchi Osachi would be PM a second time March to April 1931.

Ministers continued to be serving officers). However, Hara's appointment should not be seen as evidence of Japan heading down the road to parliamentary government:

- Hara had been chosen as Prime Minister by the genro;
- he was an ex-bureaucrat and was seen as the bureaucracy's representative not as the people's top representative;
- he was known for treating his party colleagues in an autocratic manner;
- and Hara surrounded himself with his gang of *soshi*, professional bullies who were supposed to protect him, and who actively intimidated his opponents.

Hara was skilled operator and under him the position of Prime Minister grew in prestige. He managed to establish a working compromise between the various elements of the Japanese system – his party, the Privy Council, the House of Peers and the various economic interests who had influence:

- Hara succeeded in having Seiyukai men put into the House of Peers using the power of imperial appointment;
- he sacked prefectural governors and replaced them with his own people;
- he brought in changes that allowed more civilians to take up positions in the colonial bureaucracy.

Hara's government attempted to deal with the social problems the country faced:

- a Bureau of Social Affairs was established in the Home Ministry;
- to deal with inflation he set up consumers' cooperatives and public markets;
- he promoted the construction of low-cost housing;
- laws were introduced to promote the construction of roads, railways and telegraph lines;
- he extended provisions for higher education;
- Hara's government extended the franchise by reducing the voting (direct) tax qualification from 15 yen to 3 yen;
- this increased the electorate by about 500 000.

The government of Hara found itself confronting major problems by 1920-21:

- though anti-militarist feeling was strong at the time, he still had to contend with a military used to exercising its own foreign policy, seen in decisions made during the Siberian Expedition;
- the economy suffered a major downturn in early 1920 and many businesses collapsed;
- groups ranging from richer landlords to workers to tenant farmers believed the government was not offering them anything, and this was against a background of financial scandals;
- parliamentary behaviour did little to instil confidence and political corruption was known to be widespread;
- Hara's autocratic methods were seen in his government taking major decisions without any consultation of the Diet or his own party;

It also became clear that the Hara cabinet was influenced more than previous governments by the zaibatsu. The Seiyukai Party was close to the Mitsui zaibatsu. The zaibatsu provided

funds for election purposes and bribes, while the government would push laws to protect the zaibatsu from attacks from anti-capitalist elements in the military and from farming interests.

Violence had long been a feature in the Japanese tradition. In late 1921, Yasuda, head to the Yasuda Bank was assassinated. Hara Takashi was assassinated on 4 November 1921.

Exercise 7.1 Indicate whether the following statements are true or false.

1	There was every sign that Crown Prince Hirohito was a reactionary who was likely to stand in the way of any modern or liberal attitudes.	TRUE / FALSE
2	In many ways, Japan in the early 1920s seemed to be adopting some of the modern more carefree behaviours of people in western countries.	TRUE / FALSE
3	Throughout the 1920s, most of Japan's Prime Ministers were leading members of political parties rather than military or bureaucratic figures.	TRUE / FALSE
4	As with previous Prime Ministers, Hara Takashi was from an aristocratic background, and he was a member of the House of Peers.	TRUE / FALSE
5	Hara's time as Prime Minister provided strong evidence that Japanese political life was heading down the road to western-style parliamentary government.	TRUE / FALSE
6	Under Hara, the position of Prime Minister increased in prestige and importance, and he proved to be a shrewd political operator.	TRUE / FALSE
7	During the premiership of Hara, the Japanese economy experienced steady, uninterrupted prosperity which did much to increase the government's popularity.	TRUE / FALSE
8	It became clear during Hara's time as Prime Minister that the zaibatsu were becoming increasingly influential in political life.	TRUE / FALSE
9	As Japanese politicians adopted high standards of parliamentary behaviour, it was clear that the respect people had for politicians was growing.	TRUE / FALSE
10	Anti-militarist sentiments were quite strong during the period of Hara's government but this did not mean that military influence on politics was on the decline.	TRUE / FALSE

Between Prime Minister Hara Takashi and Prime Minister Kato Takaaki

Hara was followed as Prime Minister by his former Finance Minister, Takahashi Korekiyo; he served as Prime Minister for seven months. Takahashi had stronger anti-militarist sentiments than Hara and he was closely identified with the zaibatsu. He proved unable to dominate his Seiyukai Party, which had split by mid-1922. His government was also unable to drag the country out of the economic malaise it was suffering. and was equally unable to repel attacks from either house of parliament. Takashi Korekiyo resigned in June 1922.

Over the next two years, three non-party Prime Ministers followed in quick succession: Admiral Kato Tomosaburo, Admiral Count Yamamoto Gonnohyde and Viscount Kiyoura Keigo. None was able to tackle Japan's economic problems and they presided over foreign policy setbacks, such as the return of Shandong and the end of the Siberian Expedition. Reconstruction following the 1923 Tokyo earthquake set off a mild inflationary move.

The 1923 earthquake: On 1 September 1923, Japan was hit with a massive earthquake that measured 7.9 on the Richter Scale. Large parts of Tokyo and Yokohama were totally destroyed. Over 140 000 people were killed due to the earthquake and the firestorms that spread through the cities. Most buildings at this time were made of wood. Surrounding areas suffered landslides and tsunamis. Over half of Tokyo's population became homeless. The earthquake had major political implications (which will be examined more fully in Chapter 10A). However, in the immediate aftermath of the quake, racist and anti-foreign feeling took hold as scapegoats were sought and conspiracy theories appeared. Koreans were accused of being behind the fires and of even planning to overthrow the government. In the violence that followed, over 6000 Koreans and 700 Chinese were brutally murdered in mob attacks.

Prime Minister Kato Takaaki: June 1924 to January 1926

Kato had been a supporter of constitutional government for some time. He supported manhood suffrage and cabinets based on parties. Kato's government attempted advance towards representative government:

- the May 1925 Universal Manhood Suffrage Act increased the size of the electorate from three to fourteen million;
  - nearly all males over 25 now had the vote;
  - any students who gained the vote had to vote in their home districts to prevent radicalism in the cities;
- Kato's attempt to limit the powers of the House of Peers failed

Kato also attempted reforms in other areas:

- he reduced the size of the bureaucracy;
- the Agriculture and Commerce Ministry was divided into two;
- a Bureau of Emigration was set up to assist emigration to those areas which still allowed Japanese in;
- four army divisions were eliminated and 2000 officers were removed from active duty;
  - however, many ex-army officers were moved into schools to act as military instructors;
  - these former officers were not renowned for fostering liberal values.

As his Foreign Minister, Kato chose Kujiro Shidehara:

- Shidehara tried to provide Japan with an internationalist foreign policy;
- he sought an appeasement of China to this end cancelled the Lansing-Ishii note of 1917;

- anti-foreign feeling in China in the mid-1920s was aimed far more at Britain rather than as it had been against Japan;
- relations with the Soviet Union improved as diplomatic relations were established, fisheries issues were settled and Japan evacuated the northern part of Sakhalin in 1925.

However, there were factors working against liberal developments:

- Kato's party had close links to the Mitsubishi *zaibatsu*:
  - both Kato and Shidehara were relatives by marriage of the Iwasaki family (Mitsubishi);
- despite his electoral success, Kato was still dependent on the bureaucracy and the House of Peers;
- any liberal trends were halted by the Peace Preservation Law of May 1925:
  - this was aimed at the threat of communism but soon had a wider impact:
  - it gave police wide powers of arrest and imprisonment of those guilty of 'dangerous thoughts' or seeking to change 'the Japanese way';
  - the law proved effective at attacking left-wing university students, news editors and trade unions on the ground that they were 'too radical' and thus guilty of 'dangerous thoughts'.

Prime Minister Wakatsuki Reijuro to Hamaguchi Oaschi

Kato died in 1926 and was followed by Wakatsuki Reijiro, also of the Kenseikai Party. Party government and a form of modified liberalism seemed to be taking hold. However, Wakatsuki faced major opposition from militarists which he might have been able to withstand but for the banking crisis of 1927:

- an announcement that the Watanabe Bank was bankrupt led to a run on all banks and financial panic followed as people tried to withdraw their deposits:
- 37 smaller banks failed, soon taken over by zaibatsu;
- Wakatsuki resigned in April 1927.

On 20 April 1927, General Tanaka Giichi, leader of the Seiyukai Party became Prime Minister. Measures were put in place to steady the banking situation. Tanaka's government was favoured by the military and the Privy Council. Tanaka was able to form an entirely party cabinet (apart from the War and Navy Ministries) but he lacked a majority in the Diet. His government lost the election and now faced a hostile diet.

- Tanaka Giichi was very close to the Mitsui zaibatsu:
  - with universal suffrage, elections had become even more expensive and so parties had even greater need of zaibatsu funds;
  - corruption and bribery grew even more;
- Giichi's government took a harder line on China:
  - however, Japanese troops sent to protect Japanese interests in northern China and Manchuria, took things into their own hands;
  - the Manchurian warlord, Zhang Zuolin (Change Tso-lin), was murdered; [3]
  - the government faced a scandal over the secrecy of the report into the army's activities in Manchuria in 1928;

3 See Chapter Ten.

- the Emperor demanded that army discipline over the incident be enforced but Tanaka could not carry out his Emperor's wishes and so was forced to resign.

In July 1929, Hamaguchi Osachi of the Minseito Party (formerly the Kenseikai Party) became Prime Minister. Hamaguchi was honest and determined to maintain party rule. His service minister, General Ugaki and Admiral Takarabe were moderate, and his Minister of Finance, Inouye Junnosuke had anti-militarist sentiments. Hamaguchi sought economic reform over military adventures. However, events overtook as the Great Depression took hold from late 1929. In November 1930 he survived an assassination attempt but was forced to step down from office. (He returned as Prime Minister in March 1931 but poor health forced him to resign in April. He died a few months later).

Exercise 7.2 Match the description on the left with the personality on the right.

1	I was an internationalist foreign minister in the mid-1920s. I had marriage links to Mitsubishi.		KATO TAKAAKI
2	I was the first commoner to become Prime Minister. I was assassinated in November 1921.		YAMAMOTO GONNOHYDE
3	I became Prime Minister just before the depression. I was the victim of an assassination attempt.		HIROHITO
4	I was Prime Minister for six months in 1924 but had neither a military nor a party affiliation.		KUJIRO SHIDEHARA
5	As Prime Minister, I had liberal tendencies but my term ended due to the Banking Crisis of 1927.		TANAKA GIICHI
6	My government introduced the 1925 Universal Suffrage Act that greatly increased the electorate.		HARA TAKASHI
7	Formerly a finance minister, I followed Hara Takashi was Prime Minister.		KIYOURA KEIGO
8	I was a naval officer who became Prime Minister briefly in late 1923 to early 1924.		TAKAHASHI KOREKIYO
9	I lost control of troops that had been to northern China in 1928 and tried to keep things secret.		WAKATSUKI REIJURO
10	I raised democratic hopes when I became Prince Regent as it was believed I had liberal tendencies.		HAMAGUCHI OSACHI

What do this historians have to say about "The introduction of limited liberal democracy"?

1. Richard Storry

In describing Japan in the 1920s, Storry compares the social scene in that country to what was happening in western society where a 'Jazz Age' was happening. He refers to 'moga' and 'moba' styles and more relaxed social behaviour that was evident amongst the young. The late Taisho and early Showa periods, he notes, are referred to by the Japanese as the era of "Ero, Guro, Nansensu" – ie eroticism, grotesquerie and nonsense. However, as Storry also points out, such developments caused great disquiet amongst older and more conservative people, who sincerely worried at:

"…the seeming frivolity and individualism of the young. The very air hummed with confusion – scandals in the Diet, 'dangerous thoughts'… all manner of new ideas, new fashions, new technical inventions pouring in from abroad…" [4]

2. Franz Michael and George Taylor

Michael and Taylor comment on the state of Japanese politics during the premiership of General Tanaka Giichi. Parliamentary behaviour reached new depths and the public's contempt for its politicians grew. Tanaka, himself, was accused of taking bribes and seizing Secret Service funds during the Siberian Expedition. The charges were not proved. It did not really matter whether such accusations were true or not. Scandals and charges of scandals were becoming the parliamentary norm in Japanese politics.

"…they were typical of the sort of argument that passed for parliamentary discussion, and they reflected the general belief that favouritism, bribery, corruption, and abuse of power were the price of party government…" [5]

4 Storry, R, A History of Modern Japan, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1973, p 166
5 Michael, F H, and Taylor, G E, The Far East in the Modern World, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, 1964, p 541

Chapter Ten A *will bring together the various elements of Sections 1 and 2 to offer an explanation for the failure of democracy by the time of the Great Depression.*

Section Two focusses on Japanese political life in the 1920s. There will inevitably be some overlap between the four chapters. Clearly, the political influence of the Zaibatsu cannot be separated from the impact of political parties; the challenge of the army to party politics cannot be separated from the attempted exercise of liberal democracy, and so on. It is often difficult to disentangle the elements of one chapter from one another. There will be some duplication of information. ***However, a four-chapter structure has been used to match the layout of the syllabus.***

Chapter Eight
Political influence of the zaibatsu

Background of the zaibatsu

The leadership of the industrial movement following the Meiji Restoration tended to come from Japan's old warrior class rather than from the pre-Restoration class of merchants, the Chonin. There had been some inter-marriage between samurai and merchant families. However, the post-1868 oligarchs sought to make business respectable for ex-samurai and wanted leadership from this group.

- The oligarchs sought and trusted men 'of their own kind:
  - this was a key reason why they recruited ex-samurai into commerce, industry, banking and foreign trade;
  - their values differed little if at all.
- These former samurai had accepted Japan's former social structure:
  - in Japan's new world, they did not seek to limit or control the power of the government; rather they sought its 'paternalistic protection'.

Following the Meiji Restoration, it was the government that promoted and managed the various industrial enterprises. However, once these enterprises were established, the government turned them over to a small number of private companies. These favoured companies became the zaibatsu: [1]

- there were several zaibatsu but the four principal ones were: *Mitsui, Mitsubishi, Sumitomo* and *Yasuda*;
  - other smaller zaibatsu included *Kawasaki* and *Shibuzawa* who were focussed on the areas of finance and banking;
  - *Asano* and *Okura* were focussed on industry;
- the business interest of the zaibatsu became extremely wide-ranging and extended into areas such as foreign trade, mining, shipbuilding, heavy industry and commercial interests.

1 Zaibatsu roughly translated means 'money-clique'.

Some of the zaibatsu were organised as purely family affairs with all the stock of the company kept within the hands of one family.

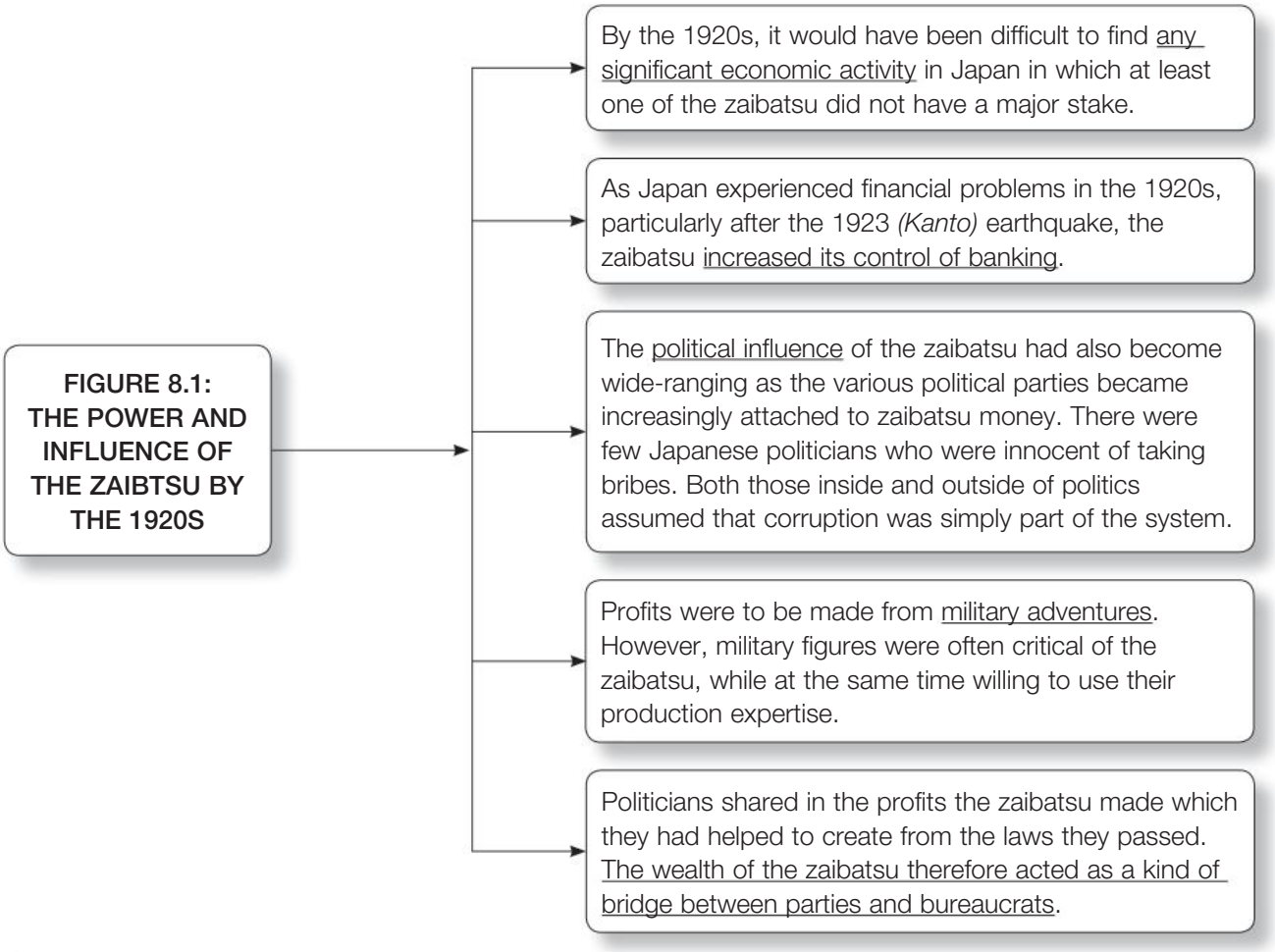
How did the zaibatsu operate?

The zaibatsu felt some obligation to the government, but this was accompanied by an identity of interest between them and the political oligarchy. Thus, the zaibatsu were reluctant to become directly involved in politics:

- however, the different zaibatsu were rivals with each other and so it suited their interests to side with different figures in the oligarchy;
  - Mitsui aligned itself with Ito Hirobumi (the main influence on the formation of Japan's constitution in 1889);
  - Mitsubishi sided with Matsukata Masayoshi; [2]
- once the Diet was established, the zaibatsu had a vested interest in favouring or opposing legislation that came before it;
- opportunities were opened for bribery and corruption, which by the 1920s would occur on a large scale.

Figure 8.1 outlines the influence of the zaibatsu

Figure 8.1 Zaibatsu influence and power



2 Matsukata Masayoshi was Prime Minister twice, 1891-92, and 1896-98.

The activities of the zaibatsu in the 1920s

Zaibatsu leaders tended to avoid becoming openly involved in politics. It was considered dangerous to openly oppose officials as that could have a detrimental effect on opportunities for profits. Zaibatsu leaders tended to see political parties as things that could be used, to be 'influenced' by zaibatsu wealth and organisation. One result of the decline of genro influence over time was the increased influence of the zaibatsu.

- The zaibatsu certainly exerted more influence than ever before during the premiership of Hara (1918-21);
  - Hara's party, Seiyukai, was strongly backed by Mitsui, to the point that the government was called a 'Mitsui government';
  - the Hara cabinet-zaibatsu alliance was one of convenience and not of principle;
  - the zaibatsu provided funds for elections which were becoming more expensive as the electorate grew;
  - the Hara cabinet passed pro-business legislation and was able to shield it from attacks from any anti-capitalist elements in the army or on the land;
  - when the economy went into a decline in 1920, the Hara cabinet tried to rescue as many of the bankrupt businesses as it could; in the end the zaibatsu were able to use their influence in the government to take over many of the smaller businesses.
- Zaibatsu influence was equally influential on the government of Kato Takaaki whose Kenseikai Party was backed by Mitsubishi:
  - Kato and his foreign minister, Kujiro Shidehara, were both linked by marriage to the Iwasaki family which owned Mitsubishi;
  - a policy of Kato was to separate the Agriculture and Commerce Ministry into two new ministries: a Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, and a Ministry of Commerce and Industry, a move that was strongly supported by the zaibatsu.

In 1927, Japan experienced a major banking crisis. As financial crises often are, the 1927 crisis is incredibly complicated. In essence, the crisis began when the government sought to exchange "earthquake bills", issued after the Kanto earthquake in 1923, for national treasury bonds.

- The zaibatsu became involved because Mitsui and Mitsubishi were attempting to bring down the Suzuki company of Kobe:
  - the government asked the zaibatsu to refrain calling in their loans from the Bank of Taiwan which was financing Suzuki, and which was overloaded with earthquake bonds;
  - the zaibatsu refused the request.
- This resulted in all Bank of Taiwan branches closing down. A panic ensued and there was a run on all of Japan's banks:
  - Prime Minister Wakatsuki Reijio resigned and was succeeded by Tanaka Giichi;
  - the new government secured government funds to help the Bank of Taiwan and the Bank of Japan;
  - the zaibatsu and those banks who had some political influence were saved while many ordinary depositors lost everything.

The crisis is revealing in what it shows about zaibatsu behaviour and influence:

- between 1926 and 1929, the number of ordinary banks in Japan fell from 1417 to 874;
- the ordinary banks had been absorbed by the zaibatsu during the panic;
- this was a panic that some of the zaibatsu had largely brought about;
- Mitsui took over the business interests of Suzuki.

Zaibatsu influence continued under the cabinet of Prime Minister Hamagachi who took over from Tanaka Giichi in July 1929.

- Hamagachi's Minseito Party had close links with Mitsubishi.
- Kujiro Shidehara was again foreign minister and he was related by marriage to the Iwasaki family who controlled Mitsubishi.
- The Minister of Finance, Inouye Junnosuke, was the son-in-law of the head of the family that controlled Mitsubishi.

Exercise 8.1 Answer the following questions in the spaces provided.

1	Why were the oligarchs keen on having former samurai take the lead in commercial, banking and industrial developments?	
2	How did the zaibatsu come about?	
3	Name the leading four zaibatsu.	
4	What was the extent of direct zaibatsu involvement in Japanese political life?	
5	What was arguably the most pernicious impact of the zaibatsu's connections to the political players in Japan in the 1920s?	
6	Which parties did Mitsui and Mitsubishi back during the 1920s?	

7	How did the zaibatsu and the Hara government provide mutual benefits for each other?	
8	How was the Iwasaki family connected to the Kato Takaaki premiership?	
9	What was the role of the zaibatsu in the 1927 banking crisis?	
10	What close links did the Hamagachi government have with Mitsubishi?	

What do the historians have to say about "Political influence of the zaibatsu"?

1. Gordon Greenwood

By 1929, the zaibatsu were arguably at the zenith of their political and economic influence.

- Greenwood describes how the zaibatsu were able to corrupt members of the Diet and sway cabinet decisions.
- The power of the zaibatsu was significant in preventing the passing of reformist legislation such as anti-trust laws.
- Mitsui favoured the Seiyukai Party with its pro-expansionist foreign policy, while Mitsubishi preferred the Kenseikai Party, whose Foreign Minister, Shidehara, pursued a more cooperative international foreign policy.
- Leading members of the zaibatsu had links with various privileged groups in Japan.

However, it was not all plain sailing for the zaibatsu as the decade was coming to an end and they often faced hostility from the ultra-nationalists and younger, radical army officers:

"…The conservative nationalists resented zaibatsu support for the political parties while the radical army officers, who believed in a form of State socialism, disliked their economic independence and their plutocratic status…" [3]

3 Greenwood, G, *The Modern World: A History of Our Time, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1973, p 652*

2. Andrew Gordon

Gordon develops Greenwood's point about the wealth and the *plutocratic status* of the zaibatsu. They were seen as being corrupt, in cahoots with the governing parties to get what they wanted, and quite willing to hurt the country if there were financial gains to be made.

- As the depression took hold, it became clear that Japan would have to leave 'the gold standard' and devalue its currency:
  - this was a policy several countries were taking at the time.
- In anticipation of this, zaibatsu banks sold yen for American dollars.
- When the Japanese currency was indeed devalued, the zaibatsu banks then quickly sold their dollars for yen, earning massive profits.

This reinforced the view among many Japanese that the country's business leaders (and their political allies) were:

"…greedy and selfish. They were profiting handsomely by selling out the country during a depression that was impoverishing everyone else…" [4]

4 Gordon, A, A Modern History of Japan: From Tokugawa Times to the Present, OUP, New York, 2003, p 183

Chapter Ten A *will bring together the various elements of Sections 1 and 2 to offer an explanation for the failure of democracy by the time of the Great Depression.*

Section Two focusses on Japanese political life in the 1920s. There will inevitably be some overlap between the four chapters. Clearly, the political influence of the Zaibatsu cannot be separated from the impact of political parties; the challenge of the army to party politics cannot be separated from the attempted exercise of liberal democracy, and so on. It is often difficult to disentangle the elements of one chapter from one another. There will be some duplication of information. ***However, a four-chapter structure has been used to match the layout of the syllabus.***

Chapter Nine

Impact of the Seiyukai and other political parties on Japanese political systems and governments

Introduction

Political parties first began to appear in Japan in the 1880s. Their development was slow, and it would take many years before a party leader assumed the power and influence, exercised by the genro (oligarchs) after the Meiji Restoration. The oligarchs were opposed to western liberal political institutions and the idea of political parties along the lines common in western liberal democracies. The aims of the oligarchs in these years were:

- to preserve their own power;
- maintain the status of the emperor;
- ensure that government decisions did not become subject to the will of popular majorities.

To these ends, the oligarchs sought to stifle free speech and the press, and keep tight control over political meetings. However, the demand for a more inclusive political process could not be wiped out completely. Two early figures who pioneered political organisation were Itagaki Taisuke and Okuma Shigenobu.

- In 1881, Itagaki set up the Jiyuto or Liberal party. This party demanded:
  - constitutional government;
  - the protection of civil rights.
- In 1882, following public anger at his revelation of government corruption, Okuma set up the Kaishinto or Progressive party:
  - Okuma was demanding a British-style constitutional system.

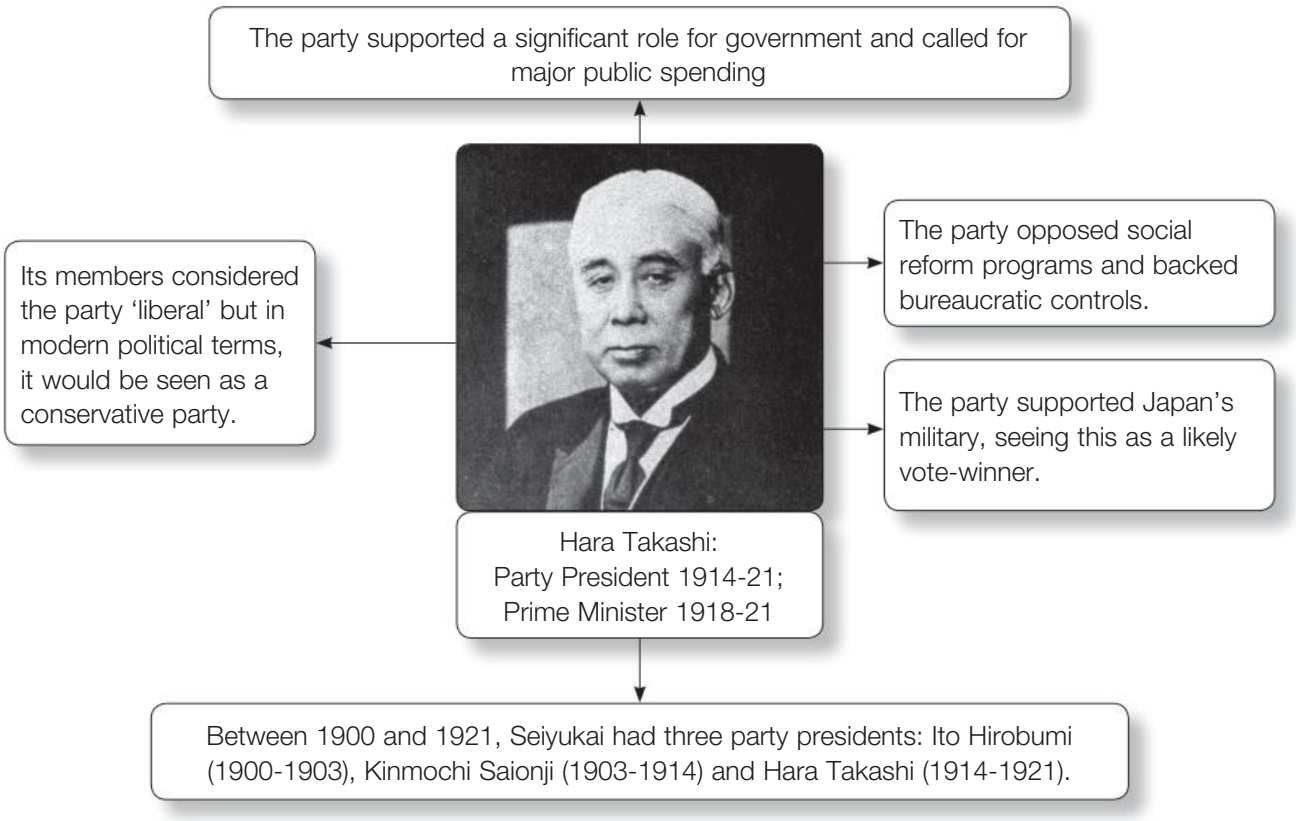
Other parties began to appear in the later years of the 19th century. The Rikken Teiseito appeared demanding a strong monarchical system. However, these early parties should not be viewed as parties organised along western lines. “Parties” at this stage were more groupings which gathered behind a particular leader.

Once Japan had a constitution (1889), more parties began to appear. However, political parties in Japan at this time were very fluid. Party programs and followings were often changing. Names also changed, eg Okuma's Kaishinto party became the Shimpoto party, and then sections of Itagaki's Jiyuto Party and Okuma's Shimpoto joined to form the Kenseito and this would eventually be transformed into the Seiyukai.

Seiyukai

The *Rikken Seiyukai* – Constitutional Association of Political Friendship – was founded on 15 September 1900 by Ito Hirobumi. It is generally referred to simply as Seiyukai. Seiyukai was the most significant party in the Diet between 1900 and 1921. Figure 9.1 outlines its key stance on broader issues.

Figure 9.1 Outline of Seiyukai policy



Seiyukai provided Japan with six Prime Ministers between 1900 and 1932:

- Party founder Ito Hirobumi was PM from October 1900 to May 1901; [1]
- Saionji Kinmochi was PM twice, from January 1906 to July 1908, and from December 1912 to February 1913. [2]
- Hara Takashi was PM from September 1918 to November 1921;
- Takahashi Korekiyo was PM from November 1921 to June 1922;
- Tanaka Giichi was PM from April 1927 to July 1929;
- Inukai Tsuyoshi was PM from December 1931 to May 1932.

1 Ito Hirobumi had been PM on three earlier occasions: 1885-88, 1892-96 and again in 1898.
2 See Chapter Ten for more on Saionji Kinmochi.

For details on the Premierships of Hara Takashi, Takahashi Korekiyo and Tanaka Giichi, **refer to Chapter Seven**. For details on the Premiership of Inukai Tsuyoshi, **refer to Chapter Eleven**.

For details of the Mitsui zaibatsu involvement with Seiyukai, **refer to Chapter Eight**.

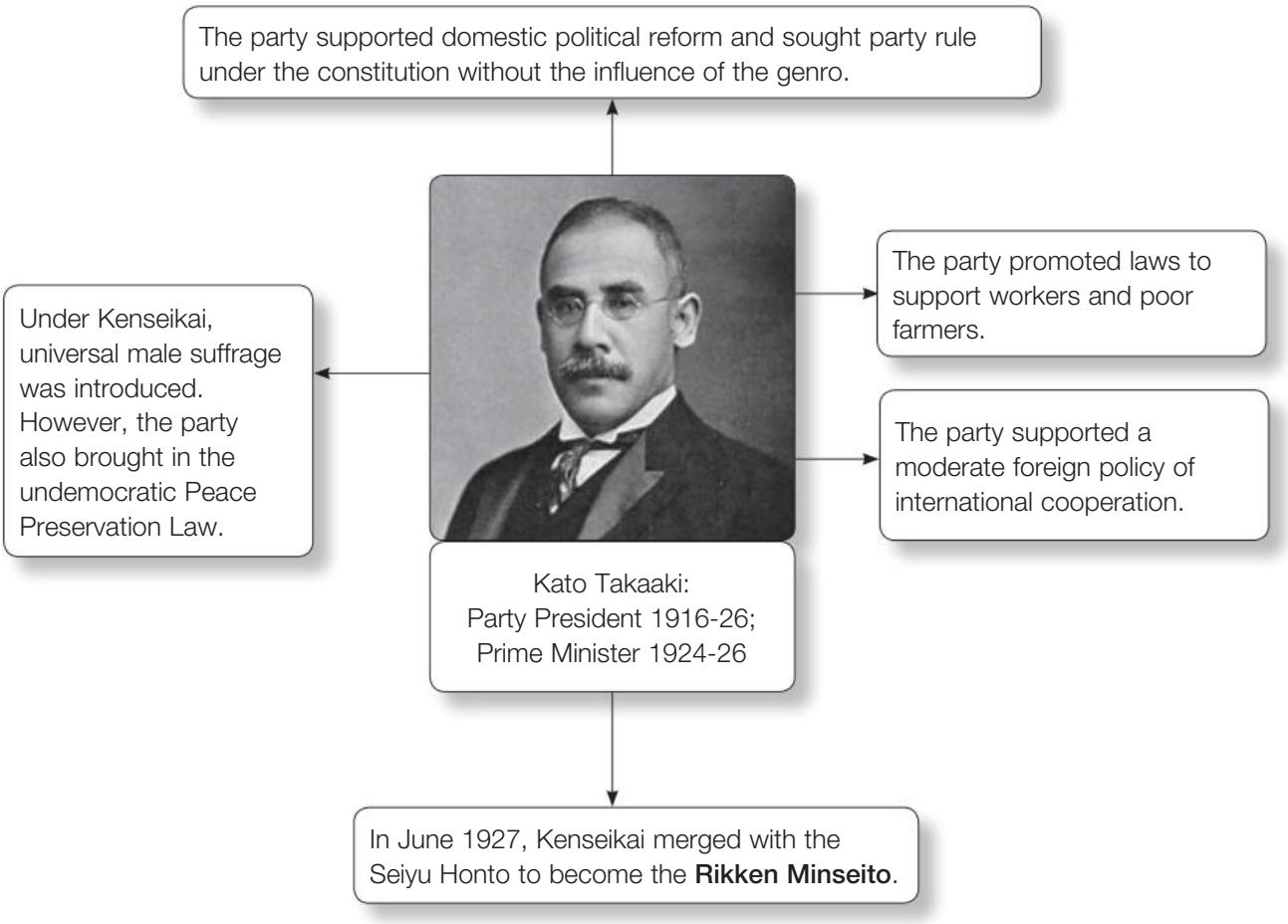
Kenseikai/ Minseito

Kenseikai was the second main political party in 1920s Japan. It was formed on 10 October 1916 following the combining of three other political groups – Rikken Doshikai, Chuseikai and the Koyu Club.

- Its first leader was Kato Takaaki:
  - at the time of its creation, Kenseikai had a majority of seats in the Diet.
- However, rather than party leader Kato Takaaki being appointed Prime Minister, the job went to General Terauchi Masatake.
  - as a result, Kenseikai called a no-confidence vote in Terauchi, the Diet was dissolved and new elections called;
  - Kenseikai would not be in a position to take government again for almost a decade.

Figure 9.2 gives an outline of Kenseikai policy.

Figure 9.2 Outline of Kenseikai policy



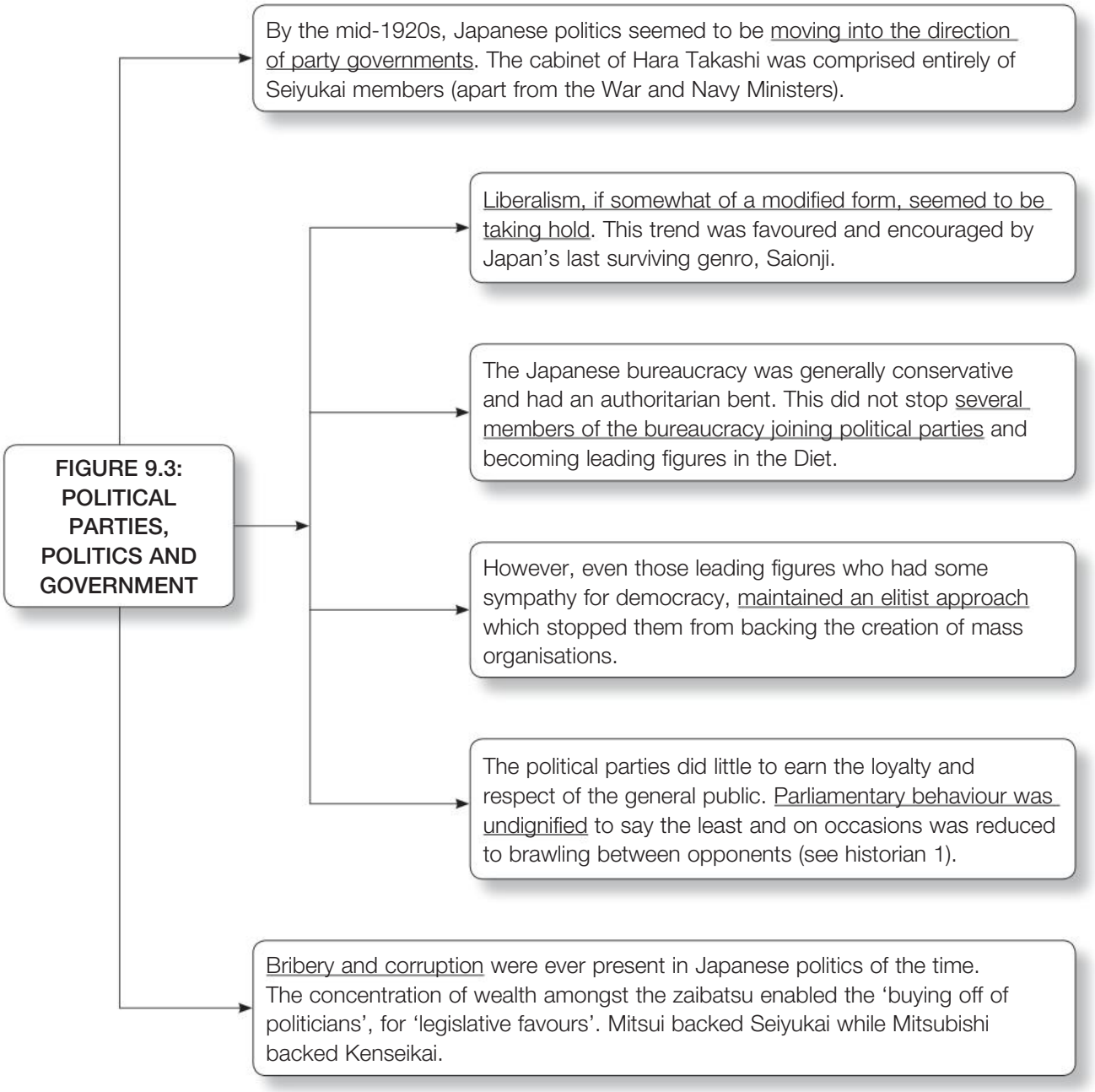
Kenseikai provided Japan with four Prime Ministers between 1916 and 1931:

- Party founder Kato Takaaki was PM from June 1924 to January 1926;
- Wakatsuki Reijiro was PM from January 1926 to April 1927;
- Osachi Hamaguchi was PM from July 1929 to April 1931;
- Wakatsuki Reijiro was again PM from April 1931 to December 1931.

For details on the Premiership of Kato Takaaki, the first Premiership of Wakatsuki Reijiro and Osachi Hamaguchi, **refer to Chapter Seven**. For details on the second Premiership of Wakatsuki Reijiro, **refer to Chapter Eleven**.

For details of the Mitsubishi zaibatsu involvement with Kenseikai, **refer to Chapter Eight**.

Figure 9.3 The impact of parties on politics and government



Communist Party

There were other smaller parties at the time, but their impact on Japanese politics and government was minimal. A Japanese Communist Party was founded in 1922. It was declared illegal from the start; its opposition to the rule of the Emperor was seen as nothing less than treachery.

- Following the Kanto earthquake, rumours and conspiracy theories involving Koreans and members of the Communist Party planning a revolutionary government spread; [3]
  - there was a mass police round-up at the time of communists, anarchists and other left-wingers;
  - many were murdered after their arrest;
  - news of the murders did not leak out until several weeks later, and those responsible received only minor punishment.
- The Peace Preservation Law which targeted any who were guilty of 'dangerous thoughts' was often used against communists:
  - an example is the government mass arrests of communists on 15 March 1928.
  - (see historian 2).

Exercise 9.1 Rearrange the terms on the right. Match them with the meanings listed on the left.

1	I was the first leader of the Kenseikai Party formed in 1916 and Prime Minister 1924-1926.		NSTKEOEI
2	My party was formed in 1922 and membership of it could be very dangerous.		TIMIUS
3	In June 1927, the Kenseikai Party combined with the Seiyu Honto to become this party.		UNMTMCOSI
4	I was the last of the genro. I was once President of Seiyukai.		OSJAIIN
5	This party was formed in 1900 and went to provide Japan with six PMs between 1900 and 1932.		BAUZTSIA
6	This organisation was one of the zaibatsu and gave its support to seiyukai.		SITOMNIE
7	Business conglomerates like Mitsui and Mitsubishi were examples of this.		RUOMIBIH

3 See Chapter Seven.

8	This political party introduced universal male suffrage but also the Peace Preservation Law.		AKTAIKA
9	Several parties combined to form this party which would eventually be transformed into the seiyukai.		SEKEAKNII
10	I founded seiyukai in 1900 and in my lifetime, I was Prime Minister of Japan on four occasions.		YUSIKAEI

What do the historians have to say about "Impact of the Seiyukai and other political parties on Japanese political systems and governments"?

1. Richard Storry

Storry makes the point that in both houses of the Japanese parliament – the Diet and the House of Peers – there were men of honesty and integrity. However, the general tone of parliament, he argues *was deplorable*. Bribery and corruption were ever present. Inside the parliament, the parties were constantly hurling charges of corruption at each other, charges that were often quite justified. The Japanese public, who generally supported the traditions of decorum and social harmony, were shocked by the parliamentary behaviour of the 1920s. Storry concludes:

"…The fact is the main parties in the Diet dug their own graves… Attacks and counter-attacks… were necessarily personal, and they frequently reduced the Diet proceedings to a rowdy brawl…" [4]

2. Shigeru Mizuki

For students who would like to consult a quite different sort of book on this period of Japanese history, Shigeru Mizuki's *"Showa: 1926-1939"* is well worth a look. Shigeru Mizuki is a renowned artist, famous for his **manga** work, related to 'yokai', or Japanese supernatural beings such as ghosts and goblins. His manga version of the events of this period brings out what the events of the time meant for ordinary Japanese people. Here Mizuki combines his artwork and his narrative with his characters' dialogue to explain the mass arrest of communists on 15 March 1928.

"…On March 15, the government applied the public security Preservation Law on a large scale for the first time…

It says here that 1600 communists have been rounded up.

Good thing you're not a communist.

I've heard they're being tortured by the Special Higher Police.

I don't even want to think about it.

The March 15 incident allows Tanaka to increase the public security Preservation Law's maximum penalty to the death sentence…" [5]

4 Storry, R, A History of Modern Japan, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1973, p 174
5 Mizuki, Shigeru, Showa 1926-1939: A History of Japan, Drawn and Quarterly, Canada, 2016, pp 92-3

Chapter Ten A *will bring together the various elements of Sections 1 and 2 to offer an explanation for the failure of democracy by the time of the Great Depression.*

Section Two focusses on Japanese political life in the 1920s. There will inevitably be some overlap between the four chapters. Clearly, the political influence of the Zaibatsu cannot be separated from the impact of political parties; the challenge of the army to party politics cannot be separated from the attempted exercise of liberal democracy, and so on. It is often difficult to disentangle the elements of one chapter from one another. There will be some duplication of information. ***However, a four-chapter structure has been used to match the layout of the syllabus.***

Chapter Ten
Challenges of the genro, bureaucracy and army to party politics

The role of the genro and the bureaucracy

Even after the constitution of 1889 had been introduced, and certainly before, the real political power in Japan resided in the hands of respected elder statesmen. These men were referred to as the **genro**: [1]

- these men were former court nobles or former samurai who came mainly from the western clans:
  - some came from the Choshu, especially in the army, eg Yamaguchi;
  - some came from the Satsuma, especially in the navy, eg Kagoshima;
  - others came from clans such as the Tosa and the Hizen but their influence became less as the military grew in importance.
- the position of genro was not stipulated in the constitution: [2]
  - their power was informal and so not limited by constitutional rules;
  - the constitution was also vague on the powers and responsibilities of the Prime Minister, the cabinet and the bureaucracy which further allowed the genro to wield their influence;
- the result was that the genro wielded considerable power and exercised a decisive influence on the formulation of government policy;
  - the power and influence of the genro are outlined in Figure 10.1.

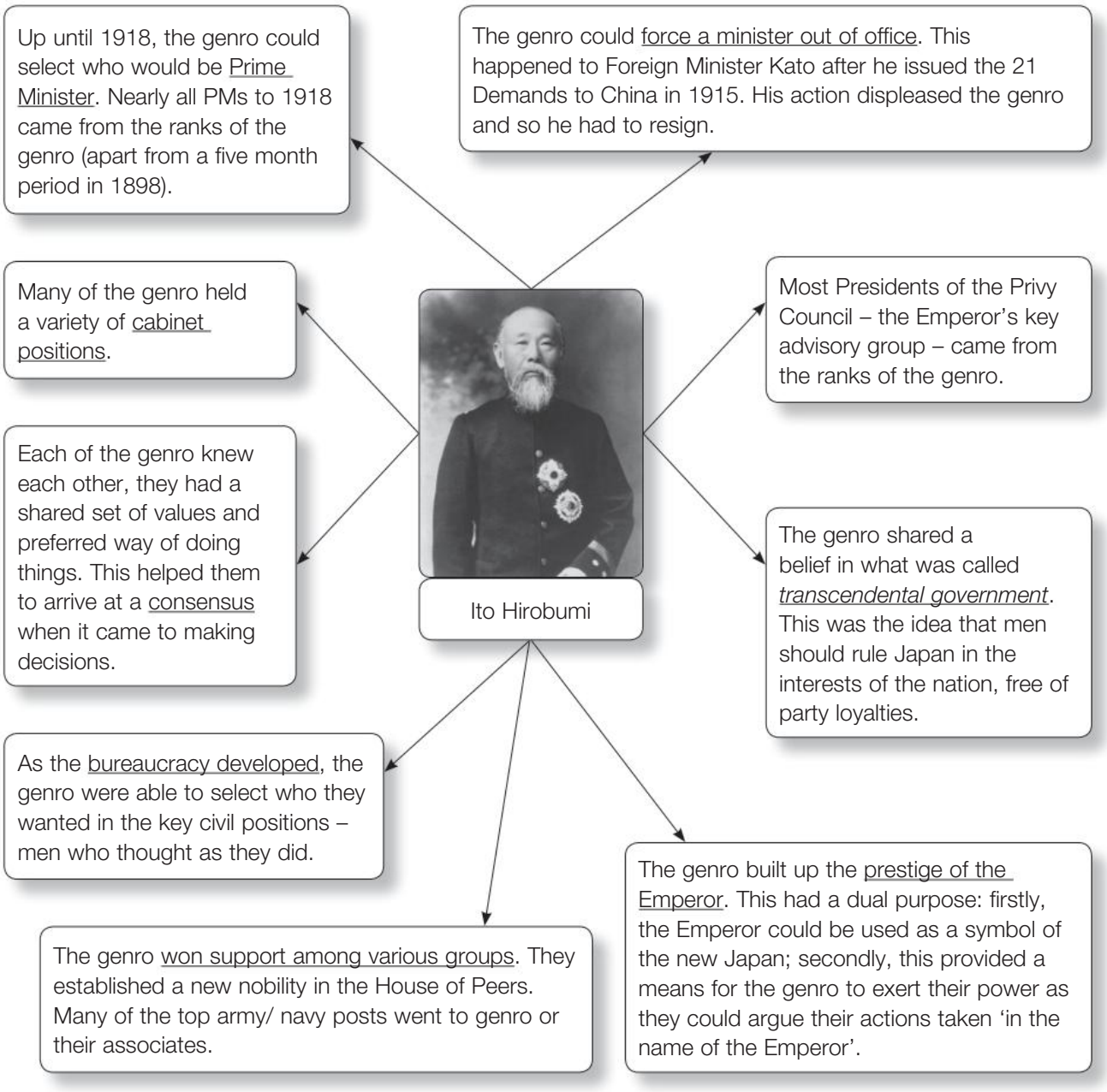
Genro power and influence existed on the basis of their prestige and the respect that they received within the country. However, as they gradually died off, that prestige that had enabled them to use their power without legal limitations, could not be passed on.

1 Paine says there were nine. Greenwood suggests there were eight.
2 The genro are referred to as the oligarchs in many books.

Some of the leading genro included:

- Yamagata Aritomo (1838-1922):
  - Yamagata was a marshal in the Japanese army and was important in promoting military interests and separating civil and military power;
- Ito Hirobumi (1841-1909):
  - Ito was the key framer of the constitution and went on to form the seiyukai.
- Matsukata Masayoshi (1835-1924):
  - Matsukata played a major role in shaping Japan's financial and economic systems.
- Saionji Kinmochi (1849-1940), the last entrant into the group:
  - Saionji held more liberal sentiments, was involved in the seiyukai and towards the end of his career tried, unsuccessfully, to limit army influence.

Figure 10.1 The power and influence of the genro

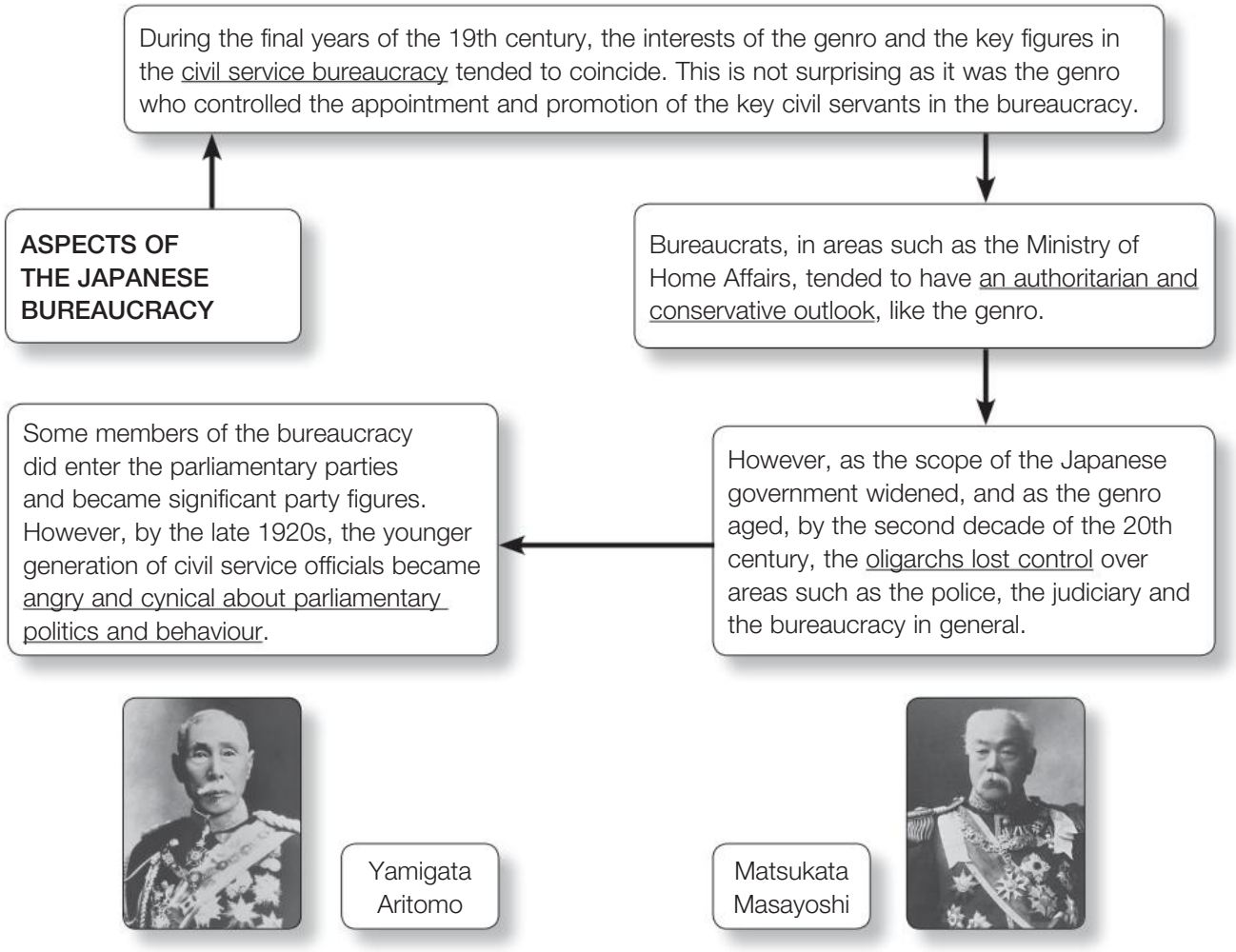


Change was occurring in Japan and the influence of the genro declined.

- By the time of the start of World War I, there were only three original genro still alive: Yamagata (aged 76), Matsukata (79) and Saionji (65).
- It was becoming more difficult for the genro to find a Prime Minister of whom they fully approved:
  - in 1916 General Terauchi became Prime Minister with the support of Yamagata;
  - however, he resigned following the rice riots 1918;
  - the genro were then forced to turn to a 'commoner', Hara Takashi, who formed a party cabinet. [3]
- The main decision making in civil institutions was moving away from the oligarchs and towards professional politicians.
  - The oligarchs were losing control of the bureaucracy.
- Yamagata's consolidation of his control over the army was moving power from civil institutions to military institutions.

Figure 10.2 outlines some aspects of the Japanese bureaucracy.

Figure 10.2 Aspects of the Japanese bureaucracy



3 The War and Navy Ministers remained serving officers.

Exercise 10.1 Indicate whether the following statements are true or false.

1	The position of the genro had been specifically written into the constitution of 1889 so that their powers would be clearly outlined.	TRUE / FALSE
2	The genro rarely took part in the political life of the country and avoided assuming the office of Prime Minister or taking on cabinet positions.	TRUE / FALSE
3	Yamagata Aritomo was originally from the Choshu clan and he focussed his attention on promoting the interests of the military.	TRUE / FALSE
4	The genro made up most of the Presidents of the Privy Council which was the Emperor's main advisory group.	TRUE / FALSE
5	The genro never took seriously the idea of transcendental government and were very keen to throw themselves into party politics.	TRUE / FALSE
6	As the position of the genro was based almost entirely on their prestige and the respect they had earned, the issue of succession was always going to be difficult.	TRUE / FALSE
7	Members of the bureaucracy tended to share the ideas and general world view of the genro.	TRUE / FALSE
8	The genro were successful in maintaining their domination of the country's political affairs well into the 1930s.	TRUE / FALSE
9	By the late 1920s, the genro were clearly losing control of several areas of the government bureaucracy.	TRUE / FALSE
10	By the late 1920s, younger members of the bureaucracy were full of admiration for the way parliamentary politics was developing.	TRUE / FALSE

The challenge of the army

As was outlined in Chapter Six, the military already had a significant say in the creation of governments and the exercise of policy by 1921. Military influence would lessen in the mid-1920s, but several factors would combine later in the decade to restore military influence, and provide the stepping stones towards military domination of government as the 1930s wore on.

- From 1900 it was the practice that the Ministers of War and the Navy had to be serving officers. This meant that Yamagata had an almost veto power over the formation of governments.
- If either the army or the navy decided not to appoint a senior officer as Minister, or if it ordered a War or Navy Minister to resign, this would force the resignation of the cabinet.
- From 1907, Yamagata had instituted a system whereby the Army and Navy Ministers were able to bypass the Prime Minister with imperial orders in the Emperor's name.

- As Paine has pointed out, by the time he died (1922), Yamagata had 'skewed government institutions in favour of army domination'. [4]

From 1918 to 1922, Japan was involved in the Siberian expedition (see Chapter Four). At one stage, Japan had 70 000 troops in Siberia. Japan did not pull out until 1922, and did not finally leave northern Sakhalin until 1925. The Siberian Expedition had a mixed impact on the army:

- though Japan's fortunes were mixed, and allied pressure was brought to bear to leave Siberia, it had given the army experience in training, and had also taught some lessons on political manipulation and intrigue;
- in the short term, the army gained few plaudits from its time in Siberia and there were many instances of public shunning of returning soldiers:
  - soldiers began to socialise 'out of uniform';
  - the shunning of soldiers at this time was a city phenomenon – they tended to be better received in the country.

During the mid-1920s, army influence was more limited and government international actions were more restrained and sought cooperation and engagement with other powers. This was in part the result of the policies of Foreign Minister Shidehara. [5]

Expenditure on the military fell during the first half of the 1920s. From 1918 to 1925, the military's share of the national budget fell from over a half to less than a third. During the Kato premiership, Army Minister, Ugaki Kazushige, took out four divisions of the army – a total of about 34 000 men. [6] However, this apparent diminution of army influence was deceptive:

- money that was being saved on personnel was directed to the development of more modern weaponry;
- and as was mentioned in Chapter Seven, many of the army officers released from service were sent into Japanese schools where they worked as military instructors and promoted decidedly undemocratic thinking.

As Japan's parliamentary system gradually fell into disfavour with the evidence of bribery and corruption, and even brawling, many in the country were being drawn to ultranationalism:

- one group espousing such ideas was the Black Dragon Society which was strongly opposed to both communism and democracy;
- racist ideas began to proliferate with notions of the Japanese people's moral purity and claims that the Japanese people had divine ancestry; [7]
- in 1927 a group of almost 200 young army officers were seriously planning a coup to establish a military dictatorship headed by the Emperor;
  - many of them came from the land-owing class or the peasantry and had never developed any sympathy or understanding of democracy;
  - many officers and soldiers saw themselves as 'champions of Japan's poor farmers';
- the works of Kita Ikki were becoming extremely popular.

4 See Historian 1, Chapter Six.
5 Foreign Policy will be more fully dealt with in Section Four.
6 See Chapter Seven for details of Kato's administration.
7 Some writers of the time claimed Japan's people were descended from the sun goddess Amaterasu.

Kita Ikki (1883-1937): As a young man, Kita had flirted with socialist ideas, though his socialism included few clearly Marxist ideas, and was more akin to German National Socialism (minus the anti-Semitism). From the end of World War I, Kita became involved in ultranationalist politics. In 1919, he published his *Plan for the reorganisation of Japan.* The gist of his thinking was that Asia needed to be freed from western imperialist control. Who would lead this campaign against the west? A reinvigorated Japan. Kita wrote: *Truly, our seven hundred million brothers in China and India have no path to independence other than that offered by our guidance and protection.* Kita has been called the 'the ideological father of Japanese fascism'. Throughout the 1920s and the 1930s, he published many pamphlets calling for a total reorganisation of Japanese society and government. Supreme power had to be given to the armed forces under the Emperor. In 1937, Kita was executed, having been implicated in a failed coup attempt.

Events in China were to highlight the potential challenge of the military to Japan's fledging liberal democracy. Since 1919, Japan had stationed a major force near Port Arthur and Dairen. Depending on the political situation at home, this force numbered around 100 000 men. Many of the officers and men of this *Kwangtung Army*, were not sympathetic to democratic principles.

- Events inside China were moving quickly and that country was coming close to be unified by Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai-Shek):
  - military figures feared China's growing strength;
  - Jiang's growing influence could harm Japanese interests in Manchuria as that region could easily become dragged into the ongoing conflict inside China in the 1920s;
  - the warlord of Manchuria, Zhang Zuolin (Chang Tso-lin), had been working with Japan, but was now acting 'too' independently.
- Faced with this developing situation, some members of the Kwangtung Army hatched a plan to seize a large part of Manchuria:
  - the Tokyo government had no knowledge of this planning;
  - in June 1928 the warlord of Manchuria, Zhang Zuolin (Chang Tso-lin) was assassinated in a bomb attack on his train.
- The government in Tokyo immediately denied any involvement in the plan and sought disciplinary action against the conspirators:
  - the Chief of the General Staff and other leading figures argued strongly against any such action, fearing it could harm the army's prestige;
  - as Storry puts it: And so *indiscipline was overlooked and another evil precedent established.*

The Kwangtung Army had failed this time. The next time they attempted action in Manchuria, its organisation and preparation would be much better.

Exercise 10.2 Complete the following passage using the terms below.

Since _____, the Ministers of War and the Navy had to be _____ officers. In ____ these ministers were allowed to bypass the _____ in the name of the _____. The key figure amongst the genro who had been responsible for promoting the army was _____. By _____, the military's share of the national _____ had fallen from over 50% to less than 33% from what it had been in _____. Under Prime Minister _____, army strength was reduced by _____ divisions but many of the officers who had been let go ended up in _____ where they were able to disseminate non- _____ thinking. By the late 1920s, ultra- _____ ideas were being spread by groups such as the _____ Society. Racist thinking was also beginning to permeate right-wing groups with the notion that the Japanese people had _____ ancestry. A key proponent of right wing thinking at the time was the writer _____. In June _____, the _____ Army, based around Port Arthur, attempted to seize part of _____. Their plot involved the assassination of _____. They acted without the knowledge of the _____ government. The perpetrators escaped _____ action.

DIVINE – TOKYO – EMPEROR – SCHOOLS – KWANGTUNG – BUDGET – ZHANG ZUOLIN – YAMAGATA – KITA IKKI – KATO – SERVING – FOUR – 1928 – 1907 – 1900 – 1918 – 1925 – DISCIPLINARY – PRIME MINISTER – NATIONALIST – MANCHURIA – BLACK DRAGON – DEMOCRATIC

What do the historians have to say about "Challenges of the genro, bureaucracy and army to party politics"?

1. S C M Paine

Paine outlines how the genro actually operated. Amongst themselves they would negotiate a consensus around the policy that they considered necessary. Having reached a bargain, it would be presented to the emperor who would then ratify it. These men were focussed on national not bureaucratic interests. They also sought to prevent the development of democratic tendencies. Their power rested on their prestige and what the constitution left unsaid. The genro:

"…leveraged the large voids in the written law and the structural weakness of the prime minister's authority to rule on the basis of their personal ties with each other, forged in the revolution that had put them in charge…" [8]

2. Brett L Walker

Walker describes how Kita Ikki's ideas became increasingly popular among certain sections of Japanese society. Kita said that Japan needed to become a charismatic authoritarian state led by the Emperor. He referred to this as 'the Showa Restoration'. Kita argued that the constitution should be suspended, and then Japan could dispense with parliament and the selfish political parties. Walker makes this point about Kita's thinking:

"…Most importantly, it gained traction with a large number of young officers in the military, who increasingly believed they needed to take matters into their own hands…" [9]

8 Paine, S C M, The Japanese Empire: Grand Strategy from the Meiji Restoration to the Pacific War, CUP, Cambridge, 2017, p 85
9 Walker, B L, A Concise History of Japan, CUP, Cambridge, 2015, p 238

Chapter Ten A *will bring together the various elements of Sections 1 and 2 to offer an explanation for the failure of democracy by the time of the Great Depression.*

Chapter Ten A
The failure of democracy in pre-Depression Japan

The previous four chapters have examined the challenges to traditional power and authority in the 1920s. They also considered the factors which worked against the development of a successful liberal democracy in Japan.

At the beginning of the decade, Japan seemed to be moving in the direction of democracy. Even at this time there were flaws in the system, but there were reasons for optimism.

However, by the end of the decade, it was clear that Japan was not going to become a western-style, liberal democracy.

Here is a list of some of the more significant factors that accounted for this. Each point will be developed a little further in Figures 10A.1 and 10A.2.

- traditional Japanese cultural and social mores
- the design of the Japanese constitution of 1889
- the role and aims of the genro
- the role of the bureaucracy
- the tradition and continuation of violence in Japanese society
- the influence of the army and the navy
- the wealth, power and consequent influence of the zaibatsu
- the behaviour of the politicians
- the prevalence of scandal and corruption
- public perception of politicians
- the impact of the Kanto earthquake
- the impact of the Peace Preservation Law
- the activities of the thought police
- the exercise of a Dual Foreign Policy
- the growth of ultranationalism
- the works of Kita Ikki

Figure 10A.1 Outline of factors working against liberal democracy:

Part 1

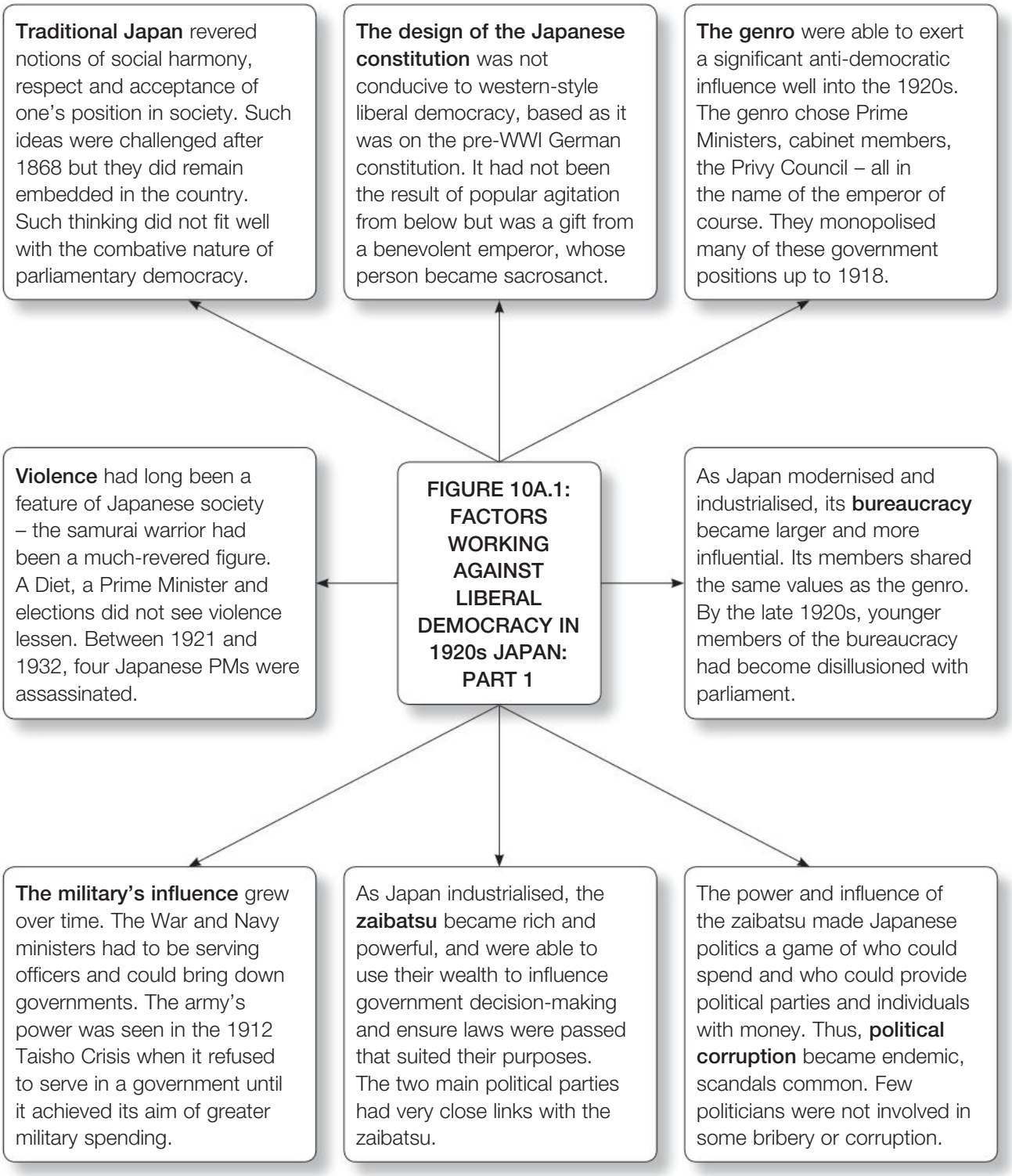
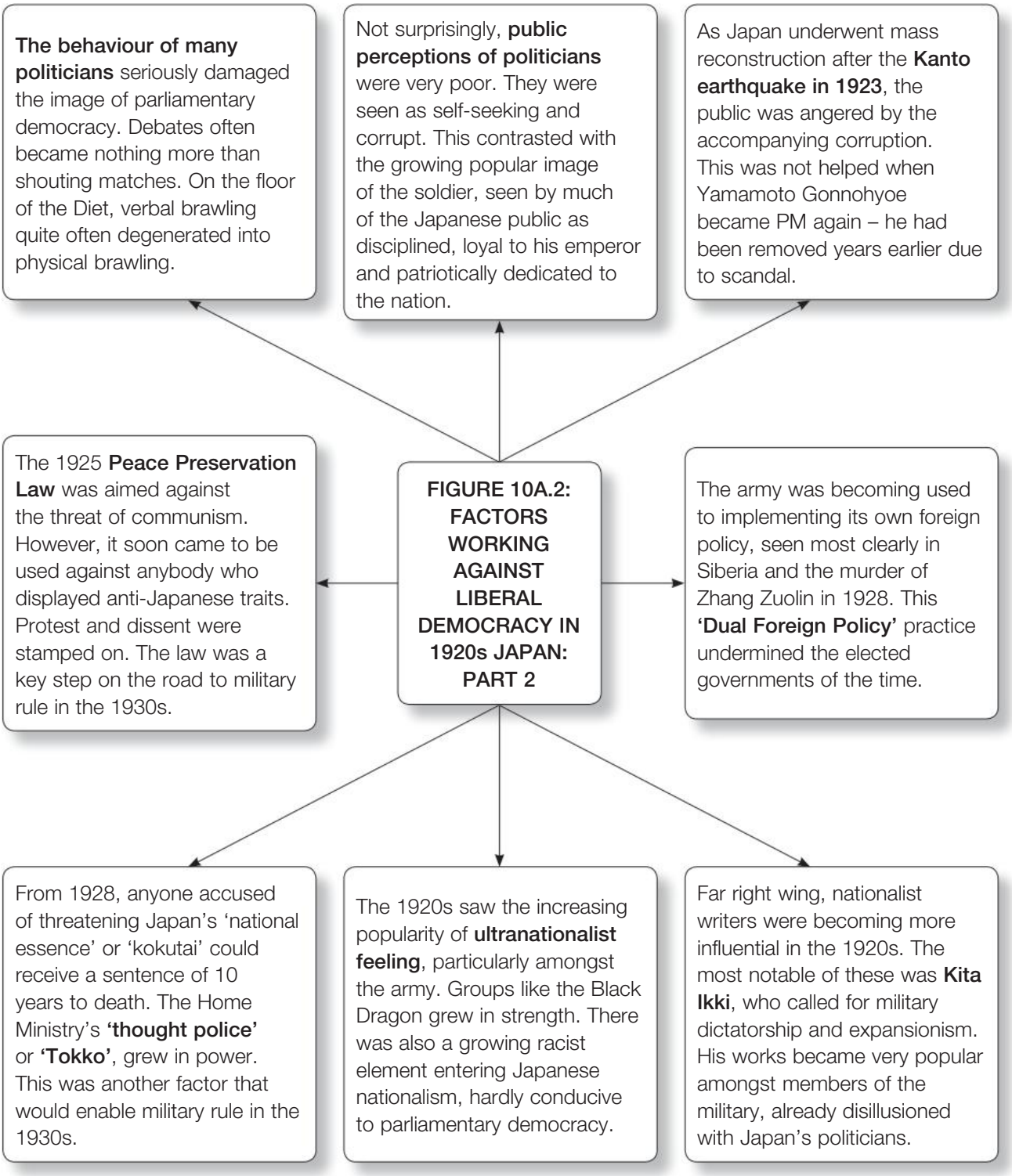


Figure 10A.2 Outline of factors working against liberal democracy:

Part 2



Exercise 10A.1 Select "fact or opinion" for each of the following statements

1	In Japan, long before the Meiji Restoration, notions of respect, obedience and social harmony were accepted aspects of Japanese society.	FACT/ OPINION
2	During the period of Japan's modernisation and industrialisation, conglomerates called zaibatsu, grew in wealth and political influence.	FACT/ OPINION
3	The genro were an essential element in Japan's political set up and were needed to prevent radical movements taking over.	FACT/ OPINION
4	The military was justified in being able to wield significant influence in Japan due to its efforts in war.	FACT/ OPINION
5	Japan's inexperience with democratic government meant that scandal and corruption were inevitable.	FACT/ OPINION
6	The Peace Preservation Law of 1925 was initially framed to deal with the possible threat of communism.	FACT/ OPINION
7	Japan had no chance of developing democracy in the face of the activities of the 'Tokko'.	FACT/ OPINION
8	Kita Ikki became popular amongst military figures who supported his ideas on military rule and expansionism.	FACT/ OPINION
9	The murder of Zhang Zuolin provides evidence of the army acting independently of the government.	FACT/ OPINION
10	The rise of ultranationalism was a positive for Japan as it enhanced the people's pride in the country's achievements.	FACT/ OPINION

Chapter Eleven
Political and economic impact of the Great Depression

Introduction

The Great Depression of the 1930s was to have a dramatic effect on Japan, as it did of course in all countries across the world.

- Economically the impact was immediate and catastrophic, and caused massive suffering for the Japanese people. However, though the figures tell a devastating story, a case can be presented suggesting that Japan's economic fate was not as serious as that of some other countries (see below).
- Politically, what optimism existed for the new government of Hamaguchi Osachi soon faded in face of the onslaught of the depression and his government's misguided steps in dealing with it (see below).
- Social tensions had been rising through the 1920s, with a reaction against the rapid process of modernisation, urbanisation and the adoption of many western values (see Chapter 12).
- The impact of these developments had two fundamental results for Japan's medium-term future:
  - militarist thinking and the move towards military domination of government were accelerated (see Chapters 13, 14 and 15);
  - Japan was to depart from the moderation of Foreign Minister Shidehara and pursue an aggressive, military foreign policy (see Chapters 17 and 18).

The economic impact of the Great Depression

By Asian standards, Japanese people in the 1920s were relatively well off, though the progress of the economy had been uneven. The rise in population since the war had assisted growth but the overall standard of living had remained static. The economy had suffered a brief recession immediately after World War I. It took time to recover from the impact of the 1923 Kanto earthquake, and the banking crisis of 1927 had caused great distress and unrest. [1]

The collapse of the New York stock market on Wall St in October 1929 pushed the American economy into depression, which in a few short years had spread worldwide. Historians have differed in their views on the severity of the impact of the depression on Japan. W Miles Fletcher suggests that its impact was mild compared to the US and Europe, [2] whereas Stokes and Stokes talk of 'desperation and distress'. [3] However, it is difficult to deny the devastating economic and social impact the depression had on Japan, at least in the short term.

1 See Chapters 7 and 8.
2 Fletcher, W M, The Impact of the Great Depression (2005)
3 Stokes, G, and Stokes J, The Extreme East: A Modern History (1971)

- The depression led to all nations (even Britain which had previously been a staunch free-trader) to impose high protective tariffs to protect their own industries from foreign competition:
  - the aim was to encourage consumers to buy only domestic goods to stimulate home industries;
  - the problem with this policy was that other countries followed with their own tariffs and so international trade plummeted.
- Within two years, Japanese exports to the US had fallen 40% while to China they had fallen over 50%.

Silk provides a forceful illustration of the impact of the collapse of international trade on Japan as Figure 11.1 shows.

Figure 11.1: Silk and the Great Depression

The average export price of silk fell from 1420 yen per 100 kin in April 1929 to 540 yen by October 1930 to 390 yen by June 1932.

As a luxury item, it is not surprising that US consumers stopped buying silk at a time of economic collapse. Estimates of the fall of Japanese silk exports to the US range from 30% to 50% within two years.

The collapse of silk was devastating in the Japanese countryside. It had been silk that had enabled up to half of Japanese farmers to 'keep their head above water' and avoid serious indebtedness. The disappearance of this secondary employment reduced many farmers, especially in northern Japan to a state of desperate poverty.

The collapse of the price of silk occurred at the same time as there was a calamitous fall in the price of rice. The fall in rice prices came at a time when rice yields were booming, which forced prices down even more. Between 1925 and 1930, the gross income of agricultural households fell by up to 45%.

The situation worsened in 1934 as many rural communities were hit by famine:

- the north-eastern region of Tohoku was hit particularly badly;
- rural poverty even forced some farmers to sell children into prostitution.

Rural distress caused anger and deep resentment against government and big business. Most conscript soldiers were from peasant families! Furthermore, farmers were the most conservative group inside Japan, and they maintained the respect and admiration of the army.

The economic impact of the depression was not only felt in rural communities. Those working in industry and living in the cities were also affected.

- as demand for Japanese output, both foreign and domestic, plummeted, there were increases in unemployment and many firms went bankrupt;
  - however, Japan did not experience the mass unemployment of countries like the United States and Germany.
- in some western economies, 'real wages', ie the value of a wage after changes in prices are taken into account, actually went up;
  - thus, in a country like Australia, if one could hold on to a job, even though wages fell, 'real' wages rose as prices fell even more;
  - however, in Japan, real wages fell steadily, eg in the textile industry, real wages fell by a third between 1929 and 1936.

The government of Hamaguchi Osachi implemented economic policies which proved to be extremely harmful to the Japanese economy.

- Orthodox economic thinking of the time dictated that during a time of depression, governments should seek to achieve 'balanced budgets' and practise 'sound finance':
  - to achieve this the government pursued a deflationary policy;
  - it reduced government expenditure (including naval and army costs) and slashed the salaries of civil and military employees;
  - (such measures earned the ire of both the military and bureaucracy);
  - deflationary policy worked to slow down the economy when the opposite was needed.
- In January 1930, the government lifted the gold embargo and placed Japan back on the gold standard: [4]
  - in a short time, this resulted in an appreciation of the Japanese yen, making Japanese exports more expensive and thus further reducing international demand for Japanese goods;
  - in September 1931, Britain left the gold standard and speculators believed that Japan would soon have to do the same, and so there was a rush to sell yen and buy dollars – a massive capital outflow from Japan followed.
- The Hamaguchi government was replaced a seiyukai government (see below) which proceeded to take Japan off the gold standard in December 1931;
  - the yen was allowed to depreciate by 60% against the dollar, and 40% against the pound between December 1931 and November 1932;
  - this made Japanese exports more competitive and foreign imports less desirable.

By 1932, the government had brought in measures to stabilise the currency and started reversing the earlier deflationary policy.

4 The gold standard is a monetary system in which paper money is freely convertible into a fixed amount of gold.

Finance Minister Korekiyo Takahashi's stimulatory fiscal policy contributed to the gradual revival of the Japanese economy. [5]

- (see Historian 1 for more on this point.)

Exercise 11.1 Match the description on the left with the term listed on the right.

1	The system which allows the conversion of paper money for a fixed amount of gold		UNEMPLOYMENT
2	Reducing government spending and the salaries of government workers		REAL WAGES
3	A tax placed on imports to protect a country's domestic industries		STOCK MARKET
4	America's principal one is located on Wall Street in New York		ORTHODOX ECONOMIC POLICY
5	Fiscal stimulation of an economy during a time of depression		GOLD STANDARD
6	Term used to describe the economic slow-down in Japan after World War I		DEFLATION
7	One of the key results for an economy which descends into a depression		RECESSION
8	The value of wages after changes in prices are taken into account		TARIFF
9	Term used to describe the economic crisis affecting the world in the 1930s		DEPRESSION
10	Term which in 1930 referred to government policy seeking to balance the budget		KEYNESIAN ECONOMIC POLICY

5 Takahashi was acting in accordance with what would become known as Keynesian economic policy, ie using fiscal stimulus to drag an economy out of a slump. Keynes would revolutionise economic thinking in 1936 with his book The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money.

The political impact of the Great Depression

Prime Minister Tanaka Giichi (and the Emperor) had attempted to discipline those responsible for the Kwangtung Army's actions in Manchuria in 1928. He failed to achieve this. [6] As a result he resigned in July 1929.

The Tanaka Memorial: General Tanaka Giichi became famous as the author of what became known as *The Tanaka Memorial*. This document allegedly set out the future plans of Japanese military expansion in Asia. The document seems to have been a forgery and Tanaka's authorship of it was never proven. Tanaka in fact was opposed to the expansionist aspirations of the military extremists.

On the recommendation of the last remaining genro, Saionji, Hamaguchi Osachi, head of *Minseito*, became Prime Minister. Hamaguchi had a minority in the Diet. He called elections in 1930 which his party won. The party supported a *conciliatory foreign policy* which included calls for disarmament and cooperation with China. The cabinet contained several moderate figures including Shidehara (Foreign Minister), General Ugaki (War Minister) and Admiral Takarabe (Navy Minister).

The government backed the call for a *return to the gold standard* (supported by its main backer, Mitsubishi).

- As was explained above, the return to the gold standard, and Hamaguchi's *orthodox deflationary economic policy*, did much to exacerbate the worst features of the depression in Japan.
- As also mentioned above, Hamaguchi's strict budgetary measures made him unpopular with parts of the military and the bureaucracy.

It was Hamaguchi's government which signed the April 1930 London Naval Reduction Treaty – Hamaguchi attended the conference in person, as acting Navy Minister. This meant that naval expenditure was to be limited and that Japan would stick to the 5/5/3 ration that had been agreed to at the Washington Conference. [7]

The army was also angered by the government's other plans:

- army leaders had heard rumours that Hamaguchi was planning to abolish the General Staff;
- they believed he intended cutting the military's direct access to the Emperor and that he sought changes to military education in schools.
- the belief that these plans were afoot was enough to unite the senior ranks of the army with the more restive younger office corps, some of whom believed the army should stage a coup d'état against the government.

On 14 November 1930, Hamaguchi was shot in an assassination attempt by an ultranationalist. He was out of politics for several months but returned in March 1931 and his party won

6 See Chapter Ten.
7 See Chapter Five.

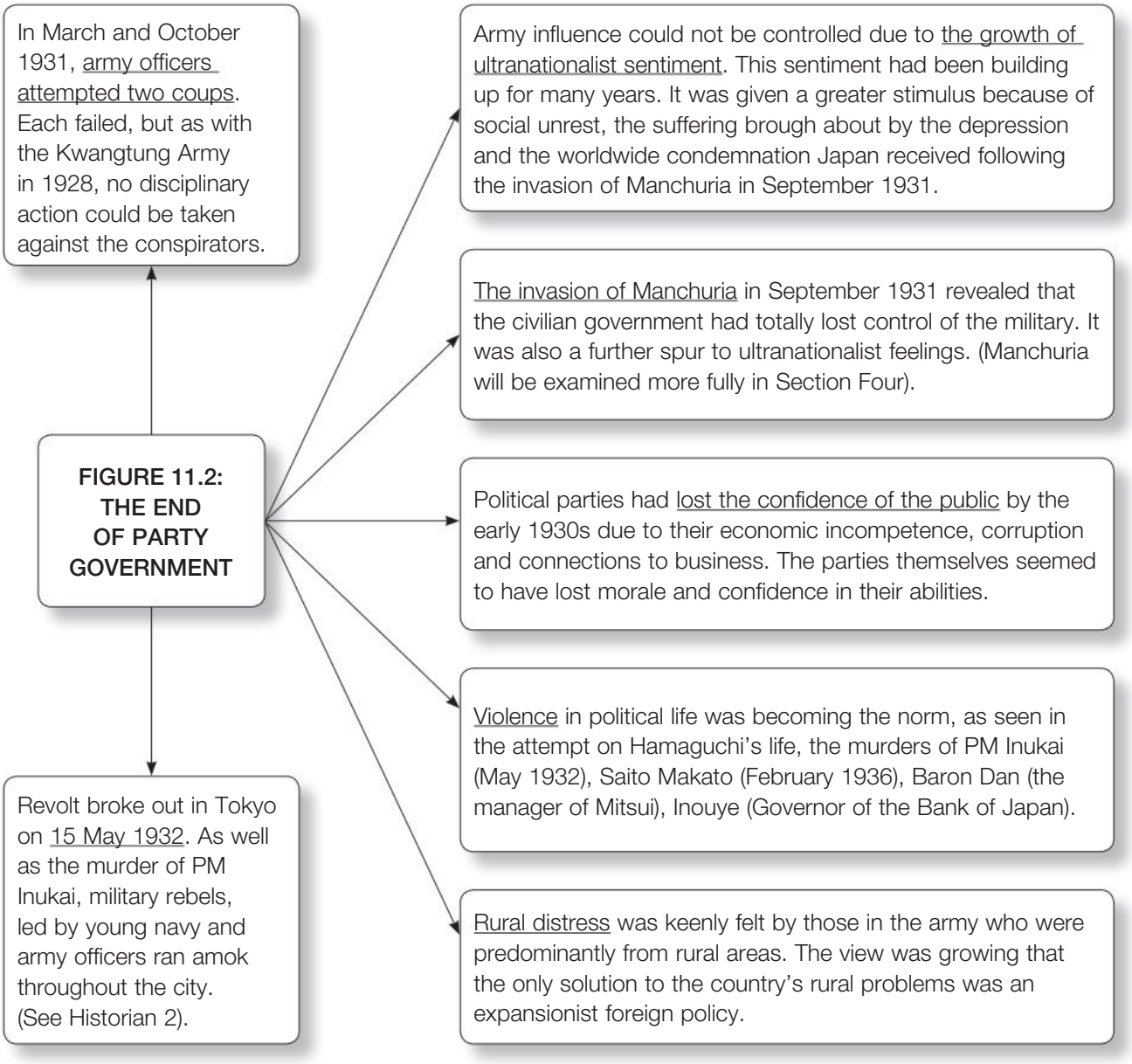
another election. However, he was forced to resign in April, and died from his wounds in August 1931. Wakatsuki Reijiro took over as Prime Minister.

Wakatsuki resigned in December 1931, and was followed by Inukai Tsuyoshi of seiyukai. This was to be the country's final attempt at a true party government. In May 1932, Inukai was assassinated.

- Party government in any true sense had now come to an end.
- The civilian control of government in Japan was never completely replaced but from now on, it was increasingly subject to the dictates of the ultranationalists and the military expansionists.

Chapter 10A outlined several of the factors which explain the failure of liberal democracy by the end of the 1920s. Figure 11.2 outlines some of the factors that further explain the eclipse of civilian authority by 1932.

Figure 11.2 Factors explaining the eclipse of civilian authority by 1932



Exercise 11.2 Place each event in the correct chronological order.

1st event		LONDON NAVAL REDUCTION TREATY
2nd event		JAPAN RETURNS TO THE GOLD STANDARD
3rd event		FIFTEENTH MAY INCIDENT
4th event		INVASION OF MANCHURIA
5th event		KANTO EARTHQUAKE
6th event		ATTEMPTED ASSASSINATION OF HAMAGUCHI
7th event		WALL ST STOCK MARKET CRASH
8th event		RESIGNATION OF TANAKA GIICHI
9th event		ASSASSINATION OF SAITO MAKATO
10th event		INUKAI TSUOSHI BECOMES PRIME MINISTER

What do the historians have to say about "Political and economic impact of the Great Depression"?

1. Gordon Greenwood

By 1936, the Japanese economy had improved significantly. Between 1930 and 1936, the volume of Japanese exports had doubled, and their value had almost doubled. By 1936, Japan had become the world's leading exporter of cotton piece goods. Japanese industry underwent a process of diversification and this allowed a great increase in the range of export consumer goods, including toys, tinned fish and pottery. Japanese goods were making big inroads into both western and Asian markets. Western governments began to act against Japanese competition with tariffs and quotas on Japanese products. Greenwood suggests that Japan's success at this time was the result of several factors including the advantage of a greatly depreciated currency, the great increase in technical efficiency and business organisation and a labour force that was large, reasonably skilled and cheap.

"…Geographical proximity was of some assistance, but a more important advantage was that cheap goods produced for her own market were also especially suitable for the low-income markets of Asia…" [8]

2. Franz Michael and George Taylor

Michael and Taylor comment on the significance of the 'May Fifteenth Incident'. The young soldiers who had killed PM Inukai, and had attacked banks and party offices across Tokyo, voluntarily gave themselves up to police. The rebels received only light sentences in the trials that followed. However, of greater significance was the fact that their ideas were given national coverage. "Destroy the zaibatsu, destroy the political parties, remove corrupt bureaucrats." In the trial, one of the accused was allowed to lecture the court for three days! The public saw the rebels as heroes. The prosecutors treated them as patriots. The invasion of Manchuria had shown the failure of civilian government but the 'May Fifteenth Incident' was arguably even more important.

"…It showed that the tide had turned against the parties and revealed a climate of opinion favourable to the plans of the most extreme elements among the military…" [9]

8 Greenwood, G, The Modern World: A History of Our Time, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1973, p 662
9 Michael, F H, and Taylor, G E, The Far East in the Modern World, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, 1964, p 543

Chapter Twelve
Development and impact of modernisation and urbanisation and rising social tensions

Introduction

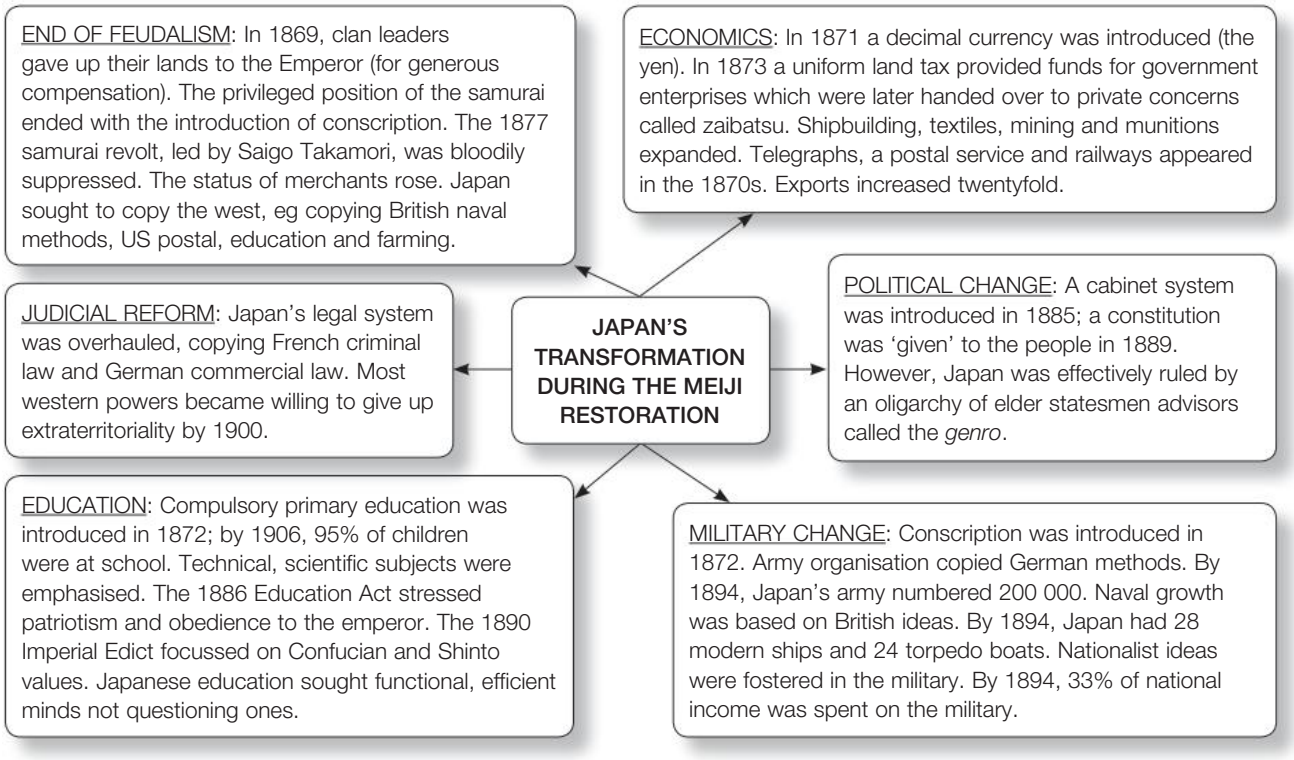
In Chapters One and Six, various comments were made about the modernisation process that had occurred in Japan after 1868, and some of the issues that this had raised by 1921. This would be a good place to revisit the key elements of that early modernisation, and then to move issues into the post-World War I period.

Before the arrival of the west, Japan was a traditional, insular society. However, unlike China, it was not a static society. Even before the arrival of the west in the mid-19th century, changes were occurring in the socioeconomic structure of the country which would assist the transition to a modern, industrialised economy:

- there was a movement of people from the country to the towns;
- capital was accumulating in the merchant class;
- a financial system was developing;
- communications were improving.

After 1868, Japan had systematically set out to learn what made the west strong, and to adapt western skills and technology to Japanese conditions. Figure 12.1, outlines some of the aspects of modernisation that occurred, and which transformed Japan from a medieval society to a modern industrial one.

Figure 12.1 The key elements of change during the Meiji Restoration period



Rising social tensions

'Tradition versus modernity'

It should be remembered that the transformation of Japan to a modern, industrialised society and economy was extremely rapid. In 1905, Japan defeated Russia; just over fifty years earlier it was a medieval society steeped in tradition which for over two hundred years had done its best to isolate itself from outside influences. Yet by the early decades of the 20th century, Japan had modern industry, had embraced technology, had modernised its army and had created a navy:

- it had witnessed the growth of large cities, eg Tokyo – Japan's urban population had grown from about 15% in 1900 to over 25% by 1920:
  - close to the Imperial Palace was the Kasumigaseki district where the government had constructed modern brick buildings for the growing bureaucratic agencies, and for the Supreme Court;
  - in the Marunouchi district was the world's largest office complex (up to the 1920s), the Marunouchhi Building;
- it had seen education become almost universal;
- Japan had adopted a new form of government;
- many of its people had taken on western customs;
- modernisation and urbanisation had spawned a 'middle class':
  - between 1908 and 1922, Tokyo's middle-class population, as a proportion of the city's work force, had increased from 6% to 22%;
  - it was very much the middle class that sought out – and could afford – much of the new delights of western culture which were appearing, ranging from fashion to gramophone players;
  - the display cases in the Mitsukoshi and Shirokiya department stores were full of western products such as handbags and neckties, as well as prestige Japanese goods such as Shiseido cosmetics

However, rapid though the change had been, and successful though Japan had been in modernising, the changes were not welcomed by all. A clear generation gap had opened up between older Japanese, who valued tradition and respect, and the young, who were keen to embrace the new.

However, it was not only the old who sought to maintain traditional ways and who resented the intrusion of western culture. The rapidity of change in the country, and the sudden appearance of western ways led to a reaction from those who saw themselves as nationalist, patriotic and upholders of what Japan should stand for.

In time many of these traditionalists would be in, supporting, or at least sympathetic to the ranks of the ultranationalists:

- for them constitutional government and party politics should not be allowed, and instead unquestioned devotion to the Emperor was the only way;

- the true, honest, patriotic Japanese wore a uniform;
- the samurai might belong to the past but the values that underpinned the noble warrior were still valued by the traditionalists and the ultranationalists;
- women should be demur and obedient;
- the young should be respectful and dedicated to the national good;
- older Japanese, and those who believed in tradition were repelled by what they called the *ero, guro* and *nansensu* – erotic, grotesque, nonsensical elements of the modern age.

In contrast to the traditionalists were those who embraced modernity in all its forms, particularly those who were young:

- young people were spurning the old ways and adapting to the new and modern:
  - young women were assuming the moga style;
  - young men were assuming the moba style.[1]
- the new generation of Japanese were embracing jazz, cinema, European-style cafes, dance-halls;
- the young seemed to be disregarding the conservative and moral social mores of traditional Japan, indeed mocking such things.

A wide gulf was opening up within Japanese society between those who clung to tradition and 'Japanese' values, and those who sought out the new.

Exercise 12.1 Answer the following questions in the spaces provided.

1	What was the fundamental change to Japan's social structure brought on by the reforms of the Meiji Restoration?	
2	How had the Japanese legal system been modernised by the early years of the 20th century?	
3	What significant economic changes were occurring inside Japan even before the advent of the west?	
4	What had Japan been much more willing to do than had China, much to the detriment of the latter?	
5	What elements of education were emphasised during the Meiji period and beyond?	

1 See Chapter Seven.

6	What evidence was there of major urban growth in Tokyo by the 1920s?	
7	Identify a connection with the growth of Japan's middle class and westernisation.	
8	What were *ero, guro* and *nansensu*, and what was the older generation's attitude to these things?	
9	What were the modern fashion styles that young men and women were adopting in 1920s Japan?	
10	To older Japanese, what seemed to be the attitude of younger people towards tradition and conservative mores?	

Urban Japan versus rural Japan

As in most societies, rural populations are more conservative than urban societies:

- they cling to the old ways and are often suspicious of change.
  - politically, rural people are usually on the conservative, nationalist, religious right.
  - it is generally urban dwellers who seek radical change and are the first to reject religion. [2]
- however, the rural-urban divide in Japan went beyond conservatism and the traditional-progressive divide:
  - rural Japanese were continuing to suffer from the economic vicissitudes of the time;
  - this was highlighted during the 1927 Banking Crisis when the urban-based business conglomerates took advantage of rural distress;
  - during the depression, rural areas suffered enormously and all the time they witnessed politicians squabbling and the zaibatsu growing ever richer. [3]

This aspect of social tensions was to have a major impact in the 1930s. Most of Japan's soldiers were from poor peasant families. Resentment of the political system, of zaibatsu power and unpatriotic 'bright young things', fuelled resentment. What Japan needed was discipline, obedience, respect for tradition, and reverence for the Emperor. For many of these soldiers of peasant-stock, the suffering of the countryside could only be alleviated with an expansionist foreign policy. [4]

2 These are generalisations but they tend to fit the Japanese situation in the early 20th century.
3 See Chapter Eleven.
4 See Section Four.

The role of women

Figure 12.2 outlines the ways in which modernisation and urbanisation had affected the role of women in Japan, is both a positive and negative way.

THE NEW

- Women were now gaining an education, even to university level for the lucky few.
- There was opportunity for paid work, especially as factory production expanded. Women were beginning to enter professions such as teaching and medicine.
- Fortunate middle-class women were able to indulge in western styles and entertainments.
- Women began to organise in pursuit of equal political and social rights as seen in the New Women's Association and the socialist Red Wave Society. From 1922 they could attend political gatherings, but political participation remained very restricted.

THE OLD

- Though some women could enter professions, most female work was unskilled, underpaid, consisted of long hours and generally involved female exploitation.
- Women in rural areas had always worked, assisting husbands and fathers. It was backbreaking work, nearly always unpaid and a major contributor to poor female health. The poorest women could end up working in coal mines.
- The traditional view of women's place in society had not changed – a lower status to men - and they were expected to keep a household going for a husband/ father, even if they were working full time.
- The idea that Japanese women could enter the Diet, vote, or take on a political role would have been seen as ridiculous. Japanese women were still expected to know their place.

Figure 12.1: Japanese women – new versus the old

Education in the modern Japan

The development of universal education and creation of a literate population, were two of the great achievements of the Meiji period and beyond. Practical, science-based subjects were emphasised as it was believed this would assist Japan's modernisation. Traditional values such as respect for Shintoism and reverence towards the Emperor also gained emphasis.

However, the spread of education brought its own social tensions:

- a modern, sophisticated, industrialised society needs a literate and educated population if it is to function effectively in a modern and changing world;
- however, the more a society is educated, the more restive it becomes.

This was particularly the case in Japan. The spread of education – especially a western-style education – presented the country with challenges to the political system, challenges the oligarchs feared and resisted.

- In countries like Britain, France and the United States, as modernisation and industrialisation took hold, so the political system gradually became more democratised:
  - the oligarchs did not want democracy in Japan.
- As western-style education spread, it was impossible to keep out 'subversive', left-wing ideas:
  - socialists began demanding laws protecting workers and improvements to their shocking working conditions;
  - those Japanese who began to embrace Marxist/ Bolshevik/ Communist ideas - especially after the 1917 Russian Revolution – sought the overthrow of the political system;
  - the 1925 Peace Preservation Law was passed to counter this threat. [5]

Exercise 12.2 Rearrange the following passage so that it follows logically.

The lives of rural women had changed little during modernisation compared to the lives of city women. However, they did not want the Japanese people seeking democracy, social reform, or even worse a Marxist reorganisation of society. Social tensions arose in early 20th century Japan is several areas. Firstly, there were tensions between rural and urban society. Not only were western styles taking hold in Japan but also new western ideas. Urban Japan was more progressive, more eager to embrace westernisation. City women, especially the young, were keen to take on western styles of fashion and entertainments. Those in power needed an educated population for modernisation. In contrast, rural Japan was more conservative and keener to cling to traditional values. This was largely the result of the spread of education.

5 See Chapter Seven.

What do the historians have to say about "Development and impact of modernisation and urbanisation and rising social tensions"?

1. Christopher Harding

Harding describes the way that Tokyo expanded during the first three decades of the 20th century. This expansion, he suggests, was a result of railway line construction, the result of government and private capital, and British rolling stock. As the new lines were laid, says Harding, department stores, housing for workers and restaurants soon followed.

"Towns and cities were consumed one after another as the city rolled on."

The city became covered with poles, posts and wires, street lighting appeared and domestic electricity followed. Accompanying this physical transformation was a change in entertainment tastes, as radio, phonograph recordings and cinema became increasingly popular.

Here the social tension between the new and the old became apparent:

- the technology was new and western;
  - however, the authorities did their best to uphold traditional values;
- the song *Tokyo March* was banned by the national broadcaster, NHK:
  - it was seen as being too suggestive;
- political issues were not to be allowed on radio or in film;
- presenters on radio were instructed to use a *coldly neutral voice;*
  - and they were told to avoid using words like *extremely* or *absolutely*.
- crime stories were not to be aired and family values should always be emphasised;
- only the most oblique references to the imperial family were allowed.

The modern-traditional tension can be seen in the amusing example of *The Keystone Cops. The Keystone Cops* was an American film series of the silent film era which involved the actions of an enthusiastic police force in an American city getting into all sorts of slapstick bungling.

"…(the Keystone Cops) *were banned in Japan, on the basis that they might damage respect for the police…"* [6]

6 Harding, C, A History of Modern Japan In search of a nation 1850 to the present, Tuttle, Vermont, 2020, p 121

2. Christopher Harding

Harding also makes an intriguing point about the impact of urban consciousness and modernity in Japan and how this highlighted tension between the old and the new. He argues that the elements of modernity gave a *far-reaching impression of linearity*. What he is getting at is the idea that today's (1920s) world was surpassing that of yesterday. People were forgetting that there was any way to live other than the modern. Modernity was taking over the urban environment, the rhythms of work, home life, relationships and routines.

"…Finally, it wormed its way into your heart, until you could no longer remember what you possessed and were before." [7]

This was a process feared by traditionalists – and one to be opposed.

7 Harding, C, A History of Modern Japan In search of a nation 1850 to the present, Tuttle, Vermont, 2020, p 147

Chapter Thirteen
Role and significance of the army and political divisions within it

Details regarding the army's actions in Manchuria from September 1931, the response of the rest of the world, subsequent military action and the steps leading to Japan's full-scale attack on China in 1937 will be covered in Chapters 17 and 18.

Introduction

The military had always been respected and revered in Japan. Before the Meiji Restoration, the samurai were admired for their sense of duty and their adherence to the code of *bushido*. [1] School children were brought up to idolise General Nogi and Admiral Togo, the victorious commanders of the Russo-Japanese War. [2]

After 1918, Japan tried to make party parliamentary government work. During the 1920s, as the influence of the genro faded, an unofficial alliance between the bureaucracy and the parties, brought together and financed by zaibatsu money, briefly held a dominant position. This was not to last. As explained in Section Two, there was widespread bribery and corruption within the political process. This, plus the poor behaviour of many members of the Diet, gradually turned public opinion against the political parties, the zaibatsu, and there was contempt for the Diet.

Following the assassination of Prime Minister Inukai and the Fifteenth May Incident, [3] party government in any real sense came to an end in Japan. Throughout the 1930s, the military established its dominance over the other centres of power within Japan. Civilian government did not completely disappear but year by year, it was increasingly operating at the behest of the ultranationalists and the military expansionists.

The situation by the end of 1932

By 1932, a series of factors had combined to establish the predominance of the military in Japan's governance.

- Aspects of the constitution ensured a special position for the military:
  - from 1900, only serving officers could be the Ministers of War and the Navy and the withdrawal of either from the cabinet could bring down a government;
  - one of the leading genro was General Yamagata Aritomo who was able to exert significant influence on Japan's government;
  - in 1907, the Ministers of War and the Navy were given direct access to the Emperor and thus able to bypass the Prime Minister.
- As was outlined in Chapter 10, as early as 1927 a group of almost 200 young army officers had serious plans to establish a military dictatorship which would be headed by the Emperor.

1 Bushido was the code and high ideals by which the samurai were expected to live. In Europe, the equivalent was the code of chivalry of medieval knights.
2 See Chapter 2.
3 See Chapter 11.

- In 1928, the Kwangtung Army had attempted to seize part of Manchuria, an action that was taken independently of the government in Tokyo:
  - the warlord of Manchuria, Zhang Zuolin (Chang Tso-lin), was murdered;
  - no strong action was taken against those involved.
- Those in the military resented the fact that the Hamaguchi government signed the 1930 London Naval Treaty which placed limits on Japanese rearmament.
- In September 1931, the Kwangtung Army staged an explosion of a railway line near Mukden in Manchuria, blaming the action on Chinese forces:
  - Japanese forces soon took Mukden and controlled all of Manchuria by November 1931;
  - **(Manchuria will be examined more fully in Chapters 17 and 18);**
  - the Wakatsuki government had not ordered the attack but was forced to back the army when presented with the army's fait accompli;
  - the action taken by the army at Mukden was well-received by the majority of the Japanese people.
- When Inukai Tsuyoshi became Prime Minister, he attempted to re-establish some control over the army:
  - he tried to open talks with the Chinese;
  - he was 'toying' with the idea of having the Emperor order the army to cease operations in Manchuria;
  - Emperor Hirohito had sent a message to Inukai at the time:
    "The army's interference in domestic and foreign politics, and its wilfulness, is a state of affairs which, for the good of the nation, we must view with apprehension."

However, by the end of 1932 it was too late. It was impossible for the civilian authorities to rein in the army as was seen only too well in the May Fifteenth Incident (outlined in Chapter 11). Figure 13.1 outlines the situation at the time.

Figure 13.1 The situation regarding the army by late-1932

Exercise 13.1 Indicate whether the following statements are true or false.

1	Respect and reverence for the military was a fairly new phenomenon in Japan and did not gain any real significance until the 1930s.	TRUE / FALSE
2	In the decade after 1918, the political parties and the bureaucracy managed to maintain political dominance rather than the military.	TRUE / FALSE
3	It became the practice in Japan that only serving officers were allowed to take on the cabinet posts of Minister of War and Minister of the Navy.	TRUE / FALSE
4	Schools in Japan had a policy of not glorifying military figures from the country's recent past.	TRUE / FALSE
5	Yamagata Aritomo did his best to keep out of the business of government and tried to limit the influence of the military.	TRUE / FALSE
6	Those responsible for the actions of the Kwangtung Army in Manchuria in 1928, and the murder of Zhang Zuolin, escaped severe punishment.	TRUE / FALSE
7	The Japanese government had little choice but to accept the reality of what the Kwangtung army had done in Manchuria in 1931.	TRUE / FALSE
8	Despite the difficulties facing him, Prime Minister Inukai was successful in preventing the army from taking actions without consulting the government first.	TRUE / FALSE
9	Japanese people objected to the condemnation which the army had received from the League of Nations and the US over its actions in Manchuria.	TRUE / FALSE
10	Most Japanese soldiers were from the big cities such as Tokyo and so had little knowledge or empathy for the situation facing Japan's farmers during the depression.	TRUE / FALSE

Japanese politics 1932-1936 – Divisions within the army

The decade after the invasion of Manchuria (1931-41) has become known as the *kurai tanima* or the 'dark valley'.

- After Prime Minister Inukai's assassination in May 1932, the army became more important in political life, but it did not yet succeed in establishing a military dictatorship.
- Saito Makato followed Inukai as Prime Minister (May 1932-July 1934) [4]
- After Saito, came Admiral Okada Keisuke (July 1934-March 1936).
  - Okada narrowly escaped assassination during the attempted coup of 26 February 1936 (see below).

4 Saito would be assassinated during the 26 February 1936 incident (see below).

The administrations of Saito and Okada were in a sense mere holding governments, staying in office until the differences within the military had been sorted out. There were several different factions within the army and the navy. However, the most significant division was within the army between two key groups:

- the **Kodoha** or the **Imperial Way faction**;
- the **Toseiha** or the **Control Faction**.

Table 13.1 examines the difference between the *Kodoha* and the *Toseiha* factions.

TABLE 13.1

THE KODOHA OR IMPERIAL WAY FACTION	THE TOSEIHA OR CONTROL FACTION
▪ Its leading figures included Generals Araki, Mazaki, Doihara, Hata	▪ Its leading figures included Generals Nagata, Hayashi, Tojo
 General Araki	 General Tojo
▪ The faction comprised mainly the more radical, younger officers, spurred on by the ideas of the likes of Kita Ikki.	▪ The faction opposed the radicalism and terroristic methods of the younger officers in the Kodoha.
▪ These younger officers sought a *Showa Restoration*, the end of political parties and the removal of the zaibatsu. ▪ Kodoha members were willing to use violent, terror methods to achieve these aims.	▪ The Toseiha opposed the violent acts against the government and the young officers' acts of insubordination as they saw this being harmful to army discipline. ▪ Toseiha members pursued more subtle methods and sought to control the political balance of power. ▪ They sought a decisive voice in each part of the government and the main parts of the economy.

■ The Kodoha believed that war with the Soviet Union was inevitable and so total control of Manchuria was needed to prepare for that conflict. ■ As a result, the Kodoha were not interested in becoming involved in a war in China.	■ The Toseiha sought out friendly relations with the Soviet Union and avoidance of armed conflict. ■ Their interest was expansion into mainland China.
■ The Kodoha sought to energise the Yamato spirit, the Japanese soldier's fighting spirit. ■ The faction wanted a purge of westernisation and a reaffirmation of traditional Japanese values and culture.	■ The Toseiha accepted that the Japanese soldier was imbued with a special spirit, but it sought to combine this with modern (western) military technology. ■ The Toseiha also believed in the idea of national mobilisation, whereby all Japanese people would be brought into a national effort. This thinking would see itself realised as Japan would adopt a total war strategy in World War II.

The violent rivalry between the *Kodoha* and the *Toseiha*

By the end of 1936, the Toseiha/ Control Faction had emerged triumphant over its Kodoha/ Imperial Way opposition. Success had been achieved following another violent and bloody period.

- At the start of Prime Minister Saito's term in office (May 1932), the Kodoha were in a fairly strong position:
  - General Araki was Minister of War;
  - General Mazaki was Vice-chief of the General Staff;
  - General Hata was Commander-in-Chief of the gendarmerie.
- In 1933, some of the Kodoha hatched a plot to kill all cabinet members and leaders of the political parties:
  - the episode became known as the *God-Sent Troops* affair;
  - the plot was revealed in July 1933 but no action was taken until 1937 and when the case was closed in 1941, all 44 defendants were acquitted.
- After the *God-Sent Troops* affair fiasco, the Toseiha moved to strengthen its position:
  - Araki was replaced as War Minister by General Hayashi;
  - in July 1935, Mazaki was removed from his post of Inspector-General of Military Education;
  - many officers who had supported Araki and Mazaki were removed from their positions and dispersed.

- The man mainly responsible for the dispersion of the Kodoha was General Nagata:
  - Nagata would pay for his policies with his life;
  - On 12 August 1935, he was assassinated by a leading figure of the Kodoha faction, Lieutenant-Colonel Aizawa;
  - the intra-army conflict was now out in the public view.
- Aizawa was placed on trial:
  - he used his trial to publicise the 'idealistic' views of the Kodoha;
  - he called for a *Showa Restoration*, which he said involved the destruction of all elements that came between the Emperor and his people;
  - at the trial, leading politicians and zaibatsu figures were forced to defend their past positions and policies;
  - Aizawa was sentenced to death and executed, but his message had resonated with much of the Japanese public.

The 26 February 1936 Incident

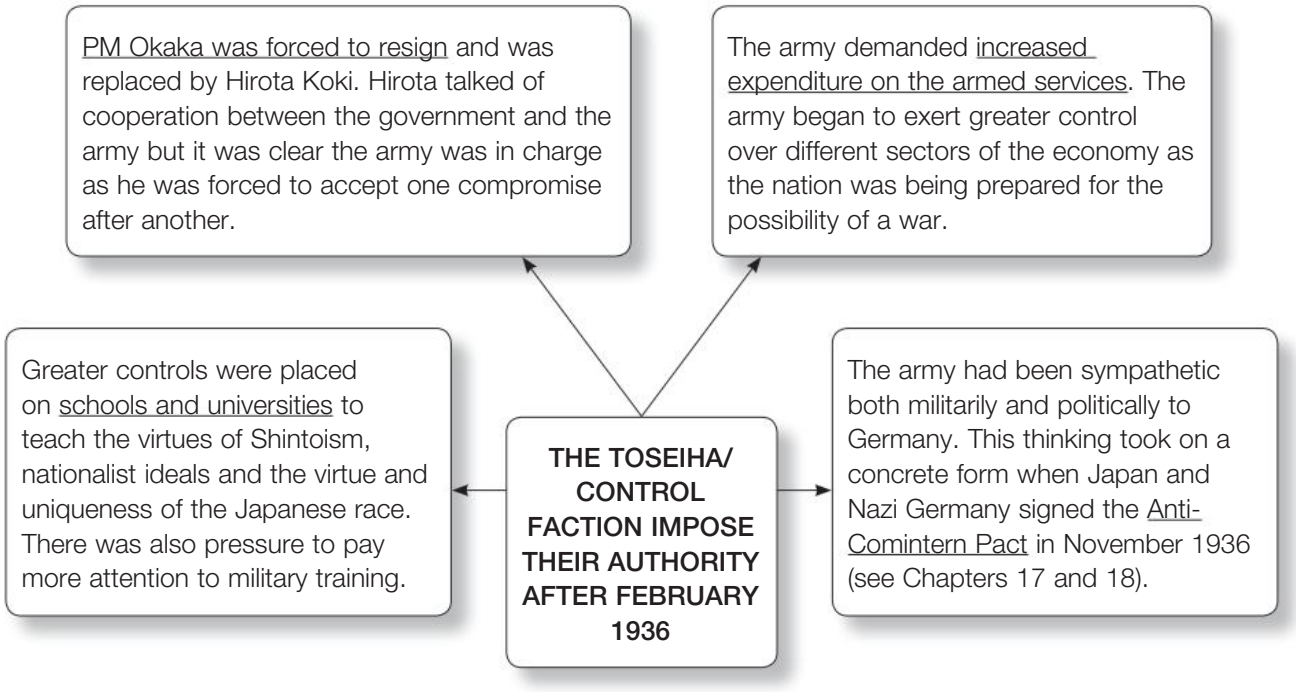
Buoyed by the public reaction to Aizawa's trial, a "young officers' group" of the Kodoha faction staged what amounted to an attempted violent military revolution. This event would become known as the *26 February 1936 Incident*.

- Young officers led 1400 troops into Central Tokyo:
  - troops occupied the Diet, the War Office, the Prime Minister's residence and police headquarters;
  - several leading figures were assassinated, including former Prime Minister Saito and Minister of Finance Takahashi. [5]
- The rebels were soon surrounded by loyal troops and leaflets dropped on them from a plane announced that the Emperor had ordered them back to barracks and so the revolt quickly ended.
  - Leading Kodoha figures such as Araki and Mazaki were placed on reserve:
  - thirteen of the young officers who led the revolt were executed; [6]
  - Kita Ikki was also executed – though he did not take part, the Toseiha saw him as the 'spiritual' leader of the revolt.

The Toseiha/ Control Faction now commanded the army and proceeded to impose its will on the nation, as is outlined in Figure 13.2.

5 Former PM Okada only escaped because assassins mistook his brother-in-law for him and killed him instead.
6 Emperor Hirohito had denied the leaders the right to commit ritual suicide.

Figure 13.2 The Toseiha impose their will.



Exercise 13.2

Read each statement. Indicate if it is a member of the **Kodoha** (Imperial Way) Faction or the **Toseiha** (Control Faction) who is speaking.

1	I am a younger officer who is seeking a Showa Restoration.	
2	In order to achieve our goals, I am willing to use extreme violence and terrorist methods.	
3	I give my loyalty to Generals Nagata, Hayashi and Tojo.	
4	I back a more nuanced attitude to power and seek a key voice in each aspect of government.	
5	I think that war with the Soviet Union is inevitable and that Japan must prepare for that.	
6	I see Japan's destiny as expansion into China and seek friendly relations with the Soviet Union.	
7	I give my loyalty to Generals Araki, Mazaki and Hata.	
8	I believe in the mobilisation of the entire Japanese people for a true national effort.	

Exercise 13.3 Who am I?

1	I assassinated General Nagata. During my trial I popularised the ideals of the Kodoha Faction.	
2	Though not Prime Minister, I was caught up in the 26 February 1936 Incident and assassinated.	
3	I escaped assassination in February 1936 as assassins mistook my brother-in-law for me.	
4	I was the Prime Minister who was assassinated during the May Fifteenth Incident in 1932.	
5	I took no part in the 26 February 1936 Incident, but was executed as its 'spiritual' leader.	
6	I was a leader of the Kodoha Faction and Vice-chief of the General Staff under Saito Makoto.	
7	I refused to give the 26 February 1936 Incident rebels permission to commit ritual suicide.	
8	After the God-Sent Troops fiasco, I replaced General Araki as War Minister.	

What do the historians have to say about "Role and significance of the army and political divisions within it"?

1. Brett L Walker

Walker offers a different explanation to the survival of Okada Seisuki, suggesting his wife had managed to dress him up as a woman and smuggle him from their home. By 29 February, the 26 February 1936 Incident had collapsed, in part due to Emperor Hirohito's refusal to support the rebels. The non-commissioned officers and ordinary soldiers were spared; thirteen officers and Kita Ikki were executed. Walker concludes:

"…The 'Two Twenty-Six Incident' proved the last serious challenge to the government's authority during these stormy years, in large part because the country was faced with the daunting prospect of total war in China…" [7]

2. Louis Allen

Allen makes the point that the collapse of the 26 February 1936 Incident was a decisive moment for Japan. From the perspective of the army's internal structure, it marked the collapse of 'field-rank' opinion linked with the ideas of Kita Ikki, and the *populist radicalism stemming from agrarian unrest*. It was a clear victory for the senior generals of the Toseiha Faction, such as Tojo and Sugiyama, who in future:

"…could always point to the possible recurrence of violent insubordination as a means of obtaining what they wanted…" [8]

7 Walker, B L, A Concise History of Japan, CUP, Cambridge, 2015, p 245
8 Allen, L, Japan: The years of triumph – From Feudal Isolation to Pacific Empire, Purnell and sons, London, 1971, p 94

Chapter Fourteen
Hostility towards the zaibatsu and the collapse of party politics

Introduction

By the late 1920s, the zaibatsu had established themselves as the major players in the economic and political life of Japan.

- Their wealth and influence meant that they were able to play a major 'behind the scenes' role in the political life of the country:
  - *Mitsui* was closely aligned to *Seiyukai*;
  - *Mitsubishi's* key links were with *Minseito* (previously *Kenseikai*).
- Leading politicians had close links to the zaibatsu:
  - Foreign Minister Shidehara was related by marriage to the Iwasaki family that ran Mitsubishi;
  - the Finance Minister in the Hamagachi cabinet Inouye Junnosuke, was the son-in-law of the head of the family that controlled Mitsubishi.

See Chapter 8 for details on the establishment, rise of, and political influence of the zaibatsu by the late 1920s.

However, by the mid-1930s, the power and influence of the zaibatsu had, if not completely disappeared, been greatly limited as the army steadily increased 'its' power and influence over government and policy. By this time, the zaibatsu had become enormously unpopular.

Why was there such hostility towards the zaibatsu?

The roots of hostility towards the zaibatsu are not difficult to discover. In essence, they can be found in four areas: political practice, the rise of ultranationalism, profiteering and the attitude of the military.

- Zaibatsu wealth led to the prevalence of bribery and corruption in Japanese politics, which was an open secret: [1]
  - few Japanese politicians of the time were not taking bribes;
  - due to their wealth and economic domination, the zaibatsu were able to manipulate Japanese politicians to pass pro-business legislation;
  - the process of granting of government contracts was riddled with corruption;
  - the view grew that the zaibatsu were interested only in safeguarding the family business and raking in massive profits;
  - this, combined with the awful disgraceful behaviour of many politicians, turned many people away from any faith in liberal democracy towards support of an authoritarian military.

1 See Section Two.

- The rise in ultranationalist thinking, which was particularly seductive to members of the military, increased hostility towards the zaibatsu:
  - ultranationalists saw the leading figures of the zaibatsu placing personal, economic greed above the interests of the nation;
  - the business conglomerates were seen as 'western', and ultranationalism was strongly anti-western;
  - army propaganda painted the zaibatsu as corrupt;
  - the kodoha faction of the army was strongly anti-zaibatsu.
- Japan had been hit by various crises in the years after World War I. The zaibatsu were seen as profiting from these various crises at the expense of the Japanese people:
  - Zaibatsu companies were able to make vast profits during the reconstruction that followed the Kanto earthquake in 1923;
  - (as was explained in Chapter 8) the zaibatsu manipulated the Financial Crisis of 1927 to increase their control of banking and finance;
  - as the country suffered during the depression, the zaibatsu were seen to continue profiting;
  - the zaibatsu took advantage of the decisions to return to the gold standard, and then again leave it, during the depression (as explained in Chapter 11).
- The army position towards the zaibatsu was ambiguous:
  - for all the reasons mentioned above, the army was antagonistic towards the zaibatsu;
  - most ordinary soldiers were from the country and it was easy to blame greedy zaibatsu (and politicians) for the suffering that farmers experienced;
  - however, the army gradually came to realise that zaibatsu expertise would be needed as rearmament progressed.

The combination of the above factors meant that being a key zaibatsu figure was becoming a dangerous occupation by the 1930s. Public protests against the zaibatsu were becoming frequent; the assassination of a zaibatsu figure was being seen as an act of patriotism:

- one ultranationalist group, the *Ketsumeidan* (League of Blood) assassinated Inoue Junnosuke in February 1932:
  - Inoue was a former Governor of the Bank of Japan and had been Finance Minister in the Hamaguchi government;
- in March 1932, Baron Takuma Dan was assassinated by the same group:
  - Baron Takuma Dan was the head of Mitsui.

The army and the zaibatsu in Manchuria [2]

Once the army had established control in Manchuria following the 1931 invasion, it decided against using the zaibatsu. This is outlined in Figure 14.1.

2 See historians 1 and 2 for further comments about the army and the zaibatsu in Manchuria.

Figure 14.1 The army and the zaibatsu in Manchuria

Manchukuo Postage Stamp

The army refused to use the old zaibatsu like Mitsubishi and Mitsui and decided to develop its own. The best-known member of these new zaibatsu was Yoshisuke Aikawa.

Aikawa had experience in iron and steel, and the chemical industry, which the army was keen to develop.

Aikawa became very influential in Manchuria and his company became the centre of the Manchurian Heavy Industry Company in 1937.

Aikawa was free to exploit his position in Manchuria but he took his orders from the army. The army had achieved in Manchuria a state-private industry relationship that it had sought in Japan.

The men who planned the military-industrial system in Manchuria were soon to take power in Japan itself. One figure who began his career in Manchukuo was future Prime Minister, General Hideki Tojo.

The collapse of party politics

After 1918, there had been hopes that a form of party parliamentary politics might evolve in Japan. However, as was explained in Section Two, and outlined in some detail in Chapter 10A, these hopes for liberal democracy and party politics had all but disappeared. In essence, the collapse of party politics can be seen as the result of tradition, a flawed constitution, poor parliamentary behaviour, zaibatsu influence, economic distress and the rise of ultranationalism. The combination of these factors opened the way for domination of Japan's political life by the military.

The trend away from party politics and towards authoritarian (military) rule strengthened after 1931, and can be explained by several factors:

- the ultranationalists exploited Japanese traditional values which were conducive to an acceptance of authoritarian rule – these included:
  - reverence and near worship of the Emperor;
  - the people's long acceptance of obedience, discipline and harmony which were all inimical to individualism and free expression;
  - the deep military tradition of Japan going back to the samurai which was spurred on by military/ authoritarian propaganda.

- ultranationalist writers, like Kita Ikki, ably fostered these ideas:
  - young officers and rural army recruits were attracted to this thinking;
  - two concepts became popular and came together: state socialism and military rule;
  - just as the Meiji Restoration had seen the great feudal lords surrender their power to the Emperor, so too, in a Showa Restoration, the capitalists should surrender their wealth, and the political parties their power, to the Emperor.
- ultranationalist thoughts and the ambitions of the army gained the support of many groups in Japanese society, including:
  - key figures in the bureaucracy;
  - and the peasantry (many of whom ended up being in the army).
- the depression, and the resultant unemployment and rural suffering discredited the parties and the zaibatsu, and groups on the left were too weak to take advantage of Japan's social and economic distress.

Political life: 1936-37

The political parties tried hard to remain relevant and began to back the extreme nationalist ideas of the ultranationalists. This was particularly true of the Seiyukai. The zaibatsu, old and new, also expressed support for extreme nationalism. However, they tried to distinguish between military domination outside of Japan and military domination inside Japan. This was a forlorn ambition.

- The government of Prime Minister Hirota Koki (March 1936-February 1937) was strongly pro-military:
  - Hirota's government even went as far as to align Japan with Nazi Germany. [3]
- Hirota found himself under strong attack, resigned, and was replaced by General Hayashi:
  - Hayashi (PM February 1937-June 1937) called an election;
  - the Seiyukai and the Minseito worked together to defeat Hayashi's supporters;
  - Hayashi resigned in June 1937.
- The last remaining genro, Saionji was able to have Konoe Fuminaro appointed as Prime Minister: [4]
  - Konoe was a respected figure from an old aristocratic family;
  - Saionji had hoped that a figure like Konoe might bring the nation together and ensure greater political stability;
  - it was a hope not to be realised as between February 1937 and October 1941, Japan was to have eight cabinets!

3 This was the Anti-Comintern Pact of November 1936 (see Chapters 17 and 18 for details).
4 Konoe Fuminaro would be PM twice: June 1937-January 1939, and again July 1940-October 1941.

Exercise 14.1 Who am I?

1	I was a strongly pro-military PM from March 1936 to February 1937.	
2	Saionji arranged for me to become PM in June 1937 hoping I might bring stability to politics.	
3	I was head of Mitsui. I was assassinated in March 1932.	
4	I was a new, pro-army zaibatsu who became an influential figure in Manchukuo.	
5	I was Finance Minister in the Hamaguchi government. I was assassinated February 1936.	
6	I was a member of the Toseiha Faction and rose to importance during my Manchuria service.	

Exercise 14.2 Complete the following passage using the terms below.

By the 1920s, wealthy _____ had become extremely influential in political life with close links to political parties. Seiyukai was backed by _____, while Mitsubishi supported _____. The zaibatsu had become extremely _____ as they were seen to be profiting from people's suffering caused by the _____. This was seen most clearly in their ability to take advantage of _____ decisions. In 1932, zaibatsu figures like _____ had become victims of _____. The _____ opposed zaibatsu figures, seeing them as only concerned with profit and lacking patriotism. Following the 1931 invasion of _____, the _____ was not keen to allow the _____ zaibatsu to take any financial advantage of the Japanese occupation. Instead, the army preferred the ____ zaibatsu such as _____. By the mid-1930s, party politics had effectively _____ as the army tightened its grip on the country. The main political parties adopted strongly _____ elements to their party platforms. This did not prevent army _____ of political life as seen in the government of _____, who brought Japan into the Anti-Comintern Pact with _____. By the late 1930s, Japan's political process had become extremely _____, with eight cabinets in four years.

MANCHURIA – DOMINATION – MINSEITO – ASSASSINATION – MITSUI – COLLAPSED – UNPOPULAR – ZAIBATSU – ARMY – HIROTA KOKI – NEW – OLD – NATIONALIST – DEPRESSION – AIKAWA – GOLD STANDARD – GERMANY – BARON DAN – ULTRANATIONALISTS – UNSTABLE

What do the historians have to say about "Hostility towards the zaibatsu and the collapse of party politics"?

1. Richard Storry

Storry comments that the Kwangtung Army in Manchukuo *(Japan's name for its puppet state in Manchuria)* had no intention of allowing the established zaibatsu, such as Mitsui and Mitsubishi, to profit from the exploitation of Manchuria's resources. Initially the South Manchurian Railway Company dominated the development of the region. After 1937, following the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War, the development of Manchuria was accelerated and:

"…new business groups, notably the Nissan firm, became very powerful in Manchukuo. These new groups, encouraged by the army, were known as shinko-zaibatsu*, or 'new zaibatsu'…"* [5]

2. Franz Michael and George Taylor

Michael and Taylor argue that the development of a 'continental war base' in Manchukuo meant that Japan itself was now committed to a semi-war economy. The zaibatsu's peaceful pursuit of markets now seemed to be impractical. This, plus the impact of the international trade restrictions brought on by the depression:

"…put the zaibatsu on the defensive. They were glad to get the pickings from Manchukuo and the contracts from the rearmament program…" [6]

5 Storry, R, A History of Modern Japan, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1973, p 194
6 Michael, F H, and Taylor, G E, The Far East in the Modern World, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, 1964, p 557

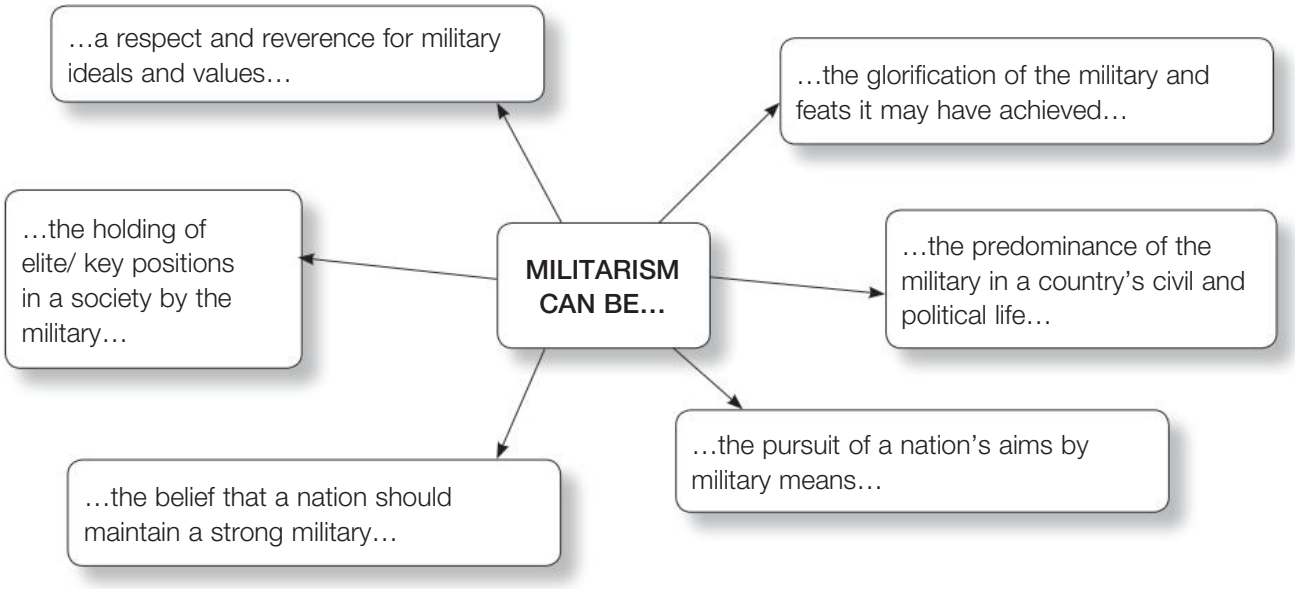
Chapter Fifteen
Differing domestic responses to militarism

What is militarism?

All textbooks on Japan in the years leading to the outbreak of World War II have sections or chapters relating to the rise and the impact of militarism. The prevalence of militarism in Japan is not questioned; however, a clear definition of militarism might be useful to outline at this stage.

A country may be considered militarist or to be pursuing militarism if any or all of the following elements are present, as outlined in Figure 15.1.

Figure 15.1 What is meant by militarism?



Understanding Japan's domestic response to militarism depends on what is being referred to as militarism and also on the time period being considered. Throughout the 1920s, support for militarism was at its lowest; in the 1930s the situation was clearly much different. Attitudes varied depending on what militarism implied:

- most Japanese supported a strong defence force so that the country could not fall prey to the stronger western nations as had happened to China throughout the 19th century;
- there was a traditional respect for the military which stretched back to the days of the samurai;
- there were those who supported an aggressive foreign policy that used military means to achieve its aims;
- those who supported some form of authoritarian government supported militarism.

Responses to militarism in the 1920s

In 1918, Takashi Hara established Japan's first party government (though the posts of Minister of War and the Navy remained in the hands of serving officers). This inaugurated a decade or so of limited liberal democracy inside Japan. Japan's attempt at parliamentary party democracy was far from perfect, but for most of the 1920s, it proved to be generally popular. In 1925, the constitution was even changed to bring in universal male suffrage. [1]

The influence of the military at this time was at its lowest point:

- it had gained nothing from its involvement in the Siberian campaign;
- the government of Prime Minister Kato Takaaki (June 1924 - January 1926) brought in measures to reduce the number of army divisions and cut expenditure on the armed forces;
- Japan was willing to take part in (naval) disarmament conferences throughout the decade, in particular the 1921-22 Washington Conference; [2]
- Japan developed a non-aggressive and cooperative approach to China;
- Foreign Minister Shidehara attempted to lead Japan in the direction of international cooperation and compromise;
- when the Kwangtung Army attempted to act independently and force the civilian government to follow its actions, as it attempted to do in Manchuria in 1928, it failed. [3]

The response of several groups to militarism at this time was clearly negative:

- groups on the left opposed militarism, including:
  - many workers and trade unions;
  - the developing Socialist and Communists opposed militarism;
- most democratic politicians obviously opposed militarism:
  - the military's supremacy would mean the end of their influence;
- the left-wing intelligentsia was opposed to authoritarianism and so were against militarism, including:
  - many academics and journalists;
  - and those in the diplomatic corps who supported Shidehara and wanted to work with the League of Nations;
- educated groups opposed militarism:
  - they feared the threat that an authoritarian militarism could mean the end of their ideals of free speech and a free press;
  - the impact of the Peace Preservation Law tended to justify such fears.

One of the most influential groups which had a negative response to militarism was the zaibatsu:

- the zaibatsu were keen on maintaining cooperative, cordial relations with other nations;
  - friendly diplomatic relations facilitated international trade, especially with nations like the United States and Britain, but also China;

1 See Chapters 7, 8 and 9.
2 See Chapter 5.
3 See Chapter 10.

- military aggression, particularly in China, would most likely bring an end to such friendly diplomatic relations, and lead to economic sanctions against Japan;

- the zaibatsu preferred Japan's imperfect liberal democracy to militarism:
  - it offered them opportunities to wield influence on the political parties due to their immense wealth;
  - as has been mentioned, bribery and corruption were ever-present;
- the military were clearly antagonistic towards the zaibatsu: [4]
  - young army officers saw the zaibatsu as greedy, unpatriotic, and only interested in amassing profits;
  - peasant army conscripts found it easy to believe that the suffering of their people in the countryside was due to zaibatsu avarice;
  - once the army moved into Manchuria (September 1931) and established its domination, it excluded the old zaibatsu, preferring to use its own;
- some ultranationalists who backed an authoritarian militarism were quite prepared to assassinate zaibatsu figures in 'the name of the Emperor';
  - thus for some zaibatsu, opposition to militarism became a matter of life and death.

Responses to militarism in the 1930s

There were still opponents to militarism in the 1930s (and there were supporters of course in the 1920s). However, once the depression had taken hold, and once the Kwangtung Army had acted so forcefully in Manchuria, it was the supporters of militarism who were in the ascendent.

- The army was by no means united in its approach for achieving militarist influence in Japan, as was highlighted in the Kodaha-Toseiha factional conflict during the first half of the 1930s:
  - however, both factions sought army dominance of political life;
  - young officers and peasant conscripts of Kodaha sought a radical path;
  - senior officers of Toseiha sought a more measured approach;
  - but the desire of each for militarist authoritarianism was not in question.
- Nationalist/ patriotic sentiments grew ever stronger:
  - young people who went through Japan's education system were subjected to constant nationalist propaganda, ranging from respect of the army to an unquestioned devotion towards the Emperor;
  - many officers had been removed during Kato's premiership in the mid-1920s but most ended up in schools as military instructors;
  - it was respect for the military that they attempted to imbue into their students, not a desire for liberal democracy.
- Beyond the senior ranks of the army, the ultranationalists were the strongest supporters of militarism:
  - the desires of the ultranationalists echoed the desires of army militarists as both sought:
    - authoritarian government, though always in the name of the Emperor;

4 See Chapter 14.

- the diminution of democracy in Japan as much as possible;
- extending Japan's influence and control throughout Asia.

- Some of the ultranationalist groups went further in their thinking than did many in the army's senior ranks:
  - some believed in the racial superiority of the Japanese;
  - if the liberal governments were not willing to establish Japan's rightful position of dominance in Asia, then it had to be removed and replaced with an authoritarian government under military control;
  - they were often willing to employ extreme violent methods.
- The pro-militarist response could be found:
  - in the writings of Kita Ikki;
  - in ultranationalist groups such as the *Black Dragon Society*, the *Tenketo Kai (Heaven Spade Party)* and the *Sakura Kai (Cherry Blossom Society)*;
  - an influential group was the *Ketsumeidan (League of Blood)*:
    - it was the Ketsumeidan which was responsible for the assassination of former Finance Minister Junnouke Inoue and Mitsui head, Baron Takuma Dan.
  - the founder of the Cherry Blossom Society was Dr Shumei Okawa:
    - he was a professor at the Colonisation Academy;
    - he sought military expansionism,a military takeover at home.

Exercise 15.1 Answer the following questions in the pages provided.

1	What the key difference in the country's response to militarism between the 1920s and the 1930s?	
2	What policies did Kato Takaaki introduce in the mid-1920s that had a direct effect on the military?	
3	How did the policy of Foreign Minister, Shidehara, affect the influence of the military in the 1920s?	
4	What was the attitude of groups on the left in Japanese politics and society towards militarism?	
5	Why did the zaibatsu have a clear preference for liberal democracy in the 1920s?	

6	Why were young army officers and peasant recruits likely to condemn zaibatsu actions in the early 1930s?	
7	How was education affected by militarist thinking from the mid-1920s?	
8	What were the two fundamental demands of the ultranationalists during the 1930s?	
9	What violent actions was the Kensumeidan responsible for in the 1930s?	
10	Who was Dr Shumei Okawa?	

Exercise 15.2 Brain exerciser – rearrange the following terms connected with militarism

1	MRNTDMASAIE	
2	TKOA KAIATAK	
3	DHRAHAIEA	
4	NRUTTLSIATAOIANL	
5	HCMARUNAI	
6	BSUTZIAA	
7	TUKWGNAGN MAYR	
8	AKTI KIIK	
9	SURKAA AKI	
10	IEMUHS AWAKO	

What do the historians have to say about "Differing domestic responses to militarism"?

1. S C M Paine

Paine analyses Japanese strategic policy as it evolved in the 1930s from the invasion of Manchuria in September 1931. He argues that the return to militarism was a throwback to an earlier period. Further he says that this development led Japan to seek a future as a continental power – which was to involve the invasion and occupation of China, and later South East Asia – when the country was better suited to a more maritime strategic outlook. At the start of his analysis, he makes this observation of what happened to Japan in the 1930s:

"…The military eclipse of the civil authority marked a return to the pre-Meiji Restoration balance between civil and military institutions. During the shogunates, the army had ruled…" [5]

2. Brett L Walker

Walker makes the point that though militarism was in the ascendent in the 1930s, it would be wrong to conclude that the whole country was going along with unquestioned support for the military. Walker notes that in 1931, 10 422 leftists were arrested by the secret police; in 1932 it was 13 938; in 1933 it was 14 622. Scholars, such as Minobe Tatsukichi, who did not go along with the prevailing nationalist/ militarist/ Emperor-centred thinking of the time were also targeted.

"….Not all Japanese bought into the exhilarating culture of war… The government viewed the left as dangerously subversive to Japan's kokutai or 'national essence.…" [6]

5 Paine, S C M, The Japanese Empire: Grand Strategy from the Meiji Restoration to the Pacific War, CUP, Cambridge, 2017, p 109
6 Walker, B L, A Concise History of Japan, CUP, Cambridge, 2015, p 244

Chapter Sixteen
The role of Emperor Hirohito

Introduction

Emperor Hirohito was, and to many people, remains, a controversial figure in those countries that fought against Japan during World War II. Rightly or wrongly, he was seen as being in large part responsible for the atrocities carried out by the Japanese army in places such as Changi POW camp in Singapore, and on the Burma Railway. Events such as the Sandakan Death March and the Rape of Nanking were not easily forgotten. Even today, the issue of "comfort women" (sex slaves) remains a taut issue between South Korea and Japan. [1]

When Emperor Hirohito visited the United Kingdom on a state visit in October 1971, he was not well-received by many. As his carriage drove through the streets of London, crowds protested:

- some merely stood in silence;
- some in the crowd wore red gloves to symbolise war deaths at the hands of Japanese;
- many in the crowd whistled the *Colonel Bogey March*, as if to remind the Japanese Emperor of the treatment meted out to allied POWs by Japanese soldiers on the Burma Railway during World War II.

The Colonel Bogey March: The Colonel Bogey March was written by a British bandmaster, F J Ricketts, under his pseudonym Kenneth Alford, in 1914. At the start of World War II, some ribald lyrics were added to the tune as a means of mocking Nazi leaders such as Hitler and Goering.

The tune remained popular and part of it was used in the 1957 World War II film *The Bridge on the River Kwai*, which told the story of allied POWs used as slave labour by the Japanese. Thus, whistling *Colonel Bogey* was meant to remind the Japanese Emperor of past Japanese behaviour.

Many people believed that Emperor Hirohito should have been tried as a war criminal after the war, as were several Japanese military leaders. The Emperor escaped punishment largely due to the influence of the allied commander of occupation forces in Japan after the war, General Douglas Macarthur.

- Macarthur's view was that Hirohito "was needed" after the war.
- Putting Hirohito on trial would have caused massive internal unrest, and would have made the occupation more difficult, argued Macarthur.
- Japan had surrendered due to Hirohito's direct intervention.
- Macarthur said that Hirohito should be shielded. He could become the focus of a post-war, democratic Japan as head of a constitutional monarchy.

This chapter is not concerned with Hirohito's wartime conduct. The focus is on his role in the rise of militarism inside Japan in the years to 1937.

1 For a detailed examination of Japan's activities in World War II, see: Webb, K, Conflict in the Pacific 1937-1951, Get Smart Education, Mona Vale, 2020, Chapters Nine and Ten.

Background: birth to accession

- Hirohito was born in Tokyo on 29 April 1901:
  - his father was Crown Prince Yoshihito who would become Emperor Taisho in 1912;
  - his mother was Princess Sadako who as a sixteen-year old had married the Crown Prince a year earlier;
  - Hirohito's grandfather was the Emperor Meiji.
- After seventy days, Hirohito was taken away from his parents, as was the custom, and entrusted to a guardian:
  - his guardian was a former vice-admiral, Count Sumiyoshi Kawamura;
  - his job was to ensure the young boy understood the role that he would one day be emperor and must behave accordingly.
- At age four, he returned to the royal palace:
  - he lived with his younger brothers seeing his mother only once a week;
  - he rarely spent time with his father, who was beginning to show signs of a mental illness that gradually become worse.
- In 1908, Hirohito was enrolled in the Gakushuin (Peers School) as part of a special class of twelve boys.
  - the head of the school was General Maresuke Nogi, the hero of the Russo-Japanese War; [2]
  - Nogi inculcated the values of hard work, devotion to duty and stoicism;
  - Hirohito and Nogi became close. [3]
- Emperor Meiji died 30 July 1912:
  - Hirohito's father, Yoshihito became the Emperor Taisho;
  - Hirohito became the Crown Prince;
  - over the next few years, Hirohito was guided by his natural history tutor and he developed a deep interest in marine biology, an area in which he was later acknowledged as something of an expert.
- On 4 February 1918, Hirohito became engaged to Princess Nagako:
  - they married on 26 January 1924;
  - the couple would have seven children, five daughters and two sons.
- In March 1921, Hirohito became the first crown prince to travel abroad:
  - he spent time in France, the Netherlands and Italy;
  - whilst in England, he spent time with King George V.
- On 25 November 1921, Hirohito was appointed regent:
  - this was needed because of his father's mental instability;
  - in December 1923, he narrowly survived an assassination attempt.

2 See Chapter Two.

3 Nogi and his wife committed ritual suicide on the new of the death of Emperor Meiji in 1912. Despite their closeness, Hirohito was said to have received the news with the 'correct impassivity'.

Crown Prince Hirohito became emperor on the death of his father on 25 December 1926; the nation's 124th emperor. Emperor Hirohito chose as his 'reign name' *Showa*, or *Enlightened Peace*. It was to prove to be a most inappropriate choice of reign name. During the first twenty years of his reign, the country witnessed extreme political violence, the invasion of Manchuria, the rise of militarism, the 1937 invasion of China, the war in the Pacific, Japanese wartime atrocities and the defeat of Japan following the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945.

Hirohito's responsibility in the rise of militarism

Historians have long debated the role of Hirohito in the rise of militarism inside Japan in the 1930s:

- was he merely a figurehead, opposed to militarism but controlled by his advisors, and unable to prevent the growth of extreme nationalist sentiments, and a desire for an expansionist foreign policy which ultimately led to war?
- or did he support Japan's special mission, an extreme nationalist himself, a man who backed Japan's militarist tendencies who allowed the militarists to take control and who allowed his prestige to be used in their cause?

The respective arguments over Hirohito's role are outlined in Table 16.1.

Table 16.1 Hirohito and the rise of militarism: the case for and against

THE CASE IN DEFENCE OF HIROHITO	THE CASE AGAINST HIROHITO
■ The Meiji Restoration supposedly came about as a desire to take power away from the Shogun and return it to the Emperor: □ this occurred only on paper not in reality. ■ In post 1868 Japan, the role of the Emperor was essentially ceremonial.	■ Following the activities of the Kwangtung Army in Manchuria in 1928, Hirohito expressed his concerns and effectively forced PM Tanaka to resign: □ he was then advised by the last remaining, genro, Saionji, that this was ill-advised and went against the constitution; □ Hirohito heeded the advice and refrained in future from voicing his opinions; □ the men behind the 1928 action received the lightest of sentences.

- Japan remained an oligarchy, ruled by senior figures (the genro after 1868) and the Emperor became a mere figurehead:
  - thus, it can be argued that Hirohito was restrained by the practice of government, regardless of what his personal desires might have been.
- By temperament, Hirohito was not the sort of person who could stand up to the militarists.
- Nationalist propaganda in schools and emperor-worship were promoted in Japan in the years before 1937:
  - Hirohito did not promote these ideas himself and simply had to accept what his ministers were doing.
- Declassified British Foreign Office documents from the 1930s, argue that Hirohito urged caution on his military advisors in the 1930s.
- The Japanese historian, Noriko Kawamura *(Emperor Hirohito and the Pacific War)* argues for a more mid-way position on Hirohito:
  - he suggests that Hirohito was neither a pacifist nor an activist commander;
  - rather his position was ambiguous, and it is difficult to disentangle his personal opinions from his state decisions.
- Hirohito refused to back those who were behind the 26 February 1936 Incident, even though the young officers involved claimed to be acting in the name of the Emperor.
- Though the Japanese *National Institute for Defence Studies* show that Hirohito was informed of military planning, and that he occasionally made suggestions, they also show that he could not actually decide basic plans or basic strategies.
- Critics argue that Hirohito was an opportunist:
  - though critical at first of the invasion of Manchuria in 1931, he soon jumped on the 'military bandwagon' and showed support for military expansionism;
  - Hirohito did not seek any punishment for the men behind the invasion of Manchuria.
- Critics of Hirohito say that he was happy that Japanese territorial control had increased;
  - he supported the creation of the puppet state of Manchukuo;
  - he was happy to announce Japan's withdrawal from the League Nations in 1933 with an Imperial Rescript.
- Hirohito had shown in the 26 February 1936 Incident that he could take a stand:
  - critics suggest his failure to take a stand on other occasions make him culpable for later Japanese actions.
- Documents from the Japanese *National Institute for Defence Studies* have shown that Hirohito was well-informed about military planning in the years leading up to the attack on Pearl Harbour in December 1941:
  - on occasions he requested, and received, revisions to specific plans

Exercise 16.1 Select "fact or opinion" for each of the following statements

1	Hirohito was raised and educated in the traditionally rarefied manner experienced by the son of an emperor.	FACT/ OPINION
2	Though the Meiji Restoration had supposedly returned power to the emperor, the emperor's role proved to be largely ceremonial.	FACT/ OPINION
3	Hirohito was a militarist at heart and was excited at the prospects of a Japanese empire being constructed on mainland China.	FACT/ OPINION
4	Hirohito should have been put on trial after World War II because of his support of Japanese militarist expansionism.	FACT/ OPINION
5	Hirohito refused to support the young officers who tried to seize power in the 26 February 1936 Incident, even though they said they had acted in his name.	FACT/ OPINION

Exercise 16.2 Place the events on the right in the correct chronological order.

1st event		Japan invades Manchuria
2nd event		Hirohito visits Europe
3rd event		Hirohito ascends to the throne
4th event		Death of Emperor Meiji
5th event		Hirohito becomes Regent
6th event		Hirohito opposes 26 February 1936 Incident
7th event		Marriage of Hirohito
8th event		Creation of Manchukuo
9th event		Hirohito effectively forces resignation of PM Tanaka
10th event		Japan leaves the League of Nations

What do the historians have to say about "The role of Emperor Hirohito"?

1. Sir John Whitehead

John Whitehead was the British ambassador to Japan from 1986 to 1992. It was during his time in Tokyo that Emperor Hirohito died (7 January 1989). Whitehead argues that Hirohito was ill suited to his role, and lacked the temperament and the personality to stand up to the militarists who were deciding Japanese policy in the 1930s. The documentary evidence of the time, suggests Whitehead, shows that Hirohito did try to use his influence to restrain the militarists. However, though the Emperor's person might have been 'sacred', he was in fact powerless. Whitehead further argues that to compare Hirohito with Hitler is a ridiculous notion.

"…A man of stronger personality than Hirohito might have tried more strenuously to check the growing influence of the military in Japanese politics and the drift of Japan toward war with the western powers…" [4]

2. Herbert P Bix

Bix takes a different line to Whitehead. He argues that once all-out war had broken out between Japan and China in 1937, Hirohito actively intervened in military decision-making. Bix says that Hirohito lived his *commander-in-chief role day and night*. He was willing to take risks with Britain and France and ignored opportunities for peace, deciding to appoint General Tojo as Prime Minister, because he supported Tojo's expansionist policies. Bix says that allowing Hirohito to remain as emperor after 1945 has affected history's view of him.

"…Keeping Hirohito on the throne until he died led to the falsification of history. Forging his credentials as a pacifist when, in fact, he had been a staunch imperialist and had exercised leadership in support of war…" [5]

3. Paul Manning

Paul Manning was a war correspondent who reported on the war in both Europe and the Pacific. He flew as a *working nose-gunner on B-29 bombing missions.* He was close to General Macarthur and travelled extensively throughout Japan during the early occupation years after 1945. Manning objected to the image that was created around Hirohito after the war as the inoffensive, gentle marine biologist. Manning argued that Hirohito listened to his army and navy leaders, and approved their recommendations for aggression, and eventually war.

"…He plotted with his advisors the invasions of Manchuria and China, and the attack on Pearl Harbour, which thrust the United States into the Pacific war…" [6]

4 Quoted in the South China Morning Post, 20 July 2017
5 Bix, H P, Hirohito and History: The Asia-Pacific Journal 6 July 2005, Japanese and American Perspectives on the Emperor and World War II in Asia,
6 Manning, P, Hirohito: The War Years, Bantam Books, New York, 1989, p ix

Chapter Seventeen
Aims and strategy of Japanese foreign policy to 1937

Background: Foreign Policy issues before 1904

In 1638, the Shogun introduced the *Seclusion Decrees*. These decrees introduced the policy of isolation, or sakkoku, which would see Japan effectively cut off from the west for over two hundred years. The decrees comprised four key measures:

- no Europeans were allowed into Japan though the Dutch maintained a small presence in Nagasaki on the island of Deshima;
- Christian converts had to renounce their faith or face execution;
- ocean-going ships were not to be built;
- any Japanese who left the country would be executed on their return.

Isolation ended with the arrival of US Commodore Perry in 1853. By the late 1860s, Japan had been forced to sign trading treaties, grant most-favoured nations and accept the principle of extra-territoriality with several western powers. [1]

Japan did not make the same mistake as China. It consciously decided to embrace what the west had to offer, while doing its best to maintain Japanese traditions. As was explained in Chapter 1, Japan adopted western technology and industry, built up an army based on German lines, a navy based on British lines, and adapted what it saw as the best of western legal, constitutional, educational and financial expertise. This had two key results for Japanese foreign policy: firstly, it meant Japan was not to suffer the same humiliations as had China; secondly, it also stimulated Japan to ape the behaviour of the western nations as it began its journey along the road of imperialism.

Japan's first area of foreign policy interest was Korea:

- Korean-Japanese tension led to conflict, culminating in the Treaty of Kanghwa in 1876 and the Treaty of Chemulpo in 1882.
- Korea was nominally a Chinese vassal state. In the 1880s and 1890s, China was attempting to regain its influence in Korea.
- China's actions, plus other factors, led to the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95. **(See Chapter 1 for details on the war and its results).**

Concerns over Russian expansion eastwards, and resentment over Russia's annexation of the Liaodong Peninsula in 1898, led to war between the two powers in 1904. **(See Chapter 2 for details in the war and its results).**

1 See Chapter One.

The narrative of Japanese foreign policy: 1902-the late 1920s

1902

Britain and Japan signed the Anglo-Japanese Alliance (see Chapter 2).

1904-05

Japan's status and reputation as a great power were established with its dramatic and unexpected humiliation of Russia in the Russo-Japanese War (see Chapter 2).

In 1905, the Anglo-Japanese Alliance was renewed, and again in 1908.

1910

Japan annexed Korea (see Chapter 3). This was the culmination of almost forty years of involvement in Korea which had seen it fight the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95 (see Chapter 1).

1914-1918

During World War I, Japan joined the allied powers in the war against Germany. This enabled it to take Germany's concessions in China and its north Pacific colonies (see Chapter Four).

1915

Taking advantage of the allies' preoccupation with the war in Europe, Japan delivered its '21 Demands' to China which sought a series of concessions from China. It would later be forced to back down on some of these demands following international criticism (see Chapter 4).

1917

The Lansing-Ishii Agreement between Japan and the United States was signed in an attempt to improve relations between the two countries (see Chapter 4).

1919

At the Paris Peace Conference (see Chapter 4), Japan was recognised as one of the great powers. It did not make great territorial gains from the Treaty of Versailles, though it did receive mandate control over the former German colonies of the Mariana, Marshall and Caroline island groups.

Japan eventually joined the League of Nations and became a Council member.

However, Japan was angry at the refusal of the western powers to include a racial equality clause in the peace treaties.

1918-1922

Japan's Siberian Expedition was undertaken to force Russia back into the war against Germany. However, Japan stayed on long after the end of the war which suggests its interest was more concerned with bringing down the Bolshevik regime. It also had eyes on Russia's far eastern resources.

1921-1922

Japan was a key participant in the Washington Conference. The conference had been called by US Secretary of State, Charles Evans Hughes, to settle issues in the Far East such as China's territorial integrity, maintaining 'the open door' and the thorny issue of naval disarmament (see Chapter 5).

In 1922, Japan acceded to international pressure to return Shandong province to China.

US immigration restrictions aimed against Asians served to sour relations between the US and Japan.

The era of cooperation and engagement

Throughout most of the 1920s, Japan became an engaged and cooperative power in international affairs. This was due in large part to the influence of its Foreign Minister, Baron Kujiro Shidehara (though his diplomacy was shared by most foreign ministers during the 1920s). Japan's foreign policy at this time was referred to by many as *Shidehara Diplomacy.*

1915	Shidehara became Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs
1919	He was appointed Japan's ambassador to the United States
1921-22	He was Japan's chief negotiator at the Washington Conference

Shidehara served two terms as Foreign Minister – 1924-27 and 1929-31. From November 1930 to March 1931, he was acting Prime Minister, following the attempted assassination of Prime Minister Hamaguchi. [2]

Shidehara's diplomacy was guided by several key ideas:

- the economic advancement of Japan;
- a conciliatory policy towards China, involving:
  - respect for Chinese territorial integrity;
  - patience for China's internal problems;
- cooperation with Britain and the United States;
- a desire for international cooperation.

Japan was a willing participant in the Washington Conference and an active member of the League of Nations. In 1928, Japan signed the Pact of Paris, otherwise known as the Kellogg-Briand Pact. [3] The Kellogg-Briand Pact's full title was the *General Treaty for Renunciation of War as an Instrument of National Policy*. It was the high point of inter-war internationalism. During this heady, optimistic period of international relations, it really did seem that Japan was destined to follow a path of cooperative and peaceful diplomacy.

2 Shidehara was also Prime Minister of Japan from October 1945 to May 1946. He was also credited with playing a key role in formulating Article 9 of Japan's post-war constitution which renounced war.

3 Kellogg was the US Secretary of State; Briand was the French Foreign Minister.

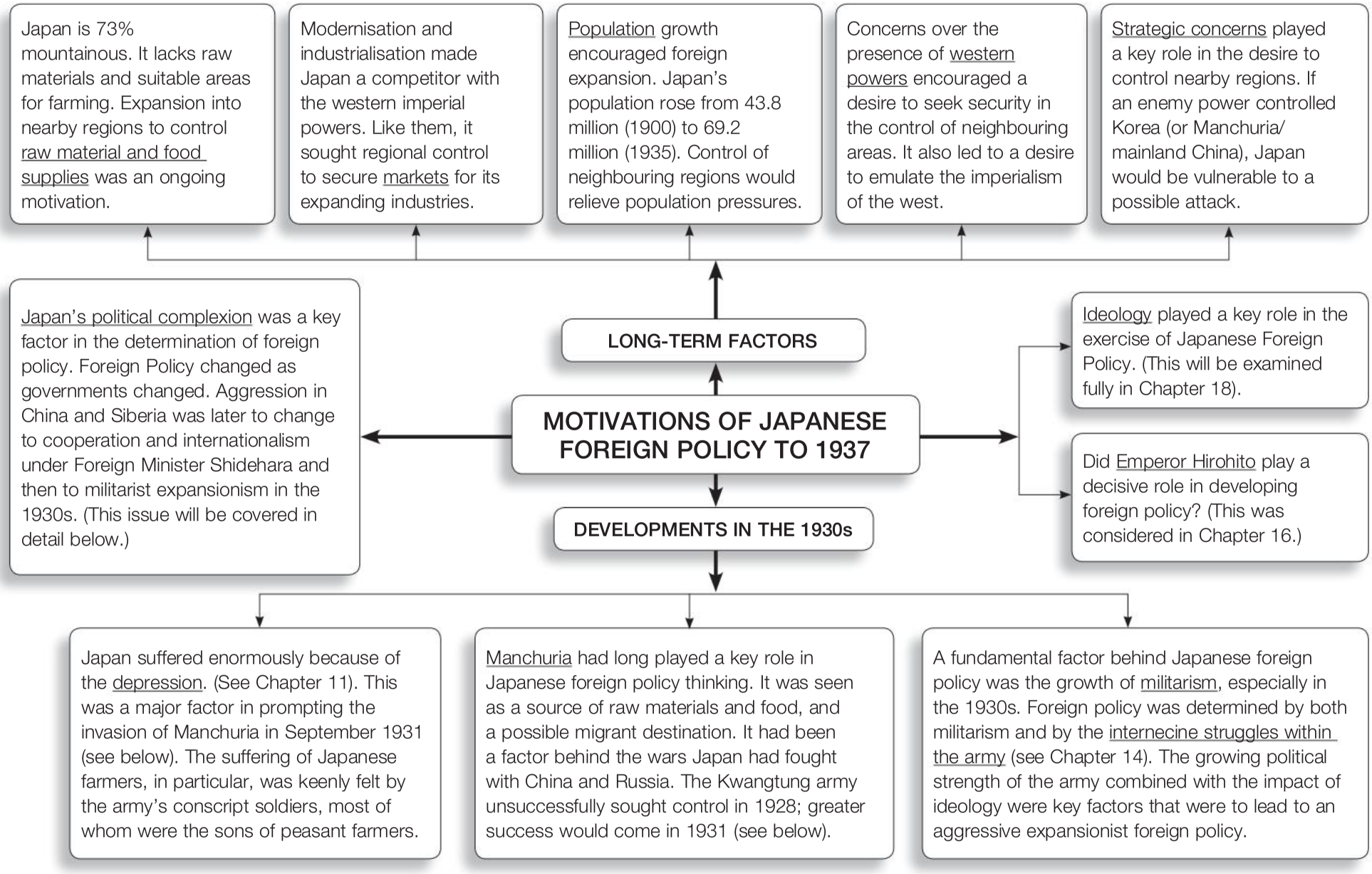
However, two key issues raised their ugly heads which was to turn Japan from the path of international peace and harmony to the path of military expansionism:

- the depression
- Manchuria.

Exercise 17.1 Indicate whether the following statements are true or false.

1	From as early as the 17th century, Japan had been an open society that was keen to welcome the western nations.	TRUE / FALSE
2	Alliance agreements and success in war had already marked out Japan as a major power as early as the first decade of the 20th century.	TRUE / FALSE
3	The annexation of Korea in 1910 was the culmination of a long period of Japanese interest and involvement in that country.	TRUE / FALSE
4	The international reaction to Japan's 21 Demands which had been submitted to China in 1915 was generally positive.	TRUE / FALSE
5	Japan was treated as a great power in Paris in 1919, became a League Council member and received several mandates over former German colonies.	TRUE / FALSE
6	Japan left the Paris Peace Conference completely satisfied with its outcomes.	TRUE / FALSE
7	Japan's Siberian expedition suggested that its concern was not so much to bring Russia back into the war but to weaken Bolshevism and exploit Russia's resources.	TRUE / FALSE
8	Japan was a reluctant participant in the Washington Conference of 1921-22, and refused to sign the final agreements.	TRUE / FALSE
9	Shidehara supported Japanese moves to take advantage of China's weakness and weaken its territorial integrity.	TRUE / FALSE
10	During the 1920s, there seemed to be a real chance that Japan would embrace internationalism and become a key cooperative player in international affairs.	TRUE / FALSE

Figure 17.1 Motivations of Japanese Foreign Policy to 1937



Depression and Manchuria

The worldwide depression had a severe economic impact on Japan, as was explained in Chapter 11. The collapse of silk exports had a devastating impact on farm incomes. Many conscript soldiers saw themselves as champions of those in need, in particular farmers. The economy nosedived, unemployment rose and export markets dried up. The combination of these economic factors led to a belief in political and military circles that some salvation could be sought in Manchuria.

Shidehara's policy of engagement and respect for China's territorial integrity was not popular in military circles:

- by 1927, the Chinese Nationalist leader, Jiang Jieshi had effectively united his country, neutralising the warlords and almost eliminating the Communists;
- there were fears that Jiang's unified China would seek to undermine Japan's position in Manchuria.

When Tanaka Giichi became Prime Minister in April 1927, he pursued a harder line on China than had Shidehara:

- Giichi twice moved troops to the border area around Japanese controlled Shantung to 'protect' Japanese interests;
- Giichi had hopes of establishing a 'cordon sanitaire' against communism, using Manchuria and Korea;
  - this was linked to the tough policy against communists inside Japan;
- however, in July 1929, Shidehara was back as Foreign Minister and he again sought to follow a more conciliatory policy towards China.

The politicians were inconsistent, and policy towards China (and Manchuria) changed as the political complexion of each government changed. However, the military remained consistent. The Kwangtung Army had attempted independent action in Manchuria in June 1928, which had resulted in the assassination of the Manchurian warlord, Zhang Zuolin (Chang Tso-lin). The government refused to back the army action but those responsible were let off very lightly. [4]

The invasion of Manchuria: September 1931

By mid-1931, Wakatsuki Reijiro was Prime Minister. He felt the Kwangtung Army was ready to strike again in Manchuria, and he sought Emperor Hirohito's help to prevent this happening. To this end, Major-General Tatekawa was ordered to Manchuria to prevent any such action:

- Tatekawa had well-known pro-expansionist views;
- he advertised his trip, and delayed his arrival, which gave the army in Manchuria time to act.

4 See Chapter 10.

On 19 September 1931, there was an explosion on the Manchurian railway:

- Japanese authorities on the spot blamed Chinese troops for this 'terrorist act' but it was clearly a concocted incident to justify military action in Manchuria;
  - Japanese troops soon took the city of Mukden;
- the Wakatsuki government was forced to accept the Kwangtung Army's *fait accompli*;
  - across Japan, the army's action was well-received, even though it had been an act of mutiny.

The Japanese army in Manchuria now moved quickly to consolidate its position:

- by November all of Manchuria was under Japanese control;
  - 28 December: Jinzhou (Chinchow) fell to the Japanese;
  - by 4 January 1932, Japanese troops had reached the Great Wall.
- in January 1932 a group of Japanese monks was attacked, and Japan used this incident to exert its superiority over China;
  - Shanghai was attacked and Japanese troops stayed there until May.
- following the Shanghai attack, Japan established a demilitarised zone between Beijing and Manchuria;
  - in 1933, Jehol was added to Manchuria;
  - by late 1935, Japan controlled the provinces of Hopeh and Chahar.

In February 1932, Manchuria became the "independent" state of Manchukuo, headed by the former Chinese Emperor, Henry Pu Yi. However, Manchukuo's "puppet status" was lost on no one.

Japan, Manchuria and the League of Nations

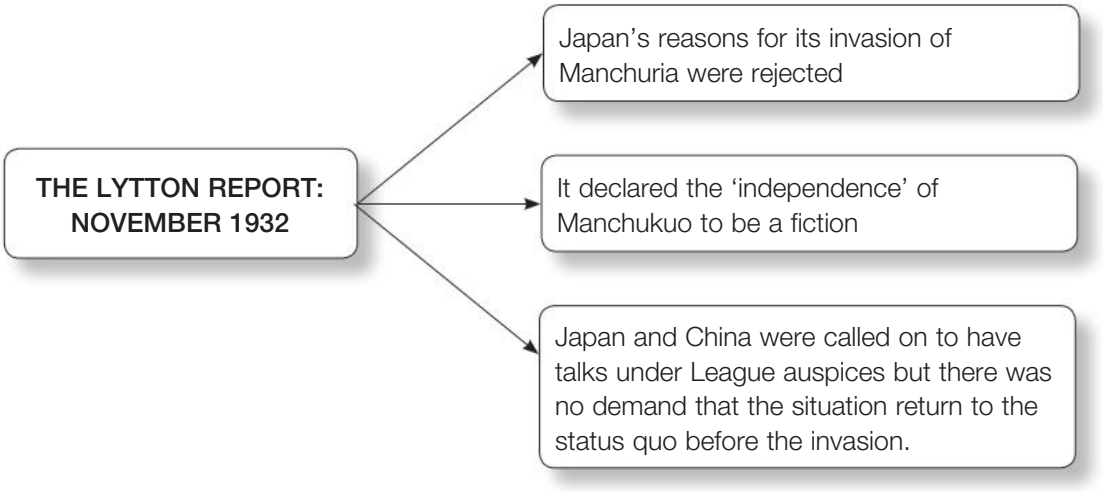
Following the Japanese attack of 19 September 1931, China appealed to the League of Nations under Article 11 which empowered the League to take *"any action that may be deemed wise and effectual to safeguard the peace of nations"*:

- 30 September: a League Council resolution was passed that called on Japan to withdraw its troops as soon as *"Japanese lives and property were secured"*;
- 24 October: a League resolution called on Japan to withdraw to the Manchurian railway line;
- 16 November: Japan vetoed the resolution.

The League was desperate not to be seen as impotent in the face of the Japanese aggression. Thus, it sent a commission of inquiry to Manchuria to investigate the issues 'on the ground'.

The *Lytton Commission* comprised delegates from the US, Italy, France, Germany and Britain. The Lytton Report reached the League Council in November 1932. The key points of the Lytton Report are outlined in Figure 17.2.

Figure 17.2 The key points of the Lytton Report



The League went out of its way to avoid saying anything that might involve it having to impose sanctions on Japan. Lytton concluded that Japan's action was not a simple case of the violation of a country's frontier by the armed forces of a neighbouring country.

- As a result, if Japan's action was 'not war', then there could be no recourse to the League's Article 16, and so no recourse to sanctions, which no nation wanted in the middle of a depression.
- The Lytton Report was adopted by the League of Nations on 24 February 1933.
- On 27 March, Japan left the League.

The consequences of the invasion of Manchuria and subsequent events were considerable:

- the United States made clear its displeasure at Japan's actions:
  - on 7 January 1932, US Secretary of State, Henry Stimson, announced that the US would not recognise any Japan-China treaty or agreement which violated US rights and agreements to which the US had subscribed;
  - this became known as the Stimson Doctrine;
  - the US action added to the developing mistrust between Japan and the US.
- the League of Nations had shown itself to be impotent and unable to preserve peace if a major power decided to ignore it;
  - other potential aggressor nations took note;
- Japan's civilian government had shown itself to be helpless in the face of determined army action;
- Japanese politics now shifted to the right as ultranationalist influence grew and violence swept the country;
  - and the army steadily increased its domination of political life. [5]

5 For the details of internal Japanese political developments, see Chapters 13 and 14.

To the Sino-Japanese War

Having rejected the League of Nations, and with militarism taking over at home, Japan's relations with the western democratic nations deteriorated. As a result, it gravitated towards Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy.

- On 25 November 1936, Japan and Germany signed the Anti-Comintern Pact:
  - the Comintern (Communist International) had been set up by Soviet leader, Lenin, in 1919 to promote world communism;
  - by the 1930s it had become nothing more than an arm of the Soviet Union's foreign policy.

The Anti-Comintern Pact was only symbolic but it did mark the common cause of the aggressive dictatorships who sought territorial expansion.

- On 6 November 1937, Italy joined Germany and Japan in the Anti-Comintern Pact:
  - on 1 November 1936, Italian leader, Benito Mussolini, had referred to the relationship between Italy and Germany as:
    "an axis around which all European States animated by a desire for peace may collaborate on troubles"
  - once Japan, Italy and Germany were linked in the Anti-Comintern Pact, commentators began to refer to a Rome-Berlin-Tokyo axis. [6]

On 7 July 1937, a clash occurred between Japanese soldiers and the Chinese 29th Army at Wanping. Japan demanded that the Chinese soldiers involved in the clash be handed over to its authorities. China refused. This incident, sometimes referred to as the 'Marco Polo Bridge Incident' or the 'China Incident', marked the beginning of the Sino-Japanese War which would rage until August 1945.

- Japanese reinforcements were quickly sent to the Chinese mainland. Shanghai was quickly taken.
- By the end of the year, Japan was in control of Nanjing (Nanking).
- The Japanese army were guilty of incredible atrocities in Nanjing, an episode which is known to history as "the Rape of Nanking". By the end of 1938, Japan was in control of most of the Chinese coastline. [7]

6 In September 1940, Japan joined Italy and Germany in the 'Tripartite Pact'. Throughout World War II, Italy, Germany and Japan would be referred to as 'the Axis powers'.

7 For details on Japan's foreign policy from 1937 and towards World War II, see: Webb, K, Conflict in the Pacific 1937-1951, Get Smart Education, Mona Vale, 2020.

Exercise 17.2 Place the events on the right in the correct chronological order.

1st event		LYTTON COMMISSION REPORTS
2nd event		THE MARCO POLO BRIDGE INCIDENT
3rd event		ASSASSINATION OF ZHANG ZUOLIN
4th event		JAPAN AND GERMANY SIGN THE ANTI-COMINTERN PACT
5th event		JAPANESE TROOPS TAKE MUKDEN
6th event		THE RAPE OF NANKING
7th event		START OF THE DEPRESSION
8th event		ITALY JOINS THE ANTI-COMINTERN PACT
9th event		THE STIMSON DOCTRINE
10th event		JAPAN LEAVES THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS
11th event		MANCHURIA BECOMES MANCHUKUO
12th event		EXPLOSION ON THE MANCHURIAN RAILWAY

What do the historians have to say about "Aims and strategy of Japanese foreign policy to 1937"?

1. Edwin P Hoyt

Hoyt makes some interesting observations about the Kwangtung Army and how it operated following the establishment of Manchukuo. By 1935, Japan had 164 000 men in Manchukuo. They were there for possible actions against the Soviet Union but the insubordinate members of the Kwangtung Army kept moving into Mongolia and China. The Chief of the Operations Bureau of the General Staff, Colonel Ishihara, wanted China left alone for at this stage the army was focussed on possible action with the Soviet Union. To deal with this situation, Major General Hideki Tojo was sent to Manchukuo to head the *Kempeitai*. The *Kempeitei* was part military police and part counter-intelligence. As Hoyt puts it *"no unit and no person of the Kwangtung Army was above its inquiries"*. The *Kempeitei* was to root out conspiracies. Due to its efforts, under Tojo's command, the Tokyo government was able to bring the Kwangtung Army under control. Hoyt concludes:

"…In Manchuria, General Tojo made the Kempeitei the most efficient secret police agency in Japanese history. After he completed the organisation, virtually nothing happened in Manchuria that the Kempeitei did not know about…" [8]

2. Gordon Greenwood

Following the establishment of Manchukuo, it was clear that Japanese control was real, even if indirect. The League of Nations and the United States adopted the principle of non-recognition of changes to territorial arrangements made by force, but not much else. Greenwood comments on the significance of Japan's actions in Manchuria/ Manchukuo:

"…The moral condemnation of the world, combined with the doctrine of non-recognition, led not only to Japan's resignation from the League but to a strengthening of ultra-nationalist sentiment in Japan itself…" [9]

8 Hoyt, E P, Japan's War: The Great Pacific Conflict, Guild Publishing, London, 1987, p 139
9 Greenwood, G, The Modern World: A History of Our Time, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1973, p 658

Notes

Chapter Eighteen
Impact of ideology on Japanese foreign policy to 1937

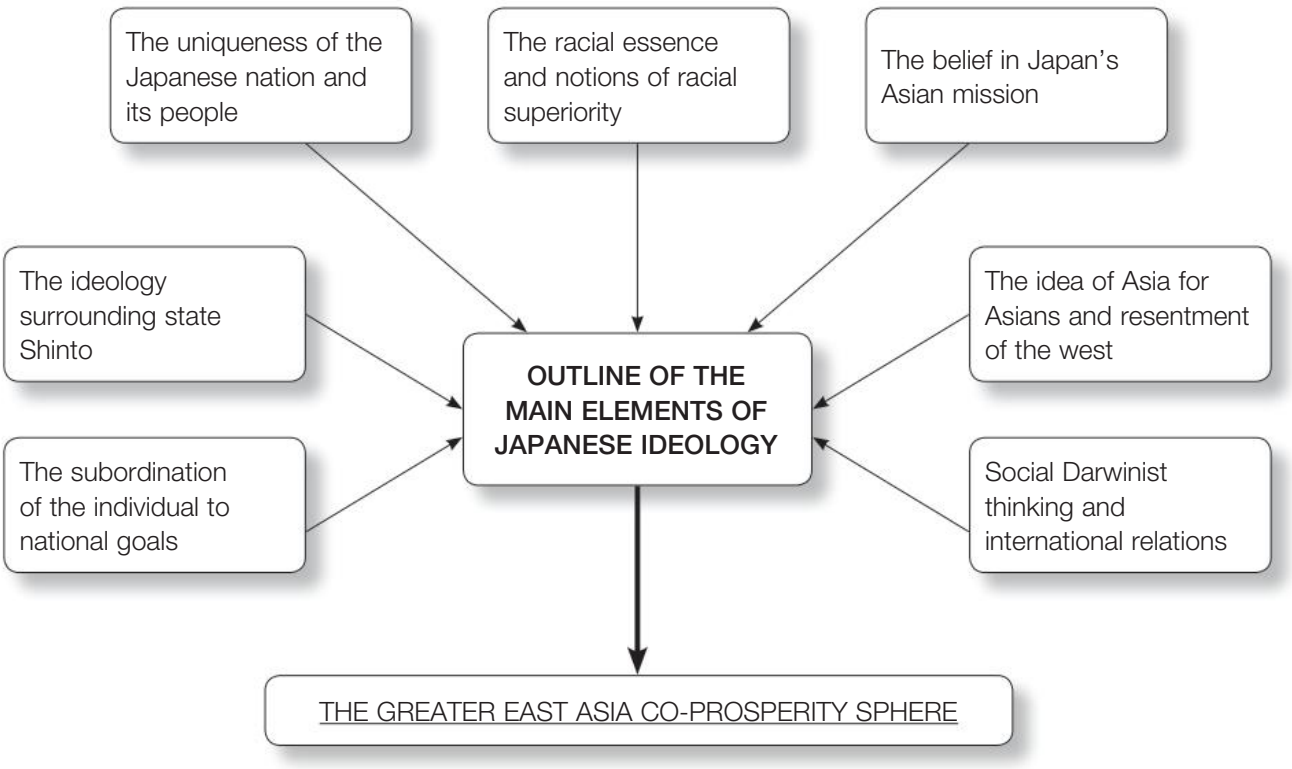
Introduction

As was explained in Chapter 17, the exercise of Japanese foreign in the years before 1937 was the result of a myriad of factors. In summary these included:

- the long-term concerns over secure resources, markets, food security and population;
- the devastating impact of the depression;
- strategic factors;
- ongoing concerns over the revival of China;
- western pressures;
- the political complexion of civilian governments;
- the rise of militarism;
- the internal struggles within the military.

However, by the early/ mid 1930s, ideology was coming to play a significant role in Japanese foreign policy thinking and strategic planning. Figure 18.1 outlines the fundamental elements of Japanese ideological thinking which were to have such an impact on the exercise of foreign policy up to 1937 (and of course beyond).

Figure 18.1 Outline of the elements of Japanese ideology



Shinto and the influence of Uesugi Shinkichi

Fundamental to the development of a Japanese ideology was *Shinto*. This is not the place to go into detail about Shintoism. It was the indigenous faith of the Japanese people and its practitioners often regarded it as a nature religion.

What matters for the development of Japanese ideology is the "makeover" that it received from Uesugi Shinkichi (1878-1929):

- he turned Shinto into an ideology of mass appeal;
- this ideology could justify any actions taken in the name of the state;
- he defined the Japanese state as the 'ultimate morality';
- the 'god incarnate', the emperor, stood above any selfish interests;
- the emperor thus came to represent what was best for not only the Japanese people but all of humanity.

Uesugi Shinkichi rejected westernisation and the call for the emperor to become a 'constitutional monarch' along British lines. Instead he promoted totalitarian thinking, though of course it would have Japanese characteristics. Uesugi Shinkichi was extremely influential:

- his teachings became an essential element of the curriculum that was taught in military schools;
- in the military academies ideology was emphasised, in particular the 'special relationship between the officer corps and the emperor';
- as army officers moved into schools in increasing numbers in the 1920s, these sorts of ideas became a key part of public school curricula.

State Shinto attacked industrialists, businessmen, politicians and foreigners. It placed great emphasis on two particular aspects which it claimed were unique to Japan: (1) the length of time that Japan's ruling dynasty had ruled, and (2) the unique ethnicity of its people; the idea of a unique ethnicity could easily become a feeling of racial superiority.

These traits meant that Japan had a special role to play in history; this was an idea which greatly appealed to the Japanese people, and which of course was promoted in state propaganda and in education.

Paine comments on the significance of this thinking:

"…It galvanised nationwide, unquestioning support for the military in the name of the emperor and a Pax Japonica to come…" [1]

(See Historian 1 for more on Paine's thinking of the importance of Shino thinking.)

1 Paine, S C M, The Japanese Empire: Grand Strategy from the Meiji Restoration to the Pacific War, CUP, Cambridge, 2017, p 96

Social Darwinist thinking

State Shinto, with its

- belief in the uniqueness of the Japanese people
- its implied notion of racial superiority
- and demands on the subordination of the individual to the greater good

fitted in well with an acceptance of Social Darwinist thinking. If a nation accepts a "survival of the fittest" attitude to international relations (as did of course Nazi Germany), then it goes without saying that such a nation is destined to survive and prosper at the expense of other nations. Japan could point to the past as evidence for a justification of such thinking. Why had China failed in the 19th century at the hands of the western powers? Why had the western nations accumulated such power? It was for the same reason that Japan was destined to dominate its region – it ultimately came down to Social Darwinist factors.

Japan's "manifest destiny"

Throughout the 19th century, the United State believed that it had a destiny, ordained by god, to fill the American continent. In American history, this concept became known as "manifest destiny". A similar strain of thinking entered Japanese ideological thinking, only the continent was different:

- this thinking took some time to evolve, but by the early decades of the 20th century, many Japanese thinkers were developing the idea of "Asia for the Asians";
- resentment at the actions of the western imperialists in Asia were keenly felt, especially when those same "hypocritical" nations attacked Japan for behaving in the same manner;
- thus, it was Japan's mission, its 'destiny', to free its fellow Asians from western imperialist domination;
- such thinking was strongly promoted by the various ultranationalist groups that were appearing after 1900, and by the writings of people like Kita Ikki; it also seemed to be validated by Japan's series of military successes.

The Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere

The various strains of Japanese ideological thinking would culminate in the concept of the *Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere*. Japan would lead its fellow Asians on the road to freedom, ie freedom from western imperialist domination. The concept was not formally instituted until 1940, but the strands leading to it were all in evidence in the decades before then.

The *Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere* has a strong element of idealism behind it:

- Japan is to lead its fellow Asians to a new future of cooperation and equality between Asians nations;
- it will bring about an end to western imperialist exploitation.

Unfortunately for the Asian peoples who were to experience the practices of the *Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere*, they would merely be exchanging one form of exploitation for a much more brutal form where promised notions of racial unity and racial equality were totally non-existent.

Exercise 18.1 Use the terms below to complete the following passage.

The indigenous faith of Japan was _____. It was developed into an _____ by Uesugi Shinkichi who placed reference for the _____ very much at the centre. He was very much opposed to _____ tendencies in Japanese society. State Shinto became a key element in the education of the _____ in their academies but also an important part of public school _____. State Shinto placed great emphasis on the _____ of dynastic rule in Japan and the unique _____ of the Japanese people. The promotion of Shinto ideology did much to promote _____ support for the military and emperor. Japan's ideology fitted in well with _____ thinking. Many Japanese came to believe it was the nation's _____ to free _____ peoples from western _____. These ideas were propagandised by _____ groups and writers such as _____. Ultimately ideology came to fruition in Japan's plans for the Greater East Asia _____. However, Asian people soon came to realise that they had exchanged western _____ for a more brutal form of _____ imperialism.

DESTINY – JAPANESE – LONGEVITY – IDEOLOGY – UNQUESTIONING – SOCIAL DARWINIST – SHINTO – ASIAN – WESTERN – CURRICULA – ETHNICITY – EMPEROR – ULTRANATIONALIST – IMPERIALISM – EXPLOITATION – CO-PROSPERITY SPHERE – KITA IKKI – MILITARY

What do the historians have to say about "Impact of ideology on Japanese foreign policy to 1937"?

1. S C M Paine

Paine makes the point that State Shinto advocated an aggressive expansionist foreign policy, even though a host of economic and geographical factors mitigated against such a strategy. He suggests that so fanatical were the adherents of this thinking, it seemed to have an "apocalyptic" basis. He argues that the ambitions which State Shinto ultimately justified had two possible outcomes:

"…total victory or utter annihilation. Adherents had undue optimism about the first possibility, but were dead right about the second…" [2]

2. Malcolm Kennedy

Kennedy argues that the government of Prince Konoe was dragged into a major conflict with China in July 1937 – and which soon escalated into full-scale war – much against its will. [3] The government sought to localise the fighting that had broken out and put a stop to it. At first, it seemed that it managed to do this and hostilities were limited to the Beijing-Tianjin (Tientsin) region. However, on 2 August, the 2nd Chinese militia in Tungchow rose up in mutiny against their Japanese officers. They then went on to massacre the Japanese residents. Anger was aroused over this incident inside Japan and the more extreme elements in the army were quick to whip up patriotic fervour:

"…Further attempts to localise hostilities, therefore, ended and Prince Konoe, who had become Premier for the first time only a few weeks before, announced his government's intention to create a New Order in Asia…" [4]

2 Paine, S C M, The Japanese Empire: Grand Strategy from the Meiji Restoration to the Pacific War, CUP, Cambridge, 2017, p 96
3 Konoe was Prime Minister twice: June 1937-January 1939, and July 1940-October 1941.
4 Kennedy, M, A Short History of Japan, Mentor, New York, 1963, p 263

Notes

Advice on Writing Essays

(These comments should be re-read when approaching the section called RESPONSES: Responding to questions on Japan 1904-1937).

Introduction to essay writing

People who have been marking the HSC for a few years can read an essay and with little hesitation can say "that's a 'B' level answer, 16/ 25, or that's a 'mid-A' range answer, 23/ 25, or this is a 'D' answer, 8/ 25. HSC markers do occasionally disagree about answers but once they share their disagreements, the value of the essay becomes clear. It is one of the comforting things about how Modern History is marked at the HSC, that the legendary level of accuracy is almost scientific.

The reason for this is that essay writing is both a literary and a scientific skill. There is no mystery in writing a good essay. Certainly, some people are better writers than others: they might have a wider vocabulary, they might know more, they might have a better turn of phrase, they might understand the issues more clearly. However, everyone can come to terms with the basics and write a reasonable essay.

So, what makes for a successful essay?

1. Answer the question. This sounds almost trite and an insult to the intelligence, but the majority of responses presented in the HSC which score poorly, do so because they do not answer the question. Failing to answer the question can be done in a variety of ways. In summary it can happen because:

   a. A student fails to address the issues presented in the question, ie he or she decides to write about something else. For example, in the essay:

      To what extent was ideology the main motivation behind Japanese foreign policy to 1937?

      A student decides to argue that:

      - the main motivation behind Japanese foreign policy to 1937 clearly had little to do with the issue of ideology;
      - rather it was the result of economics, strategic fears and rivalries in eastern Asia, the varying trends in domestic political life and the results of conflicts within the military.

A nice line of argument, but it is not answering the question. The student could argue the *"economics, strategic fears and rivalries in eastern Asia, the varying trends in domestic political life and the results of conflicts within the military line"*, but first of all he needs to deal with the issue of "ideology", even if it is to show that ideology was not an important factor.

He cannot simply ignore the focus of the question because he wants to write about something else:

- he could argue that yes, "ideology" played 'some' part in determining Japanese foreign policy to 1937; however, these pressures pale in significance compared to economics, strategic fears and rivalries in eastern Asia, the varying trends in domestic political life and the results of conflicts within the military;
  - as a rule of thumb, if you are going to pursue this style of argument, ensure that about 40% to 50% of your essay deals with the subject of the question, in this case 'ideology';
  - to do otherwise is to risk suggesting to the marker that you have gone into the examination with a pre-prepared answer

b. A student writes about the issues presented in the question, but instead of providing an argument to answer the question, they simply 'narrate' or 'tell a story'. For example, in the essay:

To what extent was ideology the main motivation behind Japanese foreign policy to 1937?

A student fails to present an argument, instead they simply narrate:

- she might describe the nature of the Japanese system of government and the role the emperor in that;
- she might describe what Japanese ideology entails, referring to various ultrnationalist groups, Kita Ikki etc;

This is all relevant, factual detail but she is merely describing, telling a story and not presenting an argument which is showing the link between "ideology" and its impact on Japanese foreign policy to 1937.

c. A student does not really understand the question and has so little factual detail they are unable to sustain even a narrative response.

d. A student does understand the question and attempts an argument but has so little factual detail that the argument cannot be sustained.

'c' and 'd' can only be fixed with solid work and revision on the part of the student; 'a' and 'b' can be learned.

2. Provide an argument in your introduction which will form the basis of the essay. The introduction is the most important paragraph of the essay; if it is written properly it should leave the marker in no doubt what is going to come up in the essay. So, what does a good introduction involve?

a. Avoid the dramatic 'setting the scene' method. For example, in the essay:

To what extent was ideology the main motivation behind Japanese foreign policy to 1937?

A student should avoid opening like this:

- For most of the period to 1937, Japan chose to disregard international norms and followed a brutal aggressive foreign policy in which it did not hesitate to use force to achieve its aims. It did this by launching surprise attacks, annexing territory to which it had no right and pressuring weaker nations Often, its army took actions into to its own hands and forced the government to accept an fait accompli. Only briefly in the 1920s did it behave in an acceptable manner.

b. Avoid providing lots of factual detail in the introduction. Introduce the broad areas you will discuss, but leave the detail to the body of the essay. For example, in the essay:

To what extent was ideology the main motivation behind Japanese foreign policy to 1937?

This is not a good introduction:

- In the period to 1937, Japan inflicted a humiliating defeat on Russia in the war of 1904-05. In 1910 it annexed Korea. When the Great War began in 1914, Japan joined the allied powers and took advantage of Germany's predicament and seized its Chinese concessions and north Pacific colonies. In 1915, it presented the 21 Demands to China. In late 1918, Japan intervened in Russia and stayed there until 1922. For a brief time in the 1920s…

c. Be careful with length. Three lines is not an introduction, no argument can be properly introduced in such a small space. However, a page and a half is too long. With average sized writing, 6-8 lines should be enough to present the argument of the essay.

d. Instead try to present an argument in your introduction. There is no 'right' answer to a Modern History essay question; the right answer is the argument which you have presented, logically developed and backed up with detailed factual evidence. For example, for the essay:

To what extent was ideology the main motivation behind Japanese foreign policy to 1937?

A student might try to argue:

- By the 1930s, ideology had become the key motivation determining Japanese foreign policy. Ultranationalist thinking, linked to State Shinto, and with an undercurrent of racist thinking, came to play a major role in Japanese thinking and behaviour. These ideological currents were particularly strong in education, in military training and then within the military itself. In the period up to the 1920s, it could be argued that foreign policy was motivated more by strategic factors, economics and opportunism rather than ideology. However, the more that militarism came to dominate Japanese political life in the 1920s and the 1930s, the more ideological considerations arguably came to dominate Japan's foreign policy makers.

3. Provide your essay with a structure. Your introduction should show where the essay will lead, eg the above introduction might lead to the following structure:

   - show the marker that you understand what is meant by ideology in the Japanese context; do not get too carried away with the detail but refer to State Shinto, the growth of ultranationalism, the works of Kita Ikki, how issues of the uniqueness of the Japanese/ ethnicity/ racial ideas entered ideological thinking; this could be linked briefly to Social Darwinist thinking

   - however, you could show that between 1904 and the early 1920s, ideology played a lesser role in determining foreign policy, eg Japan's actions in the Russo-Japanese War were more bound up with strategic issues, fear of Russian expansion, the need to control North East Asia's economic potential

   - sometimes foreign policy was motivated by opportunism, one might argue that was seen in the annexation of Korea, entry into World War I where Japan was able to take advantage of Germany's difficulties and the presentation of the 21 Demands

   - show that for a brief period in the 1920s, Japan was pursuing policies of international cooperation and harmony, in which ideology played little role – evidence for this could be Japan and the League of Nations, the Washington Conference, the Kellogg-Briand Pact, the role of Kujiro Shidehara

   - highlight how by the late 1920s and into the 1930s, ideological factors had become much more important, they motivated domestic politics and the rise of militarism – refer to the Kwangtung Army in 1928, the invasion of Manchuria, Japan's subsequent actions to 1933

   - discuss the severity of the depression and how economic distress and ideological issues were coming together to affect the views of many in the army, who had become disillusioned with domestic liberal politics and were sympathising with the plight of farmers

   - ideological thinking was moving in the direction of the idea that Japan had a destiny in Asia, to free Asians from western imperialist exploitation, a process in which Japan would take the lead

   - by the time of the Marco Polo Bridge Incident in July 1937, ideology had a firm hold in military circles – link this to the development of the idea of the Greater Co-Prosperity Sphere for Asia

   - conclusion: Ideology clearly came to play a major role in the exercise of Japanese foreign policy to 1937. In the earlier period to the 1920s, foreign policy was motivated more by economics, strategic factors and opportunism. In the 1920s, during the period of international cooperation, ideology took a back seat. However, as ultranationalism and State Shino became predominant, especially within the military, ideology became the dominating factor in foreign policy, culminating in the thinking of the Greater Co-Prosperity Sphere.

(NB: this is only one of a hundred ways of dealing with this question)

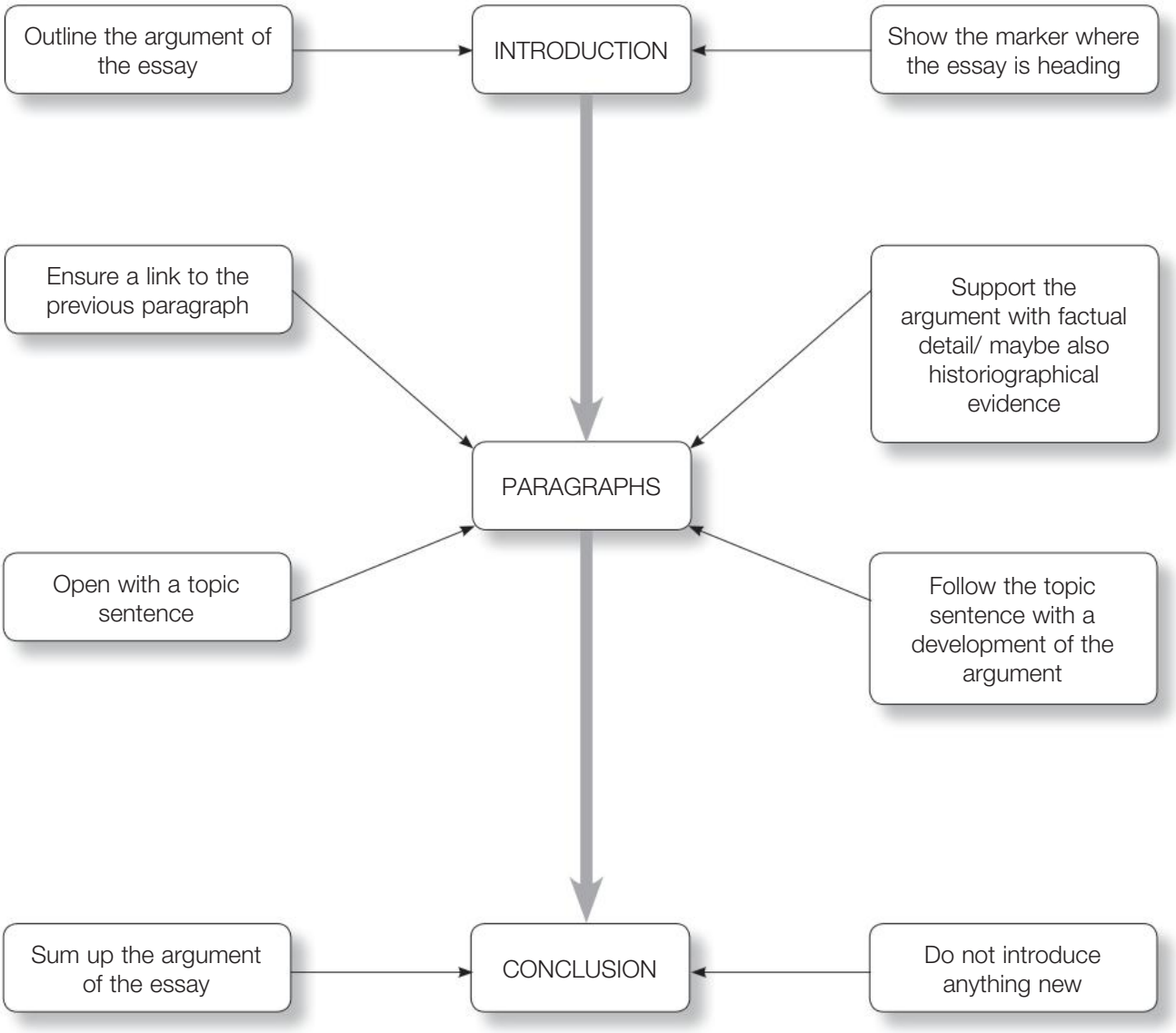
4. Structure paragraphs carefully. There are some simple rules to obey:
   - open with a topic sentence which outlines what the paragraph is going to be about;
   - develop the argument presented in the topic sentence;
   - support the argument with specific factual detail;
   - if appropriate, support the detail with historiographical evidence.
   - link your paragraphs – this can be achieved easily with certain stock phrases, eg:
     - "not only was 'x' of significance but 'y' also had an impact…."
     - "in addition to "a and b", "c and d" were also to benefit from….."
     - "in contrast to "e", "f" reacted quite differently…."

NB: Do not open paragraphs with historiography.

- The aim should be for the student to show the marker what he or she knows.
- Therefore, open with your ideas, back it up with factual detail and then, if appropriate, back up your idea with what a historian has said:
- argument>detail>(maybe) historians' ideas;
- do not name drop for the sake of it – markers are not fooled or impressed by having lots of historians' names dropped into an essay when their books have almost certainly never been looked at;
- Fewer historians mentioned is better than lots.

NB: Do not quote, paraphrase! This shows that you understand what the historian is saying; giving a three-line quotation merely shows you have remembered a three-line quotation, whereas paraphrasing the historian's view in your own words shows that you have understood what you are writing.

The following diagram sums up some of the main ideas the have been discussed in this section.



RESPONSES

Responding to essay questions on: Japan 1904-1937

The purpose of this section is to provide some ideas for the type of questions which might be asked in the HSC examination on Japan 1904-1937. These outlines are not presented as the 'be all and end all' responses to these questions. To provide a sense of reality to this section, what follows is a 'first draft response' to each question, ie what were the first ideas that came into the author's head as he thought about each question?

(Students need to be wary of "to what extent" questions.[1] *If a student argues a case that is 100% in agreement with the premise of the question, that is acceptable. However, students need to be very well-equipped to do this. Students can argue that they agree with the premise of the question, but "there are also other factors that can be considered". This is perfectly acceptable too. As a rule of thumb, ensure about 40-50% of the answer deals with the issue of the question. It is dangerous to totally ignore the issue in the question and write about something quite different. This would look like a pre-prepared answer and would suffer from not addressing the focus of the question.)*

Essay No 1

"To what extent did traditional Japanese power and authority come under challenge in the 1920s and 1930s?"

Strategies:

- The argument for this question is pretty straightforward – agree with the premise of the question, ie traditional Japanese power and authority "did" come under challenge.
- Be sure to refer to both the 1920s and the 1930s.
- There is a choice of approaches: (1) a student could deal with the question in a chronological manner; (2) or by examining issues and concepts.
- There is nothing to be gained by trying to be clever and arguing that traditional power and authority did not come under challenge.
- However, a student could differentiate, and argue that the challenges were far more profound in the 1920s as opposed to the 1930s.

Possible content:

- Establish your argument in the introduction – refer to the strategies suggested above:
  - an issues/ concept approach is preferable;
  - the challenges became stronger as time went on.

1 What follows also applies to "How important?", "How significant?", "Evaluate" and "Assess" type questions.

- It is necessary to establish what is meant by "traditional Japanese power and authority":
  - do not go to pre-1868 – what was this power and authority post-Meiji Restoration;
  - consider the position of the emperor, the genro and their oligarchical power, the bureaucracy, the constitutional limitations.
- Show the marker that you understand where the challenges came from: political parties, cabinet government, demands for democracy, the power of the zaibatsu, the ultranationalists, extremists in the army, the steadier and older hands in the army.
- The growth of political parties was a clear challenge:
  - introduce the Seiyukai and the Kenseikai – comment on their policies and rival positions;
  - deal with the idea of party cabinets – refer to Hara Takashi;
  - without falling into the trap of narrative, refer to the various governments of the 1920s;
  - comment on the weakening of the political parties onwards from the depression.
- Link the growth of political parties to the declining power of the genro:
  - who/ what were the genro?
  - why was their power declining?
  - refer to Saionji.
- Bring in the zaibatsu:
  - explain what they were and how they were able to challenge traditional power;
  - bring in issues of bribery and corruption;
  - the zaibatsu were unpopular with army leaders in the 1930s – make reference to the army's exclusion from Manchuria of traditional zaibatsu.
- The emperor and the ultranationalists can be dealt with together:
  - the emperor was seen as the all-powerful figurehead but he reigned rather than ruled (do not get carried away with the role of Hirohito);
  - the ultranationalists challenged traditional power – who were they and what did they seek?
  - the ultranationalists claimed to act in the emperor's name but were really just using that name, and were willing to act violently to achieve their goals.
- The greatest challenge to traditional power and authority came from the army:
  - outline the privileged role the army had in society and in the practice of government;
  - the army was often willing to act independent of traditional power structures and of the government – refer to the Kwangtung Army in 1928;
  - Manchuria, the 15 February 1932 Incident and the 26 February 1936 Incident can be discussed here;
  - eventually older heads in the Toseiha won the intra-army power struggle, and came to dominate the entire government structure – the result: the total weakening of traditional power and authority;
  - the rise of militarism was the greatest challenge to traditional power and authority;
  - relate how this was achieved with both internal and external measures.

In the conclusion bring together the argument which shows how Japan's traditional power and authority were challenged and what the result of this was.

Essay No 2

"Account for the failure of liberal democracy to take root in Japan between the wars."

Strategies:

- Be careful not to fall into a narrative trap with this question – it would be easy to narrate the story from Hara Takashi, through the governments of the 1920s up to the 26 February 1936 incident.
- Try to avoid the "there are 18 reasons for the failure of democracy" approach – such an approach is addressing the question but is not strong stylistically.
- Try to identify a few broad themes which explain the failure of liberal democracy to take root.

Possible content:

- In your introduction, try to present an overarching argument rather than descending into a list, as was mentioned above:
  - identify a small number of key themes;
  - three possible ones could be: (1) long-term factors (2) disillusionment with the liberal/ democratic experiment (3) the role of the army.
- Introduce an argument that suggests that liberal democracy had little chance to take root because of long-term factors:
  - these could include: the notions of harmony, discipline, respect and acceptance of one's position in society, deeply embedded in Japanese culture – such things are not conducive to liberal democratic growth;
  - though Japan had a constitution, it had been "given" to the people and was not the result of agitation;
  - the constitution contained many elements that sought to stifle the democratic voice – provide examples;
  - the genro and the bureaucracy were able to wield great influence for several decades that limited democratic development;
  - the tendency towards violence in Japan did not assist liberal democracy – give some examples.
- Even when liberal democracy did seem to be finding its feet in the 1920s, the behaviour of its principal practitioners did not help:
  - debates in the diet lacked decorum and often descended into shouting matches;
  - corruption and bribery were endemic in Japanese political life – refer to the role of the zaibatsu - and this contrasted greatly with what Japanese people expected of their leaders;
  - politicians were quick to make money from various crises such as the Kanto Earthquake of 1923;
  - consequently, public perceptions of political figures were poor and there was a desire for 'something better';
  - the ultranationalists understood this and were quick to agitate against the constitutional system – give examples.

- Ultimately the army was able to use its influence and power to undermine the possibility of liberal democracy taking root:
- the army was anti-democratic and sought to avoid scrutiny from liberal politicians – refer to Yamagata Aritomo, constitutional provisions, its perception of its role in Japan;
- governments found it difficult to control the army – refer to the actions in Manchuria in 1928, and of course in 1931;
- different factions in the army were seduced by ultranationalist propaganda and writers like Kita Ikki – these were profoundly anti-democratic;
- the impact of the depression convinced many young officers and rural conscripts that the liberal/ democratic system was rotten and should be replaced by a Showa Restoration;
- the Toseiha eventually won the factional conflict within the army – older steady army leaders could now pursue their expansionist, militarist aims free of restraint from politicians.

Essay No 3

"How significant was the role of Emperor Hirohito in Japanese political life between 1926 and 1937?"

Strategies:

- Historians have (and do) disagreed over the significance of Hirohito's role in Japanese political life.
- Thus, a possible strategy to use here to have a 'debate' about Hirohito's role.
- There are some major pitfalls to avoid with this question:
  - avoid the temptation to provide the story of Hirohito's life;
  - note the dates of this HSC topic – it ends in 1937, not 1945 – thus do not fall into the trap of seeking to put Hirohito on trial for the atrocities committed by the Japanese between 1937 and 1945.

Possible content:

- In the introduction, establish the fact that there is a difference of opinion about Hirohito's role in political life to 1937:
  - some historians have argued that he was young, naïve, uninvolved and unable to do anything to stop his politicians and his generals from acting as they chose;
  - other historians have suggested that Hirohito was closely involved in political and military issues, especially in the 1930s.
- A case can be put forward that Hirohito played only a minor role in political life between 1926 and 1937:
  - the system was designed to work against the possibility of an active, engaged and involved emperor;
  - the emperor had a largely ceremonial role – real power was in the hands of an oligarchy, the genro – give examples;

- propaganda and education policy sought to place the emperor above the hurly burly of day-to-day political life;
- Hirohito was a man of gentle temperament and not the sort of person who could stand up to the hard men within the military;
- he was more interested in marine biology than politics;
- when he did try to intervene in political life – eg his opposition to the Kwangtung Army action in Manchuria in 1928 and again during the 26 February 1936 Incident, his actions suggested a person who was not an enthusiastic supporter of militarism;
- documentary evidence of the time can be marshalled to show his limited involvement and that he often urged caution on his generals, though to no avail.

- However, a case can also be presented that Hirohito did involve himself in political life and that he was a keen supporter of the military's actions:
  - he eventually supported what occurred in Manchuria in 1931 and did not seek punishment for those officers involved in the action;
  - he never seemed to present any opposition to the creation of Manchukuo or Japan's decision to leave the League of Nations;
  - the fact that he acted against army figures in the 26 February 1936 Incident can be perceived in two ways:
  - firstly, it shows him "being" involved;
  - secondly, it shows that he could have taken action against rebellious army figures on other occasions and instead chose to allow those military figures, who were doing the wrong thing, to go unpunished;
- though the topic stops in 1937, a brief mention could be made of the period 1937-1941 which shows that Hirohito was well-informed about Japanese actions, approved of them, and even suggested revisions to plans, which sometimes were accepted.

In the conclusion try to bring the two cases together. It would be acceptable to come down on one side or the other. It would be equally acceptable to argue that the fog of history prevents the possibility of a categorical judgment about Hirohito's involvement in Japanese political life, 1926-37.

POSSIBLE HSC QUESTION ON THE TOPICS Japan 1904-1937

1. To what extent can it be argued that Japan had achieved great power status by the beginning of the 1920s?

2. Evaluate the successes and failures of Japan's liberal democracy in the 1920s.

3. Assess the role and political influence of the zaibatsu in Japanese political life in the 1920s and the 1930s.

4. To what extent were the main political parties in Japan able to challenge the country's traditional power and authority in the 1920s?

5. Assess the significance of the political and economic impact of the Great Depression on Japan in the 1930s.

6. To what extent did modernisation and urbanisation create rising social tensions in Japan in the period to 1937?

7. How significant was the role of the army and the political divisions within it for Japan in the 1930s?

8. Explain how Japanese society responded to the rise of militarism.

9. "Emperor Hirohito was naïve and ineffectual."
   To what extent is this an accurate description of Hirohito's role in Japanese political life between 1926 and 1937?

10. Account for the development of Japanese foreign policy in the period 1904-1937.

11. To what extent were economic and strategic issues the key determinants of Japanese foreign policy in the period to 1937?

12. "Above all else, it was ideology that drove the exercise of Japanese foreign policy."
    How accurate is this assessment of Japanese foreign policy in the period to 1937?

FIND-A-WORD "JAPAN 1904-1937"

There are twenty terms/ locations/ names relating to "Japan 1904-1937" in the "find-a-word" below. See if you can locate them.

Y	A	M	A	G	A	T	A	I	M
O	A	E	G	I	N	U	K	A	I
S	U	I	E	R	I	O	N	F	T
H	L	J	Y	N	R	H	U	M	S
I	M	I	U	M	A	P	G	T	U
H	I	R	O	H	I	T	O	K	B
I	L	W	N	B	H	T	H	C	I
T	A	R	I	F	F	Z	S	A	S
O	T	E	K	S	B	J	Y	U	H
G	I	G	O	N	Y	K	S	I	I
P	E	E	D	U	Q	O	D	K	C
M	A	N	C	H	U	R	I	A	J
O	V	T	R	V	N	E	E	R	O
B	Z	E	W	O	K	A	D	A	X
A	I	Z	A	W	A	F	E	R	0

YAMAGATA
INUKAI
SHOGUN
NOGI
ERO

YOSHIHITO
OKADA
ARAKI
KOREA
MITSUBISHI

HIROHITO
MANCHURIA
MOBA
AIZAWA
GENRO

MEIJI
INOUYE
TARIFF
MITSUI
REGENT

Timeline

1894-95	Sino-Japanese War
1898	Russia annexes the Liaodong Peninsula
1900	Founding of Seiyukai
1902	Anglo-Japanese Alliance
1904-05	Russo-Japanese War
1905	Treaty of Portsmouth
1910	Japan annexes Korea
1912	Death of Emperor Meiji
	Accession of Emperor Taisho
1914	Japan joins the entente powers in the war against Germany
1915	The 21 Demands
1916	Formation of Kenseikei
1917	Lansing-Ishii Agreement
1918	End of World War I
1918-22	The Siberian Expedition
1918-21	Premiership of Takashi Hara
1919	The Paris Peace Conference
	Kita Ikki publishes Plan for the re-organisation of Japan
1921	Crown Prince Hirohito visits Europe
	Crown Prince Hirohito becomes regent
	Assassination of Takashi Hara
1921-22	The Washington Conference
	Death of Yamigata Aritomo
1923	Kanto earthquake
1924	(US) Johnston Immigration Act
1924-26	Premiership of Kato Takaaki
1924-27	Kujiro Shidehara is Foreign Minister
1925	Granting of Universal male suffrage
	Peace Preservation Law
1926	Death of Emperor Taisho
	Accession of Emperor Hirohito

1927	Showa Financial Crisis
	Jiang Jieshi almost completes unification of China
1928	Kwangtung Army attempts takeover of Manchuria
	Murder of Zhang Zuolin
1927-29	Premiership of Tanaka Giichi
1928	Kellogg-Briand Pact
1929-31	Kujiro Shidehara is Foreign Minister
1929	Wall St Crash
	Start of the Great Depression
1930	Japan returns to the Gold Standard
	London Naval Agreement
	Assassination attempt on Prime Minister Hamaguchi
1931	Invasion of Manchuria
1932	The Stimson Doctrine
	Creation of Manchukuo
	Assassination of Prime Minister Inukai
	The Lytton Commission reports
1933	Japan leaves the League of Nations
1936	26 February Incident
	Japan joins Germany in the Anti-Comintern Pact
1937	Execution of Kita Ikki
	Marco Polo Bridge Incident
	Start of the Sino-Japanese War
	The Rape of Nanking
1941	Tojo Hideki becomes Prime Minister
	Japanese attack on the US base at Pearl Harbour
1945	Japan surrenders following the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki

Glossary

amaterasu	Japanese sun goddess
annexation	the taking of ownership of an area by one country from another
ANZAC	Australia New Zealand Army Corps
bakufu	the rule of the shogun
bicameral	a parliament with two houses
Black Dragon Society	anti-democratic and anti-communist group
bushido	code of high ideals followed by samurai warriors
chonin	merchant class in Japan
Choshu	leading western clan, provided several genro after 1868
deflation	policy of cutting government expenditure, raising taxation
diet	the Japanese parliament
Dong Hak	religious/ political rebel group in Korea, 1890s
entente	friendly agreement between nations
ero, guro, nansensu	erotic, grotesque, nonsensical
extraterritoriality	the right of a foreigner to be tried under his/ her country's laws
genro	elder statesmen who effectively ruled Japan after 1868
gold standard	monetary system in which paper money if freely convertible into fixed amount of gold
Greater Co-Prosperity Sphere	Japan's plan for its control of Asia following its expansionist foreign policy
Guomindang	Chinese Nationalist Government
hara-kiri	Japanese ritual suicide
Jiyuto	party established by Itagaki Taisuke in 1881
Kaishinto	party established by Okuma Shigenobu in 1882
Kanto	region of Japan hit by the massive 1923 earthquake
kempeitei	Japanese secret police
kenseikai	leading party of the 1920s, whose first leader was Kato Takaaki
kenseito	political party, forerunner of the seiyukai
ketsumeidan	League of Blood, ultranationalist organisation
kodaha faction	army action, early 1930s, led by violent radical young officers
kokutai	the Japanese national essence
Lusitania	ocean liner sunk by German submarines in 1915
mandate	temporary control given to a power over a former Germany colony
Meiji Restoration	period of Japan's modernisation 1868-1912
Mikado	emperor of Japan

minseito	successor to the kenseikai party
Mitsubishi	a leading zaibatsu
Mitsui	a leading zaibatsu
moba	fashion style adopted by young men in the 1920s
moga	fashion style adopted by young women in the 1920s
most favoured nation status	concessions granted to any nation automatically apply to the original nation
oligarchy	rule by a few people
open-door policy	US policy in pursuit of open trade for all nations with China
plutocratic status	wealthy people able to use their wealth to rule directly or indirectly
POW	prisoner-of-war
regent	title of the person who rules in the place of the emperor
samurai	the privileged and respected warrior class in tradtional Japan
Satsuma	leading western clan, provided several genro after 1868
Seclusion Decrees	laws of 1638 aimed at isolating Japan
seiyukai	leading party of the 1920s, formed by Hirobumi
Shinto worship	traditional Japanese religion closely connected to nature and emperor
shogun	strongest clan leader who ruled Japan before the Meiji Restoration
Social Darwinism	the idea that stronger nations prosper at the expense of weaker nations
sonno-joi	restore the emperor, expel the barbarian
Stimson Doctrine	US policy of non-recognition of Japan's conquest of Manchuria
Taisho era	term given to designate the period of rule of Emperor Taisho 1912-1926
tariff	a tax on imports
tokko	the thought police of the Home Ministry
Tokugawa	family name of the shogun
toseiha faction	army faction, early 1930s, opposed to the Kodaha, less radical, led by senior officers
uibyeong	the righteous armies, Korean nationalist group opposed to Japan's control of Korea
vassal state	a state that is nominally independent but actually under another state's control
warlord	regional military commander in China in the 1920s
yamato spirit	the Japanese soldier's fighting spirit
zaibatsu	business conglomerates, influential in politics in the 1920s

Dramatis Personae

Aikawa, Yoshisuke	leading zaibatsu in Manchuria
Aizawa, Lieutenant Colonel	assassin of General Nagata, 1935
Araki, General Sadao	leading figure in the Kodaha Faction
Balfour, Arthur	British Foreign Secretary at the Washington Conference
Franz Ferdinand, Archduke	heir to the Austrian throne, assassinated 28 June 1914
Gojong, Emperor	Korean emperor, forced to abdicate by Japan in 1907
Hamaguchi Osachi	prime minister July 1929 - November 1930; March - April 1931
Hara Takashi	prime minister September 1918-November 1921
Hayashi, General	prime minister February 1937-June 1937
Hirohito	prince regent 1921-26, emperor of Japan 1926-1989
Hirota Koki	prime minister March 1936-February 1937
Hughes, Charles Evans	US Secretary of State at the Washington Conference
Inouye Junnosuke	finance minister 1929, links to Mitsubishi, assassinated 1932
Inukai Tsuyoshi	prime minister December 1931-May 1932, assassinated 15 May 1932
Ishii, Viscount	special Japanese envoy to the US, November 1917
Itagaki Taisuke	founder of the Jiyuto Party
Ito, Prince Hirobumi	Japanese prime minister at the Treaty of Shimonoseki negotiations, assassinated 1909
Jiang Jieshi	leader of the Chinese Nationalist Party, the Guomindang
Kamio, General	Japanese military commander during Kiaochou operations 1914
Kato Sadakichi, Vice Admiral	Japanese naval commander during Kiaochou operations 1914
Kato Takaaki	prime minister June 1924 - January 1926
Kato Tomosaburo	prime minister June 1922 - August 1923
Katsura, Taro	Japanese Prime Minister at the time of the annexation of Korea
Kinmochi Saionji	Seiyukai President 1903-14, last of the genro
Kita Ikki	ultra right wing writer
Kiyoura Keigo	prime minister January - June 1924
Komei	Japanese emperor who died in 1867
Konoe Fuminaro	prime minister June 1937-January 1939, July-October 1941
Kujiro Shidehara	foreign minister under Prime Minister Kato Takaaki
Lansing, Robert	US Secretary of State, 1917
Lenin	leader of the Russian Bolsheviks
Li Hung-Chang	Chinese representative at the Treaty of Shimonoseki negotiations
Lytton, Lord	head of the Lytton Commission which investigated Japan's invasion of Manchuria
Masatake, Terauchi	Resident General of Korea at the time of Japan's annexation of the country

Matsukata Masayoshi	one of the genro, key figure in economic and financial policy
Mazaki, General Jinzaburo	leading figure in the Kodaha Faction
Minobe, Tatsukichi	constitutional scholar who denied the centrality of the emperor in government
Mitsuhito/ Meiji	emperor of Japan 1867-1912
Nagako, Princess	wife of Emperor Hirohito
Nagata, General	leading figure in the Toseiha Faction, assassinated 1935
Nogi, General	Japanese commander of troops who took Port Arthur in January 1905
Okada Keisuki	prime minister July 1934-March 1936
Okuma Shigenobu	founder of the Kaishinto Party
Oyama, Field Marshal	Japanese commander of troops at Mukden in March 1905
Perry, Commodore	US naval commander who arrived in Japan in 1853
Saigo Takamori	leader of the samurai revolt, 1877
Saito Makato	prime minister May 1932-July 1934, assassinated 26 February 1936
Shumei Okawa, Dr	founder of the ultranationalist Cherry Blossom Society
Stimson, Henry	US Secretary of State at the time of the invasion of Manchuria, author of the Stimson Doctrine
Sunjong	Korean crown prince who succeeded Gojong as emperor of Korea
Taisho	ruling name of Yoshihito, emperor 1912-26
Takahashi Korekiyo	prime minister November 1921 - June 1922
Takuma, Baron Dan	head of Mitsui, assassinated 1932
Tanaka Giichi	prime minister April 1927 - July 1929
Tatekawa, Major-General	chosen to stop Kwangtung Army activities in Manchuria in 1931
Terauchi, Count	prime minister 1916-1918
Togo, Admiral	Japanese fleet commander at the Battle of Tsushima in May 1905
Tojo, General Hideki	leading figure in the Toseiha Faction, became prime minister October 1941
Uesugi Shinkichi	responsible for the development of state Shinto ideology
Wakatsuki Reijiro	prime minister January 1926 - April 1927; April - December 1931
Wilson, Woodrow	US President 1913-21
Yamagata, General Aritomo	army general, twice Prime Minister of Japan
Yamamoto Gonnohyde	prime minister September 1923 - January 1924
Yi Wan-Yong	Korean Prime Minister at the time of Japan's annexation of the country
Yoshihito	son of emperor Meiji, emperor 1912-26
Yuan Shih-kai	China's leader 1912-16
Zhang Zuolin	warlord of Manchuria, assassinated 1928

Answers to Exercises

Exercise 1.1

1 – bakufu; 2 – extraterritoriality; 3 – chonin; 4 – Meiji; 5 – Seclusion Decrees; 6 – mikado; 7 – most-favoured nation status; 8 – Charter Oath; 9 – shogun; 10 – sonno-joi

Exercise 1.2

1st – The Seclusion Decrees; 2nd – Arrival of Commodore Perry; 3rd – Treaty of Kanagawa; 4th – The Harris Treaty; 5th – western bombardment of Shimonoseki; 6th – Endo of the Bakufu; 7th – The Charter Oath; 8th – Dong Hak rebellion; 9th – Battle of the Yalu; 10th – Treaty of Shimonoseki

Exercise 2.1

1 – false; 2 – true; 3 – true; 4 – false; 5 – false; 6 – true; 7 – false; 8 – true; 9 – false; 10 – true; 11 – true; 12 – false

Exercise 2.2

1 – fact; 2 – fact; 3 – opinion; 4 – fact; 5 – opinion

Exercise 3.1

Japan had long been interested in Korea for both economic and strategic reasons. Korea had been the main issue that had prompted the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95. During the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-05, Japan forced Korea to accept the Japan-Korea Protocol. Following its defeat in the war, Russia formally accepted Japan's supremacy in Korea. After the war with Russia, Japan and Korea signed the Japan-Korea Treaty. However, there was opposition to Japan's presence inside Korea, seen in the activities of the uibyeong. Emperor Gojong attempted to bring the issue of Korea to the world's attention at The Hague Peace Conference in 1907. This led to his forced abdication and he was succeeded by the Crown Prince, Sunjong. The Treaty of Annexation, placing Korea under formal Japanese control and ownership, was signed in August 1910.

Exercise 4.1

1912 – Enlightened Government – status – China – Russia – empire – Korea – Formosa – 1902 – 1914 – Britain – Germany – Tsingtau – Kiaochou – navy – ANZAC – Egypt – Mediterranean – German – Marshall – Caroline – north

Exercise 4.2

1 – it delivered its 21 Demands to China; 2 – Japan sought economic gain from, and political influence in China; 3 – this would have given Japan control of China's police, political and military institutions; 4 – strong anti-Japanese feeling, culminating in the May 4th Movement; 5 – an exchange of notes between the US and Japan, recognising each nation's interests in China; 6 – control of Germany's former north Pacific colonies; 7 – it was a member of the League Council, a League member till 1933; 8 – the refusal to include a racial equality clause in the peace settlement; 9 – to bring Russia back into the war against Germany; 10 – territorial ambitions in Russia's Maritime Province – 1925

Exercise 5.1

1 – FIVE POWER; 2 – NINE POWER; 3 – FIVE POWER; 4 – FOUR POWER; 5 – FIVE POWER; 6 – NINE POWER; 7 – FOUR POWER; 8 – FIVE POWER

Exercise 5.2

1 – true; 2 – true; 3 – false; 4 – true; 5 – false; 6 – false; 7 – true; 8 – false; 9 – true; 10 – false

Exercise 6.1

1912 – Yoshihito – Taisho – Hirohito – 1921 – golden – democracy – 1885 – constitution – power – franchise – oligarchy – genro – Choshu – Satsuma – Privy – 1918 – Hara Takashi – diet – 1921

Exercise 7.1

1 – false; 2 – true; 3 – true; 4 – false; 5 – false; 6 – true; 7 – false; 8 – true; 9 – false; 10 – true

Exercise 7.2

1 – KUJIRO SHIDEHARA; 2 – HARA TAKASHI; 3 – HAMAGUCHI OSACHI; 4 – KIYOURA KEIGO; 5 – WAKATSUKI REIJURO; 6 – KATO TAKAAKI; 7 – TAKAHASHI KOREKIYO; 8 – YAMAMOTO GONNOHYDE; 9 – TANAKA GIICHI; 10 – HIROHITO

Exercise 8.1

1 – similar views between the old samurai and the oligarchs; the samurai would not try to upset the system; 2 – the government set up enterprises and then sold them onto to private concerns; 3 – Mitsui, Mitsubishi, Sumitomo, Yasuda; 4 – more behind the scenes using their wealth rather direct participation 5 – it led to massive bribery and corruption; 6 – Mitsui/ Seikukai; Mitsubishi/ Kenseikai (Minseito); 7 – the zaibatsu provided funds for expensive elections/ the government supported pro-zaibatsu legislation and offered protection; 8 – Kato and Shidehara were related by marriage to the Iwasaki family which owned Mitsubishi; 9 – they partly caused it and swallowed up smaller failing banks; 10 – Shidehara and Finance Minister Inouye Junnosuke related by marriage to the Iwasaki family, owners of Mitsubishi

Exercise 9.1

1 – TAKAAKI; 2 – COMMUNIST; 3 – MINSEITO; 4 – SAIONJI; 5 – SEIYUKAI; 6 – MITSUI; 7 – ZAIBATSU; 8 – KENSEIKAI; 9 – KENSEITO; 10 – HIROBUMI

Exercise 10.1

1 – false; 2 – false; 3 – true; 4 – true; 5 – false; 6 – true; 7 – true; 8 – false; 9 – true; 10 – false

Exerise 10.2

1900 – serving – 1907 – Prime Minister – Emperor – Yamagata – 1925 – budget – 1918 – Kato – four – schools – democratic – nationalist – Black Dragon – divine – Kita Ikki – 1928 – Kwangtung – Manchuria – Zhang Zuolin – Tokyo – disciplinary

Exercise 10A.1

1 – fact; 2 – fact; 3 – opinion; 4 – opinion; 5 – opinion; 6 – fact; 7 – opinion; 8 – fact; 9 – fact; 10 – opinion

Exercise 11.1

1 – gold standard; 2 – deflation; 3 – tariff; 4 – stock market; 5 – Keynsian economic policy; 6 – recession; 7 – unemployment; 8 – real wages; 9 – depression; 10 – orthodox economic policy

Exercise 11.2

1st – Kanto earthquake; 2nd – resignation of Tanaka Giichi; 3rd – Wall Street stock market crash; 4th – Japan returns to the gold standard; 5th – London Naval Reduction Treaty; 6th – attempted assassination of Hamaguchi; 7th – Invasion of Manchuria; 8th – Inukai Tsuyoshi becomes Prime Minister; 9th – Fifteenth May Incident; 10th – assassination of Saito Makato

Exercise 12.1

1 – the end of feudalism; 2 – it taken on French-style criminal law and German-style commercial law; 3 – improvements in communications, developments in finance and capital; 4 – adopt western methods; 5 – technical subjects, patriotism, devotion to the Emperor; 6 – major state buildings in the Kasumigaseki district, the Marunouchi Building; 7 – a growing preference for western-style fashion and products; 8 – erotic, grotesque, nonsensical, strongly opposed; 9 – moga (women) and moba (men), new fashion styles similar to contemporary western styles; 10 – contempt and rejection

Exercise 12.2

Social tensions arose in early 20th century Japan is several areas. Firstly, there were tensions between rural and urban society. Urban Japan was more progressive, more eager to embrace westernisation. In contrast, rural Japan was more conservative and keen to cling to traditional values. The lives of rural women had changed little during modernisation compared to the lives of city women. City women, especially the young, were keen to take on western styles of fashion and entertainments. Not only were western styles taking hold in Japan but also new western ideas. This was largely the result of the spread of education. Those in power needed an educated population for modernisation. However, they did not want the Japanese people seeking democracy, social reform, or even worse a Marxist reorganisation of society.

Exercise 13.1

1 – false; 2 – true; 3 – true; 4 – false; 5 – false; 6 – true; 7 – true; 8 – false; 9 – true; 10 – false

Exercise 13.2

1 – kodaha; 2 – kodaha; 3 – toseiha; 4 – toseiha; 5 – kodaha; 6 – toseiha; 7 – kodaha; 8 – toseiha

Exercise 13.3

1 – Lieutenant Colonel Aizawa; 2 – Saito Makoto; 3 – Okada Seisuki; 4 – Inukai Tsuyoshi; 5 – Kita Ikki; 6 – General Mazaki; 7 – Emperor Hirohito; 8 – General Hayashi

Exercise 14.1

1 – Hirota Koki; 2 – Konoe Fuminaro; 3 – Baron Takuma Dan; 4 – Yoshisuke Aikawa; 5 – Inoue Junnosuke; 6 – General Hideki Tojo

Exercise 14.1

zaibatsu – Mitsui – Minseito – unpopular – depression – gold standard – Baron Dan – assassination – ultranationalists – Manchuria – army – old – new – Aikawa – collapsed – nationalist – domination – Hirota Koki – Germany – unstable

Exercise 15.1

1 – liberal democracy was fairly popular in the 1920s and managed to limit militarist influence; the reverse was the case in the 1930s; 2 – reduction in army numbers and expenditure; 3 – he pursued a cooperative, moderate foreign policy which opposed military adventurism; 4 – they were opposed to authoritarian rule; 5 – it was more conducive to growing trade and made it easier to influence politicians with their wealth; 6 – they opposed zaibatsu greed and blamed them for the suffering of Japan's farmers; 7 – former officers sent into schools as instructors promoted anti-democratic/ pro-military thinking; 8 – authoritarian military government and an expansionist foreign policy; 9 – assassinations, including that of Junnouke Inoue; 10 – founder of the Cherry Blossom Society and professor at the Colonisation Academy

Exercise 15.2

1 – DISARMAMENT; 2 – KATO TAKAAKI; 3 – SHIDEHARA; 4 – ULTRANATIONALISTS; 5 – MANCHURIA; 6 – ZAIBATSU; 7 – KWANGTUNG ARMY; 8 – KITA IKKI; 9 – SAKURA KAI; 10 – SHUMEI OKAWA

Exercise 16.1

1 – fact; 2 – fact; 3 – opinion; 4 – opinion; 5 – fact

Exercise 16.2

1st – death of Emperor Meiji; 2 – marriage of Hirohito; 3 – Hirohito visits Europe; 4 – Hirohito becomes Regent; 5 – Hirohito ascends to the throne; 6 – Hirohito effectively forces resignation of PM Tanaka; 7 – Japan invades Manchuria; 8 – creation of Manchukuo; 9 – Japan leaves the League of Nations; 10 – Hirohito opposes the 26 February 1936 Incident

Exercise 17.1

1 – false; 2 – true; 3 – true; 4 – false; 5 – true; 6 – false; 7 – true; 8 – false; 9 – false; 10 – true

Exercise 17.2

1st – assassination of Zhang Zuolin; 2nd – start of the depression; 3rd – explosion on the Manchurian railway; 4th – Japanese troops take Mukden; 5th – the Stimson Doctrine; 6th – Manchuria becomes Manchukuo; 7th – Lytton Commission reports; 8th – Japan leaves the League of Nations; 9th – Japan and Germany sign the Anti-Comintern Pact; 10th – The Marco Polo Bridge Incident; 11th – Italy joins the Anti-Comintern Pact; 12th – the Rape of Nanking

Exercise 18.1

Shinto – ideology – emperor – western – military – curricula – longevity – ethnicity – unquestioning – Social Darwinist – destiny – Asian – exploitation – ultranationalist – Kita Ikki – Co-Prosperity Sphere – imperialism – Japanese

FIND-A-WORD "JAPAN 1904-1937" SOLUTION

Y	A	M	A	G	A	T	A	I	M
O	A	E	G	I	N	U	K	A	I
S	U	I	E	R	I	O	N	F	T
H	L	J	Y	N	R	H	U	M	S
I	M	I	U	M	A	P	G	T	U
H	I	R	O	H	I	T	O	K	B
I	L	W	N	B	H	T	H	C	I
T	A	R	I	F	F	Z	S	A	S
O	T	E	K	S	B	J	Y	U	H
G	I	G	O	N	Y	K	S	I	I
P	E	E	D	U	Q	O	D	K	C
M	A	N	C	H	U	R	I	A	J
O	V	T	R	V	N	E	E	R	O
B	Z	E	W	O	K	A	D	A	X
A	I	Z	A	W	A	F	E	R	0

ISBN 978-0-6488419-5-1