

“See You in Yasukuni”: Western Perceptions of the Imperial Japanese
Before and During the War in the Pacific

By

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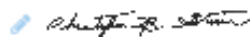
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I would like to first acknowledge my family, especially my mother and father, grandfathers, and grandmothers. I would like to thank my professors, specifically, Dr. Strain, Dr. Ely, and Dr. Corr. Additionally, I’d like to thank my friends, especially Houston, Emily, David, Ashlee, and Tyler. I’d like to thank the Cox Science Center for being so understanding in my scheduling. Finally, I’d like to thank the long past John L. Stoddard, for starting me down this rabbit-hole with a few free books at a college library.

Joshua Naccarato, *See You in Yasukuni*

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Japan’s history is one of extremes. From an island’s seclusion, Japan rose to become the “golden child” of Asia upon her lifting of her isolationist policies at the start of the Meiji period to falling into international ill-renown at start of her aggressions in Manchuria around 1931. One factor that has stayed constant is that the outside world has told of life on her shores, first through traders and shipwrecked sailors, then through the more reliable “globetrotters,” scholars, and professional advisors. This thesis uses a wide selection of voices from the more and less reputable to examine what the outside world thought of Japan and will argue that her rise and fall are both due to contact with the outside, with the fall especially being due to Japan’s brutal militarism and wide-reaching imperialism.

To Gus, the “therapy” dog

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Introduction:

Japanese history is a history of extremes, and in no way is it more extreme than in how the nation is viewed by outsiders. When Japan opened itself up after its two and a half centuries of self-isolation, it emerged as one of the most unique cultures in the world. Many travel hobbyists, called “globetrotters” at the turn of the twentieth century were fascinated and Japan well rewarded any who traveled to its shores. Many chose to live and work there, accepting the Japanese offer to anyone with an academic or technical skill it needed to aid them in modernization.

One such professor, an Englishman named Basil Hall Chamberlain, who taught at the Imperial University of Tokyo at the turn of the century and who is widely considered one of the best Western scholars on Japan had nothing but glowing praise for the Japanese. After a smaller Japanese fleet had annihilated the larger Russian fleet at the height of the Russo-Japanese War and with the final outcome still in question, Chamberlain declares:

“Whatever may be its final issue, one fact has deeply impressed all those who, by long residence among the Japanese and familiarity with their language, have been able to watch the attitude of all classes during the various wars and other changes here briefly sketched :—it is the fundamental sturdiness and healthiness of the national character. The assumed intellectual inferiority of Far-Eastern nations—at least of this Far-Eastern nation—to Europeans has been disproved. Disproved, likewise, is the supposed moral inferiority of “heathen” nations—at least of this “heathen” nation—to Christians.

“For no one fully cognizant of the events of the last forty years can allege that any Christian European nation could have shown itself readier to acknowledge its former errors, more teachable in all the arts of civilization, franker and more moderate in diplomacy, more chivalrous and humane in war. If there be

*any "Yellow Peril," it must surely consist in Europe's own good qualities being surpassed by a higher grade of those same qualities in her new rivals. Such are the astonishing results of forty years of hard work on the part of a whole nation, which saw itself in a bad way, and resolutely determined to mend it."*¹

Nearly exactly forty years later, Japan was in an altogether different state and anyone with a way of observing knew it. Embroiled in the Second Sino-Japanese since 1937 and the Pacific theater of the Second World War against the Americans, Dutch, British Commonwealth, and others since 1941, it was bleeding from a hundred wounds. Supplies couldn't get where they were desperately needed due to roving American naval squadrons and submarine warfare and the people of the Imperial heartland, much less its far-flung military outposts and colonial holds, were in dire straits.

In the latter years of the war, surrounded by the blood-and-bone-fertilized jungles of a Pacific island-turned battlefield, a note was found on a body by a soldier and turned in to an American Intelligence officer who then reported it up the chain. It is supported by many other materials available to soldiers, especially the U.S. War Department's *Intelligence Bulletin* series, but much more poignant as it is the idle scribblings of an Imperial Japanese Army soldier addled by hunger and his dream meals upon getting home. The note is both heartbreaking and illustrative of the depths the Japanese had fallen in the eyes of the world, or, in this case, those who were now closest, with its largest punch being in its most subtle details. It read:

"When I reach home... the faces...raw fish, vegetables, five bowls of red-bean soup with rice cake, first day. Second day- pork cutlets, vegetable salad. Third day- sukiyaki, fish. Fourth day- tempura [writing gets fainter]. Sixth day- fish. Seventh day- fried oysters, slaw. Eighth day- [fainter still] rice ball wrapped

¹ Basil Hall Chamberlain. *Things Japanese: Being Notes on Various Subjects Connected with Japan for the Use of Travelers and Others*. (London, England: Kelly and Walsh, Limited, 1905). Pg. 242.

with dried seasoned... Ninth day- cutlets, curry, and rice. Tenth day- ten plates of noodles a la Wan Tun... [writing fades out].”²

In between those two notes is a mere four decades and countless news stories that had made both stories incredibly believable in their own time, but not to each other, contrasting in a stark light. At the turn of the twentieth century, Japan was the golden child of Asia, the continent’s best hope for a bright future. Forty years later, it had abandoned its now pauperized soldiers to the mercy of the elements and the enemy on its scattered holdings- and the enemy knew it.

Yasukuni was a shrine built to honor soldiers who had died in battle and became war gods. Yasukuni was so mythologized and embedded in Japanese military culture as one of a slew of spiritual rewards that soldiers would often even agree on it as a place to meet with their friends after death. Some sources, though this is impossible to substantiate, agreed even upon a particular tree in the front of the shrine’s grounds. At the shrine proper in the material world, they would receive a wooden tablet that was taken out of the temple’s recesses and placed into the sun every morning, receiving a measure of sake, and a lit cigarette to smoke, along with any offerings from their families.

The Emperor would frequently make offerings himself and would often come to Yasukuni and even bow to the soldiers, as it was believed they had reached apotheosis as war deities. These same war gods watched over the Japanese in every moment, protecting them in life with the “divine winds,” the famous *Kamikaze*, typhoons that had allowed the Mongols to be

² Harris, Meirion and Susie. *Soldiers of the Sun: The Rise and Fall of the Imperial Japanese Army* (New York, N.Y., Random House, Inc., 1991). Pg. 402

defeated.³ Japan's soldiers, who had long said their farewells with cries of the titular "See you in Yasukuni" and who protected the Japanese in the material world, now expected this to be the only place their lives would matter.

This thesis will examine how all of this changed and the English-speaking West's perceptions and views of the Japanese. It will argue that views of the Japanese generally worsened over the years first due to isolation and hostility to outsiders of any kind; and later, due to militarism, residual isolation, the heightening doggedness and cruelty of the Imperial Japanese military, and policies of imperialism and expansionism.

Additionally, this thesis will put forth that the degradation of the West's opinion of Japan was gradual, becoming worse after the Russo-Japanese War. Compounding the issue, the restoration of these negative views was hindered by the recent nature of Japan's isolation and of its modernization, the perceptions of Japan's culture and national character being enigmatic and vastly different, and the appraised residuality of its medieval past.

European and American perceptions of the Imperial Japanese before and during the Pacific War were quite fluid and changed greatly in positivity, racial and cultural stereotyping, and hostility based upon interaction with the outside world (or lack thereof).

³ *Know Your Enemy: Japan*, directed by Frank Capra, Joris Ivens, released 9 August 1945 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. War Department, 1945)

A Primer on Japanese History

It helps to have a brief history of Japan for context. The Japanese themselves say that their nation began with the reign of the legendary Emperor Jimmu Tennō in 660 B.C.E., descended from the sun-goddess Amaterasu Omikami, and the first human Emperor, or *Mikado*, of Japan. Though Jimmu has a legendary status, going on adventures with the gods and fighting monstrous creatures, some authors allege a much more scientific view of events. Here and forward for our timeline, we again turn to Chamberlain, as his information matches the more modern ones, and we are most primarily concerned with perceptions. By vetting Chamberlain's timeline, we can use the most accurate narrative while still retaining the voices of the past.

Chamberlain writes that the Japanese common knowledge holds that Jimmu, known in life to his people as *Kamu-Yamato-Iware-Biko*, was an unknown sum. The professor expresses doubt that he even existed.⁴ Chamberlain pointedly states that several monarchs supposedly lived to be over 120 years old, with one, *Suijin Tennō*, he incredulously says lived to be 168. Whatever the truth, much of early Japanese history is shrouded by legend, much like the history of almost any ancient and long-lived country, especially one born before its discovery of writing.⁵

What is known is that Chinese culture had a massive influence on Japan for a great deal of its history, especially during its early years. Chinese writing was modified and used, a Chinese calendar, and the Chinese method of rule.⁶ Our modern source, Kenneth G. Henshall, Professor of Japanese Studies at Waikato University, New Zealand, and author of *A History of Japan:*

⁴ Chamberlain, *Things Japanese*, Pg. 226-227.

⁵ Chamberlain, *Things Japanese*, Pg. 227.

⁶ *Ibid*, Pg. 231-232.

Stone Age to Superpower, agrees.⁷ Also like many Chinese Emperors, the Emperors of Japan grew weak and decadent, surrounding themselves with entourages of priests and women for alternating periods of prayer and hedonism.⁸ Henshall again agrees that there was a weakening of the government, but argues the more practical reasons of regents installing weak or young Emperors and early abdication.⁹ For hundreds of years after, the Emperor was essentially a formality, a god, but the god of rubber stamps. The true ruler was whoever had the largest and most powerful army, the Shogun.

Another profound formational influence on Japan was Buddhism and its principles, which Chamberlain states "...was the teacher under whose instruction the Japanese nation grew up."¹⁰ Again, Henshall agrees with it providing ideas, especially Chinese ideas,¹¹ and adds that it provided a degree of respectability to the Japanese newcomers to the East Asian world stage.¹² Buddhism in Japan was near ubiquitous except in Satsuma, where the priests of Buddhism were expelled and forbidden after they betrayed the warlord to the enemy.

In Japan, Buddhism is heavily mixed with Shinto, according to Basil Hall Chamberlain, and W.B. Mason in their text *Handbook for Travelers in Japan*.¹³ In fact, many sources state that outside of Satsuma, Buddhism and Shinto are inseparably mixed.^{14, 15} Buddhism had a definitive advantage in how it treated local religions, as it already meshed in India with Hindu deities. The

⁷ Kenneth G. Henshall, *A History of Japan: From Stone Age to Superpower* (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 2001). Pg. 20-21.

⁸ Chamberlain, *Things Japanese*, Pg. 233.

⁹ Henshall, *Stone Age to Superpower*, Pg.24-25

¹⁰ Chamberlain, *Things Japanese*, Pg. 78.

¹¹ Henshall, *Stone Age to Superpower*, Pg. 13

¹² *Ibid*, Pg. 14.

¹³ Basil Hall Chamberlain, F.R.G.S., and W.B. Mason, *Handbook for Travelers in Japan (Including Formosa) by Basil Hall Chamberlain and W.B. Mason, with Thirty Maps and Plans and Numerous Illustrations, Ninth Edition, Revised Throughout* (New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, Kelly and Walsh, Limited, 1913). Pg. 35

¹⁴ *Ibid*, Pg. 35.

¹⁵ Henshall, *Stone Age to Superpower*, Pg. 17

Japanese were more willing to take on Buddhist doctrine, as Buddhism would allow them to keep and incorporate their existing gods into Buddhist doctrine.¹⁶

Furthermore, Chamberlain, speaking alone in his 1905 book, *Things Japanese*, claims that Buddhist clergy saturated Japan in about 500 C.E. after a collection of Buddhist statues and artefacts were presented to a Japanese Emperor.¹⁷ A plague broke out shortly thereafter and the locals, blaming the foreign religion, burned down the shrine holding the artefacts. A series of such severe misfortunes broke out that the Japanese rebuilt the temple and welcomed an ensuing wave of Buddhist clergy, all within a mere few years. The clergy brought not only their religion, but educated the citizens, mainly the nobility and other monks in training, treated the sick, brought new ideas on medicine, deeply influenced art and politics, created the Japanese form of dramatic poetry, and essentially recreated Japanese culture. In the years of 593-621 C.E., Buddhism would become the Chief religion, though Shinto would never go out of popularity and only meshed with Buddhism.

Japan's Imperial Family would rise in 645 C.E. but would become decadent and weak and begin to lose control around 1050 C.E. After the always militaristic Japanese warlords became sick of what Chamberlain calls a "Petticoat Government," the Emperor would be forced to take a backseat. Between 1185 and 1190, the Shogun Yorimoto, the man with the most powerful armies, would rule.¹⁸ This would continue until Emperor's replacement at the head in the Boshin War and Meiji Restoration much later. In the final years of the 13th century, Kublai Khan sent a vast armada to conquer Japan. This armada was almost entirely destroyed by

¹⁶ Chamberlain and Mason, *Handbook for Travelers*, Pg. 36

¹⁷ Chamberlain, *Things Japanese*, Pg. 77.

¹⁸ Chamberlain, *Things Japanese*, Pg. 231-232

powerful storms and the remaining troops were defeated after they landed, severely bled and made more manageable, in a series of battles. Those storms, named *Kamikaze*, or “Divine Wind,” spawned a belief that Japan was under divine protection and the gods had sent winds to protect them.¹⁹

As seen with Buddhist priests a millennia before, the Japanese were originally open to the wider world. In 1543, the Japanese traded for two arquebuses with Portuguese sailors who had gotten lost and subsequently reverse engineered and locally manufactured tens of thousands of matchlock black powder guns known as *Tanegashima*, after the island the Portuguese came to.²⁰ The sailors brought word back to Europe and Christianity soon found converts in Japan. Guns would become most important of all in the Sengoku period, an almost 200-year period of internal warfare. In 1575, the lowly warlord Oda Nobunaga made extensive use of these arquebuses and early combined arms tactics, becoming powerful and establishing a regime that would go on to reunify Japan.²¹

Following this chaos, the Tokugawa regime that arose from Oda Nobunaga’s unification decided to isolate Japan from the outside world in the year 1603 due in part to Christian missionary activity, unfair trading practices, and the widespread chaos that came with the Warring States Period.²² The withdrawal was accompanied by persecution of foreign elements not advantageous to the Japanese rulers, especially Christianity. One notable event which prompted a widespread and lasting persecution of Christian converts and missionaries occurred

¹⁹ *Ibid*, Pg. 233.

²⁰ Clive Sinclair, *Samurai: The Weapons and Spirit of the Japanese Warrior* (Guilford, Connecticut: The Lyons Press, 2004). Pg. 129

²¹ *Ibid*, Pg. 132.

²² Office of the Historian, “The United States and the Opening to Japan, 1853.” *1830-1860*. United States of America Department of State. Accessed March 10, 2021. <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1830-1860/opening-to-japan>

when a Spanish pilot, in the absence of his captain, made a particularly idiotic boast to local authorities.

In a conversation with these men, the pilot pointed proudly to a map of the Spanish Empire, which prompted a question about how the Spanish king had managed to conquer such a vast array of countries. The pilot responded that this was by infiltrating religious missionaries and allying with the resultant converts upon a Spanish invasion. 26 missionaries and converts were subsequently crucified, and Japan was set upon the course of isolation.²³ Japan largely continued on in isolation, its culture thriving and becoming increasingly unique, but stagnating technologically and socially.

The only Westerners to really interact with the Japanese after this were Dutch traders with permits, and even then only to a limited degree in designated quarters of a few port cities.²⁴ The Japanese would reverse this in 1854 in response to Commodore Perry's expedition with limited diplomatic relations with the U.S. but giving them the status of most-favored nation.

In 1858, the Japanese heard secondhand about the British and other Europeans' efforts to open China and divvy up her wealth at the muzzle of a gun and opened almost entirely to Western trade in the fear they were next. Later the same year, Japan signed the Harris Treaty to open for trade with the U.S.²⁵ With the opening of Japan, the Tokugawa Shogunate would rapidly lose power and influence. In the wake of the dynasty's decline, two camps would form,

²³ Chamberlain, *Things Japanese*, Pg. 325.

²⁴ Office of the Historian, "The United States and the Opening to Japan, 1853." *1830-1860*. United States of America Department of State. Accessed March 10, 2021. <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1830-1860/opening-to-japan>

²⁵ Office of the Historian, "The United States and the Opening to Japan, 1853." *1830-1860*. United States of America Department of State. Accessed July 25, 2021. <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1830-1860/opening-to-japan>

one favoring the old ways and another advocating for the rule of the Emperor and total reformation to avoid becoming a colony. The Boshin War was the result, and those favoring empowering the Emperor were victorious.²⁶

In 1868, supporters of the Emperor Meiji would seize control of the country from the final Shogun of the Tokugawa Dynasty and would place the Emperor on the throne.²⁷ The Emperor had long been considered a divine entity, but with this, the Emperor would become worshipped in State Shintoism as a god. This period would be the start of Imperial control that would be known as the Meiji Restoration and would begin a period of astonishingly rapid Westernization.

During this period, vast and earthshaking reforms would be enacted, and the nation would rapidly modernize and strengthen, becoming the powerhouse of the East. They would spend years taking in various experts, educators, and specialists and invited the world's top militaries to send British, French, Prussian, and American officers, and theorists to instruct their nation. Japan would take in every western advance they thought would fit, vaccines, abolition of torture, the telegraph and telephone, railways, and the parliamentary system, along with anything else they could pack in.²⁸ Much of what was taken was to strengthen Japan against any outside interference, but much was also to gain prestige and make some improvement to the lives of the nation's people.

The times, and the Japanese, would soon change incredibly rapidly. Japan would get its first taste of colonialism in a string of wars, first with the Russians who were eager to distract from

²⁶ "Foundation," *About Yasukuni Jinja*, Yasukuni Jinja Shrine, Accessed July 25th, 2021,

²⁷ Office of the Historian, "Opening to Japan, 1853." <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1830-1860/opening-to-japan>

²⁸ Chamberlain, *Things Japanese*, Pg. 237-238

troubles at home. A war was then fought against China, who were just as eager to keep Korea in their sphere of control and prevent its Westernization. Japan would handily defeat these two powers and begin enjoying the benefits of colonies; hungry for more, she would thus embark upon the biblical road to perdition. From isolated to worldwide, Japan still attracted fascinated eyes.

Despite this isolation, there existed a fascination with Japan that only grew after Commodore Matthew Perry's expedition to open the nation. This uniqueness and especially the sense of fascination gave rise to a rapidly shifting kaleidoscope of radically different views of the Japanese. Knowledge about Japan prior to the opening of the country by Commodore Perry was heavily subject to the whims of the few travelers allowed into the country. These already inaccurate works were prone to misinterpretations, omission, embellishment, and misconnection of often contextless details.

Japan was, at this time, largely like a fine cask of old wine, aged and sealed from the outside until something unique came, something much sought after but available only in drips. Thus, to read these works is to read what often amount to rumors, unsubstantiated wisps of information floating on the wind from a source far away. Many were true. Many were not. To start, let us examine those that were largely untrue and confused murmurings, the rumors that came out of Japan before she herself allowed the record to be set straight.

Whispers and Echoes: Views of Japan before Opening, 1663-1853

The echoes from Japan would be garbled and muffled and any information coming through was suspect- and those writing at least often knew this. Some even stated this, as will be seen later in one source, publisher Harper and Brothers' *Manners and Customs of the Japanese*, who used this as a selling point for information about the mysterious East. Most of the information was garbled and confused, contradicting material in the same source let alone others. Much of the early and later fascination was with the structure of the society and no one in the society was more fascinating than the Emperor.

The status and position of the Emperor is a common theme in foreign thought of Japan throughout time and place. Dutch writers and missionaries Francis Caron and Joost Schorten noted even in the late 1663 that when the Emperor passed by the people stayed in their shops and houses or knelt and looked upon the ground when in his presence and never looked on from heights onto him or his Imperial Family.²⁹ The Imperial Family could be quite large, presumably making this rather difficult, and Caron and Schorten claim in 1663 that the Emperor's uncle by age 54 had at least as many sons as years of age and an unknown but larger quantity of daughters.³⁰

The famed French Enlightenment Era philosopher Montesquieu lays out his views on duty to a superior, in this case, the Emperor, in this case his 1748 text, *The Spirit of the Laws*, In addition to in addition to his foundational thoughts on democracy in the West. Montesquieu claims that any crime was dealt with harshly in Japan, as they were seen as an affront to the

²⁹ Francis Caron, Joost Schorten, *A True Description of the Mighty Kingdoms of Japan and Siam: Written Originally in Dutch by Francis Caron and Joost Schorten: And Now Rendered into English by Capt. Roger Manley*, Translated by Roger Manley (London, England: Samuel Brown and John de l'Ecluse, 1663). Pg. 20

³⁰ *Ibid*, Pg. 19

Emperor and thus punished largely by death.³¹ In a passage about the “Breach of Modesty in Punishment of Crimes,” Montesquieu says that in Japan, he had heard that women were forced to crawl naked through the market square on all fours after committing certain unnamed crimes. However, previously, he also said that almost all crimes were punished by death, preempting credibility, and highlighting the lack of information and sensationalism that comes with Japan

Montesquieu attempts to explain the reason for despotic laws by relating the climate and presence of temperate zones to the strictness of laws, with more temperate areas leading to more liberal laws. Montesquieu says that Asia, including Japan, has almost no temperate zones, while in Europe the temperate zones are quite large,³² in direct contradiction to an earlier passage that says that Indians are nearly exclusively “...mild, tender, and compassionate.”³³ India is well known for being hot and tropical almost throughout. He posits that these strict laws must do nothing to deter a population, for, in Japan, “are men who have a natural contempt for death and who rip open their bellies for the least fancy... mended or deterred, or rather are they not hardened, by the continual prospect of punishments?”³⁴

Montesquieu also claims that for certain crimes, people can be punished in an assuredly lurid manner by an elephant.³⁵ This is rather strange, as it was in India and Southeast Asia that trained elephants were used to execute people largely by ordering them to step on the convict’s head or kick them about. Japan, however, is conversely a mostly temperate nation, with climates

³¹ Charles de Secondat. Baron de Montesquieu, “Spirit of the Laws,” in *Great Books of the Western World: 38 Montesquieu and Rousseau*, Robert Maynard Hutchins, Editor in Chief (Chicago, IL: William Benton, Publisher, 1984). Pg. 39.

³² *Ibid*, Pg. 123.

³³ *Ibid*, Pg. 108.

³⁴ Charles de Secondat. Baron de Montesquieu, “Spirit of the Laws,” in *Great Books of the Western World: 38 Montesquieu and Rousseau*, Robert Maynard Hutchins, Editor in Chief (Chicago, IL: William Benton, Publisher, 1984). Pg. 40.

³⁵ *Ibid*, Pg. 90.

varying almost as much as they do in the U.S. For example, Okinawa and Southern Japan tend to be warm and tropical, while the extreme Northern parts of Japan close to Siberia are quite cold.

The misidentification of culture, events, people, and nearly anything possible seems to be a common aspect of views of people in contrasting parts of the world, especially of the Orient and Occident. This is partially due to an eternal and ubiquitous fog hampering the sharing of communications and experiences of the two places, but a large part is also sensationalism. Orientalism, or the exoticization of Oriental cultures may also play a part, as in Montesquieu assignment of the infamous and unverifiable magic act known as the Indian rope trick to the Japanese.³⁶

For more example of Orientalism and misunderstandings of a closed land, we turn to William Mackay's 1782 text about the religious ceremonies of the east which gives, among other details, description of a ceremony used to root out Christians known as *Jefumi*. In performing *Jefumi*, citizens of each prefecture were alleged to be rounded up, assembled, and ordered to defile Christian imagery by spitting and trampling on it. Any who refused were usually killed painfully.³⁷

Jefumi would be widely written about by Christians in the West and, according to analysis by Chamberlain, the persecution happened largely due to a widespread antagonism towards and occasionally by Christians in Japan, as has already been spoken about.³⁸ Either way, Christianity was, as described earlier, a victim of its own unfortunate timing and Spanish proto

³⁶ *Ibid*, Pg. 395

³⁷ Printed by William Mackay (Probably written, as well), *A Dictionary of the Religious Ceremonies of the Eastern Nations, With Historical and Critical Observations, Some Account of their Learned Men; and Situations of the Most Remarkable Places in Asia...* (Cont'd),(Calcutta, India: No Publisher, 1787). Pg. 140

³⁸ Chamberlain, *Things Japanese*, Pg. 325.

nationalism, but this would do little to assuage reasonable European aggrievement of their brothers and sisters of the faith.

The Japanese, however, had their own religions and spirituality which had its own scintillating cover of rumors surrounding it. One author, T. Cadell, alleges in 1792 that the Japanese form of spirituality is mainly in the form of “*Sintoo*,” or worship of a supreme being and a system of rewards and punishment.³⁹ Though obviously referring to *Shinto*, the former stated tenet goes against many later accounts and common knowledge of the religion, which state it is polytheistic and animistic.

When Cadell writes that the doctrines of “*Sintoo*” involve inner and outer purity, he writes that the former is not looking upon impure things and the latter is not contaminating oneself with blood, death, consuming meat, etc., offering a similarity to Indian Hinduism. However, much of the Japanese diet’s protein has been traditionally made up of either legumes or fish. Indeed, T. Cadell says that eggs, spirits, and fish are forbidden by the religion of “*Foé*,”⁴⁰ which we must turn to Leonhard Schmitz’ *Nations of the World* for explanation that *Foé* is simply the Chinese word for Buddha.⁴¹ Cadell’s assertions are untrue as the Japanese diet relied heavily on fish for protein and the Japanese are well known for their unique wine made from rice and their old, long-established brands of beer. While not spirits, these are still potent.

Buddhism is often seen as encouraging its followers to exhibit an expansive reverence for all life, as seen in the assertion that Buddhists regard meat as polluting. However, there is a

³⁹ Printed for T. Cadell, *Sketches Chiefly Relating to the History, Religion, Learning, and Manners of the Hindoos, with a Concise Account of the Present State of the Native Powers of Hindustan: The Second Edition, Enlarged, in Two Volumes, Vol. II* (London, England: No, Publisher Listed, 1792). Pg. 163.

⁴⁰ T. Cadell, *Sketches*, Pg. 153.

⁴¹ Dr. Leonhard Schmitz, Ph.D., LL.D., F.R.S.E., *The Nations of the World: An Historical Series in Thirty Volumes; Volume Thirty, Ancient History* (New York, NY: Peter Fenelon Collier, 1898). Pg. 48

somewhat profound clash between this sanctity of life in the European view of the Japanese and, as evidenced by Montesquieu's discussion, in the view of the Japanese as being innately self-destructive. Suicide in Japan itself has a long and rather infamous history, almost as well-known by outsiders as by natives. T. Cadell writes in 1792 that "Suicide appears to be more frequent among the Japanese, than among any ancient or modern nation we are acquainted with..." He, in fact, ascribes it, unhelpfully, to the "...effects of the doctrines of the metempsychosis, which may tend, to an unenlightened mind, to make death appear less terrible."⁴² Metempsychosis was a Pythagorean religious view of reincarnation.

Publishers Harper and Brother released a book in 1841 that gives information regarding seppuku from the cusp of Japan's opening, some mere 12 years later. From an unknown editor, it contains the accounts of Dutch and German writers who had dealt with the Japanese, mostly in the harbors and factories, secluded and guarded foreigner's enclaves within the country. The book is an excellent source of pre-opening conjecture on Japanese culture, social life, and society.⁴³ The book is especially tantalizing given the imminence of accurate information being released, and in some ways, reading it is almost agonizing for this reason. In fact, at times it even states itself the suspect nature of its information with enthusiasm on the mysterious Orient.

One practice that fascinated Westerners even into modern times is the practice of ritualized suicide, known formally as *seppuku*, this appearing in many texts. *Seppuku* had different connotations in Japan: meanings were varied but included being used as a form of apology or atonement, a way to shame or condemn, and a way to demand change. It additionally

⁴² T. Cadell, *Sketches*, Pg. 161

⁴³ Unknown Editor, *Manners and Customs of the Japanese in the Nineteenth Century, from the Accounts of Recent Dutch Residents in Japan, and from the German Work of Dr. Ph. Fr. Von Siebold* (New York, NY: Harper & Brothers, 1841). Pg. 124.

was a means to avoid or prevent disgrace to oneself or to one's family and to prevent any disgrace to oneself spreading, among other meanings. Alice Mabel Bacon relates that it was often used when a samurai disagreed with his feudal lord's decisions and wanted to display this without shaming himself by disobeying orders.⁴⁴

Harper and Brothers also weigh in on the state of the Japanese woman, saying that she is treated like no other woman in the East and is dealt with in a much more similar manner to Western women.⁴⁵ The Japanese woman is educated, even amongst the working class, and the noble-born women are further educated with a curriculum that enables them to run a household, do crafts, and hold an interesting conversation.⁴⁶ However, the writers also say that a woman is kept in profound ignorance of her husband's business affairs,⁴⁷ has no legal rights beyond those related to her husband, cannot demand divorce, and need not receive support after a divorce if she has borne no children.⁴⁸

Despite these notes, the author alleges that the Japanese woman is not treated poorly, which bears some credence. The Japanese woman shares in her counterpart's recreational opportunities.⁴⁹ When divorced, the husband must support his wife in accordance with his means and of the long list of esteemed Japanese artists, scholars, poets, literary writers, historians, and other intellectuals, a fair few are women. Despite her word not being admitted in a court of law, she runs the household and all those working in it, including, in wealthy families, any servants.⁵⁰ Children were expected to obey their parents and sacrifice for them. In a sort of Aesop's Fables,

⁴⁴ Bacon, *Girls and Women*, Pg. 201.

⁴⁵ Harper and Brothers, *Manners and Customs*, Pg. 122.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, Pg. 123.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, Pg. 124.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, Pg. 123.

⁴⁹ Harper and Brothers, *Manners and Customs*, Pg. 122

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, Pg. 123.

there is even a record that Chamberlain relates about a man using his body heat to melt ice over a lake to gather carp as a winter treat for his cruel stepmother.⁵¹

Children were not, however, merely the parent's automata. In their portion on the daily and social life of the Japanese, Harper and Brothers say that raising a child was done quite sensibly by the Japanese. In fact, the authors show as the epitome of this sentiment in a claim that "in nothing do they discover their good sense more than in leaving their infant children free from swathing."⁵²

A Japanese child first acquires a name 30-31 days after their birth, depending respectively on whether they are female or male, respectively. The baby is carried in a ceremonial procession along with treasures, charms, the child's whole wardrobe and a slip of paper bearing three names. These names are presented to a priestess of a temple along with a box of money carried by a maid servant at the rear and the priestess chooses one of these names as being most favorable to the gods. The child is chanted to with sacred songs and taken on a tour of several more temples and his father's family members, who give him symbolic valuables, gifts, and protective fetishes.⁵³

In contrast to the seeming importance and trouble gone through with the first naming, the child again receives a new name at age seven. The child becomes an adult at age 15 and boys shave their head. Both sexes receive a new name. This is by no means their final name, and the Dutch traders allege that Japanese receive new names for many major events in their life and also every time they advance in rank.⁵⁴ No other mention of such short-lived naming was found in

⁵¹ Chamberlain, *Things Japanese*, Pg. 165.

⁵² Harper and Brothers, *Manners and Customs*, Pg. 124.

⁵³ Harper and Brothers, *Manners and Customs*, Pg. 124.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, Pg. 126

relatively more modern sources and Chamberlain, indeed, mentions only a single baby name that is often, though not always, dropped at age 15.⁵⁵

A convoluted and ever shifting morass of names might've been a ploy by the Japanese handlers of the Dutch and German traders to keep them from learning too much about the then very secretive Japanese. It may also have simply been something misattributed or simply made up to make them more mysterious. It would not by any means be the first time such a thing would have happened to the Japanese, let alone other Eastern peoples affected by Orientalism.

Harper and Brothers allege in their 1841 book that a child is taught to pray at age three and that religious ceremony and spirituality accompanies them at every epoch of their life.⁵⁶ Further, children of either sex are given a basic education, which includes reading and writing, while higher born children also learn mathematics, ethics, and etiquette.⁵⁷ In addition, *Manners and Customs of the Japanese* tells that boys of noble birth learn a more sober lesson in addition to mathematics and writing. Boys learned the ins and out of when and how to commit seppuku, whether in public or private, and the ceremonies of it, which the writer is told "... signifies," whatever that means, "the happy despatch." (*Sic*)⁵⁸

This was not just taught formally. Alice Mabel Bacon tells of meeting a girl who had been trapped inside the citadel during the siege of Wakamatsu during what was presumably the Boshin War. Aged eight-years-old, the girl was given the task of carrying cartridges women made in the citadel to the men fighting at the walls and barricades during intense fighting and shelling. The girl was asked by Bacon if she was afraid, to which she replied "No," and flashed a

⁵⁵ Chamberlain, *Things Japanese*, Pg. 346.

⁵⁶ Harper and Brothers, *Manners and Customs*, Pg. 125.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, Pg. 125

⁵⁸ Harper and Brothers, *Manners and Customs*, Pg. 126

small, sharp, and well-made sword. Bacon knew that a small girl could not defend herself, and when she pressed the girl on this, the girl said it was to commit suicide to prevent capture.⁵⁹

Suicide was also, allegedly, a family matter in more ways than one. In Japan, a man may at times kill themselves in the presence of their family and in their own home, especially when by his death his family would be spared some pain or penalty. It is also said, somewhat more incredulously, that for certain offences, suicides are carried out at a temple, along with “splendid entertainment given to relatives and friends, and in which the officiating priests of the temple participate.”⁶⁰ The suggestion that suicides are carried out with as a semi-catered family event does somewhat stretch credulity.

Europeans would be utterly fascinated and display a hunger for information and accounts of *seppuku*, with it being a common theme in writings on Japan from all periods. In fact, Europeans seem to be consumed with a salacious thirst for lurid details on the practice. This would be seen in sources from Montesquieu, and it would continue into the Gilded Age and Japan’s opening to the Second World War and even modern times. The demand would, however, be met with generally more reliable information than Harper and Brother’s previously related catered suicide family nights.

A Yankee in the Emperor’s Land: Japan’s Modernization, 1854-1930

All this sort of bastardized and mutated hearsay is quite common for texts written before Commodore Perry’s opening of Japan in 1854, as has been demonstrated throughout. Much of the fog of misinformation that had existed previously was dispelled slowly in the Gilded Age.

⁵⁹ Bacon, *Girls and Women*, Pg. 209.

⁶⁰ Harper and Brothers, *Manners and Customs*, Pg. 137.

During this time, many middle-class and wealthy men and women would journey across the sea and across continents to travel in foreign lands, sampling the food, dress, art, and culture and many marveled at the unique and exotic mix of the modern and the medieval.

The more scholarly travelers would call these travelers “globetrotters” to mean amateur at best and, at worst, shallow. Far from being stopped, the globetrotters soon came to mock the more pretentious travelers. The moniker would spread to all members and be adopted by the community at large after the wealthy traveler Egerton Laird published a book ironically describing himself that way.⁶¹

The massive influx of travelers, professors, professionals, and other temporary or extended transplants brought new information and translations of existing work and cleared away much of the extant sensationalism, misinformation, and rumors regarding the nation. The new writers gave rich, fascinating, and engaging accounts that still entertain today, though the attitudes of the time occasionally shine through. The attitudes of the time were often praising, as writing often mentioned an obviously respected sense of refinement and depth to the Japanese, self-evident to almost any observer and as intoxicating. Chamberlain calls them a placid people, especially in speech, elaborating that: “The gesticulations of a Southern European fill them with amazement, not to say contempt, and fidgeting of any kind is foreign to their nature.”⁶²

The depth of Japanese culture seemed to not only be bottomless but also covered in a fog that made every aspect of culture enigmatic, regardless of whether any allusion could be made to the West. For example, Chamberlain wrote of the love of tea in 1905, something that seemed to run throughout the nation’s history. He says that amongst the lords, a party game was played

⁶¹ Amy Miller, *The Globetrotter: Victorian Excursions in India, China, and Japan* (London, England: The British Library, 2019). Pg. 12

⁶² Chamberlain, *Things Japanese*, Pg. 251.

with its drinking in which these lords were shown a collection of valuable gifts and party favors that they could claim if they were able to tell where the materials for the drink came from. These were delivered to their arms from the walls by dancing girls in a procession.⁶³

The party game could simply be seen as an exoticized version of what many Westerners could imagine the especially dedicated wine aficionados with more extensive resources trying. Even its differences, the giving of expensive gifts along with the expensive materials, has much basis in more decadent upper class Western parties. Stoddard agrees with the idea that Japanese culture was laden with meaning, but again fails to look at it from the Japanese view. He often fails to endeavor to find Western parallels, though he largely does not sink to Orientalism and keeps an admirably open mind and respectful sense of humor, rare in his field and times.

Two examples come to mind. For the first, Stoddard gives a tradition the Japanese had concerning prayer. When a Japanese man or woman prayed at the temples of certain gods, there was a handy way of seeing almost immediately whether the prayer would be answered. The mendicant would write their plea on a slip of paper provided by the shrine and chew this until it becomes a wad. They then threw this at the statue of the god they were praying to. If it stuck to any part of the body but its head, it had a chance of coming true. If it immediately fell off, there was no hope, but if it stayed fast and to the face, the prayer was almost certain to be granted.⁶⁴

Stoddard, to his credit, doesn't scoff much and seems bemusedly interested. Despite this, he fails to recognize that the Japanese receive an almost instantaneous prediction of their prayer's chances and gives an ability to the Japanese to get on with their day, a factor he might

⁶³ *Ibid*, Pg. 455.

⁶⁴ Stoddard, *Lectures*, Section 1, Pg. 102.

favor over any bits of left-over paper. Many anxious and desperate supplicants of nearly any faith might even be more willing to put up with some unsightly paper ripples for a fast response by oddly informal gods. He also fails to look at this in relation to Western methods of divination, like that of opening the bible to a random page, despite the bible forbidding fortune telling.

In addition to the paper-scarred statues, Stoddard makes mention of another oddity involved in the process of raising the iconic *torii* gates and gracefully terraced, sloped wooden mountain roofs of Japanese temples. He has an interesting and open-minded view of the process that shows some of his bearing and relatively enlightened mindset. Stoddard alleges that Japanese women take as much, if not more, pleasure in their appearance as western women do. However, if a woman is too poor to donate to the building, maintenance, or expansion of their local temple and was forbidden by her sex from lending physical labor, she had the option of donating her prized hair.

These locks would be spliced with hempen cords and twisted into massive cables, which seemed as thick as a man's arm from included photos, to raise the pieces of the temple.⁶⁵ Indeed, Stoddard writes that he truly respects the spirit of Buddhism present in the women of Japan and their lengthy sacrifice. He remarks that, in light of the average Japanese woman's love for her hair, it seemed "the most touching proof of popular devotion to a sacred cause that we had ever seen."⁶⁶

Both the spit balls and hair ropes present at Japanese temples related by Stoddard, though somewhat uncleanly to European sensibilities, give some explanation for the cognitive dissonance felt by many Westerners regarding the Japanese. Upon interpretation, one might feel

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, Pg. 191.

⁶⁶ Stoddard, *Lectures*, Pg. 192.

that both practices have very populist tinges to them. When one thinks of the Japanese justification for being racially superior, that they are directly related to their sun goddess, both practices smack of the commonality of the Japanese man and woman with their gods and add to the confusion regarding where the Japanese stand. It could be extrapolated, ironically as said by the anti-Japanese film *Know Your Enemy: Japan* says, that the Japanese are united by their divinity and the “liquid sunshine” that flows through their veins.⁶⁷

Worrying to the Japanese themselves, the race-fascinated Europeans of the Gilded Age seemed to be as interested in the liquid sunshine of the Japanese as with their land and culture. The Japanese found their race and racial characteristic being documented and examined, and racial scientists attempted to determine the ethnic history of the country. Even Chamberlain engages in this, though to a lesser degree.⁶⁸

Chamberlain, however, does his racial ascription in a much more respectful manner. He even goes further than his high praise and defense in his previously told sentiments on “yellow peril” being the risk that Japan will supersede the West in all the Values that the West holds as honorable and humane. Chamberlain says, “the Japanese of the old regime were no mere barbarians, but a community as highly cultured as it was intelligent,”⁶⁹ In a premonition of the future and Japan’s later “honorary Aryan” status, a fair few contemporary writers even alleged that the Japanese were descended from the seemingly ubiquitous Aryans as the native Ainu display many characteristics of the remnants of this people.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Capra, Ivens, *Know Your Enemy: Japan*

⁶⁸ Chamberlain, *Things Japanese*, Pg. 250

⁶⁹ Chamberlain, *Things Japanese*, Pg. 239.

⁷⁰ A.H. Keane, F.R.G.S, *Ethnology in Two Parts, I. Fundamental Ethnical Problems. II. The Primary Ethnical Groups* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1896). Pg. 308.

Somewhat surprisingly, it is very difficult to find negative accounts amongst those who had actually visited the nation and its people. Positive attitudes seemed quite common to the globetrotters, much to their collective credit, with relativity of course. The globetrotters were often much less generous towards nearby cultures they felt to be less impressive, especially China and India. The views on China show some degree of disregard for the nation's role in helping to formulate early Japanese culture, ironic as Stoddard, Chamberlain, and many others inform their readers of such history and influence.

In his third volume of essays written on Japan and China, Stoddard said the Chinese had not only fallen behind, but bitterly compares the two as if he wishes he had stayed in Japan. He further had little good to say about China and the Chinese, exemplifying the loss of respect many Western countries had in what they had regarded as a venerable and ancient nation. Now, in contrast, China seemed dead and backward. In the eyes of the world, Japan had risen like a star and China had fallen like a brick, burying itself on impact.⁷¹

A potent example comes when we remember that contemporaneously, railroads were the symbol of the future made manifest. Stoddard says there are almost no rails in China and that when a small party that favored their building as in Japan paid for some they were soon thwarted. In fact, these rails had been "Speedily... bought up at great cost, transported the rails and locomotives to the sea, and left them to rust upon the beach." Stoddard gives as the reason the coolies who would lose their jobs and the Chinese covering the land with graves, the residents of whom he lamented that the locals believed would be disturbed by the noisy trains passage.⁷²

⁷¹ Stoddard, *Lectures*, Pg. 116

⁷² Stoddard, *Lectures: China and Japan*, Pg. 254

Stoddard quotes a July 5th, 1870, editorial written by a Chinese man in the Peking Official Gazette, in which the man called for the Chinese Emperor to notice a young woman's filial devotion. In the unverifiable and actually untraceable article, Stoddard tells that one of the most powerful type of medicine in treating some diseases is a parent's child's fingers, which the young woman had chopped off two digits to mix into their medicine.⁷³ There are a fair few sources confirming this. One, Marian Roalfe Cox', in a text on folklore around the world entitled *Cinderella: Three Hundred and Forty-Five Variants on Cinderella, Catskin, and Cap O' Rushes*, says that children were often encouraged to dismember and mutilate themselves for their parent's health.⁷⁴ The story is likely an urban legend, but it is concerningly widespread.

Stoddard says that the Japanese, while being idolatrous and therefore not possessing much godliness, are the next best thing- incredibly clean- and states he would rather spend time with a "...nice wholesome sinner than with an uncleanly saint."⁷⁵ The Chinese women's fingers are one of the things that make his skin crawl as they are tipped with "claw-like fingernails" so long that they must be covered in "metal sheathes."⁷⁶

Stoddard's feelings bear a bit of analysis and contrasting between the two nations. One could argue that Stoddard is granting more leeway to the more modernized and Westernized Japanese. Stoddard did, however, comment on the also cosmetic and potentially more painful modification that Japanese wives made by shaving and pulling out their eyebrows and eyelashes, as well as staining their teeth black.⁷⁷ He calls this a "sad disfigurement," and expresses relief

⁷³ *Ibid*, Pg. 305.

⁷⁴ Marian Roalfe Cox, *Cinderella: Three Hundred and Forty-Five Variants of Cinderella, Catskin, and Cap O' Rushes, Abstracted and Tabulated, with a Discussion of MediÆval Analogues, and Notes* (London, England: Published for the Folklore Society by David Nutt, 1893). Pg. 524

⁷⁵ Stoddard, *Lectures*, Pg. 184.

⁷⁶ Stoddard, *Lectures: China and Japan*. Pg. 302

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, Pg. 163.

that it was going away. Indeed, Stoddard would place that as the main thrust of his argument: that the culture of Japan was changing.

China for their self-titled Century of Humiliation seemed to be unwilling and unable to make any changes that would make their nation and people stronger. China seemed to refuse to put an end to their nation's being bullied by the national community while Japan was actively making rapid changes from both the top and bottom.

However, this is ignoring three key defenses of China that may have been hard to see for an outsider and tourist. China had vast tracts of highly isolating land that split large parts into many small, remote villages. Secondly, China had an impotent Imperial line and government that the world and the Chinese public saw with contempt as weak and incompetent, and who couldn't pass much meaningful change. Finally, China didn't receive as much or as enthusiastic military, technological, educational, and other forms of investment as Japan did from the powerful British Navy, German and French armies, and American industrialists.

For all the Japanese and Westerner's enthusiasm towards Westernization, both writers noted that visitors and foreigners both lamented the loss of many of the old ways. Chamberlain gives his observations on one page as to why it could not be, why the old ways couldn't stay despite their beauty. On the very next page, he reasons, "History has never witnessed a more sudden volk-face. History has never witnessed a wiser one." He goes on to lay this destruction squarely at the feet of the West in a way that is incredibly cognizant and wise for an outsider, especially one with the biases of the day, and his lament bears quoting, though it may be lengthy.

"We foreigners, being mere lookers-on, may no doubt sometimes regret the substitution of commonplace European ways for the glitter, the glamour of picturesque Orientalism. But can it be doubtful which of the two civilizations is the higher, both materially and intellectually? And does not the whole experience of the last three hundred years go to prove that no Oriental state which retains distinctively Oriental institutions can hope to keep its territory

*free from Western aggression.? What of India.? What even of China? And what was Commodore Perry's visit but a threat to the effect that if Japan chose to remain Oriental, she should not be allowed to remain her own mistress? ”*⁷⁸

Reluctance for the Japanese to change too much was widely held and many Westerners and globetrotters especially wished for Japan to become not just another Western nation, albeit in a different location. One of the most aggrieved changes was in Japanese women, who would become a fascination to European travelers, both men and women. Chamberlain says that Japanese women are better looking than the men, with “pretty manners and charming voices...”⁷⁹ Similarly, Chamberlain opines that “their children in particular engender a great deal of affection [from] European visitors for their good manners and ‘old fashioned appearance.’”⁸⁰

Chamberlain, one of the top writers on Japan of his day, helpfully relays a book by a Miss Alice Mabell Bacon, *Japanese Girls and Women*. Miss Bacon was an esteemed woman’s educator in Japan and America, writer, and, through her early interaction and friendship with Japanese children, a respected advisor to Japan on girls and women. She relates that when foreign women from Europe live for a longer period in Japan, they often “see to their own surprise, that their countrywomen look ungainly, fierce, aggressive, awkward among the small, mild, shrinking, and graceful Japanese ladies.”⁸¹ She further laments the role missionary schools play in making their Japanese girls less “Oriental” and taking away their charm by instilling a mongrelized mix of European and Japanese values and making these girls, normally from noble families, “seem brusque and awkward.”⁸²

⁷⁸ Chamberlain, *Things Japanese*, Pg. 237.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, Pg. 251.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, Pg. 251.

⁸¹ Alice Mabel Bacon, *Japanese Girls and Women* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1902). Pg. 59-60.

⁸² *Ibid*, Pg. 56.

If Stoddard held the Chinese to a higher standard, it was not higher than that which the Japanese held themselves. Chamberlain tells an illustrative story of a speech at a party in which “Prince Edwin lauded Japan to the skies- and lauded it justly- as the nearest approach to paradise or to lotus-land.” He continued that “so fairy-like... is its scenery, so exquisite its art, so much more lovely still... that politeness humble without servility and elaborate without affectation that place Japan above all other countries in nearly all the things that makes life worth living.” Chamberlain asks his readers whether they thought the Japanese “were satisfied with this meed (*sic*) of praise?”⁸³ He reveals that they were not, with tones of both admiration and irritation.

The next morning, an article came out in the chief paper present at the party, asking “Why did not Sir Edwin praise us for huge industrial enterprises, for commercial talent, for wealth, political sagacity, powerful armaments...” before answering “He has gauged us at our true value, and told us in effect that we are only pretty weaklings.”⁸⁴

The man responsible for much of these changes and for strengthening the Japanese nation was, of course, the Emperor, whose treatment was seen as peculiar in European eyes. The Japanese conceptualizing of the Emperor was similar to the Chinese, but also to the Romans, as the Emperor was a god and one was bound to his orders, ideally killing oneself at his merely implied displeasure. However, to the Japanese, the Emperor was the holiest man of earth, not merely a god, but the highest and most supreme son of god, the direct ancestor of the highest god, the Sun Goddess, Amaterasu Omikami.

⁸³ Chamberlain, *Things Japanese*, Pg. 3.

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, Pg. 3.

To kill him, seemingly unlike the Roman and the Chinese conceptualization, was near unthinkable, especially in the Meiji period. While they both saw their emperors as divine, assassination was still not infrequent, and was even seen as patriotic in certain cases by Romans. In Japan, however, all power belonged to the God Emperor and any who ruled did so with his sufferance. Foreign reports abounded that the Emperor cannot be looked upon without going blind, as he shone like the sun whose liquid light ran through his veins.

Additionally, his tailor could not touch him, lest he burn his hands and pollute that which gives life. Teachers would often rush into burning schools to save his portrait,⁸⁵ a practice expanded on in other documents. Jesse F. Steiner further says that schools and universities were later required by law to have either a fireproof safe or special building for these portraits for this very reason. The portraits not only depicted the Emperor but were given by him as a gift to those he expected to help him modernize the nation and the portraits were honored during celebrations and national holidays.⁸⁶

The Emperor received many special privileges. Certain bridges were only to be used by him. John L. Stoddard was a very popular Chicagoan globetrotter of the turn of the century, writing a series of 14 books, each almost always containing accounts of his travels through two or three countries. According to Stoddard, there stands a bridge at Nikko,⁸⁷ a beautiful area of mountains and streams with a series of summer resort towns, temperate weather, but frequent rain,⁸⁸ known as the Sacred Bridge.

⁸⁵ Capra, Ives, *Know Your Enemy: Japan*

⁸⁶ Jesse F. Steiner, *Behind the Japanese Mask* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1943). Pg. 17

⁸⁷ Stoddard, *Lectures*, Section 1, Pg. 93.

⁸⁸ Chamberlain, Murray, *Handbook for Travelers*, Pg. 191-192.

According to Stoddard. The famous bridge was made of red lacquered wood made “smooth to the touch as polished mahogany and bound by brass” and was only to be used by the Emperor. When General Grant visited, the Emperor ordered the bridge opened to him, but Grant, showing magnanimity and care to the local culture, declined the offer and took the common path.⁸⁹ Chamberlain and Murray say that the “Sacred Red Bridge,” originally meant for the shogun, was also opened to pilgrims twice every year.⁹⁰

The allowance of pilgrims onto a bridge is rather important despite any dullness first apparent. For example, the Japanese are seen as being contradictorily both rather lenient on religious matters and as very strict with their religious teachings. Contrast is seen in both the Westerner’s recognition that Shinto as being traditionally somewhat nebulous and as noted in Europe by *Jefumi*, respectively. When one remembers that to the Japanese, the Emperor is a literal god, the direct human and mortal descendent of the highest god, Amaterasu, the Goddess of the Sun, it paints an interesting picture. Despite the fact that on two days, anyone, not just the Emperor, can achieve a temporary apotheosis and receive their endowments as fellow children of the sun, any nuance appears to go unnoticed to its contemporary viewers.

Apart from a bridge, the Emperor and the Imperial Family also owned property at the town of Akami, a popular mountain summer resort located 2,400 ft above sea level and sitting alongside the waters and geysers of Hakone Lake.⁹¹ The Emperor’s house here had historically been empty, especially of him, though the fourteen-year-old crown prince had stayed there at the

⁸⁹ John L. Stoddard, *John L. Stoddard’s Lectures: Illustrated with Views of the World’s Famous Places, Being the Identical Discourse Delivered during the Past Eighteen Years Under the Title of the Stoddard Lectures, Complete in Ten Volumes, Volume IV, (India and Passion Play)* (Boston, Mass.: Balch Brothers Co. , 1898) Section 1, Pg. 93

⁹⁰ Chamberlain and Murray, *Handbook for Travelers*, Pg. 194.

⁹¹ Stoddard, *Lectures*, Section 2, Pg. 35-36.

time of Chamberlain's visit.⁹² Chamberlain also writes that unlike most houses of royalty around the world, the homes and properties of the Imperial Family remain "closed inexorably," with none allowed to even enter their grounds.⁹³

The respect paid to the Emperor did not always extend to the other members of the Imperial court. Other than many attempted and successful assassinations of Japanese Imperial princes, officials, and courtiers, pranks were played on the Emperor's servants. Around the town of Akami, there is a road called Reiheishi Kaido, used by a minister to carry gifts to a shrine to Ieyasu Tokugawa. Many portions of this road have gone missing over time, as mischievous peasants take and dispose of, hide stones, or scavenge stones for their own buildings, as has been done throughout history.⁹⁴

Locals also enjoyed toying with the visitors and sightseers, as locals do the world over. One globetrotter, H. Allen Tupper, Jr. describes a humorous situation in which he asked a question even he realized was somewhat inane regarding why everyone in Nagasaki seemed to wear glasses. A local drily explained how widespread glasses were, saying, "Oh, yes; we put green glasses on goats and feed them with [wood] shavings. They think that they are eating grass."⁹⁵ It is unknown whether Tupper received a straight answer. Indeed, mischief was widespread amongst the Japanese at many levels at some point. It may be seen later in officers from poorer families later in the 30s, despite the desirability of its eradication. A strict regimen of training would help to eradicate any funny business, but it would also change its men.

⁹² *Ibid*, Pg. 148.

⁹³ *Ibid*, Pg. 37.

⁹⁴ Murray, Chamberlain, *Handbook for Travelers*, Pg. 192

⁹⁵ H. Allen Tupper, Jr., D.D., *Around the World with Eyes Wide Open: The Wonders of the World Pictured by Pen and Pencil* (Bible House, New York: The Christian Herald, 1898). Pg. 86.

Training for the Imperial Japanese Army was brutal and life in the Imperial Japanese Army was a life of timeliness, schedules, travel, and modern appliances the farm boys were certainly unused to. Some soldiers were so homespun that they were noted as being seen by officers blowing on electric lamps at night as if they were candles.⁹⁶ Despite the wonder that would have greeted the farm boys, the Army had little time for it, even in the wonder years of childhood in which much of training started as a mandatory addition to schooling. Training began for most boys from age 12 with riflery and practice with light field guns and it and service were often obligatory.⁹⁷

Once they joined or were drafted, the Japanese recruits were often brutalized over the course of their training and military career, both to instill discipline and to harden them. Japanese soldiers were also often beaten extensively for even minor wrongdoings, in some cases adding up to 200 blows a day.⁹⁸ Some observers noticed this treatment and the change it was effecting on the young men early on, such as an American language officer. Lieutenant Colonel Warren J. Clear was a fascinating man who advised and trained the Imperial Japanese Army in the 1920s, Clear was attached in Manila in 1942 to General MacArthur's staff to be evacuated by submarine before the fall of the Philippines.

During the Meiji Restoration, Japan invited officers from many of the world's best militaries as well as their educators, scientists, and technicians, including Clear. However, Japanese training of their men remained quite different and much stricter than their Western mentor nations. Lt. Colonel Clear speaks about such a time as a liaison with the Japanese Army.

⁹⁶ Lt. Col. Warren J. Clear, "*Close-up of the Jap Fighting Man*," Lecture, Command and General Staff School, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, October 1942. Pg. 15.

⁹⁷ *Ibid*, Pg. 34-35.

⁹⁸ Maj. C. Patrick Howard, *Behind the Myth of the Jungle Superman: A Tactical Examination of the Japanese Army's Centrifugal Offensive, 7 December 1941 to 20 May 1942* (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 2000. Pg. 37

While with one regiment, Clear observed their training, part of which consisted of long marches through the countryside and especially through villages and historical sites to inspire the young conscripts. After visiting one village and being treated to expensive foods like cake, ice water, and watermelon, the recruits marched on.

A time later, a dog from a nearby house began chasing the column of marching soldiers, barking and biting at the commanding officer's heels. Annoyed, he drew his sword and chopped the legs off the dog and sent it sprawling to the ground, much to the amusement of his men. Clear felt a deep sense of pity for both the dog and the young conscripts, many of whom were still boys and who he felt were being turned into what were potentially monsters by the harsh discipline and what was potentially a regimen of over-hardening the young men in the military.⁹⁹

Whatever the abuse and whatever the effect down the line, being a soldier was viewed as an honor, as it was a connection to the deified samurai knights of Japanese history. It was additionally an emancipation from those same, often cruel warriors. Previous to the Meiji restoration, only samurai and their levies had been permitted to bear arms in the military.¹⁰⁰ The fact that the inability of the samurai to raise enough men to compete with modern riflery tactics and a peasant army was a factor in why samurai lost the Boshin War. Glorification of those who were the primary opposition of the new regime contributes an anachronistic aspect to the nationalistic fervor the opportunity was met with.

The new muscle of the Japanese military was put on full display in the Russo-Japanese War, in which Russia would be thoroughly whipped. During the war and especially after, the Russians' string of bad defeats created quite a mix of unrest, joy, and trepidation worldwide. For Japan it must have been exhilarating- an Asian power was going up against a Western one and

⁹⁹ Clear, *Close-up*, Pg. 23.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid*, Pg. 57.

was winning- and handily at that. That the Western power was Russia did not necessarily matter- only that a Western power would soon lose. The November 19th, 1904, edition of the South San Francisco newspaper, *The Enterprise*, ran a small article showing the depth of the unrest.

Soberly titled “Gambling in Human Lives: The Weird Sport is Carried on in London,” the article opens with the statement that there had been a spate of gambling in London on almost anything, including the lives of famous figures. The only large company willing to get its hands dirty was Lloyd’s, who placed a massive rate on the king of England, the lowest in Europe, with the Russian Czar priced highest. As the price was prohibitively high, the Russian Czar is noted as being a bad bet. The life of the Russian royal heir, printed here as Alexis and born three months earlier that very year in August, however, was especially popular.¹⁰¹

Other gambling topics relate heavily to the still ongoing war, with two being the fate of a Russian battleship entering combat against the Japanese (Not very good odds for the Russian ship in hindsight due to the previous navies’ destruction) and whether a Japanese spy would be caught entering Port Arthur.¹⁰² The Battle of Port Arthur would end inconclusively in May of 1904, with the Russo-Japanese War ending in late 1905. Along with the Japanese Admiral Togo’s strategic emphasis on finding a decisive engagement that would carry on to the Pacific, the battle fueled further speculation on the city.¹⁰³

In the coming Pacific War, that desire would see the Japanese Navy invest massive amounts of its total naval strength in each battle and refuse to disengage. Any hesitation and lack of initiative would later enable the technologically superior Americans to destroy large parts of

¹⁰¹ No Author, “Gambling in Human Lives: The Weird Sport is Carried on in London” *The Enterprise*, November 19th, 1904, South San Francisco, San Mateo County, California, Pg. 3 (Unmarked).

¹⁰² *Ibid*, Pg. 3 (Unmarked).

¹⁰³ John Toland, *The Rising Sun: The Decline and Fall of the Imperial Japanese Empire, 1936-1945, Volume II*, (New York, NY: Random House, Inc., 1970). Pg. 601.

fleets at once and retire to another devastating battle.¹⁰⁴ The Japanese, especially those in the military, were often seen as being hidebound and unable to improvise, as will be covered later.

If relations with Russia were strained, relations with the U.S. were near the exact opposite, especially with the peace terms between the two combatants having been negotiated by Theodore Roosevelt, who had been specifically sought by the Japanese for the honor. The settlement brought Japan large amounts of valuable land, something they were quite grateful for. George H. Blakeslee, writing in 1912, states that relations between the U.S. and Japan were quite excellent. The Japanese, he says, were quite fond of saying “The Pacific Ocean unites our nations. It does not separate.”¹⁰⁵

When Blakeslee inevitably writes on the possibility of racial violence and hatred in the U.S., he gives the example of the Japanese presence in Hawaii. Here, he says, “The conditions of mutual help and tolerance in Hawaii shows that men of a dozen races can get along together if they try to do so. The problem of the South is the problem of slavery... It is the problem of [even] the half-white man given political equality when social equality is as far away as ever.”¹⁰⁶ While Blakeslee does say that there had been a deal of rabble rousing against Japanese immigrants, especially at a working-class level, he opines that it was primarily on an economic basis.¹⁰⁷ In fact, the Japanese government was noted by Blakeslee as having seen economically based prejudice coming and had previously moved to restrict the number of poor and unskilled immigrants moving to the U.S. on the Japanese’ own accord.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴ John Toland, *The Rising Sun: The Decline and Fall of the Imperial Japanese Empire, 1936-1945, Volume 1* (New York, NY: Random House, Inc., 1970). Pg. 150-151

¹⁰⁵ George H. Blakeslee, *Japan and Japanese American Relations: Clark University Addresses*, (New York, NY: G.E. Stechert and Company, 1912). Pg. 9.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*, Pg. 5-6.

¹⁰⁷ Blakeslee, *Japanese American Relations*, Pg. 3.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid*, Pg. 2.

Prejudice in all quarters rose in the hard times of the 1930s and Japan's actions didn't do anything to attenuate the hostility. Brutality and cruelty became most visible during the Second Sino-Japanese War and the Pacific War, having largely gone dormant during the Russo-Japanese War and the Great War. Chamberlain, one of the most esteemed scholars regarding Japan of his day and after, and one who lived, worked, and studied amongst the Japanese had nothing but praise for their humanity in war.¹⁰⁹ That humanity would largely be replaced by rage and cruelty and one of the first and largest displays of this is to be seen in the Second-Sino Japanese War.

The Crack in the Dam: Japan in the Sino-Japanese War and the Beginnings of the Pacific War, 1931-1940

Though the Second Sino-Japanese War would officially start in July of 1937 and continue until Japan's defeat largely by the U.S. and Australia in 1945, Japan had acted violently in isolated cases as early as 1931. Japan had meddled far earlier in the area, but China had perhaps wisely not declared war until 1937. To understand Japan's escalation of the Sino-Japanese War into a world war, one must understand the tarpit that the war was and how it started.

After the Russo-Japanese War and the Treaty of Portsmouth, Russian influence over Inner and Outer Manchuria was replaced by the Japanese, with the Japanese moving into Outer Manchuria in the confusion of the Russian Revolution, starting in 1917 and ending in June 1923. The Japanese would leave the area in 1925 due to American economic pressures and a

¹⁰⁹ Chamberlain, *Things Japanese*, Pg. 242.

strengthening Soviet Union which had in the same year finally consolidated enough from the Russian Revolution for its opinion to matter. Japan did retain rights to the extant Russian rail-lines and to construction of new rail in Southern Manchuria, which placed a firm Japanese influence over the area which was then occupied by Japan's seasoned Kwantung Army.

After an abortive and unsanctioned assassination of the Japanese backed Manchurian warlord, Zhang Zuolin, by overzealous Japanese junior officers in 1928 by blowing up the train he was riding on, the warlord's son, Zhang Xueliang, unexpectedly took over smoothly. The young, extremist officers' plan to easily conquer the area was ruined and Manchurian relations soured. Junior officers' disobeying orders and acting "on initiative" would be a common occurrence in China and would eventually lead to a series of events that would escalate into an actual war.

Japan fully invaded the region of Manchuria in Northern China in 1931, smashed aside weak Chinese resistance and established the Empire of Manchukuo in 1932, placing the weak, decadent puppet Puyi as Emperor. The Sino-Japanese War would not start in proper yet, however, as China was, perhaps wisely, unwilling to declare war for a territory that they hadn't really even been in control of to begin with. A good-sized volunteer army was organized but was utterly crushed in 1933, survivors being absorbed into the Chinese Communist Party's forces. Japan would further consolidate in 1935, buying out Russian rail companies. They soon had a stranglehold over the area. The Japanese would rapidly strengthen their hold, fighting a counterinsurgency war until eventual pacification at the pinnacle of the Empire of Japan, 1942.

Japan defended their attacks with claims of self-defense and that things were becoming better in Manchukuo due directly to their involvement and control. It pays to look at the claims briefly. The Japanese ran an ad in the Victoria Daily Times in 1933 to show the better housing

being built in Manchukuo. The ad depicts a row of men dressed in a combination of Western business suits and Eastern robes cropped to stand in front of large, modern, concrete and tile houses.¹¹⁰

The ad itself presents a duality: old and new. The Chinese men may be depicted dressed in a mixture of traditional robes and modern Western business suits to show the Western audience valuing Western ideals that, despite improvement, there was still work to be done. It may also show that the flavor of the land and its people would not be lost, as the Western globetrotter and their readers had lamented might become of the Japanese before.

America and Japan in Amity and Trade is another such repository. The book itself was a trade and industry text sold at a business convention and probably printed cooperatively by the Japanese and American governments to assuage any concerns over the two nation's fraying relations. Two articles are useful here, "Travel Tales of Manchukuo" and "Soya Beans in Manchuria," respectively authored by Tohmasu Dan and an unlisted author, who may possibly be Dan. The publication is, in fact, written by many authors, including important officials like the U.S. Secretary of Commerce, Daniel C. Roper with an unknown editor.

Much space was given to both public relations improvement and soliciting foreign investment in the articles, often mixing the two to tell foreign money that their investment would be both profitable and ethically good. One article tells of improvements made to the region, including the opening of a one-day air express route between Hsinking and Tokyo and a railway station in Dairen. The Dairen station is the lynchpin to a series of boasts about the improvement of Manchukuo's undeveloped interior. The author professes that the previous station was too small for the new amount of traffic and unbecoming of the new wharf and the new trains running

¹¹⁰ Unknown Author, probably Japanese Government, "Manchoukuo (*Sic.*) Builds on Modern Lines," *Victoria Daily Times* Thursday July 6th, 1933, Victoria, British Columbia. Pg. 11

on it.¹¹¹ Also described is a desperately needed new shale oil plant and continued coal output in Mukden.¹¹² Manchukuo was growing, and Japan sought investment, placed alongside advertisements for cigarettes, ocean liners, and air travel to Japan and their new land.

It is said that Manchukuo was extremely profitable, with ¥441,000,000 being shipped out of Dairen's port alone in 1936 out of ¥598,000,000 total shipped from, presumably, Manchukuo, although the latter is merely implied.¹¹³ A little digging must be done to find the value of this money and its context at the time. The source most helpful in this is incidentally a seeming throwaway bit in *A Soldier's Guide to the Japanese Army*. Though a newer source by 6 years, a segment on the prices of goods in Imperial Army canteens is extremely valuable. One hundred Japanese Sen makes one Yen which equals out to 25¢ of contemporary American money. The average private stationed in China made ¥8 and a pack of cigarettes cost upwards of five Sen.¹¹⁴ i

Thus, the conquest and colonization of Manchukuo was quite popular in Japan for a number of diverse reasons, not least of which were the mineral and oil wealth, arable land, timber, and more held there for the taking by resource-starved Japan. Traveler and journalist Willard Price assembled a selection of opinions by various, mostly Japanese voices in his book *Where are You Going, Japan?* The foremost reasons amongst Japanese citizens were the natural resources it held, resources very often lacked by tiny and mountainous Japan and gained from

¹¹¹ Tohmasu Dan, "Travel Tales of Manchukuo," *America and Japan in Amity and Trade*, Unknown Editor, ((Presum.) Osaka: Osaka Mainichi, 1938). Pg. 140.

¹¹² *Ibid*, Pg. 141.

¹¹³ *Ibid*, Pg. 140.

¹¹⁴ Military Intelligence Service, *A Soldier's Guide to the Japanese Army* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. War Department, 1944). Pg. 16.

unusual sources, like sorghum¹¹⁵, and the blood that had already been spilled to obtain the territory.¹¹⁶

The lack of land and resources bit especially hard into the Japanese, as many nations had taken only a quota of Japanese citizens as immigrants and had put tariffs and more quotas on cheap Japanese goods, including the U.S. The action being taken by the U.S. felt personal, as Japan by and large felt positive feelings toward the Americans. Theodore Roosevelt's mediation of the end of the Russo-Japanese War and Japan's successful solicitation of American investment, education, and expertise were fresh in the Japanese mind.

Both lack of land and resources and the quotas and tariffs were felt hard by the Matchida family, who had lost a son in the War to take Manchuria and had only two acres to their name to farm. Rising from bed early to pray over his son's sword at his family's shrine, Matchida wryly noted to Price that "Matchida," their family name, meant "Son of two acres," though their name had originally been *Chimachida*. They had changed it after hearing too many jokes- *Chimachida* meant "Son of thousands of acres."¹¹⁷ Many of the others interviewed felt much the same way. Poverty was a widely known facet of contemporary Japanese life. As mentioned, the Japanese peasants, factory and mill workers, soldiers, and other lowly Japanese citizens were widely viewed as having one of the lowest standards of living in any modern, industrialized nation, making production cheap.¹¹⁸

Japan's cheap production costs gave it a contemporary reputation similar to that of China today, in terms of intellectual property piracy, hostile trading, ill-made and cheap goods, and

¹¹⁵ Willard Price, *Where are You Going, Japan?* (London, England: William Heinemann, 1938). Pg. 127-128

¹¹⁶ *Ibid*, Pg. 5-7

¹¹⁷ *Ibid*, Pg. 5

¹¹⁸ Capra, Ivens, *Know Your Enemy: Japan*.

damage to local economies.¹¹⁹ This was enough of an issue to require downplay. Japan printed a deluge of material promoting itself around the world in the 30s. Other than the promotion of the Japanese-led increasing of the living standard in Manchukuo previously mentioned, another such source is the, again, rather suspicious *America and Japan in Amity and Trade*, containing rosy articles about U.S.-Japanese relations such as “Peace and Good Will Through Trade,”¹²⁰ and “Exceptionally Happy Trade Relationship.”¹²¹

Also included is an unknown author’s humanist story, “Japan’s Mandated South Seas Islands,” with subtle mention of profitability, “. Here, Japanese-led humanitarian and economic development is detailed on now bloodily familiar locations like Saipan, with ¥5,000,000 coming from marine work there, such as bonito fishing.¹²² Using the same source as before to figure out the American value, comes out to \$1,2500,000 of contemporary American money.¹²³ In Manchukuo, even farmers were noted in *Where are You Going, Japan?* as being able to buy sewing machines for the first time due to the stabilization of the currency.¹²⁴

Humanitarian efforts in the South Seas included education, training in handicrafts, hygiene, and sanitation, hospitals built, public works, and many others.¹²⁵ Japan was zealous in its dissemination of pieces to help its image overseas, as the economic competition from their cheap products likely helped by no means. The necessity of sanitation works would herald the

¹¹⁹ Capra, Ivens, *Know Your Enemy: Japan*

¹²⁰ Daniel C. Roper, “Peace and Good Will Through Trade,” *America and Japan in Amity and Trade*, Unknown Editor, ((Presum.) Osaka: Osaka Mainichi, 1938). Pg. 26

¹²¹ Hon. Shinji Yoshino, “Exceptionally Happy Trade Relationship,” *America and Japan in Amity and Trade*, Unknown Editor, ((Presum.) Osaka: Osaka Mainichi, 1938). Pg. 27,

¹²² Unknown Author, “Japan’s Mandated South Seas Islands.” *America and Japan in Amity and Trade*, Unknown Editor, ((Presum.) Osaka: Osaka Mainichi, 1938). Pg. 298.

¹²³ Military Intelligence Service, *A Soldier’s Guide*, Pg. 32-33.

¹²⁴ Willard Price, *Where are You Going, Japan?*, Pg. 40.

¹²⁵ Hon. Shinji Yohsino, “Exceptionally Happy,” *America and Japan*. Pg. 32-33

horrifically grim and filthy conditions on these islands and the names of places like Saipan would prove to be echoes to many hellishly battles in the war to start in a mere three years.

The writers of *Amity and Trade* do not, however, reflect the actual situation and form a dubious bit of propaganda. Leading up to war, the view of Japan could best be summed up with a simple news story in the February 23rd, 1936, issue of *The Bombay Chronicle*. The paper gave an ever-popular report on a rash of suicides at a Japanese volcano.

At Mount Mihara, located on the island of Izu Ōshima, a man threw himself off the rim of the volcano and instead of landing in the fire, hit a ledge. Stones were thrown, but he did not move until the next day, when the crowd saw he was alive and a suicide prevention worker who had come with the crowd of hundreds volunteered to be lowered on a rope to save the man. After the successful rescue, the crowd died down, but about 500 people remained. Milling around in groups, the crowd was unprepared to do anything when a young couple rushed past and jumped into the stygian crater. The event was widely reported on almost as if it were a sort of case of fad.¹²⁶

Indeed, about 419 people threw themselves off the edge in 1937 up to the month of April alone and 2,000 died in total before a barbed wire fence entanglement was set up, according to a story in the Reading, Pennsylvania's *Reading Eagle*.. The newspaper additionally reports that a thriving tourism trade had started in the never-before prosperous town and that the ferry had gone from 3 crossings a week to daily and added two large ships to its fleet of small boats. The

¹²⁶ No Author, "Jap Couple Jump into Fiery Crater of Volcano" *The Bombay Chronicle*, Bombay, Sunday Edition, 23 February 1936. Pg. 38.

ferry service was further said to offer only round trips as a hint to its “passengers to avoid anything desperate.”¹²⁷

However, the reporting could, in hindsight, be interpreted as going hand in hand with the views of Japan at the time as being on a precipice, eying the bottom longingly, ever closer to throwing itself off. Japan was inching closer to a devastating world war, one it knew it could not win for long. Once again, we must go back to a timeline of events and accompanying context before we can continue to the Second World War.

In 1936, the Imperial Japanese Army revolted in what is now called the February 26th Incident. Young officers became radicalized after frequent conversations with their men and from reading their letters from home, especially as many of the young officers were by no means well off themselves.¹²⁸ What followed was a high adrenaline near-coup seen in a very strange and surprising way by outsiders, even those present.

Japan, like many countries, was seen as going further and further under in the chaos and poverty of the Great Depression. Though Japan hadn’t fallen as far as the U.S. or England, she didn’t have as far to fall, and food was scarce for the already poor farmers. Many of the impoverished farmers had sons who joined to spare their parents the expense of feeding both them and their younger siblings, and to send money home. In 1936, a plot to assassinate multiple unpopular officials was initiated after long planning, plunged parts of Tokyo into violence.

Though these plots were by no means rare at this turbulent time, the Revolt of February 26th was out of the ordinary with much of the might of the Army as could be summoned by the young officers on display in the streets of Tokyo. The often already disaffected and low born

¹²⁷ “Japan’s Suicide Island: Popular Volcano Pit Claims Over 2,000 victims,” *The Reading Eagle*, Reading, Pennsylvania, Wednesday, 14 April 1937. Pg. 26.

<https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1955&dat=19370414&id=VxoyAAAIBAJ&pg=2666,3155368>

¹²⁸ John Toland, *The Rising Sun, Volume I*, Pg. 7.

officers disobeyed multiple orders, including from their own popular higher ups, to disperse and cease the rebellion. The uncontrolled soldiers even assassinated unpopular officials and commanders deemed to be betraying the Emperor and his people.

In the end, the junior officers surrendered, but only after seven people died, the Prime Minister faked his death, tanks rolled through Tokyo, bombers flew with readied bombs overhead, and a Japanese fleet lay in Tokyo Bay, training its guns on Army positions. Even more dramatically, many ships were headed by equally hot-headed young Navy officers who had had three popular higher-ranking officers assassinated or heavily injured by their bitter rivals in the mutinous Army. One officer reported the temptation to blow apart the Army-overrun Diet, Japan's version of the American Capitol building, holding their parliament and the parliamentarians' offices, among other organizations.¹²⁹ Even after this extraordinary drama, most foreign observers barely registered or reported on it as it was seen as, as historian John Toland says, "No more than another ultranationalist bloodbath."¹³⁰

The word "another" is telling. Opinion of the Japanese decreased steadily after its war with Russia concluded. Upton Close, a journalist and radio personality wrote a famous book on the Japanese that earned him a reputation on the subject. Close was controversial for two things at the time: Pointing out the legitimacy of anti-colonial efforts in Asia and allegations of anti-Semitism, the latter of which are near impossible to find in unbiased and contemporary form.

A piece of heated rhetoric in his book *Behind the Face of Japan* rails against America's past complacency, Close bitterly states that "while Japanese students inscribed patriotic oaths in blood, English and American students proclaimed that they would never fight for their country,

¹²⁹ Toland, *Rising Sun, Volume I*, Pg. 39.

¹³⁰ *Ibid*, Pg. 41.

right or wrong.”¹³¹ This references an American satirical youth organization which lampooned both Fascism and the concurrent hawkishness and demands for money of veterans of the First World War. One notable and heavily ironic trademark of the movement was a gesture holding the arm extended in a Nazi/Roman salute, but with the palm up, as if demanding money.

Said bloodbaths would continue, and perceptions of the Japanese nation would continue to drown in the deepening swamp that resulted. In December of 1937, Japanese international relations took another, massive hit with the notorious Rape of Nanking. The massacres were photographed, sometimes by foreign men and women, including video by a prolific and strong-willed American pastor, John Magee, but quite often by the Japanese soldiers themselves as a souvenir. A photo, most likely of the former, exists of a woman who had died on a flight of steps in Tai'zerhuang, but not before having been raped by what appears to be either a knife or bamboo cane.¹³²

However, other photographs exist that are almost certainly of the latter, souvenirs by brutalized sadists wanting to remember their deeds. One such infamous photograph exists of an infant having been tossed into the air and Japanese troops smiling and attempting to skewer it on their bayonets. John Rabe, a Nazi Party official in the city, was so shocked by what transpired that he was a key hand in setting up and leading a safe zone located in the international section of the city.¹³³ He may have personally saved hundreds of thousands of Chinese lives.¹³⁴

¹³¹ Upton Close, *Behind the Face of Japan* (D. Appleton-Century Company, Inc.: New York, NY, 1942 Ed.). Pg. 12.

¹³² Wikimedia Commons, “File:Chinese old woman raped and killed by Japanese at Tai'erzhuang.jpg,” Wikimedia, accessed February 26, 2021

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Chinese_old_woman_raped_and_killed_by_Japanese_at_Tai%27erzhuan_g.jpg

¹³³ Alain Lempereur, “Humanitarian Negotiation to Protect: John Rabe and the Nanking International Safety Zone (1937-1938),” *Group Decision and Negotiation* Volume 25, July 2016, Pages 663-691

¹³⁴ Lempereur, “Humanitarian Negotiation,” Pg. 666

Nanking started an outcry. A writer for the *New York Times* named F. Tillman Durdin wrote in 8 December, 1938, that: “The unrestrained cruelties of the Japanese are to be compared only with the vandalism in the Dark Ages in Europe or the brutalities of medieval Asiatic conquerors,” referring of course to the barbarian hordes at the Fall of Rome and the Mongols.¹³⁵ Another writer, A. T. Steele, wrote for the *Chicago Daily News* on 4 February, 1938, that he had witnessed one mass execution of several hundred men herded by two or three Japanese soldiers into a vacant lot. Here, they were shot in small groups.¹³⁶

That smaller case would show an exaggerated version of the Chinese resistance against Japanese aggression, which was largely ineffective, hamstrung by many factors, including incompetence, corruption, poor quality forces, and lack of resources. The only resource available were men, and China spent these freely. After a decade of hopeless and bloody resistance by the Chinese, the resultant Japanese contempt became apparent: only 56 Chinese POWs would be presented as having survived Japanese captivity at the end of the war, out of hundreds of thousands.¹³⁷ The bloodshed was called medieval, a callback to Japan’s recent history.

There had always, however, been a sense of timelessness about the Japanese, even in the worst of its times, and the revolts and bloodshed were by no means new to Japanese history in any measure but perhaps scale and location. Basil Hall Chamberlain foresaw, as others did, that Japan would one day go to war with the West. In a segment on “Japanese chauvinism,” Chamberlain said “...the peculiar feature of the present situation is that the Japanese are determined to beat us on our own ground and with our own weapons. Japan is to engross the

¹³⁵ Suping Lu, “The Nanjing Atrocities Reported in the U.S. Newspapers, 1937-38,” *Readex Report*, Volume 7, Issue 2, No Original Page Numbers, April 2012. Pg. 7 (On PDF).

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, Pg. 9 (Of PDF).

¹³⁷ Richard B. Frank, “There are no Civilians in Japan,” Articles, *National World War II Museum*, August 4th, 2020, <https://www.nationalww2museum.org/war/articles/there-are-no-civilians-japan>

trade of the Pacific, and to be the leader of Asia in modern warfare and diplomacy.”¹³⁸ He may not have been surprised by the future, but he most likely would have been by the intensity of it.

Shattered Gem: Japan and the Allies in War, 1941-1945

A Japanese concept that becomes especially important at this time is *Gyokusai*, or “a shattered gem,” a word for a sacrifice for a cause, especially when that sacrifice is in human lives. The Japanese used the term *Gyokusai* for the first time in a formal document after the later Battle of Attu. In the Battle of Attu in Alaska, the Army would sacrifice 2,500 men in an attempt to create a perhaps Verdun-inspired meatgrinder in Alaska the U.S, would have to respond to. According to Japanese American essayist Hiroaki Sato writing for the Asia Pacific Journal, it was essentially a justification.¹³⁹ One for throwing not money at a problem but flesh and blood.

Gyokusai was Japan’s answer to a war that would rapidly turn against them as America’s industrial and agricultural might, vengeful anger, and ever-swelling armies took their toll in extirpating Japan, wearing it away, drop by drop. Another even more desperate word comes from it: *Ichoku Gyokusai*, “100 Million Shattered Gems.” The number comes from no random place. It is the product of Japan’s population of 70 million and its population of 30 million colonial subjects in Korea, Manchukuo, and Taiwan.

Japanese policy amounted to using its blood to wash itself free from the tarpits it had gotten itself stuck in. Japan had largely gotten stuck this series of tarpits in trying to get itself out of previous ones, starting in its quest for empire and prestige. This thesis will, however, not focus

¹³⁸ Chamberlain, *Things Japanese*, Pg. 88.

¹³⁹ Hiroaki Sato, “Gyokusai or “Shattering like a Jewel”: Reflection on the Pacific War”, *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, February 1, (2008), No Pages, Volume 6, Issue 2, Article ID 2662, <https://apjif.org/-Hiroaki-Sato/2662/article.html>

on the views of the battles and grand strategies of the war but will continue to focus on the thoughts of individuals, as it has with all the previous sections. With the war now taking over in the minds of all involved, no one was more thoughtful about it than soldiers. One of the things soldiers most thought about were creature comforts, a taste of home, or, in some cases, any taste at all.

For all the presumptions of engulfing trade, Japan would have constant supply trouble in the Pacific War, the more precise name for the portion of the Second World War taking place in the eponymous Pacific and starting in, most agree, 1937. Supply issues were very common amongst Japanese soldiers, and Allied soldiers were quite aware of this shortcoming. The film *Know Your Enemy: Japan* glorified the supply issues as being illustrative of Japanese toughness, saying: “He lives on rice. Rice and fish, or occasionally rice and meat, but often on rice alone. And he’s proud of it,” as well as noting, “He’d just as soon go over a mountain as around it.”¹⁴⁰ However, the Japanese soldier did not seem proud to those reading their mail and documents.

One written order was found which, when translated, suggested that when a battle goes poorly and supply become difficult, the soldiers should endeavor to “assault and capture enemy supply depots at all costs.”¹⁴¹ This was, of course, made near impossible by what would be the malnourished state of the men trying to take the depot quickly. Reliance on close combat would have demanded a swift approach.

Japanese soldiers were extensively trained in the bayonet,¹⁴² as it was, as the propaganda film *Know Your Enemy: Japan* notes, a holy instrument connected to the legacy and nobility of

¹⁴⁰ *Know Your Enemy: Japan*, directed by Frank Capra, Joris Ivens, released 9 August 1945 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. War Department, 1945).

¹⁴¹ U.S. War Dept., *Intelligence Bulletin*, Vol. II, No. 2, (Washington D.C. U.S: Military Intelligence Division, October 1943). Pg. 59.

¹⁴² *Ibid*, Pg. 39

the samurai's sword. It points out, as many other sources do, that in the past only those of noble blood could be a true warrior, and that it was therefore an honor that the Emperor was allowing anyone be a soldier. The same film quotes a notoriously militant Japanese official as going so far as to call it their "steel Bible."¹⁴³

Perhaps related to a reliance on close combat, Japanese soldiers were seen as incapable of adapting to changing conditions without the orders of senior officers, which was blamed on the brutal training of the Japanese soldier. For example, on the fourth night of a siege in the Imphal Campaign in South Asia, two Japanese soldiers and then a larger band of soldiers were killed in a dip in the road guarded by a small bunker covered by a machine gun. More and more groups of Japanese soldiers wandered into the sights of the defense post until eventually 110 men lay dead there. Captured intelligence later revealed that this had been set as a rally point by Imperial Japanese commanders who had not bothered to have it scouted out beforehand.¹⁴⁴

True warriors were not how they were often seen, however, as the Japanese were viewed as being guileful and duplicitous fighters. An October 1944 U.S. War Department *Intelligence Bulletin* tells that Japanese bayonet training emphasized the use of two men working as a team in a bayonet assault. A Japanese bayonet was long and had a hook at the base used to snare an enemy's bayonet. The other member of the team would then come up and skewer the now impotent enemy. The observer notes that he never saw this work successfully.¹⁴⁵ Another states dubiously that a Japanese soldier wouldn't charge "unless backed up by a dozen other Japs."¹⁴⁶

¹⁴³ Capra, Ivens, *Know Your Enemy: Japan*.

¹⁴⁴ The Harris', *Soldiers of the Sun*, Pg. 410.

¹⁴⁵ Military Intelligence Division, *Intelligence Bulletin*, October 1943. Pg. 64.

¹⁴⁶ Lt. Col. Russel P. Seeder, *Notes on Jungle Warfare from the U.S. Marines and U.S. Infantry on Guadalcanal Island* (No Publisher, though from Southwest Pacific Theater, Operations Division, WDGS, and is dated December 12th, 1942). Section 1, Pg. 7.

Japanese soldiers preferred to be able to attack with the night on their side, especially due to their equipment. One common version of the standard issue rifle, the Arisaka, seems almost designed for night fighting. In this capacity, though less powerful, the lightweight ammunition and design of the earlier standard issue rifle gave off less flash and made it an ideal night-fighting weapon,¹⁴⁷ as well as less smoke during the day.¹⁴⁸

Concealment would go further than just weaponry, and ploys were another important aspect of the Japanese soldier's being seen as tricky. One soldier noted that "The Japs make noises to mislead us. They shot off some firecrackers at the start, but we have learned that where the noise is, he ain't."¹⁴⁹ Japanese were frequently noted across sources as having split bamboo sticks and slapped them together to draw attention with a sound like a rifle's report.

The tricks didn't end in death, either. Japanese soldiers were well known for using rope harnesses to tie themselves into a tree when sniping with the intention being to hold them in the tree when shot. This would cause American soldiers to panic upon seeing them and waste ammunition on them, as well as give their position away.¹⁵⁰ Another soldier understood, saying "I was a scout and got shot in the shoulder by a Jap in a tree. I look in the trees now."¹⁵¹

Being tied into a tree seems to be somewhat common, as an earlier source cites Japanese prisoners' claim that two men in each squad were equipped to hide in trees and take pot shots. It further states that U.S. soldiers often had trouble getting bodies out of trees, for which it suggests toppling the tree with dynamite or a tank.¹⁵² It may have been less trouble to simply chop the tree down or get a strong stomached marine to cut the man down, except for booby traps.

¹⁴⁷ Military Intelligence Department, *A Soldier's Guide*, Pg. 26

¹⁴⁸ Seeder, *Jungle Warfare, Section 1*, Pg. 24

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid*, Pg. 17.

¹⁵⁰ War Department, *Intelligence Bulletin, October 1943*, Pg. 65.

¹⁵¹ Seeder, *Jungle Warfare, Section 1*, Pg. 20.

¹⁵² U.S. War Dept., *Intelligence Bulletin, Vol. I, No. 4* (Washington D.C.: U.S: Military Intelligence Division, December 1942). Pg. 4.

Oftentimes, the Japanese would attempt to sneak in with a small group of men and infiltrate the American lines to cause further havoc. These were often terrifying experiences in which a band of Japanese soldiers would run screaming “Banzai,” while firing shots and throwing grenades into dugouts, slashing and stabbing with swords and bayonets, and attempting to blow up supply and ammunition dumps. In one attack, a Japanese soldier blew 2 boatloads of fuel, ammunition, and other supplies sky-high in a massive fireball.¹⁵³

Some Marines, conversely, would come to prefer nighttime engagements, as one Allen Matthews said that, during the day, the Japanese would hunker down until night and be harder and much more dangerous to root out. At night, the Japanese would come to meet them.¹⁵⁴ Marines soon learned that the common sentiment of the Japanese being “Supermen” was false and that he had no inherent skill at night fighting that anyone couldn’t acquire through hard work and experience. Some said that the soldiers soon learned that if they were alert, they could almost always see them first.¹⁵⁵

To help them, an equal ingenuity was manifested by the Marines. Some would remove tracer rounds to avoid giving a line back to the machine gun crew’s position, while others rigged up a cord to go all along the dugout and trench line. If a soldier even thought he saw a Japanese soldier, he was instructed to pull the line and send a noiseless alert through the entire fortification.¹⁵⁶

The Japanese were well known during the war for yelling things over at the Americans in near-perfect English. One Japanese man was reported to have caused the retreat of two green companies and leaving one exposed on both flanks by laying down smoke shells or grenades and

¹⁵³ Rose, *Men of War*, Pg. 250.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid*, Pg. 251

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid*, Pg. 252

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid*, Pg. 253

yelling “Gas!”¹⁵⁷ In an infiltration effort against the Dutch prior to 1942, Japanese soldiers called for the location of the commander in Dutch until he appeared, then shot him.¹⁵⁸ Japanese English-speakers would often speak to each other in English to attract the attention of Allied soldiers and patrols to entice them to come close and then get shot at.¹⁵⁹

In one almost cartoonish incident at an Australian base, a Japanese soldier disguised himself as a bush for three days and learned the habits and personalities of the soldiers there, before calling out, “Say, Bill, where are you? This is Alf.” He shot Bill dead when he appeared. The man was captured severely wounded after the area was raked by a machine gun, and the man had resigned himself to death before setting out.¹⁶⁰

The men had solutions, though. According to Alexander Rose, approaching soldiers would often be required to give the names of five American cities or car makers, with one usually required to be “Chevrolet.”¹⁶¹ In fact, many soldiers even required a password with either both or multiple “l” or “r” noises, and thus Chevrolet became a popular required response, along with “lemon,” “lanolin,” or “yellow,” as many Japanese are unable to pronounce or even identify these sounds correctly without extensive practice.¹⁶²

Soldiers turned this same practice on other problems, as well. Medics were often called by Japanese who were easily able to pronounce the word “Corpsman,” so in some units, corpsmen were told to only respond to “Tallulah,” as the Japanese would often not know or be able to pronounce the name. Others would require call and response identifiers, with an “L” or an “R.” One popular and ingenious one was to shout out “rotten” expecting the return of “lemons.”

¹⁵⁷ Seeder, *Notes on Jungle Warfare*, Section 1, Pg. 14.

¹⁵⁸ U.S. War Dept., *Intelligence Bulletin*, Vol. 1, No. 1, (Washington D.C. U.S: Military Intelligence Division, September 1942). Pg. 62

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid*, Pg. 60

¹⁶⁰ U.S. War Dept., *Intelligence Bulletin*, Vol. 1, No. 4, Pg. 5.

¹⁶¹ Rose, *Men of War*, Pg. 259.

¹⁶² *Ibid*, Pg. 259.

Not only were the shibboleths difficult to pronounce both for a Japanese who was not sufficiently practiced, it was very difficult for those who did not know English like a natural language to recognize and correctly use the adjective-noun combination and order almost unique to the English language. Someone who had not sufficiently learned Japanese or hadn't learned it from a high-quality speaker couldn't practice well, especially with other low-grade speakers, and any failure in a real situation would often see the infiltrator killed.¹⁶³ During the fighting in the Solomon Islands, Japanese troops would occasionally jump into foxholes occupied at night by Marines and be shot because they could not give the password.¹⁶⁴

One commander recommended an ingenious change he made in name usage. The men all received nicknames, especially the officers, as the Japanese would call over commands in perfect English. The officers spoke over the radio and would challenge each other to give their nickname and then require them to tell the name of another officer from their nickname. As if to illustrate, just seconds after the conversation, a voice came in over the radio and said "Our situation here, Colonel Edson, is excellent. Thank you, sir," in perfect English.¹⁶⁵

In another case, a bomber was sent to bomb an island off the Solomons with 1,000-pound bombs but was countermanded over radio by a voice in excellent English and with a perfect American accent. The bomber went through with the attack only after the radioman couldn't give the confirmation code, which the airman and his squadron mates had worked out as being their nicknames the previous night.¹⁶⁶ The Japanese would also turn off electric fences during enemy reconnaissance, as well as flipping switches for sections throughout the course of a battle.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶³ Rose, *Men of War*, Pg. 259

¹⁶⁴ U.S. War Dept., *Intelligence Bulletin*, Vol. I, No. 4 (Pg. 4

¹⁶⁵ Seeder, *Jungle Warfare*, Section 1, Pg. 14.

¹⁶⁶ U.S. War Dept., *Intelligence Bulletin*, Vol. I, No. 4, Pg. 9.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid*, Pg. 18.

Whichever way the tricks were used, they all had one purpose- killing- and some were simpler than others. Some men noted that the Japanese enjoyed placing machine gun teams on the reverse side of a hill and then firing up to kill those coming over what looked like an unoccupied position.¹⁶⁸ Other Japanese troops were known to carry light machine guns on their backs and lean over for the firer to shoot with when enemies were spotted, allowing rapid use of a hidden machine gun on unsuspecting Allied men.¹⁶⁹ Scattered reports exist of Japanese troops doing this when surrendering.

Compounding the mistrust, officers often used dirty tricks. A Japanese captain was noted as having presented himself at a headquarters and claimed to be the Captain of a labor battalion, offering his and his unit's surrender. Of the twenty men and a colonel sent to get them, only a wounded sergeant returned. The rest were shot. When news arrived via the sergeant, a force of Marines pushed the Japanese from their rear and destroyed them, preempting more being sent.¹⁷⁰

The constant trickery tallied into the U.S. soldiery's extant hatred and need for revenge resulting from Pearl Harbor and the others, especially the propagandist's dream of Bataan. Americans soon grew to hate the Japanese and even enjoy killing them. The hate was somewhat understandable, especially when one considers the insularity and homespun life of many Americans at the time and intensity of the fighting. In what is now known as the Chichijima incident, an American bomber was shot down and up to eight of its crew were beaten and tortured, then disappeared. The only survivor was a lowly airman who would later become

¹⁶⁸ Seeder, *Jungle Warfare*, Section 1, Pg. 16.

¹⁶⁹ War Department, *Intelligence Bulletin*, Vol. 1, No. 1, Pg. 58

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid*, Pg. 8.

president: George H. W. Bush. After the war it was found that they had disappeared into Japanese stomachs.¹⁷¹ There were many incidents, and they were often not due to starvation.

Records seized by Australian troops after the war shed light on a massive series of cannibalism, many of which were not even performed from starvation. Many soldiers, American and Australian alike, had their own personal experiences from during and after the war of such literally ghoulish practices. Troops were said to be in fit and healthy shape, had plenty of canned food, potatoes, rice, and other supplies and in good morale.¹⁷² However, officers would frequently order their men to eat prisoners of war, indigenous and other civilians, laborers, and many others captured alive, often after torturing them. Some ordered it to make their troops feel more victorious and to instill more hatred in the enemy¹⁷³ or to force their men to bond by breaking one of the ultimate taboos, perhaps making it easier to break others.¹⁷⁴

Cannibalism, dirty tricks, and simple daily killing made the demonization evident at nearly every level. Lt. Colonel Russel P. Seeder compiled a list of feedback from troops on Guadalcanal and relates a soldier's chiding to count, "One Jap dead, two Japs dead, when letting a grenade cook"¹⁷⁵ Another marine recounted in *Men of War* that he was trying to fight off invisible Japanese during a night firefight on Iwo Jima and was grateful when a star shell, designed to burn incredibly bright and slowly descend, floated down on a parachute to illuminate

¹⁷¹ Nick Pearson, "The Chichijima incident: George HW Bush's extraordinary WWII survival story," *World, 9News.com.au*, 5:19pm Dec 4, 2018 <https://www.9news.com.au/world/chichijima-incident-george-hw-bush-extraordinary-wwii-survival-story/b8edd905-c63b-409f-971b-23f08e533389>

¹⁷² Terry McCarthy, "Japanese troops 'ate flesh of enemies and civilians'" *News>World*, The Independent.co.uk Saturday, 22 October 2011, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/japanese-troops-ate-flesh-of-enemies-and-civilians-1539816.html>

¹⁷³ Associated Press, No Title, *cannibalism (sic)*, Associated Press, AP, No Date Given, (Story appears to be for other journalists to use as a starter) <https://apnews.com/article/2e7e9a8dae17cc29862c4562b44c9225>

¹⁷⁴ McCarthy, "Japanese Troops 'Ate Flesh'", <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/japanese-troops-ate-flesh-of-enemies-and-civilians-1539816.html>

¹⁷⁵ Seeder, *Notes on Jungle Warfare*, Section 1, Pg. 21.

the battlefield. The Marine, now seeing a dozen soldiers on a ridge below him, said “They looked like little devils running through the gates of Hell. All they needed were pitchforks.”¹⁷⁶

There were other terms used for the inhumanity of the Japanese, with one soldier noting in an obviously trimmed down interview for the U.S. Military document *Notes on Jungle Warfare* that the Japanese were “man monkeys and they run around considerably.” Another noted that one could tell a Japanese at a distance by “their short, choppy step.” Yet another said that he and his comrades believed that it was because they wore wooden shoes in Japan.¹⁷⁷ It may sound somewhat ridiculous that wearing wooden shoes for a while would impart a shuffling gait to a man or woman for the rest of their life and changes of footwear. However, a choppy gait seems to be a common sentiment from foreigners and Alice Mabel Bacon attributes this in 1902 to their heavy wooden sandals, called *geta*, giving “an awkward, shuffling gait.”¹⁷⁸

Indeed, hatred was evident even in the accounts of the most highly acclaimed soldiers. Eugene “Sledgehammer” Sledge would say in his autobiography, *With the Old Breed, at Peleliu and Okinawa*, that after finding American corpses luridly sexually mutilated by the Japanese, “My emotions solidified into rage and hatred for the Japanese beyond anything I had ever experienced. From that moment on I never felt the least pity or compassion for them no matter what the circumstances.”¹⁷⁹

Taking souvenirs has been a hobby in every war, and in the Pacific, it would become linked to that same hatred. Taking souvenirs was risky, as the longer a body had been laying, the more likely it was to be booby trapped.¹⁸⁰ Speed was essential to looters and recent bodies were

¹⁷⁶ Alexander Rose, *Men of War: The American Soldier in Combat at Bunker Hill, Gettysburg, and Iwo Jima* (New York, NY: Penguin Random House, LLC, 2015). Pg. 251.

¹⁷⁷ Seeder, *Jungle Warfare*, Section 1, Pg. 7.

¹⁷⁸ Bacon, *Girls and Women*, Pg. 14.

¹⁷⁹ E. B. Sledge, *With the Old Breed at Peleliu and Okinawa* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1981). Pg. 148.

¹⁸⁰ Rose, *Men of War*, Pg. 268.

always sought.¹⁸¹ For this reason, some U.S. soldier's documents carried warnings about looting and souvenir collecting, especially in the U.S. War Department's *Intelligence Bulletins*.

In the October 1943 issue, harsh criticism is levelled against looting soldiers, as one soldier was said to have had hidden binoculars that may have been used to spot snipers.¹⁸² Other stories include a sheet of sketches taken absentmindedly by one soldier that turned out to be battle plans. Soldiers were noted as leaving camps in such array while looting that they were decried as "work[ing] for the Japanese [in what] the enemy was not given time to complete."¹⁸³

Many souvenirs were iconic pieces of Japanese culture or equipment or almost anything with Japan's various sigils on it that made a good memento, though almost anything sufficed. Especially sought after were Arisaka rifles; devotional flags for rifles and pack; swords and knives, the distinctive sword bayonets; pistols and "knee mortars;" and daily use or items seen as culturally significant like stationary, headwear, canteens, religious memorabilia, family photos and letters. For the more refined gentlemen amongst the looters, one James Vedder collected a pristine porcelain cup with the IJA symbol, as well as a working phonograph machine.¹⁸⁴

Hatred led to a very specific, less wholesome variety of souvenir that would be unlikely to meet the eventual fate of the antique shop and show of much other war trophies. Recent bodies were the ideal place to find a more ghoulish souvenir, as, on both sides, collecting fingers, ears, and, as an infamous photo of a sweetheart looking at one while writing a note of thanks back attests, human skulls.¹⁸⁵ One soldier interviewed by Rose related stumbling upon a group of soldiers boiling skulls in a discarded oil drum. The soldiers related that they made excellent

¹⁸¹ Rose, *Men of War*, Pg. 269.

¹⁸² Military Intelligence Division, *Intelligence Bulletin*, October 1943, Pg. 72.

¹⁸³ *Ibid*, Pg. 73.

¹⁸⁴ Rose, *Men of War*, Pg. 269.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid*, Pg. 269.

money at this, selling them to rear-echelon troops and at least one overjoyed dentist.¹⁸⁶ Other items like gold teeth were so sought after that another soldier told Alexander Rose that he and a buddy once went scavenging near the frontlines, getting sniped at all the while, but found only bodies with all the gold already knocked out of their heads.¹⁸⁷

As such, the lust for knowledge, stories, and anecdotes became a lust for the Japanese's ephemera, trinkets, and daily possessions. A thirst for memories of one's own in an exotic locale became a thirst for the fingers, ears, teeth, and even skulls for the people one would have wanted to build these memories with. These were taken from bodies and camps in an excitement that seemed to combine with trauma and foreseen nostalgia for the camaraderie of the war.

Some pieces of war loot are still present in many antiques shops and shows. Personal finds in one include Rising Sun hand pennants, an Arisaka rifle, an SNLF steel helmet with anchor sigil, a sword bayonet, a fatigue cap, a tropical pith helmet, and posters and booklets. The many cases show that the Japanese were not only thought of as not entirely human and not only as an "other," but that they became evil at a base level and thus their possessions gained an increased value. The status of barbarity the Japanese were seen as having been evidenced in an incredible mental dissonance in the desirability of souvenirs, much as SS and Nazi Party memorabilia would become desirable on other fronts.

There was hatred on all sides, and some would seem to be self-hatred, manifesting as jokes or spiteful gallows humor. Soldiers have often called themselves by self-deprecating titles to shame their officers and inspire the men to stick together. One example from history are the Roman

¹⁸⁶ Rose, *Men of War*, Pg. 270.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid*, Pg. 270.

legionaries referring to themselves as “Marius’ Mules” after General Marius scrapped the long baggage trains previously enjoyed by the now heavily burdened legionaries. Japanese soldiers had many names for themselves, such as human bullets, which appears surprisingly early and in a glamorous manner. Japanese lieutenant, Tadayoshi Sakurai, wrote a book titled *Human Bullets: A Soldier’s Story of Port Arthur*, which was translated into English after the Russo-Japanese War. The title was ostensibly named for a title the soldiers referred to themselves as due to their perceived officer’s view of them as expendable.¹⁸⁸

Strangely, in many cases, Tadayoshi uses the term in an intensely romantic and patriotic way. He harkens joyously to the glories and honor of those fighting for a new nation, as in one passage in which he proclaims:

“At the top of the hill the clash of bayonets scattered sparks- hand-to-hand combat at close quarters was the last effort, the impact of the human bullets, the sons of Yamato... the consequences being a stream of blood and a hill of corpses... At last, at 8 AM of July 28th, when the Eastern sky was crimson, we became the undisputed masters of the heights of Taipo-Shan.

The Imperial colors waved high over our new camp, and the Banzai of rejoicing arose like surges of the sea!”¹⁸⁹

The imagery is made especially more rousing to his fellow Japanese by use of stirring imagery for the hour of victory, the most noticeable being “when the Eastern sky was crimson,” referring to the Japanese Rising Sun flag and Japan’s title as the Land of the Rising Sun.

Expendability would become increasingly internalized and much more bitter and resentful.

Japanese men would later have more realistic names for themselves, often to spite officers seen as being uncaring. In Manchuria , the increasingly wearied and desperate Kwantung Army called

¹⁸⁸ Tadayoshi Sakurai, *Human Bullets: A Soldier’s Story of Port Arthur* (Boston, MA: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1907). Pg. 138.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid*, Pg. 146.

themselves the same “human bullets,” but also “the pulverized ones,” victim units,” and, most telling, “Manchurian orphans.”¹⁹⁰

The Japanese developed many anti-tank weapons and tactics. From men holding a hammer to bash down the detonation switch on artillery shells, to shaped charges on a 4-foot-long shaft, most of these were near suicidal. One, used often enough to merit discussion in an April 1943 Intelligence Bulletin, was using flamethrower teams to wash flames over a tank, broiling the crewmen and damaging the tanks’ internal components, thereby destroying both trained men and materiel.¹⁹¹This was, however, incredibly dangerous.

Mothers became involved on occasion as well and sometimes even encouraged the suicides. Hiroo Onoda wrote in his autobiography *No Surrender* regarding a gift his mother made to him before he left for the war, a family heirloom dagger and told him to use it in case of capture.¹⁹² Hiroo Onoda is a was a well-known case of Imperial Japanese holdouts who refused to surrender after the war, staying in the jungles of the Philippines for just shy of thirty years, longer than anyone else. Onoda’s rationale is made somewhat more untenable by the fact that he had killed thirty random Filipino civilians in largely unprovoked raids over that time. He may very well have wanted to make up a romantic and palatable cause for his actions that not only wouldn’t land him in prison but wouldn’t make him a pariah.

Japanese soldiers didn’t merely recede into the jungle to launch guerilla campaigns, though. A corporal Richard Nummer remembered in the book *Men of War* that he often had to

¹⁹⁰ Phillip Jowett, *Men at Arms 369: The Japanese Army, 1931-1945 ([Vol.] 2): 1942-1945* (Oxford England: Osprey Publishing, 2002). Pg. 22.

¹⁹¹ U. S. War Dept. *Intelligence Bulletin, Vol. 1 Num. 8, April 1943* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Military Intelligence Service, U.S. War Dept., 1943). Pg. 66.

¹⁹² Hiroo Onoda, *No Surrender: My Thirty-Year War*, Trans. by Charles S. Terry (Tokyo, Japan: Kodonsha International, Ltd., 1974). Pg. 37.

exercise caution while on burial detail, saying he had “to watch out there wasn’t a Jap among ‘em waiting for us, with a rifle or a grenade, whatever they could find.”¹⁹³ The Japanese would often dress as U.S. troops and lay amongst the dead, sometimes with macabrely humorous consequences, as a Ray Crowder remembers seeing Japanese soldiers who had both dressed as Marines and shot each other by mistake. To prevent these incidents, Marines devised a “possum patrol,” in which the troops would go over the battlefield and shoot again any bodies of anyone that appeared Japanese or was dressed as a Japanese soldier. These patrols, so named after the possum’s habit of playing dead when cornered to deter predators that preferred live prey, were very widespread, though many soldiers found them distasteful and hated going on that detail.

Shooting the dead was essential, whatever anyone’s feelings. One U.S. soldier called it an insurance policy, “cheap insurance- a bullet costs only a dime.” They were, in fact, so widespread, that a George Nations could only recall seeing a single Japanese soldier with but one bullet hole in him: Japanese men would often adopt desperate measures. One, Saturo Omagari, survived and recounted that he and some comrades slit open the bodies of dead men, rubbing their blood on them and stuffing their coats with untangled intestines. He had wanted to bag a Sherman tank with explosives, attacking the very thin underside of an already thinly armored tank.¹⁹⁴

Self-destruction was glorified in Japanese society, with a long-time comparison to the flowers of the Japanese cherry tree. The cherry blossom is a beautiful pinkish white flower that grows and falls in spring in Japan, elegant petals fluttering down like snow in eddies and forming drifts along the walkways they are planted. The flower was and is so beloved that Basil Hall

¹⁹³ Rose, *Men of War*, Pg. 249

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid*, Pg. 249.

Chamberlain said the Japanese considered it to be analogous for “what the rose is to western nations.”

A Japanese folk proverb says, “The cherry is first among flowers, as the warrior is first among men.”¹⁹⁵ Another said that the Japanese peasant who had been raised up to finally become a samurai knew the symbolism: The cherry blossom falls much like the young soldier- while it is still perfect and in the prime of its life.¹⁹⁶ Those who interacted with the *Kamikaze* often noted their youth. Workers at a restaurant had this concern deepen when one of the young boys had approached the proprietress and asked sheepishly if she would mind him calling her “Mother...Just once.”¹⁹⁷

One son who had volunteered for the *Kamikaze* corps wrote to his parents, saying “Please congratulate me. I have been given a splendid opportunity to die. This is my last day. The destiny of our homeland hinges on the decisive battle in the South Seas, where I shall fall like a blossom from a radiant cherry tree... I wish that I could be born seven times, each time to smite the enemy.”¹⁹⁸ There was, in fact, a tendency to commit suicide when wounded and then trapped, when cornered, or when otherwise facing capture. Joseph Wheelen quotes a Private Marlin “Whitey” Groft in his book *Midnight in the Pacific*, on the frequent occurrence: “There is a grotesque horror in watching a man activate a grenade and then clutch it to his chest, blowing himself apart before your astonished eyes.”¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁵ Chamberlain, *Things Japanese*, Pg. 89.

¹⁹⁶ Clear, *Close-up*, Pg. 58.

¹⁹⁷ Harris, *Soldiers of the Sun*, Pg. 420

¹⁹⁸ Raymond Lamont-Brown, *Kamikaze: Japan's Suicide Samurai* (London, England: Cassel & Co., 1997). Pg. 37

¹⁹⁹ Joseph Wheelan, *Midnight in the Pacific: Guadalcanal, the World War II Battle that Changed the Tide of War* (Boston, MA: De Capo Press, 2017). Pg. 19.

The myth of a “divine wind” that would protect the Japanese as it had done from the Mongolians was always assumed to be just around the corner. In fact, there was a divine wind at the end of the war, two actually. One was a death rattle at the time of the Emperor’s final surrender, after the Japanese people heard his voice for the first time over radio announcing the dire news. There would be one final show of suicidal determination at the end of the war.

On August 25th, 1945, the *San Pedro News Pilot* would report that there was a rash of suicides in front of the Imperial Palace.²⁰⁰ One source said there were more bodies every hour and the men came with their families to bid farewell to the survivors, though this is unsubstantiable.²⁰¹ The *San Pedro News Pilot* came by the story through intercepts of Japanese radio transmissions after the surrender. People were in despair and hungry, the bombers overhead no longer dropped hundreds of bombs, and their roofs leaked.

The roofs leaked due to another major story. Typhoons, the original “divine winds,” had swept in and doused the entire western side of Japan in storms, winds, and heavy rains. The victorious Americans who had been trying to land were now delayed for two days and even MacArthur’s airborne troops were unable to go.²⁰² The original *kamikaze* had come to stop invasion by sea yet again, just as Japanese tradition and prophecy held. Though it had now come, it was still too late to prevent the impetus even temporarily for the surrender, the dropping of two atomic bombs on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Whether that is a twisted mercy in long years of misery is up to interpretation.

²⁰⁰ Associated Press, “Many Kill Selves at Palace, Claim; Landings Delayed,” *The San Pedro News Pilot*, August 25th, 1945, Front Page. <https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=SPNP19450825.2.26&e=-----en--20--1--txt-txIN-----1>

²⁰¹ Ruslan Budnik, “Japan Surrendered, Civilians & POWs ‘Disappeared’ They Could No longer Testify to the Atrocities Committed by the Guards” *Instant Article/ World War II*, War History Online, <https://www.warhistoryonline.com/instant-articles/japan-surrendered-civilians-pows-disappeared-they-could-no-longer-testify-to-the-atrocities-committed-by-the-guards.html>

²⁰² *San Pedro News Pilot*, “Many Kill Selves at Palace, Claim; Landings Delayed,” Front Page

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ⁱ This means that ¥441,000,000 comes out to \$110,250,000 and ¥598,000,000 tallies to \$149,500,000. In the canteen, cigarettes costed from 5-8 sen, soap 30 sen, and the rice liquor sake ¥4, with the latter, again, being \$1 American.ⁱ For further context, the highest general made ¥475-¥545 per month and the lowest private made ¥7-¥9 per month, both depending on the location of their posting.