

# Imperial Japan's Forever War, 1895-1945

Paul D. Barclay

**Abstract:** Between 1894 and 1936, Imperial Japan fought several “small wars” against Tonghak Rebels, Taiwanese millenarians, Korean Righteous Armies, Germans in Shandong, Taiwan Indigenous Peoples, and “bandits” in Manchuria. Authoritative accounts of Japanese history ignore these wars, or sanitize them as “seizures,” “cessions,” or occasions for diplomatic maneuvers. The consigning the empire’s “small wars” to footnotes (at best) has in turn promoted a view that Japanese history consists of alternating periods of “peacetime” (constitutionalism) and “wartime” (militarism), in accord with the canons of liberal political theory. However, the co-existence of “small wars” with imperial Japan’s iconic wars indicates that Japan was a nation at war from 1894 through 1945. Therefore, the concept “Forever War” recommends itself for thinking about militarism and democracy as complementary formations, rather than as opposed forces. The Forever-War approach emphasizes lines of continuity that connect “limited wars” (that mobilized relatively few Japanese soldiers and civilians, but were nonetheless catastrophic for the colonized and occupied populations on the ground) with “total wars” (that mobilized the whole Japanese nation against the Qing, imperial Russia, nationalist China, and the United States). The steady if unspectacular operations of Forever War-- armed occupations, settler colonialism, military honor-conferral events, and annual ceremonies at Yasukuni Shrine--continued with little interruption even during Japan’s golden age of democracy and pacifism in the 1920s. This article argues that Forever War laid the infrastructural

groundwork for “total war” in China from 1937 onwards, while it produced a nation of decorated, honored, and mourned veterans, in whose names the existing empire was defended at all costs against the United States in the 1940s. In Forever War—whether in imperial Japan or elsewhere--soldiering and military service become ends in themselves, and “supporting the troops” becomes part of unthinking, common sense.

**Keywords:** Japan's Forever Wars, Manchuria, Korea, Taiwan, settler colonialism,

## Imperial Japan's Forever War

Professor Hiyama Yukio has argued that Japan’s 1894-95 war against the Qing dynasty marked a rupture in time, inaugurating a “Fifty-Year War” that lasted until 1945. The pivotal war not only shattered the Sinocentric world order; it intensified the entanglement of Japan, Korea, China and Taiwan with each other and the nation-state centric international system. For Hiyama, it was during the Sino-Japanese war that the Japanese population became “the people of a militarized nation” (*gunkoku no tami* 軍国の民). Prior to the mobilization for war against the Qing, he argues, the Japanese military maintained an elitist, samurai image among the broader public. Since the time of the conscription ordinance of 1873, military service was viewed as a “blood tax” in Japan. It was only during the Sino-Japanese War that the citizenry became the nationalized people of “The Great Japanese Empire” (Hiyama 1997b, 28-32; Hiyama 2001, 26-31; 40-42).

Other scholars have made related claims (Keene 1971; Dower 2008; Saya 2011).

However, Hiyama's formulation commands attention for the deep well of social historical documentation that backs it up, most importantly his detailed study of battlefield mortality and its commemoration. In contrast to the many important studies of Sino-Japanese War nationalism that focus on episodic and expressive forms of soldier-veneration and war-glorification, Hiyama foregrounds quotidian, durable, and widely dispersed objects to suggest that militarization acts upon society more like an undertow, rather than an outbreak. For Hiyama, "the Fifty-Year War" began when the Japanese government began to publicize information on its own battlefield fatalities to "bring the war home," launching a tradition of soldier veneration that continued through the mid-1940s. Henceforth, at the national level, semi-annual mass-enshrinements at Yasukuni reinforced the connection between soldiering, the crown, and national survival at regular intervals (Hiyama 1997a, 43-44; Hiyama 2001, 42-63).

Based on the Yasukuni shrine editorial board's multi-volume published death lists, Hiyama identifies nine discreet imperial Japanese wars that, taken together, span fifty years--two in the 1890s, two in the 1900s, one in the 1910s, one in the 1920s, two in the 1930s, and two in the 1940s (Hiyama 2001, 51-57) (see Table 1).

**Table 1: Wars and Fatality Counts for Hiyama Yukio's "50 Year War"<sup>1</sup>**

War	Enshrined
日清戦争 (Sino-Japanese War 1894-95)	13619
臺灣の役 (Taiwan War 1895-1898)	1130
北清事変 (Boxer Uprising 1900)	1256
日露戦役 (Russo-Japanese War 1904-05)	88429
大正三一九年役 (World War I [Qingdao Siege/Siberian Intervention/Mediterranean Sea Patrol] 1914-1920)	4850
済南事変 (Jinan Incident 1928)	185
満洲事変 (Manchurian Incident 1931-34)	17174
支那事変 (China Incident 1937-1945)	191215
大東亜戦争 (Great East Asian War 1941-1945)	2133752

The significance of Hiyama's "fifty-year war" conception of imperial Japanese history is twofold. First, it highlights the existence of wars that are either ignored or treated by historians as mere diplomatic incidents. The Taiwan War, Boxer Uprising, various deployments during World War I, and the Jinan Incident of 1928, were all occasions for national death-commemoration rituals at Yasukuni. The afterlives of these wars in occupation zones expanded imperial Japan's geography of settlement and troop placement, which in turn sparked new cycles of violence. Secondly, Hiyama's rigorous approach to Yasukuni's figures reveals that death commemoration, and death itself, could be drawn-out processes. Deaths were discovered, acknowledged, or processed long after they occurred. Lingering illness or injuries sent soldiers to early graves years after war's end. Therefore, for veterans and their families, and the officiants at Yasukuni Shrine, the time spans of the wars listed in Table 1 overlapped each other. For a significant sector of the Japanese population—soldiers in occupation zones, bereaved families of the war dead, surviving veterans, and settler-colonists—imperial Japan's wars were never-ending.

This essay will argue that Hiyama's approach to chronology points the way towards a different history of militarism and warfare in imperial Japan. It regards the empire's numerous wars, small and large, as components of a longer, larger "forever war." The concept "forever war" is adapted from contemporary U.S. discourse about a series of armed conflicts that began in the early 1990s, to better capture the quality of the continuous, though often submerged, warfare in imperial Japan from 1894 through 1945. It is true that during peak periods of public mobilization from 1931 to 1932, 1937 to 1938, and in late 1941 to early 1942, imperial Japan's wars were, for a time, experienced as thrilling dawns of new age, and took on the luster of righteous wars

whose aims were being advanced by dint of soldierly heroism and bravado. But as studies of Japanese wartime culture by Louise Young, Benjamin Uchiyama, and Julia Adeney Thomas have indicated, the bouts of war fever that punctuated the forever war were followed by longer periods of stasis and even ennui in the realm of cultural production (Young 1999, 114; Uchiyama 2019, 62-66, 109-112; Thomas 2020, 160-177).

To be sure, the post-1937 wars represented quantum leaps in the scale of war-fighting in imperial Japan. The “total wars” fought from August 1937 through August 1945 have justifiably been treated as novel historical formations. We should also be mindful, however, that for Korean rebels fighting Japan in 1894, the citizens of Jinan who were violently occupied by Japanese forces in 1928-29, or Taiwanese Indigenous Peoples who were slaughtered in the aerial bombardments and POW camp massacres of 1930 and 1931, Japan’s smaller wars were “total wars” viewed from the perspective of populations on the receiving end of putatively “limited wars.” These limited wars, in fact, were not “limited” in the sense of returning matters to *status quo ante* upon their termination. Instead, they begat occupations and insurgencies that had the cumulative effect of preparing the ground for total wars. The battlefield geographies of the Second Sino-Japanese War and Asia Pacific War were not random, but were rather determined by the physical location of Japanese settlers, stationed troops, anchored ships, consulates, and factories—all made possible by four decades of war-making. The Japanese military rapidly deployed troops and material to China and beyond from the late 1920s by utilizing a pre-existing and highly developed network of military bases, ports, railways, and telegraph/telephone lines that took decades to put into place (Yang 2010; Matsuzaka 1996; Sakamoto 2015; Kasahara 2017). Such an infrastructure not only moved troops and supplies. It also sustained a dispersed and

energetic Japanese settler population that often became the occasion for Japanese armed intervention during a forever war that was arguably presupposed by total war (Morton 1980; Banno 1989).

The forever-war approach, superficially, echoes the rhetoric of “long-war” employed by nationalist defenders of Japanese colonialism. The resemblance is deceptive, yet instructive. To cite a famous example of “long-war” thought, in the early 1960s critic Hayashi Fusao recycled the fascist-era trope that imperial Japan’s wars were defensive in nature. He argued that Japan’s wars in Taiwan, Korea, China, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific Islands were responses to EuroAmerican gunboat diplomacy and global imperialism. He lumped all of these operations together under the banner of an “East Asia 100-year War” (1840s-1940s). Hayashi was not howling in the wilderness. His “long war” viewpoint appeared in the widely read *Chūō Kōron* (Central Review) (Dennehy 2011, 307-313). Hayashi’s broadside was hardly novel. It reprised the central theme of a 1941 Ministry of Education ethics textbook titled “The Way of the Subjects” (*Shinmin no michi*). This nationally distributed primer intoned that imperial Japan’s wars were all part of a single heroic effort to defend itself while emancipating Asia from “the shackles and bondage of Europe and America.” “The Way of the Subjects” traced European aggression and world- domination back to the fifteenth-century (de Bary 2006, 304-305; Tolischus 406-409). Four years later, a Ministry of Education textbook celebrated Japan’s pushback against Western depredations in Asia dating back to the 1490s. At great expense to the Japanese populace, the empire fought the Sino-Japanese [1894-95] and Russo-Japanese [1904-05] Wars, the Manchurian Incident [1931-34], in addition to the recent Second Sino-Japanese [1937-1945] and Great East Asia Wars [1941-1945], “not only for the existence of the empire, but also guided by the single-minded pursuit of East Asia’s peace and stability”

(Monbusho 1945, 5). After the war, the Yūshūkan military museum in Tokyo refreshed and updated the long-war narrative for a new generation of Japanese citizens. It was reopened in 1986 on the grounds of Yasukuni Shrine. Its exhibits, bookstore, and monuments laud imperial Japan's wars against Asians as noble undertakings born of the highest idealism (Yoshida 2014, 148-152; Breen 2007, 151-155).

There are major differences between the "long-war" view of imperial history and the forever-war approach advocated in this essay. Most importantly, long-war narratives are silent regarding the many wars that occurred in parallel with, or in between, the Sino-Japanese, Russo-Japanese, Manchurian Incident, Second Sino-Japanese, and Pacific Wars. The long-war narrative exhibits a deliberately selective reading of history, since one has to look no further than contemporary public records, journalism, and state-sanctioned propaganda to see that imperial Japan's colonial armed conflicts were recognized as wars by powerful organs of the prewar state and Japanese civil society. The combatants of colonial wars received military burials at Yasukuni, were recipients of honors and awards, and were commemorated in public statuary. For example, Yasukuni Shrine's Giant Stone Lanterns (大燈籠) (Figure 1) were unveiled in 1935. Each is decorated with seven scenes of heroism from imperial Japan's varied military history, including bronze friezes commemorating the five-year war against Taiwan's Indigenous Peoples (fought against putative subjects of the empire), another depicting a Japanese ship dispatched to the Mediterranean during World War I to protect British transports, and yet another with a scene from the Siberian Intervention that fought against the fledgling Soviet state. (See column 6, Table 2 and Figures 1 and 2) (Fukoku chōhei hoken sōgō kaisha, 1936).



**Figure 1. Great Stone Lantern at Yasukuni Shrine, 2019, with scenes from the Boxer Rebellion below (views left) and Sino-Japanese War (center) as two of fourteen scenes of imperial Japanese warfare from 1894-1945 (Photograph by author)**



**Figure 2. [ip1562] "Commemorating Various Land, Sea and Mountain Military Operations." East Asia Image Collection. Special Collections & College Archives, Skillman Library, Lafayette College. Three of the bronze base reliefs from the Yasukuni Shrine Stone Lanterns: Top center: "Armored Train, Siberian Intervention"; "Special Mission Second**

**Fleet in the Mediterranean,” and the “Police Battalion Battle in the Punitive Campaign Against the Taiwan Indigenous Peoples.” Author’s Collection.**

Several “small wars” depicted on the Great Stone Lanterns are ignored by patriotic long-war narratives, because these suppression campaigns against Japanese imperial subjects, and wars fought in concert with European imperialists, contribute little to a triumphalist narrative about imperial Japan’s stout defense of Asia. Nonetheless, such wars were meticulously documented by Japan’s modern war-fighting bureaucracy. The Army’s General Staff compiled and published separate official military histories of nine wars and occupations for the years 1894 through 1941, including one for the all-but-ignored occupation of Sakhalin (1923-25) (column 7, Table 2) (Inaba and Rikugun Sanbō Honbu [1941] 1971, 1-2). The Japanese central government’s official gazette (*Kanpō* 官報) employed consistent nomenclature for numerous colonial wars and occupations in its published lists that announced mass enshrinements at Yasukuni (column 2, Table 2). In the 1930s, Yasukuni Shrine’s officiants published an elaborate multi-volume register of enshrined combatants from every Japanese military encounter from the 1860s through the Manchurian Incident. Each death is attached to a time and place, and every battle illustrated with maps and chronologies (column 2, Table 2). The Bureau of Merit and Award used similar nomenclature to publish registers of combatants and civilians who received rewards small and large, again for military operations of various shapes and sizes, many fought against putative Japanese subjects (column 4, Table 2).

**Table 2: Government-Acknowledged Wars**

**in Imperial Japan’s History**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
War	<i>Kanpō</i> Yasukuni Mass Enshrinement Announcements (published from 1895 to 1945)	Yasukuni Multivolume Register 1933-35	Bureau of Merit and Awards Archives records of cash disbursements and medals	Campaign Medal Wars	Giant Stone Lantern at Yasukuni (1935)	General Staff History of the Jinan Incident, revised edition (1941)
Sino-Japanese War, including battles in Taiwan and Korea (1894-1896)	明治二十七八年戦役 (+役給台湾朝鮮国に於ケル戦)	明治二十七八年戦役	明治二十七八年戦役 (+役給台湾朝鮮国に於ケル戦)	明治二十七八年戦役	明治二十七八年戦役	明治二十七八年日清戦
Taiwanese Resistance (1897-1904)	台湾守備隊土匪討伐 (臺灣の討伐)		台湾守備隊土匪討伐	X	X	X
Boxer Rebellion (1900)	明治三十三年清国事件	北清事変	明治三十三年清国事件	明治三十三年清国事件	清国事変	明治三十三年清国事変
Russo-Japanese War (1904-05)	明治三十七八年戦役	明治三十七八年戦役	明治三十七八年戦役	明治三十七八年戦役	明治三十七八年戦役	明治三十七八年露戦
Suppress Righteous Armies Korea (1908-1911)	韓国暴徒鎮圧事件	韓国暴徒鎮圧事件	韓国暴徒鎮圧事件	X	X	X
Suppress Taiwan Indigenous Peoples (1910-1914)	臺灣土匪及生蕃討伐	臺灣理蕃	臺灣土匪及生蕃討伐	X	臺灣理蕃	X
Japanese-German War (1914)	大正三四年戦役	大正三四年戦役	大正三四年戦役	大正三四年戦役	X	大正三年日独戦
WWI (Qingdao) (1914)	大正三年乃至九年戦役	大正三年乃至九年戦役	大正三年乃至九年戦役	大正三年乃至九年戦役	大正三年乃至九年戦役	X
Mediterranean (1917), Siberian Intervention 1918-1920)	大正五年支那奉天省(鄭)家屯	鄭家屯日支兵衝突事件	X	X	X	X
Zhengjia-tun Incident (1916)						大正七乃至十一年西伯利出兵
Siberian Intervention (1918-1922)	X	X	X	X	X	大正十二年乃至十四年薩哈噠駐兵
Occupation of Sakhalin (1923-1925)	X	X	X	X	X	昭和三年支那事変出兵
Shandong Expedition 1928	昭和三年支那事変	昭和三年支那事変	昭和三年支那事変	X	X	X
Musha Uprising (1930)	昭和五年台湾露社事件	台湾露社事件	昭和五年台湾露社事件	X	X	X
Shanghai Incident (1932)	X	満洲上海事変	X	X	上海事変	X
Manchurian Incident (1931-1934)	満洲事変	満洲上海事変	満洲事変	昭和六年乃至九年満洲事変	満洲事変	満洲事変

In short, the “long war” narrative favored by the 1940s Ministry of Education, revisionists such as Hayashi Fusao, and the Yūshūkan management team, is not the prewar view of imperial history. In the prewar period, even monuments in Yasukuni Shrine and official war histories integrated colonial wars of conquest into Japan’s public-facing record of exploits. The forever-war framework, in contrast, focuses attention on wars of colonial conquest to echo a sentiment expressed by Arif Dirlik. He wrote that “to the people in the brush, a brush war is a holocaust” (2001, 311). While “the people in the brush” are invisible in long-war narratives, and in post-war national histories of modern Japan, they are integral to the forever-war conception of imperial Japanese military history.

To be sure, Japanese bureaucrats, journalists, and civic groups who created the dense archive of imperial Japan's small wars were mostly interested in losses of Japanese life, or the battlefield performance of Japanese troops, to the exclusion of damage inflicted upon non-Japanese combatants and civilians. Some massacres were kept off the books altogether. The so-called Second Tonghak Rebellion is an example. As Japanese forces laid railway tracks, strung telegraph lines, and conscripted labor across large swaths of the Korean peninsula, *en route* to northeast China during the Sino-Japanese War, reconstituted Tonghak armies in Gongju 公州 rose up on October 23, 1894, under the leadership of Jeon Bongjun 全琫準. Over the next five months, an estimated 134,750 rebels fought Japanese forces on forty-six occasions. Jeon's forces were not defeated until November 27, 1894. Jeon Bongjun himself evaded capture until December 28, 1894. Estimates of the number of Korean rebels killed during the so-called Second Tonghak Uprising range from 30,000 to 50,000 (Nakazuka, Inoue and Pak 2013, 99; Chiba 2104, 133). It turns out that only one Japanese soldier was recorded as killed-in-action in this grisly affair. This single Japanese fatality, however, was listed in the Yasukuni register as a casualty of the battle of Seonghwan, fought against uniformed Qing troops in a different part of Korea. Based on years of painstaking research, Inoue Katsuo has argued that this entry was a falsification, and that the five-month war was suppressed in the Japanese bureaucratic paper trail (Nakazuka, Inoue and Pak 2013, 86-91, 146-147).

The meticulous scholarship and investigative journalism of postwar historians who have returned to the sites of military massacres demonstrate that such incidents left scars on landscapes, communities, and social fabrics that were not easily erased (Hiroiwa 2019; Takahashi 2018; Bickers 2017, 128; Nakazuka, Inoue, and Pak, 2013; Hayashi 2002; Kitamura 2021). And yet, while its gaps and silences

must be acknowledged, it is still the case that public records of colonial wars, occupations, and other neglected battles remain underexploited by scholars of Japanese colonialism and military history. To take one example, the Japanese-German War of August through November 1914 was a brutal affair that ended over 1000 Japanese and over 200 German lives, not to mention the capture and imprisonment of 5,000 German soldiers, and collateral damage to Chinese civilians. This war mobilized over 100,000 Japanese military personnel, sending 58,000 of them abroad (Zabecki 2013, 330-332; "Sei'i-gun kōshō shuryō," *Yomiuri Shinbun*, March 18, 1916, 3; "Senshi issen amari na," *Yomiuri Shinbun*, July 8, 1915, 3).

The Japanese-German War was not a "dirty little war" hidden from public view. After six weeks of naval blockade and siege warfare, Germany capitulated to Japan on November 7, 1914. On November 11, some 70,000 citizens packed into Hibiya Park to hear a rousing concert band, take in festive banners and national flags, and celebrate the Japanese victory with three shouts of "banzai" for the emperor under the shade of a great triumphal arch. New Year's Cards brought in 1915 with celebrations of the victory (see Figure 3) (Dickinson 2013, 84; "Nekyō seru shimin banzai o utau," *Yomiuri Shinbun*, November 12, 1914, 7).



As the troops were being ferried back to Japan from Shandong Province, plans were made for the five-day Spring Rite at Yasukuni Shrine, eventually held April 27 through May 1, 1915. In the midst of solemn ceremonies and raucous amusements, 970 Japanese soldiers and laborers who died fighting the Germans were enshrined (“Shōkonsai dai ichi nichi gogo kara waga no hitode,” *Yomiuri Shinbun*, April 28, 1915, 5). They were also memorialized in Qingdao itself with a loyal spirits tower (see Figure 4).



Commemoration activities continued on into 1916. After much delay and anticipation, in June 1916, the Bureau of Merit and Award bestowed 102,852 medals for participation in the Siege of Qingdao. Of these, 2,993 were Golden Kites—Japan’s most prestigious military honor (Naikaku tōkei kyoku 1921, 80) (see Figure 5).



**Figure 5. "Gold Kite Awards, Third Grade and Below."**

**Yamaroku Gikyō, ed., "Teikoku kunshō taikan,"**

**Shōnen kurabu furoku vol. 21 no. 5, May 1, 1934, n.p.**

Another 55,362 Order of the Rising Sun and 37,532 Order of the Sacred Treasure medals were distributed for military and civilian participation in the war effort. Soldiers, sailors, porters, laborers, engineers, and medics, whether dispatched to China or stationed in Japan, received a total of 104,709 campaign medals *jūgun kishō* (see Figure 6) ("Kōshō sōin nijū ichiman raigetu jōjun kunshō shiju-shiki," *Yomiuri Shinbun*, June 22, 1916, 3).



**Figure 6. Yamaroku Gikyō, ed., "Campaign Medals." "Teikoku kunshō taikan," Shōnen kurabu furoku vol. 21 no. 5, May 1, 1934, n.p. Top row, reader's right-to-left: 1874 Campaign; 1894-95 Campaign; 1900 Campaign. Bottom row, reader's right-to-left: 1904-05 Campaign; 1914-15 Campaign; 1914-1920 Campaign.**

But for all of its sound and fury, the Japanese-German War has been reduced to a point on a timeline in narrative histories of modern Japan. As Appendix 1 illustrates, the Qingdao Siege earns mention in several authoritative accounts. However, the Japan-German War has been remembered as a bloodless "seizure" notable only as a harbinger of things to come. The point to be made here is not that histories of modern Japan should emphasize battle orders, troop movements, body counts, and war-fighting to the exclusion of social, cultural,

economic, environmental and gender history. But neither should military operations be sanitized or reduced to occasions for diplomatic agreements, cessations, or outbreaks of jingoism. A frank accounting of the movements, dispositions, and activities of combatants who die, kill, and maim is actually consonant with the goal of writing “history from below.” As Tarik Barkawi puts it, “war is always already part of ‘normal’ social existence,” and thus intimately related to “the whole complex of social life and organization” (Barkawi 2006, 28-29).

Standing militaries sustain base-town economies, which create dependencies and dispositions that ripple beyond the barracks themselves (Lutz 2001; Sasaki 2015; Vine 2020). Deployed combatants create folk ethnographies, or “images of the Other,” that circulate among the troops but also back home at the grassroots level (Rekishī kyōikusha, 2015, 45). Veterans return to the homefront to create a whole set of challenges for civil society that continue long after wars are officially concluded (Watt 2009; Barshay 2013; Belew 2018). And lastly, wars profoundly alter topographies and built environments, while providing occasions for militaries to collect and archive data on the very spaces they transform.

A restricted view of wars as diplomatic milestones obscures the fact that war-fighting, while intimately connected to other domains of history, is also an autonomous realm that produces its own chains of cause-and-effect (Barkawi 2006, 29). For example, the Japanese-German War (1914) and the Jinan Incident (1928) fall on either side of the “interwar period” sometimes called “Taishō Democracy” in narrative histories of modern Japan. Therefore, they appear to be unconnected. If the Jinan Incident is mentioned at all (see Appendix One), the war is attached to the frictions surrounding the Guomindang’s Northern Expeditions (北伐) of 1926-1928, leaving readers with the impression that

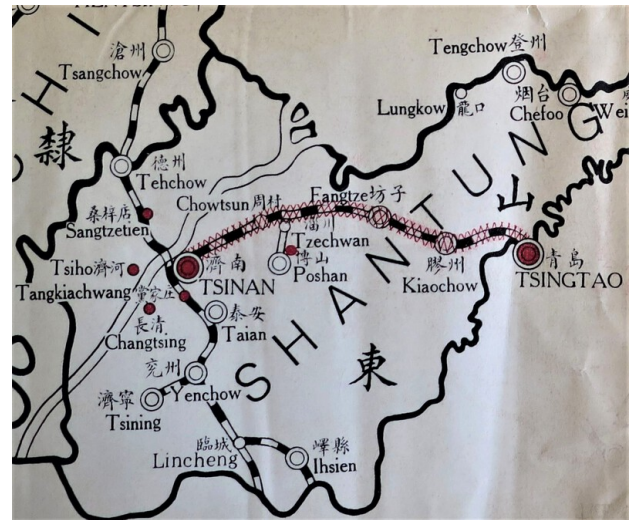
international affairs and national-level partisan politics were to blame for the fracas. In fact, conditions on the ground in China mattered as much, if not more, than swings in Japanese electoral sentiment or policy shifts in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials.

The Jinan Incident, like the Japanese-German War, merited its own General Headquarters campaign history—a 1000-page tome with 62 maps (Inaba and Rikugun Sanbō Honbu [1941] 1971). It occasioned two mass enshrinements at Yasukuni for the 158 Japanese killed-in-action, and resulted in public distributions of 31,773 military honors and awards. The accepted number of Chinese civilians and soldiers killed in the affair is 3625, but credible estimates run as high as 11,000. As a result, Jinan, the provincial capital of Shandong Province, was occupied by Japanese troops for the better part of a year, from May 1928 through May 1929.

From a forever-war perspective, the Jinan Incident was put on rails when Japan wrested the walled city of Qingdao, the naval facilities at Jiaozhou Bay, and the Qingdao-Jinan railway from Germany in 1914. From 1915 through 1922, Japanese civilians and soldiers duly exploited these spoils of war by emigrating to the new dependency in great numbers. In 1906, there were only 189 Japanese residents of Qingdao; by 1922 there were over 25,000. This number decreased after Shandong’s retrocession to China per agreements at the Washington Conference of 1922. Nonetheless, 15,300 Japanese residents still lived in Qingdao in 1928, the largest expatriate population in China outside of the South Manchurian Railway corridor. Again, there were only 154 Japanese residents in Shandong’s capital of Jinan in 1914, but over 5,600 in 1922—about 2,000 remained in 1928. At the announcement of Chiang Kai-shek’s 1928 Northern Expedition, these settler-colonists repeatedly lobbied their consulates in Shandong for Japanese military intervention. It was in the name of over 20,000

Japanese residents in Shandong, said to be in the path of Chiang Kai-shek's Northern Expedition, that Prime Minister Tanaka Giichi dispatched three major deployments to China in 1927 and 1928 totaling over 20,000 troops-- or about one for each Japanese resident of Shandong (Bickers 2017, 128; Iechika 2016, 41-64; Sakurai 2015, 158-190; Kasahara 2017, 89-107; International Relations Committee 1928) .

Lieutenant General Fukuda Hikosuke's Sixth Division, who were responsible for escalating tensions into a full blown shooting war and occupation, disembarked in Qingdao between April 26<sup>th</sup> and 28th, 1928. On Fukuda's initiative, they arrived at Jinan's gates within a week on May 2, to link up with Japanese forces who had barricaded the city against Nationalist troops. Fukuda moved his division over 360 kilometers from Qingdao to Jinan along the railway Japan had managed from 1914 to 1922. Japanese engineers thickened the rails and invested in other improvements. Japan technically returned it to Chinese sovereignty in 1922, but still held it in collateral for the yield on the treasury notes it accepted from China for its purchase. While the Sixth Division was slowed by nationalists who cut the line in two places, they made up for the sabotage with forced marches in terrain well mapped (Misselwitz 1928a, 12; Misselwitz 1928b, 1). Occupying this railway corridor, which many still thought of as Japanese property, was one of the objects of this deployment (Buck 1978, 156-161)(see Figure 7).

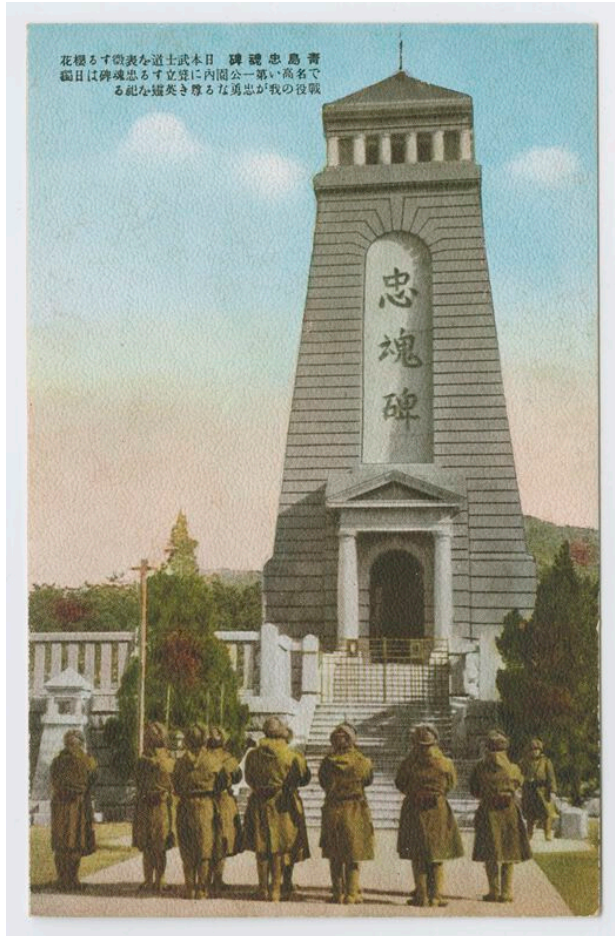


**Figure 7. "Districts Occupied by Japanese are Shown in Red."**

**From The Tsinan Affair Volume I.  
Shanghai: International Relations  
Committee, 1928.**

Moreover, Japan's access to the telecommunications link between Sasebo Navy Base in Kyūshū and Qingdao, and telegraph lines along the Qingdao-Jinan corridor, were all legacies of the German-Japanese War. Lastly, the December 1, 1922 agreement forged at the Washington Conference left the Japanese Consulate in Qingdao intact, along with Japanese schools, hospitals, cemeteries, and a shrine—including the memorial tower and ossuary for the over 1000 Japanese soldiers buried in Qingdao (League of Nations 1924, 257-265). While Japan's seizure of the port city, the railways, and the provincial capital of Jinan was a source of outrage fueling the May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement (1919), Japan's monument to the soldiers who seized Shandong was not razed, but rather stood as a symbol of the informal empire that persisted after the formal occupation ended (see Figures 4 & 8). Against the eight years of Japanese occupation, only five and a half years had intervened between the retrocession to the weak and tottering

Beijing government in December 1922 and the dispatch of Fukuda's division in April 1928.



**Figure 8. [ip1687] “Qingdao Monument to Loyal Spirits.”**  
postcard ca. 1930. East Asia Image  
Collection.  
Special Collections & College Archives,  
Skillman Library, Lafayette College.

Japanese publicity photographs portrayed the rapidly dispatched imperial army troops as besieged soldiers hunkered down in defensive postures (see Figure 9).



**Figure 9. Urgent Alert by Our Dispatched Troops at the Intersection of Jinan Erma Street and Wei Yi Street, May 4. Asia Depicted on Postcards. Kyoto University Rare Materials Digital Archive.**

In sharp contrast, Chinese publicity photographs emphasized the aggressive and technologically superior nature of Japan's forces, publicizing photos of aerial bombing, the death of Chinese civilians, and other ruins to an international audience (see Figure 10)



**Figure 10. From The Tsinan Affair Volume I.**  
**Shanghai: International Relations**

## Committee, 1928.

After the bombardment and occupation of Jinan, anti-Japanese sentiment in China reached new levels of intensity, to the chagrin of liberal politicians in Tokyo, and champions of Shidehara diplomacy. Nonetheless, Fukuda Hikosuke, the Lieutenant General who moved troops to Jinan without orders, and composed a provocative ultimatum to Chinese commanders on May 8 that preceded the occupation, was not disciplined for starting the war. Instead, he was decorated with an Order of the Rising Sun commendation that came with a cash bonus of 1350 yen (“Sainan kōshō happyō,” *Tokyo Asahi Shinbun*, March 8, 1930, 3).

The pattern would be soon repeated. On October 27, 1930, a committed band of 300 rebels killed 134 Japanese nationals in the hill station and resort town of Musha, Taiwan. Accumulated grievances at labor exploitation and a host of other indignities at the hands of colonial police officers pushed the rebels into taking this desperate measure. Japanese Army infantry and air forces, along with Taiwan Government General police units used the same colonial infrastructure that brought settlers to Musha to crush the rebellion. Over 640 Japanese subjects (Taiwanese) died in the suppression, from mass suicide, machine fire, carpet bombing, and rifle fire. Subsequently, another 300 Taiwanese died in Japanese POW camps or under interrogation. The Japanese state deployed 1,563 regular Army troops, 1,231 Policemen, and 1,381 military laborers to search and destroy rebels and suspects in forbidding terrain. The Imperial Japanese Army lost twenty-two men, the Taiwan Government General police lost six, while another twenty-nine Taiwanese civilian auxiliaries perished (Taiwan sōtokufu keimukyoku 1981, 427-449).

Prior to 1914, access to Musha from Japanese strongholds in Taiwan’s ports and plains was limited to a foot-trail. The roads and push-cart

rail tracks to Musha utilized by Japanese forces in 1930 were opened up during a massive five-year military offensive from 1910 to 1914 to disarm Taiwan Indigenous Peoples. This was commemorated in Yasukuni records as the “Punitive Expedition against the Taiwan Indigenous Brigands,” and also subject to public distributions of honors and decorations (Barclay 2018) (see Table 3). After the “Punitive Expedition,” schools, a hot springs resort, lumber mills, and administrative buildings brought Japanese settlers to the Musha area, intensifying demands on local peoples, while bringing a much expanded police presence to the region (Barclay, forthcoming). In both cases, Jinan (1928) and Musha (1930), the cumulative and steady operations of migration, friction surrounding policing at the edge of Japanese enclaves in China and Taiwan, and infrastructure development, continued through the period usually referred to as “Taishō Democracy” in the metropole, setting the stage for eruptions of warfare at the end of the decade

## II. “Wartime” and the Missing Wars

Why is it that some wars are remembered by historians as violent encounters with death tolls and long aftermaths, but others are either forgotten or downgraded to “seizures” and “acquisitions”? Historian Mary L. Dudziak’s important book *War-Time: An Idea, Its History, Its Consequences* provides a clue. Dudziak argues that narrative histories of the United States are structured around the principle that “peacetime” is America’s default condition. Accordingly, “wartimes” are exceptional and short-lived. For Dudziak, the “wartime/peacetime” trope is not solely a product of historical imagination. In fact, U.S. presidents and judges throughout the twentieth century have issued “state-of-exception” regulations, edicts and waivers that expire at war’s end. Taking their cues from Cicero’s

dictum that “in times of war the law falls silent,” U.S. legal historians have imagined “wartime” as an interruption of the normal state-of-affairs (Dudziak 2012, 125-136).

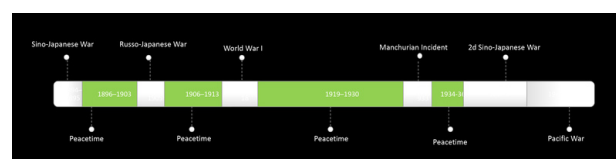
Dudziak’s critique of U.S. legal history discourse can be extended to liberal historiography more generally. The problem is not limited to the study of U.S. history by scholars with an interest in constitutional rule. Glenn D. Hook and Tarak Barkawi, with different emphases, have explained that all liberal theories of political-economy assume a default state of peace for nation-states. The absolutist or “social contract” nation-state, having ended the “war of all against all” by monopolizing the legitimate use of force, or having banished capricious despotism by institutionalizing popular sovereignty, are by definition “peaceful.” As Barkawi points out, such theories externalize chaos and violence as preserves of the anarchic international arena, marking the domestic realm as one of law and order (Hook 1996, 16; Barkawi 2006, 43-44).

Colonial wars confound this model, because they do not require the suspension of the rule-of-law for citizens of empire-states, nor do they take place in the “international arena.” For Barkawi, military history’s exclusive focus on wars between national citizenries is a fatal design flaw, since colonial warfare has been endemic to European history since the nineteenth century (Barkawi 2006, 49-57). For Dudziak, legal historical figurations of “wartimes” as exceptions rest upon the omission of dozens of imperial wars from the chronology of U.S. history. Considering interventions in Haiti, Nicaragua, and Panama, China, the Philippine Islands and several wars against Native American nations as parts of American history, Dudziak documents that being at war has been the normal state of affairs for the United States since the 1860s (Dudziak 2012, 4-5, 26-32, 35-36).

Of course, one could call US military

expeditions to Nicaragua or Japanese deployments to Taiwan “police actions” since they did not involve diplomatic maneuvers and formal declarations of war. But as Dudziak demonstrates, the U.S. military itself, at least in its “soldier-facing” guise, considered even its briefest deployments to be wars, as did the imperial Japanese military (see Tables 1-3). To honor veterans and rally the nation, the U.S. military, by order of Congress, has issued combat medals to soldiers for all manner of conflicts since 1905. Accordingly, Dudziak considers all of the wars eligible for campaign medals as episodes in American military history, a move that obliterates most the putative “peacetimes” that dominate narrative histories of the 20<sup>th</sup>-century United States (2012, 26-30). One can say the same for imperial Japan.

From 1894 through 1915, not a year passed when Japanese troops were not engaged in hot shooting wars and scorched earth campaigns to kill the enemies of the state in Korea, China, Russia and Taiwan. From 1916 through 1936, the Japanese government dispatched troops from the Mediterranean to Micronesia to Sakhalin to intervene in civil wars, ensconce settler-colonists, “exterminate bandits,” and crush insurgencies. In existing accounts of modern Japanese history, however, only the largest of wars are described as armed encounters that occur in particular battle spaces. Only these major wars produce fatalities, or effect lasting change. In essence, their narrative structures conform to the wartime/peacetime framework that is implicit in much liberal historiography (see figure 11).



## Figure 11: Japanese History According to the War-Time Paradigm

But such a picture would exclude *most* of the wars fought by the Japanese armed forces. While Japanese soldiers, sailors, and constables fought their long war against Taiwanese insurgents from 1895 through 1902, the Tokyo Government dispatched over 22,000 troops to Beijing to take part in an international consortium to suppress a millenarian uprising known as the “Boxer Rebellion” in 1900 (Lone 2000, 80). The counter-insurgency war in Taiwan crested in 1902, and then entered a new phase of mountain campaigns in 1903 to secure resource-rich forest lands. As the upland wars against Taiwanese indigenous peoples bogged down, Japan sent over a million sailors, soldiers, and laborers to fight Russians in Korea and China between 1904 and 1905. As a spoil of the costly Russo-Japanese War, the empire established a protectorate in Korea. This act ignited a long war against Korean Righteous Armies that incurred Japanese fatalities from 1906 through 1913. Simultaneously, Japan accelerated its military offensives against Taiwan Indigenous Peoples between 1910 and 1914. Japan announced victory in Taiwan in August of 1914, but declared war against Germany on 23 August 1914. In September, 1914, Japan dispatched over 50,000 troops to the Shandong peninsula in China to take over the German concession and naval base at Qingdao by force.

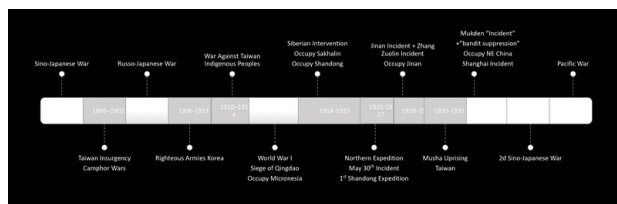
The last mass enshrinement of war dead from Japanese-German War at Yasukuni took place in 1916. That same year, in the railway town of Zhengjiatun, one patrolman Kawase forced his way into a Chinese barracks. His effrontery, not uncommon among Japanese consular police in China at the time, fomented a clash of arms between Japanese garrison forces and the Chinese Army’s 28<sup>th</sup> Regiment. Kawase and eleven Japanese infantrymen were killed in the

skirmish (Esselstrom 2009, 53-55). In 1917 the Japanese Navy lost 59 men to a German torpedo boat off the island of Malta while escorting Allied shipping during the first world war (Evans and Peattie 1997, 169). In 1918, Japan began dispatching what eventually amounted to 72,000 troops to Russia, to begin the ill-fated Siberian Intervention, which produced 1480 Japanese combat fatalities and another 600 dead from illness by 1922 (Dunscomb 2006, 58, 76). A notable cost of the Siberian Expedition was the March-May 1920 massacre of over 820 Japanese civilians and troops in Japanese occupied Nikolayevsk (尼港事件) by Bolshevik partisans. Japan’s response was the military occupation of Sakhalin north of the 50<sup>th</sup> parallel until 1925, mostly to secure oilfields to supply the navy with petroleum (Hiroiwa 2019, 125-135; Ono 2015, 101-102).

On March 24, 1927, Chinese Nationalist troops killed Naval officer Gotō Kameki 後藤亀喜 in their zeal to press the Northern Expedition to rid China of warlords and imperialists (Iriye 1965, 125-129; Hiyama [1935] 2006:5.2, 501). Soon after, Prime Minister Tanaka dispatched the Kwantung Army’s 2000-troop 33d Infantry to Qingdao, and onwards to Jinan (Shandong Province) in May of that year. The Japanese troops left Shandong that September without incident (Kasahara 2017, 89). But the sequel in May 1928, the so-called Jinan Incident, resulted in a year-long Japanese occupation of Shandong’s provincial capital, and the killing of thousands of Chinese soldiers and civilians. This break with the previous policy of relative restraint embittered Chiang Kai-shek as it emboldened Japan’s field officers in northeast China, setting the two nations on a collision course (Bickers 2017, 128; Iechika 2016, 41-64; Morton 1980; 117-118; Sakurai 2015, 158-190; Kasahara 2017, 89-107; Humphries 1995, 137-140). The subsequent and more infamous 1931 Mukden- and 1932 Shanghai Incidents were but larger scale, and better planned, versions of the episodes recounted above, as soldiers and sailors stationed in China forced

the central government's hand in sanctioning large troop deployments abroad. Less well known were the bloody "anti-Bandit" campaigns in and near Manchukuo from 1932-1935 (Kasahara 2017, 145).

A timeline which takes these "brush wars" and military occupations seriously, as violent encounters occurring in specific places that produced actual body-counts, presents a much different picture of modern Japanese history. Compare Figures 11 and 12.



**Figure 12: Japanese Military History With Colonial Wars and Occupations (Forever War)**

### III. Priming the Pump: The Continuous Operation of the Honor-Conferral Machine

Dudziak's important intervention requires refinement and elaboration, however, because her model runs the risk of flattening important distinctions among wars and eras. For Dudziak, combat medals serve as indexes pointing to myriad and ontologically commensurate wars that in turn saturate the timeline of U.S. history. Dates of eligibility for combat medals start and end wars in this view. This approach is an improvement over uncritically accepting the dates assigned to wars by diplomatic and legal historians. But combat medals were more than mere indexes: they were physical objects that were designed, minted, and distributed to combatants. Recipients, at least in the Japanese case, underwent an elaborate process of

bureaucratic scrutiny to receive them. Combat medals and war decorations bound individuals to bureaucracies and battle spaces, not automatically, but through a process, which itself was dynamic.

The persistent and nearly continuous stream of public announcements and rituals surrounding battle commemoration kept forever war on the front-burner for the millions of Japanese subjects, even when civilian leaders and pundits had put wars behind them to address other concerns. These vectors of forever war had an uneven quality. The familiar and large-scale wars against empire-states produced more prestigious decorations, a greater variety of awards, and drew wider cross-sections of society into the system. "Brush wars" in the colonies, and expeditions to China to shore-up settler colonialism, were accounted for in the system as well, but downgraded. For example, the small-scale wars did not occasion specially commissioned campaign medals (従軍記章) (see Tables 2 & 3), while large-scale wars did. In large-scale wars, civilian officials, from cabinet members to mayors of small towns, were decorated and compensated for their "contributions to the war effort," in parallel to the military award system. Smaller wars did not produce such extravagance; they were occasions for bonuses and medals to combatants, and enshrinement at Yasukuni, but not for blanket distributions of awards to civilian officials and boosters.

The distribution of campaign medals, military decorations, and cash prizes was coordinated by a bureaucratic organ known as the Bureau of Merit and Award (*shōkunkyoku* 賞勲局—hereafter BMA). The BMA was established in 1876 to confer aristocratic titles (Marquis, Viscount, Baron, etc.), assign court-bureaucratic ranks (*ikai kuntō*), and issue medals for meritorious service to the state (Takahei 1976, 114). In its first decade, the BMA issued awards to Japan's aristocracy, the royal family, and heroes of the Meiji

Restoration. However, as part of the state's efforts to extend and deepen nationalist sentiment, new awards were established about the time of the Meiji Constitution in 1889. For our purposes, the 1890 creation of the Gold Kite medal, for exceptional military service, is the most important. To distribute Gold Kites based on battlefield merit, from the Sino-Japanese War (1894-95) through the Great East Asia War (1941-45), the BMA collated and assessed a vast quantity of data from war zones. The voluminous manuscript collection housed in the National Archives in Tokyo (国立公文書館) pertaining to the BMA houses a detailed paper trail that documents the functioning of a state organ whose task it was to normalize forever war in early twentieth-century Japan.

The honor-conferral machinery described above was of a piece with the Meiji government's project to nationalize the masses through military service. Military conscription, death-in-battle commemoration, and honor conferral to combatants began as small-scale operations in early Meiji, but mushroomed into truly mass phenomena by the Sino-Japanese War. At its inception, the 1873 Conscription Act allowed wealthier Japanese to skirt conscription for a variety of reasons. In addition, the government lacked the resources to implement the system evenly across the whole territory of Japan. By the time of the Sino-Japanese War, however, Japan was able to field a national army conscripted from most strata of Japanese society (Jaunrdill 2016, 157-158). Early national cemeteries for the military dead in Ryōzen, Kyoto, and Kudan Hill, Tokyo, were sites of episodic rituals to welcome the spirits of imperial troops who perished suppressing samurai uprisings, winning the Meiji Restoration Wars, or fighting in the Taiwan Expedition of 1874. But it was only with the Sino-Japanese War that national war-commemoration funerals became large public spectacles held on appointed semi-annual festival days (Takenaka 2015, 67).

Also in 1895, the promulgation of Imperial Ordinance #115 on July 25, 1895 further extended the reach of the state's honor-conferral system by codifying the practice of distributing cash bonuses for meritorious service (功劳) in "wars 戦役 and incidents 事変, to those who do not receive awards that have annuities [such as the Golden Kite or Rising Sun]" (*Kanpō* #3622, July 26, 1895, 317). In a sense, Ordinance #115 institutionalized the second-tier of an honor conferral system. This post-Sino Japanese War measure (Ordinance #115) made it possible for the central government to honor soldiers, sailors, auxiliaries, and laborers who did not qualify for meritorious service medals, while it created the bureaucratic procedure for acknowledging and rewarding participation in smaller military conflicts that did not meet the standard of "campaign-medal" wars (see Tables 2 & 3). The honor conferral procedures and commemoration ceremonies that were institutionalized in 1895 created a public expectation that some form of military decoration or cash bonus would accrue to most combatants sent abroad in Japan's wars, and that enshrinement at Yasukuni awaited those who perished in battles famous and infamous (Suzuki 2005, 11).

The honor conferral system bore some elements of a meritocracy, while it stabilized and recoded existing systems of social stratification and status hierarchy. As Hiyama Yukio has pointed out, stringent regulations often excluded combatants from Yasukuni enshrinement who died in transport to battlefields, or military laborers who were paid by subcontract (Hiyama 1997, 260-261). An inspection of all shrine lists for the wars fought between 1894 and 1915 reveals that Taiwanese and Korean combatants who fought alongside imperial troops to put down rebellions in each colony—Tonghaks, Righteous Armies, Taiwanese insurgents, and Indigenous Peoples—were also excluded from the enshrinement rolls at Yasukuni.

However, by the late 1930s, Yasukuni enshrinements became more inclusive. At the spring Special Grand Rite in 1937, Korea Government General patrolman Kim of North Pyong'an Province was enshrined as a Manchurian Incident combatant (*Kanpō* #3073, April 2, 1937, p. 108). By the early 1940s, Yasukuni enshrinement rolls began to include Korean and Taiwanese combatants as a matter of course (*Kanpō* #5013 [furoku], September 27, 1943, 8, 15). By war's end in 1945, ethnic segregation regarding mass enshrinement effectively disappeared. According to Tak Fujitani, "21,181 Korean and 28,863 Taiwanese war dead [were] ... enshrined at Yasukuni" (Fujitani 2011, 4). It is probable that all 50,000 non-Japanese combatants were enshrined after the start of the China Incident in August, 1937.

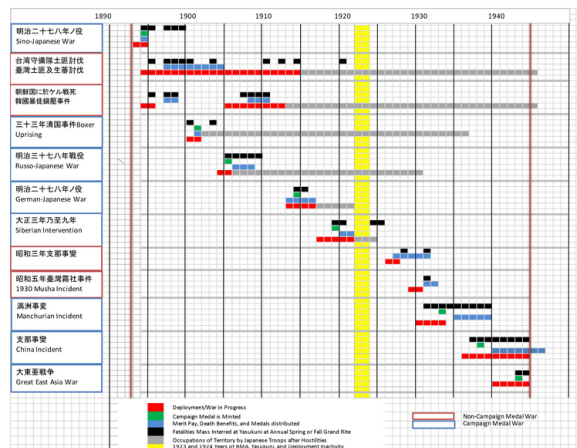
In addition to sanctioning ethnic hierarchy, (at least initially), Yasukuni burial honors conferred graded levels of prestige on combatants based type of conflict. For example, the violent suppression of the March 1<sup>st</sup> Independence Movement produced thousands of Korean fatalities (Eckert and Yi 1990, 278-279). On the Korean Government-General's side, eight policemen (*kenpei* and *keisatsu*) perished, and a total of 158 military and police forces were injured (Kondō and Sakatani 1964, 29). The government's eight fatalities do not appear on any of the *Kanpō* lists for mass enshrinement, nor are they enumerated in the Yasukuni retrospectives. It is safe to conclude that they were not enshrined. In contrast, the eleven Japanese soldiers who perished in the temporally and geographically circumscribed August 1916 Zhengjiatun Incident were mass enshrined in the Spring Rite of 1920 (to the exclusion of the consular police officer who died fomenting the conflict) (*Kanpō* #2307, April 14, 1920, 353; Yasukuni [1933-1935] 2006:5.2, 480; Kasai 1916, n.p.). In short, a vast majority of Japanese war-fatalities were enshrined at Yasukuni, but enough of them were excluded to give enshrinement the measure of prestige that attends membership

in an exclusive club.

An examination of military-decoration bestowals and bonus distribution announcements, or *ronkō kōshō* (論功行賞, hereafter "kōshō") indicates that the imperial Japanese state cast a wide net to acknowledge varied conflicts as worthy of merit pay and medals. Like the post-1895 Yasukuni rites, the *kōshō* system broadened the social base of combatants eligible for honor conferral. However, the *kōshō* events also concretized and ritualized status hierarchies by ruling out the possibility of privates and petty officers upstaging generals and admirals. The distance between its leveling ideology and its status confirming implementation provided fodder for critics, commentators, and beat-reporters, thereby keeping *kōshō* in the news-cycle.

The delays in announcements of honor conferees that were covered in the press, and prolonged by parliamentary and bureaucratic wrangling, also prolonged the subjective experience of being "at war" for those awaiting affirmation, or "closure." Therefore, the "forever war" chronology in Table 3 regards not only the time-spans of shooting-wars and military occupations as war-times, but also the duration of honor-conferring processes, as periods of time when at least some portion of Japan's population was in a sense "at war." The table indicates a steady stream of national public military funerals at Yasukuni Shrine for the duration of forever war, from the years 1895 through 1945. During this interval, mass enshrinements (合祀) were performed at Yasukuni Shrine in thirty-seven different years.

**Table 3: Death Commemoration, Honor Conferral, and Military Occupations in Imperial Japan**



Click to expand.

#### IV. Taishō Militarism

There were three separate 3-year “droughts” in Yasukuni mass enshrinements; these occurred between WWI and the Manchurian Incident (1917-19; 1922-24; 1926-28), coinciding with gaps between shooting-wars in Japanese history. If one factors in the duration of *kōshō* distributions (see blue squares on Table 3), then only two years—1923 and 1924—during imperial Japan’s forever war are devoid of active hostilities, national rites for the war dead, or public dispersals of honoraria and death-benefits to soldiers (see yellow vertical bars on Table 3). Nonetheless, the apparent “hiatus” from militarism suggested by these yellow bars are shot through with sustained periods of forceful and aggressive occupations in Korea, China, Sakhalin, and Taiwan, as represented by the horizontal gray bars on Table 3. These periods of occupation also facilitated the deployment of force, or became occasions for violent encounters that fomented military actions.

Y. Tak Matsusaka suggests that military planning for Manchukuo in 1931 was premised on decades of Japanese experience “managing” foreign populations. As incubators for the procedures and institutions that would govern

Manchukuo, Matsusaka lists Japanese occupations of: “Manchuria and North China during the Sino-Japanese War (1894-95), Tientsin during the Boxer Rebellion (1900), Manchuria during and after the Russo-Japanese War (occupation between 1904 and 1907), Shantung during the First World War [1914-1922], and Siberia (1918-1922 [and] North Sakhalin until 1925) (Matsusaka 1996, 103).

Just as importantly, during the 1920s, Japan maintained a settler-colonial, industrial, military, and communications infrastructure in China that was premised on concessions from the Qing and fledgling national governments after the Sino-Japanese War (1894-95), Boxer Rebellion (1900), Russo-Japanese War (1904-05), and the Shandong Occupation (1914-1918). While China’s nationalist movements and civil wars raged from 1923 onward, Japanese settlers in treaty ports and leaseholds from Wuhan to Shandong energetically petitioned Japanese politicians for protection from protestors, strikers, and Nationalist soldiers (Morton 1980, 86-89; Banno 1989). Concurrently, Japan’s officers in the Kwantung Leased Territory officers decisively interfered in China’s civil wars by supplying equipment, shaping informal diplomacy, and disbursing bribes to favored warlords (Coox 1989, 402-407; Sakurai 2015, 135-141). The May 30<sup>th</sup> Incident in Shanghai (1925), the result of Chinese labor activism directed at a Japanese textile factory, ratcheted up the intensity and frequency of Chinese boycotts, strikes, and protests against foreign businesses, treaty port arrangements, and increasingly foreign settlers themselves (Iriye 1965, 57-88). Of China’s eleven nationwide boycott movements in the 1905-1932 period, nine were directed at Japan (Sakurai 2015, 141-142); between 1919 and 1928, four major anti-Japanese boycotts were launched (Banno 1989, 327). All of this tumult made foreign minister Shidehara Kijūrō’s policy of non-interference in China’s civil war a non-starter

among Japanese emigrants and many in the home islands, leading to the election of Tanaka Giichi's cabinet in 1927.

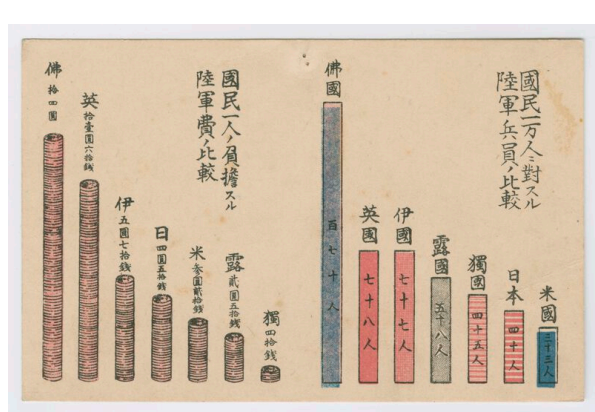
There is an august tradition in narrative histories of modern Japan that considers most or all of the 1920s as an interwar, as a period characterized by anti-militarism in the public sphere, and retrenchment in the colonial realm. Frederick Dickinson has presented the most forceful version of this view in his 2013 book *World War I and the Triumph of a New Japan, 1919-1930*. Dickinson draws attention to reductions in Japanese force levels and military spending for that decade, while highlighting the citizenry's disaffection with the Siberian Intervention. In general, he claims, Japan was a nation dedicated to peace, pluralism, and democracy in the 1920s, following world trends. Dickinson claims that the hunt for strains of militarism in 1920s Japan distorts history by disregarding the voices and aspirations of the Japanese people who lived through the era (121-122).

As Dickinson and others have noted, the Versailles Treaty (1919) and the Washington Conference (1921-22) fueled talk of war's atavism in the Japanese press, and in some quarters of academia. For many urban intellectual activists, in Tokyo, Taipei, Seoul, and Beijing, a "Wilsonian moment" had arrived, and peace would rule the planet. These trends, he argues, are logical concomitants of the global atmosphere of anti-militarism that was a result of the catastrophe that was World War I. But one does not have look under rocks at the periphery of empire to locate countervailing vectors of militarization during Japan's vaunted "interwar period."

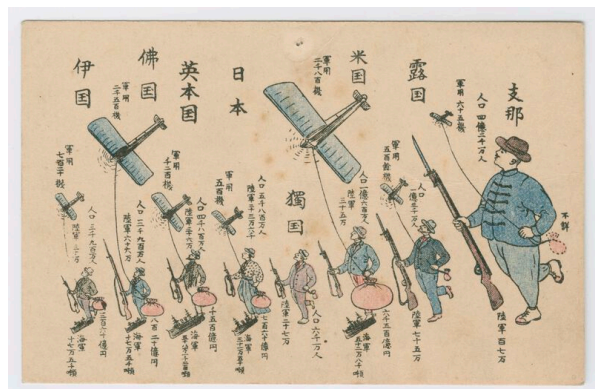
For a highly visible and powerfully placed coterie of Japanese military planners, politicians, and intellectuals, World War I's end was not the dawning of the Age of Aquarius, but the beginning of the era of "total war." Morohashi Eiichi's recent book chronicles this

development in great detail. To the consternation of Japan's free-trade advocates, Japan joined Great Britain's trade embargo against Germany during World War I to honor its alliance with England—but also to maintain vital trade relations. Concurrently, Japan dispatched military escorts for Allied shipping in the Mediterranean as a sop to the United States, to induce America to end its ban on steel exports, at least to Japan. These measures demonstrated that "total war," a strategy premised on the notion that national populations, and not just armies, were legitimate targets, was doctrine for the leading military powers in the world. At the same time, Britain's total war against Germany taught Japanese officers and public intellectuals that a similar fate could befall Japan in future wars. If German citizens could be deprived of food and necessities as a result of British blockades, Japan risked a similar fate in the next war. Indeed, World War I put into sharp relief Japanese dependence upon British and US trade. In anticipation of future total wars, Japanese economists advocated strengthening trade and investment links to China to achieve "self-sufficiency" against the Atlantic powers, thus presaging the outsized role of "Manchuria as lifeline" as a casus belli in the late 1920s and beyond (Morohashi 2021).

The "total war" zeitgeist of the 1920s produced anxiety about Japan's relatively small population, resource base, and standing military, as illustrated in examples from many postcards that commemorated the first anniversary of the national census, issued in October of 1921 (see figures 13 & 14).



**Figure 13. [ip1430] “Comparative Statistics on Soldiers per 10,000 Civilians and on Military Burden per Person.” East Asia Image Collection. Special Collections & College Archives, Skillman Library, Lafayette College.<sup>2</sup>**



**Figure 14. [ip1431] Comparative Military, Financial and Population Strength by Nation. East Asia Image Collection. Special Collections & College Archives, Skillman Library, Lafayette College.<sup>3</sup>**

Future Prime Minister Tanaka Giichi and Army Minister Ugaki Kazushige translated post-World-War I premonitions of “total war” into Japanese military doctrine. Tanaka and Ugaki believed that future wars would require Japan

to develop the industrial capacity to remain in the field against committed enemies for years. Therefore, Tanaka supported the military budget cuts of 1922 so that Japan could “expand its heavy industrial base [and] diversify its economy” (Drea 2009, 151). The Army made big cuts again in 1925 under Ugaki’s leadership, paring 40,000 personnel (four divisions and the Taiwan Garrison Headquarters). The savings, however, was not exactly a peace dividend. The funds were reallocated to build tank units, air squadrons, training institutes, and machine guns (Drea 2009, 153-154).

Albert Craig, like his predecessor at Harvard Edwin Reischauer, marked the post-World War I period as one of great hope, and even progress, especially regarding representative political institutions and the improvement of Japanese livelihoods. Nonetheless, despite the fact that Japanese military expenses dropped from “42 per cent of the budget in 1922” to “28 per cent in 1927,” Craig argued that “the army was by no means out of the picture altogether.” In addition to the 1920s mechanization of the army, Craig notes that officers who were demobilized by the cuts were redeployed as instructors in public schools and “local training units” (Fairbank, Reischauer and Craig 1979, 699-700). The government trimmed the military budget by reducing conscript tours of duty from three to two years, but it also created a “larger reserve pool available for mobilization because conscripts would cycle through the active force quicker” (Drea 2009, 154). Ugaki gushed to his diary in December 1925:

More than 200,000 troops in active service, more than 3,000,000 in the veterans’ organization, 500,000 or 600,000 middle and higher school students, and more than 800,000 trainees in local units: all of these will be controlled by the army, and their power will work as the central

force aiding the Emperor in war and peace alike (Fairbank, Reischauer and Craig 1979, 699-700).

In fact, as Ugaki's notes indicate, militarization remained a potent force in 1920s Japan. The troop reductions of 1922 removed only a single company from each infantry battalion across the whole army, leaving the imperial Army's force structure undisturbed (Drea 2009, 148). This approach was adopted to avoid the politically risky policy of closing military bases, which were a major employer (Humphreys 1995, 62). Therefore, even as urban intellectuals, party politicians, foreign ministers, and civil-society activists celebrated "the new Japan" and made inroads into reducing the relative power of the military to steer the ship of state, there was an undertow beneath the waves.

As we have seen, liberal political theory shows a predilection for dichotomizing constitutional government and militarization, by postulating a chronological framework featuring alternating eras of "wartime" and "peacetime." Within this tradition, it is hard to reconcile the co-existence of a golden age of parliamentary politics with large-scale and programmatic gains for the militarization of society. But for analysts of military affairs working outside of the liberal tradition, going back to Carl von Clausewitz himself, nothing could be more democratic than militarism. For Clausewitz, the princely states of eighteenth-century Europe had monopolized war as their own private sport, excluding "the people" from the affairs of the nation and the army. It was Napoleon, argued Clausewitz, who made war "the business of the people" (Clausewitz 1993, 715). After the barriers between state and people were destroyed by the unleashing of citizen armies against the monarchies of Europe, Clausewitz posed an important question: "From now on, will every war in Europe be waged

with the full resources of the state, and therefore have to be fought only over major issues that affect the people? Or shall we again see a gradual separation taking place between the government and the people?" (Clausewitz 1993, 717).

With reference to the wars fought by imperial Japan, one must reply affirmatively to both of Clausewitz's questions. In many respects, war did become the preserve of the people in Meiji Japan, after a long period of non-participation in the Tokugawa period of samurai rule. As Hiyama Yukio and many others have argued, war after 1894 in Japan unleashed popular energies including hero-worship, anti-Chinese racism, and nationalism, that bound the nation together across regional and status lines. It is also the case that "the full resources of the state" were often brought to bear on enemies such as the Qing Dynasty, the Russian Empire, the Chinese Nationalist Government, and the United States during times of war. These exactions prompted public mobilization campaigns that indeed made "war the people's business."

On the other hand, imperial Japan's wars, no matter how much they approximated Clausewitz's ideal type of "absolute war," were never spontaneous expressions of popular zeal to annihilate the armies of neighboring kingdoms to usher in a new era. These wars were launched and orchestrated by successful bureaucratic in-fighters who sat at the apex of the imperial polity. These were men who shared a common view of reality, even if they violently disagreed on specific policies. We could call these men imperial Japan's "power elite" after the famous book by C. Wright Mills. For Mills, the unceasing mobilization for war that characterized the United States in the 1950s was attributable to the outsized power of a relatively small number of "power elites." The members of this elite, like Meiji oligarchs, or statesmen-soldiers who took more formal routes to power in 1920s and 1930s, occupied

the leadership positions at the head of vast and complex organizational charts in military and civil governmental bureaucracies. They often shared educational, social, and regional affiliations, moving easily among the theoretically distinct realms of civilian politics, military command, and corporate leadership. According to Mills, militaries of states run by power elites answer to civil officials who are themselves former military men, or civil officials whom they call in-laws, classmates, and fraternal club members. Writing in the mid-1950s, and presaging Dwight Eisenhower's famous "military industrial complex" speech, Mills described the US power elite as a "permanent war establishment" whose interests were closely intertwined with a "privately incorporated economy" that operated nearly unopposed in the "political vacuum" of American congressional politics (Mills 1956, 19).

Such a characterization of imperial Japan's war-making elites, who included numerous political generals and nation-minded captains of industry, is not far-fetched. Yamagata Aritomo, Yamamoto Gonnohyōe, Tanaka Giichi, and Ugaki Kazushige, to name just a few, fit Mills' description of a "power elite" well enough. From a forever-war perspective, Mills' notion of a the "political vacuum" created by parliamentary democracy is key. This "vacuum" is a concomitant of the scale and complexity of modern military industrial complexes. On the one hand, civil society activists, dissenting politicians, and crusading journalists in Japan reduced military budgets and asserted control over foreign policy at an opportune moment in the mid-1920s, just as anti-war activists and congressional watch dogs temporarily hobbled the US war machine in the mid-1970s. But anti-militarists were opposed by entrenched, organized, and focused adversaries who retained oversight of the military bureaucracy and unparalleled mastery over the operational details of running the war machine. Cabinets, Prime Ministers, and editorial boards came and

went, but military officers and the hierarchies they presided over remained in place, along with veteran's organizations, military-base towns, and the armaments industry.

But even if a national power elite plays an critical role in the perpetuation of forever war, and the initiation of particular wars, they require popular support to maintain their budgets. Even during wars that generated feverish levels of public enthusiasm, there were always pockets resistance and war-weariness, thanks to the extreme burdens exacted on the population (Lone 1994, 87-92; Shimazu 2005, 33-43). Therefore, a satisfactory theory of militarization must somehow account for the fact that modern war is "the people's business," while it is perpetuated by military-industrial complexes that operate with very little democratic oversight.

Tomoyuki Sasaki's study of the Self Defense Forces adopts such a definition of militarization. Sasaki draws upon Cynthia Enloe's loose construction of "militarism" to explain the robust and abiding civilian support for a standing army in a nominally pacifist nation. Such support, argues Sasaki, is necessary, but is never a given. Rather, it emerges through

a step-by-step process by which a person or thing *gradually* comes to be controlled by the military *or* comes to depend for its well-being on militaristic ideas. The more militarization transforms an individual or a society, the more that individual or society comes to imagine military needs and militaristic presumptions to be not only valuable but also normal. Militarization, that is, involves cultural as well as institutional, ideological, and economic transformations (Cynthia Enloe, quoted in Sasaki 2015, 7).

Enloe's formulation suggests that militarism is a cumulative process that targets both individuals and societies, in the domains of organizational life, culture, and livelihood. In this spirit, Oleg Benesch and Ran Zwigenberg have coined the useful term "Taishō militarism" to explain the army's use of economic and cultural levers to consolidate its centrality in Japanese life, during a period of liberal florescence. From Meiji times, they write, the imperial army refurbished defunct Tokugawa-era castle grounds as military bases in all of Japan's major urban centers. These structures not only provided employment. They were also sites of spectacle, outreach, and ceremony. Through adroit use of these repurposed castles, "the army retained ultimate control over the urban space during the Taishō period." The interwar period, in effect, "saw a normalization and spread of martial symbols and ideas that laid the groundwork for the comprehensive militarization of Japanese society that would follow in the 1930s" (2020, 98-99).

Like military bases, military decorations also militarized Japanese individuals through appeals to material interests, but also through symbolic action. The decoration system in late-Meiji and Taishō Japan, by design, held out the prospect of social mobility or at least improved livelihood. Suzuki Ken'ichi has noted that the annuity attached to the newly promulgated Gold Kite medal, even at its 1894 level (65 yen), exceeded the military pensions for the average non-commissioned retiree (63 yen). The prospect of winning a Gold Kite was especially attractive for privates and petty officers because conscripts were not eligible for military pensions upon completion of their three-year hitches. Only career soldiers with eleven or more years of service qualified (Suzuki 2005, 8-9).

Recalling the Ming-Qing imperial-examination honors in China, the annuities attached to Gold Kite and some Rising Sun medals at *kōshō* announcements cast a wide net of eligibility,

but rewarded only a small percentage of Japanese enlistees. While the decoration system disproportionately rewarded those already possessed of wealth and social standing, it distributed millions of citations, medals, and one-time bonuses over the decades. The 1920s reforms in Gold Kite awards reveal how democratization and militarization proceeded in tandem. To begin the decade, the duration of eligibility for payments to families of deceased Gold Kite awardees was increased five-fold. From an initial one-year period of eligibility, bereaved families were henceforth eligible for up to five-years of payment to posthumous awardees (*Kanpō* #2365 June 21, 1920, 531).

A more loudly trumpeted reform occurred in 1927. Retroactive pay raises were instantiated for the non-commissioned officers and enlisted Gold Kites awardees from several wars fought between 1894 and 1922. The new regulations raised annual stipends for the bottom three grades of the Gold Kite (for non-commissioned officers and rank-and-file) by 50 yen, with back-pay included. The top four grades (for commissioned officers) were frozen at their 1895 levels. A similar raise for the bottom tiers of Rising Sun annuities was also enacted, again with the top tiers remaining frozen (*Kanpō* #114, May 19, 1927, 485-486; "Kunkō no roku-man hassen-nin kinō kara warai kao," *Tokyo Asahi Shinbun*, May 19, 1927, 3). The back pay associated with the new pay-scales entailed significant outlays for the imperial government. From 1926 to 1927, the total numbers of Gold Kite and Rising Sun annuity-recipients remained flat, but the annual cost of annuity disbursements rose from 8.66 to 11.7 million yen for Golden Kites, and 201,000 to 254,000 yen for Rising Sun annuities (Naikaku tōkei kyoku 1935, 435-436).

Thus, like the rapid increase in numbers of reservists touted by Ugaki, and the mechanization of the Imperial Japanese Army, the budget increases to compensate decorated

veterans or their families in the 1920s represents another vector of militarism during a period that was superficially a golden age of demilitarization. To be sure, awards of annuity-bearing Gold Kites was severely curtailed in the wake of the Hamaguchi-cabinet financial retrenchments at the end of the decade. Nonetheless, several divisions of Japanese troops took the field, and killed tens of thousands of Nationalist soldiers, Chinese civilians, and Taiwan Indigenous Peoples in the early Shōwa period. The 1928 Jinan Incident, the 1930 Musha Incident, and the 1932 Manchurian Incident were all attended by *kōshō* announcements and lists of medal awardees that inducted well over 100,000 soldiers and veterans into the honors-conferral system before the onset of the Second Sino-Japanese War (Naikaku tōkei kyoku 1939, 382-383).

## V. Conclusion

In the magisterial *Japan's Total Empire: Manchuria and the Culture of Wartime Imperialism*, Louise Young acknowledges the long-term antecedents of the 1931 occupation of Northeast China by Japan. She writes,

After eighty years of experience with the diplomacy of imperialism, two imperial wars, and a thirty-five-year-old colonial empire, Japan had at its disposal a sophisticated understanding of international law, an army practiced in colonial warfare, and a seasoned colonial bureaucracy. *This represented the overall accumulation of Japanese imperial capital in 1931* (Young 1999, 34; emphasis added).

What concrete forms did this “imperial capital” take? This article has argued that it took the

form of a forever war that was sustained by the continuous deployment of troops, consular police, colonial enforcers, and other combatants throughout East Asia. The “total empire” of the 1930s, and the “total wars” of the late ‘30s and early ‘40s, were all built on the back of decades of the forever war that began in 1894 with Japan’s occupation of Gyeongbok Palace in Seoul to start the Sino-Japanese War. Conventional endpoints for Japanese wars, the Treaty of Shimonoseki (1895), the Boxer Protocol (1901), Portsmouth (1905) and Versailles (1919) Treaties, and the Washington Conference agreements (1922), did not terminate the deployment of soldiers in foreign lands and the use of lethal force to achieve political ends. These dates were merely occasions reshuffle the imperial card deck by sending some soldiers home from battle zones while sending others to zones of occupation in Taiwan, Liaodong, Tianjin, Qingdao, Truk, and Seoul. The forever war created career paths for soldiers, policemen, and other military auxiliaries that knit the inside and the outside of empire together. In short, the accumulation of imperial capital that had accrued by the 1930s was indeed formidable. The forever war perspective does not argue that Japan was “always at war” to defend itself from a hostile world. Rather, it argues Japan fought several particular wars that overlapped each other to produce cumulative effects. The Japan of 1937 was much different than the Japan of 1894. By the former date, it was a nation of publicly decorated, compensated, honored, and mourned veterans, but also of families, acquaintances, and well-wishers. At the hub of the honor conferral system that disbursed such acknowledgment were organs of the state whose very survival and growth depended upon the existence of war—any type of war would do. For modern citizenries, war and militarism are not necessarily opposed to democracy Wars do not always present themselves as unwelcome intruders. In forever war, soldiering and military service become ends in themselves, and “supporting the troops” becomes part of

unthinking, common sense. Conversely, not being “at war” becomes unthinkable.

### Acknowledgements:

Previous versions of this paper were presented in Professor Andrew Gordon’s seminar, “Modern Japan: Empires and Aftermaths” at Harvard University, Fall 2020; the 2021 Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian Studies (held virtually) in March 2021; and, at the University of California-Santa Barbara Center for Taiwan Studies in April, 2021. The author thanks Tak Fujitani and Mark Selden for insightful comments and questions on this manuscript. I also wish to thank Jordan Sand, Sabine Frühstück, Andrew Gordon, Kirsten Ziomek, Nadine Willems, Luke Roberts, John Breen, Sakaya Chatani, and Ben Uchiyama for the many conversations and exchanges that have made this essay possible—from productive objections to critical bibliographical support. The author also acknowledges support for research in Tokyo from the Richard King Mellon Foundation, administered by the Provost’s Office at Lafayette College.

### List of Works Cited

Banno, Junji. 1989. “Japanese Industrialists and Merchants and the Anti-Japanese Boycotts in China 1919-1928.” In *The Japanese Informal Empire in China, 1895-1937*, edited by Peter Duus, Ramon Hawley Myers, and Mark R. Peattie, 314-29. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Barclay, Paul D. 2018. *Outcasts of Empire: Japan’s Rule on Taiwan’s “Savage Border,” 1874-1945*. Asia Pacific Modern 16. Oakland, California: University of California Press.

\_\_\_\_\_. Forthcoming. “The Musha Incident and the History of Tgdaya-Japanese Relations.” In

*The Musha Incident: A Reader on the Indigenous Uprising in Colonial Taiwan*, edited by Michael Berry. New York: Columbia University Press.

Barkawi, Tarak. 2006. *Globalization & War*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.

Barshay, Andrew E. 2013. *The Gods Left First: The Captivity and Repatriation of Japanese POWs in Northeast Asia, 1945-56*. Berkley: University of California Press.

Belew, Kathleen. 2018. *Bring the War Home: The White Power Movement and Paramilitary America*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Benesch, Oleg, and Ran Zwigenberg. 2020. *Japan’s Castles: Citadels of Modernity in War and Peace*. First paperback edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bickers, Robert A. 2017. *Out of China: How the Chinese Ended the Era of Western Domination*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Breen, John. 2007. “Yasukuni and the Loss of Historical Memory.” In *Yasukuni, the War Dead and the Struggle for Japan’s Past*, edited by John Breen, 143-62. London: Hurst.

Buck, David D. 1978. *Urban Change in China: Politics and Development in Tsinan, Shantung, 1890-1949*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Chiba Isao 千葉功. 2014. “Nisshin Nichi-ro sensō.” In *Iwanami koza Nihon rekishi. 16 (Kingendai 2)*, edited by Ōtsu Tōru 大津透, Sakurai Eiji 桜井英治, and Fujii Joji 藤井 譲治. Tokyo: Iwanami shoten.

Clausewitz, Carl von. 1993. *On War*. Translated by Howard, Michael and Peter Paret. Everyman’s Library. New York: Knopf.

Coox, Alvin W. 1989. “The Kwantung Army

- Dimension." In *The Japanese Informal Empire in China, 1895-1937*, edited by Peter Duus, Ramon Hawley Myers, and Mark R. Peattie, 395-428. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Dennehy, Kristine. 2011. "Hayashi Fusao: 'Affirmation of the Great East Asian War,' 1963." In *Pan-Asianism: A Documentary History. Volume 2, 1920-Present*, edited by Sven Saaler and Christopher Szpilman, 307-15. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Dickinson, Frederick R. 2013. *World War I and the Triumph of a New Japan, 1919-1930*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dirlik, Arif. 2001. "'Trapped in History' on the Way to Utopia: East Asia's 'Great War' Fifty Years Later." In *Perilous Memories: The Asia-Pacific War(s)*, edited by Takashi Fujitani, Geoffrey M. White, and Lisa Yoneyama, 299-322. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Dower, John W. 2008. "Throwing Off Asia III." *Visualizing Cultures*. Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology. <http://visualizingcultures.mit.edu>
- Drea, Edward J. 2009. *Japan's Imperial Army: Its Rise and Fall, 1853-1945*. Lawrence, Kan.: University Press of Kansas.
- Dudziak, Mary L. 2012. *War-Time: An Idea, Its History, Its Consequences*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dunscomb, Paul E. 2006. "A Great Disobedience against the People": Popular Press Criticism of Japan's Siberian Intervention, 1918-22." *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 32 (1): 53-81.
- Eckert, Carter J. and Yi Ki-baek, eds. 1990. *Korea, Old and New: A History*. Seoul: Ilchokak.
- Esselstrom, Erik. 2009. *Crossing Empire's Edge: Foreign Ministry Police and Japanese Expansionism in Northeast Asia*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Evans, David C., and Mark R. Peattie. 1997. *Kaigun: Strategy, Tactics, and Technology in the Imperial Japanese Navy, 1887-1941*. Annapolis: Naval Institute Press.
- Fujitani, Takashi. 2011. *Race for Empire: Koreans as Japanese and Japanese as Americans during World War II*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Fukoku chōhei hoken sōgō kaisha. 1936. *Yasukuni jinja ōtōrō kennō kinen ehagaki*. Tokyo: Fukoku chōhei hoken sōgō kaisha.
- Hayashi Eidai 林えいだい. 2002. *Musha no hanran, minshūgawa no shōgen: Taiwan hiwa*. Tokyo: Shinhyōron.
- Hiroiwa Chikahiro 広岩近広. 2019. *Shiberia Shuppei*. Tokyo: Kandensha.
- Hiyama Yukio 檜山幸夫. 1997a. *Nisshin sensō: hizō shashin ga akasu shinjitsu*. Tokyo: Kōdansha.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1997b. "Nisshin sensō no rekishiteki ichi: 'gojū-nen sensō' toshite no Nisshin sensō." In *Nisshin sensō to higashi Ajia sekai no henyō (jō)*, edited by Hiyama Yukio, 11-38. Tokyo: Yumani shobō.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2001. *Kindai Nihon no keisei to Nisshin sensō: sensō no shakaishi*. Tokyo: Yūzankaku Shuppan.
- Hook, Glenn D. 1996. *Militarization and Demilitarization in Contemporary Japan*. London: Routledge.
- Humphreys, Leonard A. 1995. *The Way of the Heavenly Sword: The Japanese Army in the 1920's*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Iechika Ryoko. 2016. "From the Northern Expeditions to the Assassination of Zhang Zuolin." In *Fifteen Lectures on Showa Japan*:

- Road to the Pacific War in Recent Historiography*, edited by Kiyotada Tsutsui, translated by Makito Noda and Paul Narum, 41-64. Tokyo: Japan Publishing Industry Foundation for Culture.
- Inaba Masao 稲葉正夫 and Rikugun Sanbō Honbu 陸軍參謀本部, eds. (1941) 1971. *Shōwa sannen Shina Jihen shuppeishi*. Tokyo: Gannandō Shoten.
- International Relations Committee, ed. 1928. *The Tsinan Affair* Volume I. Shanghai: International Relations Committee.
- Iriye, Akira. 1965. *After Imperialism*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Jaundrill, D. Colin. 2016. *From Samurai to Soldier: Remaking Military Service in Nineteenth-Century Japan*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Kasahara Tokushi 笠原十九司. 2017. *Nitchū Sensō zenshi*. Tokyo: Kōbunken.
- Kasai, Jiuji G. 1916. "The Cheng-Chiatun Affair." *New York Times*, September 21, 1916, n.p.
- Keene, Donald. 1971. "The Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95 and Its Cultural Effects." In *Tradition and Modernization in Japanese Culture*, edited by Donald Shively, 121-75. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Kitamura Kae 北村 嘉恵. 2020. "Zài qīngtīng tāmen de gùshì: sīkǎo 'Táiwān yuánzhùnmín guāndiǎn de wùshè shìjiàn'." In *Wùshè shìjiàn: Táiwān lìshǐ hé wénhuà dúběn* (Musha Incident: a Reader in Taiwan History and Culture), edited by Michael Berry, 154-78. Taipei: Rye Field Publications.
- Kondō Ken'ichi 近藤 釵 and Sakatani Yoshio 阪谷 芳郎, eds. 1964. *Banzai sōjō jiken: (san-ichi undō)*. Tokyo: Yūhō Kyōkai; Chōsen Shiryō Hensankai.
- League of Nations. 1924. "No. 559. China and Japan." *League of Nations Treaty Series*. 293-322.
- Lone, Stewart. 2000. *Army, Empire and Politics in Meiji Japan: The Three Careers of General Katsura Tarō*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1994. *Japan's First Modern War: Army and Society in the Conflict with China, 1894-95*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Lutz, Catherine. 2001. *Homefront: A Military City and the American Twentieth Century*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Matsusaka, Y. Tak. 1996. "Managing Occupied Manchuria." In *The Japanese Wartime Empire, 1931-1945*, edited by Peter Duus, Ramon Hawley Myers, and Mark R. Peattie, 97-135. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Mills, C. Wright. 1956. *The Power Elite*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Misselwitz, Henry. 1928a. "Chinese Defy Tokio, Cut Tsinan Railway," *New York Times*, May 1, 1928, 12.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1928b. "3,000 Besieged Japanese Fight Horde of Chinese for 2 Days in Tsinan-fu," *New York Times*, May 5, 1928, 1.
- Monbusho, ed. 1945. *Chūtō chiri san*. Tokyo: Chūtō gakkō kyōkasho kabushiki kaisha.
- Morohashi Eiichi 諸橋 英一. 2021. *Daiichiji sekai taisen to nihon no sōryokusen seisaku*. Tokyo: Keiō gijuku daigaku shuppankai.
- Morton, William Fitch. 1980. *Tanaka Giichi and Japan's China Policy*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Naikaku tōkei kyoku, ed. 1921. *Nihon teikoku dai sanjū-kyū tōkei nenkan: Taishō jū-nen kankō: ryakusetu*. Tokyo: Tokyo tōkei kyōkai shuppan-bu. NDL Digital Collections.

- \_\_\_\_\_. 1935. *Nihon Teikoku dai gojū-yon tōkei nenkan*. Tokyo: Tokyo tōkei kyōkai shuppan-bu. NDL Digital Collections.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1939. *Nihon Teikoku dai gojū-hachi tōkei nenkan*. Tokyo: Tokyo tōkei kyōkai shuppan-bu. NDL Digital Collections.
- Naka Kaoru 那珂馨 1973. *Kunshō no rekishi*. Tokyo: Yūzankaku.
- Nakazuka Akira 中塚明, Inoue Katsuo 井上勝生, and Pak Men-su 朴孟洙. 2013. *Tōgaku nōmin sensō to Nihon*. Tokyo: Kōbunken.
- Ono, Keishi. 2015. "The Siberian Intervention and Japanese Society." In *Japan and the Great War*, edited by Anthony Best and Oliviero Fratolillo, 93-115. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Rekishi kyōkasha kyōgikai, ed. 2015. *Mukaiau Nihon to Kankoku, Chōsen no rekishi: kin-gendai hen* Tokyo: Ōtsuki Shoten.
- Sakurai Ryōju 櫻井良樹. 2015. *Kahoku chūton Nihongun: Giwadan kara Rokōkyō e no michi*. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten.
- Sasaki, Tomoyuki. 2015. *Japan's Postwar Military and Civil Society: Contesting a Better Life*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Saya, Makito. 2011. *The Sino-Japanese War and the Birth of Japanese Nationalism*. Translated by David Noble. Tokyo: International House of Japan.
- Shimazu, Naoko. 2009. *Japanese Society at War: Death, Memory and the Russo-Japanese War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Suzuki Ken'ichi 鈴木健一. 2005. "Meiji-ki ni okeru kuntō shōhai ni tsuite." *Hikaku Bunkashi Kenkyū* 7: 1-12.
- Taiwan sōtokufu keimukyoku 1981. "Mush jikenshi." In *Taiwan Musha hōki jiken: kenkyū to shiryō*, edited by Tai Kuo Hui, 349-520. Tokyo: Shakai shisōsha.
- Takahashi Kunisuke 高橋邦輔. 2018. *Chōlla ūi tūlpul:Tōgaku Nōmin Sensō tanbō*. Tokyo: Shakai Hyōronsha.
- Takahei, Tsuneichi たかへい常市. 1976. *Nihon ikai kuntō shiron*. Tōkyō: Nihon o sekai de ichiban sumiyoi kuni ni suru kai.
- Takenaka, Akiko. 2015. *Yasukuni Shrine: History, Memory, and Japan's Unending Postwar*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Thomas, Julia Adeney. 2020. "Japan's War Without Pictures: Normalizing Fascism." In *Visualizing Fascism: The Twentieth-Century Rise of the Global Right*, edited by Julia Adeney Thomas and Geoff Eley, 160-82. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Uchiyama, Benjamin. *Japan's Carnival War: Mass Culture on the Home Front, 1937-1945*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019.
- Vine, David. 2020. *The United States of War: A Global History of America's Endless Conflicts, From Columbus to the Islamic State*. Oakland: University of California Press.
- Watt, Lori. 2009. *When Empire Comes Home: Repatriation and Reintegration in Postwar Japan*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center.
- Yang, Daqing. 2010. *Technology of Empire: Telecommunications and Japanese Expansion in Asia, 1883-1945*. Harvard East Asian Monographs 219. Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center.
- Yasukuni Jinja. (1933-1935) 2006. *Yasukuni Jinja chūkonshi*, edited by Hiyama Yukio. 6 volumes. Tokyo: Yumani Shobō.
- Yoshida, Takashi. 2014. *From Cultures of War to Cultures of Peace: War and Peace Museums in Japan, China, and South Korea*. Portland, Maine: MerwinAsia.

Young, Louise. 1999. *Japan's Total Empire: Manchuria and the Culture of Wartime Imperialism*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

## Appendix One: The Demilitarization of German-Japanese War and Jinan Incidents in English-Language Histories of Modern Japan

Book	The German-Japanese-German War (1914)	The Jinan Incident (1928)
1976 Peter Duus, <i>The Rise of Modern Japan</i> (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1976).	"the Ōkuma cabinet decided to enter the war on the side of Great Britain and its allies, and Japanese expeditionary forces quickly seized Germany's island colonies in the Southwest Pacific and the German concessions on the Shandong peninsula in China. But more ambitious schemes were in the air" (p. 205).	"When the Guomindang's northern expedition threatened Japanese residents in north China, the Tanaka cabinet twice dispatched Japanese troops to protect them..." (p. 209).
1978 Fairbank, John King, Edwin O. Reischauer, and Albert M. Craig. 1978. <i>East Asia, Tradition &amp; Transformation</i> . New impression. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.	"As an ally of Britain, Japan declared war on Germany and took over the German position in Shantung. The following year, 1915, Japan issued the so-called Twenty-One Demands to China..." (p. 692).	"As prime minister, Tanaka spoke of a 'positive foreign policy,' of strengthening Japan's position in Manchuria, and of taking a tougher attitude toward the Chinese. In fact, Japan's relations with China remained by and large the same as under Shidehara, but Tanaka's bellicose tones provoked anti-Japanese reaction in China. This boomeranged on the Tanaka cabinet when in 1928 officers of the Japanese Kwantung Army in Manchuria assassinated Chang Tso-lin" (p. 700).
1987 W. G. Beasley, <i>Japanese Imperialism, 1894-1945</i> (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987).	Then in 1914, having declared war on Germany, ostensibly in accordance with obligations under the Anglo-Japanese alliance, Japan seized the German installations and investments in the Chinese province of Shantung, which included the leased territory of Kiaochow and a naval base at Tsingtao. It also occupied German island possessions in the western Pacific north of the equator. The Shantung rights, except for some economic ones, were returned to China after the Washington Conference in 1922 "(p. 142).	"Tanaka once more sent troops into Shantung. The step this time led to clashes with Chiang's forces in Tsinan and to Japanese occupation of the Kiaochow-Tsinan railway" (p. 186).
1993 Boyle, John Hunter. 1993. <i>Modern Japan: The American Nexus</i> . Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.	"With little opposition, Japan's 'sunshine combatants' seized Germany's economic concessions and military bases on the Shantung peninsula in the north of China in 1914. At the same time, the Japanese Navy occupied Germany's South Pacific possessions in the Mariana, Caroline, and Marshall Islands, including places like Saipan and Tinian, which would become well-known battlegrounds in World War II" (p. 153).	"By 1928, the armies of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek were fulfilling the longstanding dream of the Kuomintang. During a two-year campaign, they crushed one warlord army after another" (p. 175).
		"The outbreak of war in Europe in the summer of 1914 and the preoccupation of the European powers allowed Japan, under the guise of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, to seize German holdings in Shantung and German-held islands in the South Pacific: the Carolines, Marianas, Marshalls, Palau, and Yap. Hard on the heels of those swift maneuvers came the delivery in January 1915 of Japan's Twenty-One Demands on China. This was an incident fraught with importance for the future of international relations in East Asia..." (p. 182).
		"In 1928 as the Kuomintang troops moved closer to Peking and successful extension of nationalist authority throughout North China, extremist elements in the Kwantung Army arranged the bombing of the train carrying Chang Tso-lin" (p. 187).
		"In April 1928, as Chiang Kai-shek's army moved north, the Japanese commander in Shandong sent his troops into Jinan to block the Nationalist forces. A clash resulted, and in order to overcome public opposition to dispatching reinforcements, the Japanese army claimed that more than 300 Japanese residents had been massacred in Shandong. This was a gross exaggeration of an incident in which thirteen Japanese, who had been accused of smuggling opium into the region, had been killed. The [opposition party]...opposed Tanaka's aggressive policies, but the newspapers stirred up public opinion in favor of intervention. Tanaka sent an additional division into Shandong and the Japanese forces launched an attack against Jinan, killing and injuring thousands of Chinese residents (p. 254)."
		"The following April [1927], Tanaka sent five thousand troops from bases in Japan...In May 1928 those units clashed with Chiang Kai-shek's forces in Jinan; the bloody skirmishes left hundreds of Chinese soldiers and civilians dead, and reports about appalling atrocities, including castration and blinding of prisoners, aroused bitter anti-Japanese feelings in China's urban centers" (p. 397).
		"The emperor officially proclaimed his nation's entry into World War I on August 23, 1914, and by November Japanese forces had seized the German leasehold in China's strategic Shandong Province, which jutted into the Yellow Sea south of Manchuria, and moved against German holdings in the Caroline, Mariana, and Marshal island groups in Micronesia" (334).
		"The Japanese forces captured the German fortress at Qingdao on the Shandong Peninsula and the German island possessions in the Pacific. Other than this, Japan's active role in the battle was limited to the use of its warships to patrol the Mediterranean toward the latter part of the war" (p. 208).
		"The Japanese forces captured the German fortress at Qingdao on the Shandong Peninsula and the German island possessions in the Pacific. Other than this, Japan's active role in the battle was limited to the use of its warships to patrol the Mediterranean toward the latter part of the war" (p. 208).

2002 Jansen, Marius B. 2002. *The Making of Modern Japan*. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

"Japan was committed by the Anglo-Japanese Alliance to join the allies, but was not inclined to participate in areas where its interests were not involved. Some destroyer-escorts were sent to do duty in the Mediterranean, but otherwise Japan limited its contribution to seizure of German holdings in the Chinese province of Shantung, occupation of German-held islands in the South Pacific, and sweeping Eastern waters clear of German raiders" (p. 515).

"In December 1927 Tanaka decided that the possibility of conflict in the area made it wise to send troops to Shantung again to protect Japanese nationals and Japanese interests. He hoped that if he sent them to Tsingtao they would be out of Chiang Kai-shek's path of advance, while the nevertheless available....The division commander thought he knew better, and moved to Tsinan as the northern forces retreated. As might have been expected, a clash between Japanese and Chinese Nationalist forces broke out in May. Attempts for local settlement of whatever had prompted the clash failed when the Japanese military decided the national honor was at stake; when the Chinese would not accept the demands they made, Japanese troops occupied Tsinan. The Japanese now took over the area, imposed martial law, and held on until 1929" (p. 525).

2003 Andrew Gordon, A *Modern History of Japan: From Tokugawa Times to the Present* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

"The Anglo-Japanese alliance of 1902 (revised in 1911) led Japan quickly to join the war on the British side in August 1914. By year's end, Japanese troops had taken control of German possessions including railways and a military base in China's Shandong peninsula and several Pacific Islands" (173).

"[Tanaka] did not directly repudiate cooperation with the West, but he promoted a considerably more assertive foreign policy than Shidehara. He sent troops to China on three occasions in 1927 and 1928, ostensibly to protect citizens and economic interests" (p. 176).

**Paul D. Barclay** is Professor and Head of the History Department at Lafayette College in Easton, PA. He is the author of *Outcasts of Empire: Japanese Rule on Taiwan's "Savage Border" 1874-1945* (University of California Press, 2018) and general editor of the *East Asia Image Collection*, an open-access digital archive of visual historical sources. He is currently researching Japanese military/police campaigns in Korea, China, Taiwan and the Soviet Union from 1894 to 1936 for a project called "Imperial Japan's Forever Wars." Barclay's research has received support from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Social Science Research Council, the Japanese Council for the Promotion of Science, and the Taiwan Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> The China Incident occurred in the 1930s and 1940s, so it is counted twice.

<sup>2</sup> "A Comparison of Soldiers per 10,000 Civilians." From the reader's right-to-left: America 33, Japan 40, Germany 45, Russia 58, Italy 77, England 78, France 170. The stacks of coins represent "Army cost-burden per citizen." From reader's right-to-left: "Germany 40-sen, Russia 250-sen, America 320-sen, Japan 450-sen, Italy 570-sen, England 1160-sen, France 1400-sen."

<sup>3</sup> "An illustration of relative national strength." Japan is symbolized by fourth person from the reader's left. It is associated with these statistics: population=58 million; army troops=236,000; navy=315,000 tons (ships); military aircraft=500; financial reserves=76 billion yen. On this chart, Japan's population lags far behind China's, Russia's, and America's, but its financial capacity exceeds China's and Russia's considerably, while America and England are noticeably wealthier.