

History Issue in East Asia

Week 2: The Road to War

The Official Position, 2015

- Using Socrative, let's think more carefully about the explanation of the "road to war" given by Prime Minister Abe in his statement of 14 August 2015.
- Let's read some commentaries on it:
- [Tessa Morris-Suzuki](#)
- [Tokyo Foundation Round Table](#)
- [A Korean Newspaper](#)

The "Road to War"

1853 & 1854	Perry's Black Ships
Late 1850s	Unequal treaties and opening of Japan
Early 1860s	Domestic terror and political violence
1867	<i>Taisei hokan</i> : Return of power to the emperor
1868-9	Boshin War
1869	Annexation of Ezochi (creation of Hokkaido)
1873	<i>Seikanron</i> , subjugate Korea debate
1874	Taiwan Expedition
1875	Kanghwa Incident (1876, Treaty of Kanghwa)
1877	Satsuma Rebellion
1879	Annexation of Ryukyu (Okinawa)

The "Road to War"

1884	Gapsin Coup (Korea)
1889	Meiji Constitution
1894	Tonghak Rebellion, First Sino-Japanese War
1895	Treaty of Shimonoseki, Japan gains Taiwan
1895	Triple intervention (Japan returns Liaodung peninsula)
1900	Boxer Rebellion
1902	Anglo-Japanese Alliance
1904-5	Russo-Japanese War
1905	Korea becomes a Japanese protectorate, Japan gains Karafuto
1910	Annexation of Korea

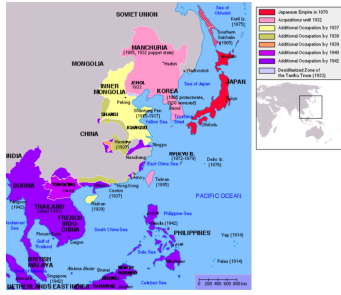
The "Road to War"

1914	World War I: Japan captures Tsingtao and Pacific Islands
1915	The Twenty-one Demands
1918	Siberian Intervention (to 1922)
1919	Treaty of Versailles
1919	March 1 Movement (Korea), May 4 Movement (China)
1920	Nikolaevsk Incident (Japan occupied northern Karafuto, to 1925)
1922	Washington Naval Treaty
1923	End of Anglo-Japanese Alliance, Kanto Earthquake
1924	Racist immigration laws in the US
1926	Ascension of Emperor Hirohito
1929	Wall Street Crash, Great Depression
1930	London Naval Treaty

The "Road to War"

1931	Manchurian Incident
1932	Shanghai Incident, May 15 incident (Inukai assassination)
1933	Japan withdraws from the League of Nations
1936	February 26 Incident
1936	Anti-Comintern Pact
1937	Marco Polo Bridge Incident, Second Sino-Japanese War
1939	Nomonhan Incident (but border clashes 1932-1938, too)
1939	World War II begins in Europe
1940	Fall of France, Japan occupies French Indochina
1940	Tripartite Pact (Japan, Germany, Italy)
1941	April: Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Pact (modelled on 1939 German-Soviet Pact)
1941	July: US oil and steel embargo on Japan
1941	December: Pearl Harbor, invasion of South East Asia

Japan's Empire, 1942



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Naming “the War”

Manchurian Incident	満州事変
China Incident	支那事変
Sino-Japanese War	日中戦争
Second Sino-Japanese War	第二日中戦争
Fifteen Years War	15年戦争
World War II	第二次世界大戦
Pacific War	太平洋戦争
Asia-Pacific War	アジア太平洋戦争
Great East Asia War	大東亞戦争
those (Japan's) war(s)	あの戦争
Empire of Japan	大日本帝国

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Interpretations of War and/or Imperialism

- Asia liberation theory: Japan fought a just war to liberation Asia from Western colonialism.
- The “Shiba view” (and Abe view?): Bright Meiji but mistakes and aggression of the Showa Period.
- Marxist-Leninist view: Clash of capitalistic empires.
- Progressive view: Japanese aggressive war.
- Dominant Allied view: Liberal democracy vs fascism, Allies vs Axis.
- Pacifism: All war is bad.

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Key Decisions for Japan

- 1850s and 1860s: To open up or remained a closed country?
- Meiji Period: Modernization with imperial expansion or without imperial expansion?
- Allies: Britain or someone else? Germany or someone else?
- The China Question: How much of the “China pie” to aim for?
- The Resources Question: “Look north” or “look south” for access to natural resources?
- The American Ultimatum: To withdraw from China or not?
- The War Option: How and when to start hostilities?

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Our First Debate

- **“Japan had no choice but to go to war with America and Britain in 1941.”**
- Homework: Read general histories of Japan in the prewar era to familiarize yourself with the events leading up to war, plus some of the recommended articles on the course website and other relevant materials (Japanese school textbooks, online articles etc).
- Procedure in class:
 1. 20 minutes of preparation.
 2. 20 minutes of debate.
 3. 10 minutes of summary.
 4. Anonymous vote on the motion via Socrative.
 5. Class discussion and conclusions.

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