

Japanese–German Relations, 1895–1945

War, diplomacy and public opinion

**Edited by Christian W. Spang and
Rolf-Harald Wippich**

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Japanese–German Relations, 1895–1945

Japanese–German Relations, 1895–1945 provides an original and stimulating interpretation of Japanese–German history and international diplomacy. The book offers a deeper understanding of many important aspects of the bilateral relations between the two countries from the Sino–Japanese War in 1894–5 to the parallel defeat of Germany and Japan in World War II.

The book presents new research on the military as well as the ideological side of Japanese–German relations during the crucial half-century preceding 1945. Focusing on ‘War, Diplomacy and Public Opinion’, the book shows convincingly that there is no ‘natural’ link between early German influence on Meiji Japan and the fatal war-alliance.

Written by a team of Japanese and German scholars, this book will be of great interest to those dealing with Japanese and German studies, comparative or world history, international relations and political science alike.

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Preface

At the *Asian Studies Conference Japan (ASCJ)* in Tokyo in 2001, C.W. Spang organized and chaired a panel on *Diplomacy, War and Public Opinion: Japanese–German Relations, 1895–1945*. Apart from the organizer, S. Saaler, G. Schepers and R.-H. Wippich presented papers, while N. Tajima was a discussant. The panel was attended by an unexpected large number of international scholars, most of whom expressed a great deal of interest in the subject. Considering the crucial role that Germany and Japan played during the first half of the twentieth century, a thorough understanding of their relations in the historical context is significant for anyone interested in the developments leading to both World Wars.

What is often heard is the complaint that it is difficult to find relevant information on the topic of Japanese–German relations in English – information that should be easily accessible to both teachers and students. With this in mind, the editors believe that there is an information gap regarding the historical dimension of Japanese–German relations within the international academic community. This often leads to misinterpreting Prusso–Germany’s intellectual and military influence on Meiji Japan as the starting point of a continuous and logical development that reached its climax in the wartime co-operation of the 1940s. It is one of the goals of this book to show that such a perception is too simple and too one-dimensional.

This volume brings together an unprecedented number of German and Japanese scholars, who are all experts in their related fields. In addition to the articles written by the editors, it contains contributions by three Japanese and five German scholars. All authors have published numerous articles and books in German or Japanese, but few have done so in English. Therefore, this volume makes some of the most recent research on Japanese–German relations available to an international audience.

In selecting contributors and topics, the editors made every effort to present as coherent a picture as possible on the subject. The opinions of the authors remained untouched though. The Introduction draws a broad picture of bilateral contacts, thus providing the historical context in which the subsequent articles can be better understood. The individual contribu-

tions contained in this book highlight some of the most significant topics in the ups and downs of Japanese–German relations between 1895 and 1945.

Editors' note

Japanese words are rendered by the standard Hepburn romanization. Japanese names are given in the Japanese order, i.e. family names precede given names.

Christian W. Spang
Rolf-Harald Wippich
Tokyo, December 2005

Abbreviations

ADAP	Akten zur Deutschen Auswärtigen Politik 1918–1945
BA	Bundesarchiv (Berlin and Koblenz); <i>German Federal Archives</i>
BA-MA	Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv Freiburg; <i>Military Archives</i>
CINC	Commander-in-Chief
Comintern	Communist International
DJG	Deutsch–Japanische Gesellschaft; <i>German–Japanese Society</i>
FRUS	Foreign Relations of the United States
GP	Grosse Politik der Europäischen Kabinette
HStA-IV	Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv München, Abteilung IV Kriegsarchiv; <i>Bavarian State Archives, War Archive</i>
IfZ	Institut für Zeitgeschichte Munich; <i>Institute for Contemporary History</i>
IMTFE	International Military Tribunal for the Far East
IRAA	Imperial Rule Assistance Association (<i>Taisei Yokusankai</i>)
KPD	Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands; <i>German Communist Party</i>
KTB	Kriegstagebuch; <i>war diary</i>
LDP	Liberal Democratic Party of Japan; <i>Jimintō</i>
LMU	Ludwigs-Maximilians University Munich
NARA	National Archives and Record Administration Washington, D.C.
NHK	Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai; <i>Japan Broadcasting Corporation</i>
NKVD	People's Committee of Domestic Matters in the USSR
NL	Nachlass; <i>personal papers</i>
NSDAP	Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei; <i>German National Socialist Party</i>
OAG	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Natur- und Völkerkunde Ostasiens, Tokyo; <i>German East Asiatic Society</i>
OKW	Oberkommando der Wehrmacht; <i>High Command of the German Armed Forces</i>
PAAA	Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes Berlin; <i>Political Archive of the Federal Foreign Office</i>

Skl	Seekriegsleitung; <i>Naval War Staff</i>
SPD	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands; <i>German Social Democratic Party</i>
SS	Schutz-Staffel; <i>lit. protective echelons of the NSDAP</i>
TMWC	Trial of the Major War Criminals Nuremberg
ZfG	Zeitschrift für Geopolitik; <i>Journal for Geopolitics</i>

1 Introduction – from ‘German Measles’ to ‘Honorary Aryans’

An overview of Japanese–German relations until 1945

Christian W. Spang and Rolf-Harald Wippich

Official contacts between Japan and Germany date back to 1861 when a Prussian expedition under Count Friedrich zu Eulenburg concluded the first bilateral treaty. The Prusso–Japanese treaty of 24 January 1861 resembled previous unequal treaties, which the Shogunate had been forced to conclude with Western powers after the opening of the country in 1853–4. It remained in force with only minor modifications until 1899 when the unequal treaties in Japan ceased to exist.¹

After the establishment of diplomatic relations, Prussia pursued a low-key policy, which reflected both its focus on European affairs as well as its minor interests in Japan. Prussia had no political ambitions in East Asia, but was only interested in economic relations. For that very reason a policy that embraced co-operation with the Western powers and dismissed independent action was most welcome. After the war against France, 1870–1, and the foundation of the *Reich*, Germany continued its passive attitude towards Japan. Chancellor Bismarck concentrated on European politics and abstained from an active policy overseas. Throughout the 1870s, friendly diplomatic representation within the context of the solidarity of Western nations represented the yardstick for Germany’s policy towards Meiji Japan.

In spite of Berlin’s diplomatic hesitancy, Germany began to become attractive as an advanced workshop for Japan’s modernization. In 1872 the first two German *oyatoi gaikokujin* (foreign experts hired by the Meiji government) were employed at the Tokyo Medical School (*igakujo*), Dr Müller and Dr Hoffmann. These two medical officers did invaluable pioneering work with regard to the future employment of German scholars and experts in various fields. Above all, both physicians provided the Japanese with a good model of academic expertise and erudition and helped to establish the outstanding reputation of German medicine in Japan until 1945.

Though Germany continued to exercise political restraint, by the end of the 1870s the idea of taking Germany as a model for modernization was

gaining ground among Japan's ruling elite. The turning point came after Japan had tried and tested various foreign patterns, and a new direction of the modernization process was about to set in as a consequence of the Iwakura Mission to the West (1871–3).²

From around 1880 onwards, a noticeable shift away from those countries that previously had been considered role models for Japan's modernization, such as Britain, France and the USA, towards Germany was beginning to emerge. The period of German prominence in Japan's modernization peaked in the 1880s and early 1890s. Germany's popularity as preceptor of modern Japan was supported by the 'Society for German Science' (*Doitsu Gaku Kyōkai*), which had been founded in 1882 by prominent pro-German Japanese academics and politicians. In such fields as education, military, law and science the German influence prevailed and German experts were hired continuously, so that to contemporary observers Meiji Japan looked like it was suffering from 'German measles' (Riess 1917: 203). In particular, the strong military connections proved to be a solid pillar of the 'fatal' Japanese–German friendship after World War I. Friendly relations reached a climax with the promulgation of the Meiji Constitution on 11 February 1889, which was drafted along Prussian lines (Andō 2000).

After about a decade of amicable contacts, great power politics began to take a heavy toll on Japanese–German closeness. It was the Sino–Japanese War of 1894–5 that marked the watershed in the relations between Berlin and Tokyo. The war promoted Japan's international military standing and caused concerns in the West about a confrontation with the new aggressive rival who destabilized the traditional China-based equilibrium in East Asia. After victorious Japan had signed the peace treaty with China in Shimonoseki (17 April 1895), Russia, France and Germany launched a diplomatic protest in Tokyo (23 April 1895) to demand the retrocession of Japan's territorial acquisition in continental China (the Liaodong Peninsula including Port Arthur), which was regarded as a permanent threat to China and to peace in the Far East.

Germany had joined the Triple Intervention exclusively for European reasons; it was interested in a rapprochement with Tsarist Russia whereby its political and strategic position in Europe would be improved considerably. For the German government good relations with their Eastern neighbour were by far more significant than maintaining amicable contacts with Japan. R.-H. Wippich's contribution, however, illustrates another facet of Germany's reaction to the East Asian war. He discusses the enthusiasm for Japan among ordinary Germans as articulated in letters of congratulation to the Japanese Ministry of War.

The Triple Intervention abruptly ended the close relationship between Berlin and Tokyo and led to bitterness and disillusionment on the Japanese side. The Japanese reaction was all the more understandable as the

Kaiser had thought it necessary to strengthen German–Russian co-operation in the Far East by mobilizing the spectre of the ‘Yellow Peril’ and by referring the Tsar to his ‘real’ mission: to be at the ready in the East against the Japanese.³ Nothing perhaps was more harmful to Japanese–German relations than the Kaiser’s irresponsible agitation of the ‘Yellow Peril’. A. Iikura in his related article gives ample proof of the catastrophic effect of that discriminatory slogan on Japanese–German relations until 1914.

The negative image that the ‘Yellow Peril’ evoked was miles apart from the way Japan was perceived at about the same time by German writers and intellectuals. In his contribution, G. Schepers explains that these literary images of the early twentieth century revolved around ‘exotic’ fantasies, which depicted Japan as a fairy-tale land full of mysteries and wonders. It is remarkable that some of these images and stereotypes have survived to this day.

The year 1897 marked the birth of *Weltpolitik*, a new stage in Germany’s imperialist expansion overseas, which held further dangers for an engagement in the Far East. When Germany’s seizure of Kiao-Chow Bay in November of that year gave the signal for the partition of China, a further rift was added to the already strained Japanese–German relations. Germany’s move triggered the race for spheres of interest in China and threatened Japan’s aspirations there.

Despite growing alienation between Germany and Japan after 1895, the Berlin government was firmly convinced that Germany’s international position had remarkably improved owing to Russia’s preoccupation with Japan in the Far East. What amounted to growing tensions between St Petersburg and Tokyo, particularly after the Russians had taken Port Arthur in 1898, brought Germany relief from Tsarist pressure on its eastern borders. Seen from that perspective, Japan played an important role in Germany’s political calculations: by absorbing all of Russia’s energy, it contributed to the *Reich*’s (alleged) freedom of action around the turn of the century.

Japan’s concerns about Russian aggression were confirmed after the suppression of the Boxer Uprising in China in 1900 when Russia occupied Manchuria and refused to withdraw its troops completely. The growing antagonism between St Petersburg and Tokyo before long led to the conclusion of the Anglo–Japanese alliance on 30 January 1902. This powerful new combination was welcomed in Berlin as a means to further inflame the conflict in East Asia. When Russia finally turned down Japan’s offer of a bargain acknowledging mutual spheres of interest in the Far East, Japan broke off relations and replied by attacking the Russian naval base at Port Arthur on 9 February 1904.

The escalation of Russo–Japanese tensions had not been overlooked in Berlin. On the contrary, Germany did everything to make this duel happen. It even assured Japan of its disinterest in Korea and encouraged

the island power to take the initiative against its rival. The Russo–Japanese war was seen as a welcome opportunity to keep Tsarist Russia busy in East Asia. Even if Wilhelm II and Chancellor Bülow were convinced that Russia would finally defeat Japan, they hoped that as a consequence of a war of attrition Russia would considerably be weakened in its military capacity and therefore no longer represent a menacing factor in the years ahead.

Throughout the war, Japan followed German policy with apprehension, because Germany remained officially neutral without announcing its neutrality. In addition, the sympathies of the German government seemed to be more with Russia since it supplied coal to the Baltic Fleet on its way to East Asia. More important, however, was that Wilhelm II fiercely reactivated his role as the chief propagandist of the ‘Yellow Peril’, which soon reached unknown heights of agitation and intensity. As the political interests of Berlin and Tokyo were basically incompatible, all efforts to improve the somewhat strained Japanese–German relations failed. To maintain that low-profile orientation, individual pro-German politicians, such as Aoki Shūzō or Katsura Tarō, who even had the Kaiser’s confidence, were considered to be of the utmost importance to bilateral contacts in Berlin notwithstanding the poor prospects for success of such a scheme.

It was during the early twentieth century that a thorough readjustment of the international system took place. The first step in that direction had been the Anglo–Japanese alliance in 1902. What came as a real shock to Germany was that in spring 1904 Great Britain and France reached a settlement of their colonial disputes in the *Entente Cordiale* and moved closer together politically. Germany reacted to this challenge by attempting to form an alliance with Russia, but its advances ended in failure. Another attempt was to exert pressure on Russia’s ally France in the First Moroccan Crisis of 1905–6 to undermine the Anglo–French rapprochement. This plan not only went entirely wrong, but it also increased Anglo–German tensions which had already been burdened with Germany’s large-scale naval construction programme since 1898.

By the end of the Russo–Japanese war Germany’s international position had dramatically deteriorated despite the fact that from 1904–5 onwards Germany sought a certain level of political and economic co-operation with the USA. Both powers were strong supporters of the ‘Open Door’ policy in East Asia against the advocates of a more restrictive course, such as Russia and Japan. In subsequent years, Germany’s interest in that region was absorbed by the growing US–Japanese conflict which was considered a welcome opportunity to deflect attention from its own problems. These tensions offered the Kaiser, above all, new opportunities to spread his ‘Yellow Peril’ idea (Stingl 1978: 766–71; Mehnert 1995).

When in 1907, England and Russia finally settled their colonial rivalries

and also Japan moved closer to Russia and France, the concept of ‘encirclement’ gained momentum in Berlin. It was then that Wilhelm II thought about creating a counter-league against the existing triple formation of Britain, Russia and France, which was to comprise Germany, Japan and the United States. In many respects, such a grandiose scheme represents the key to understanding Germany’s pre-war Japan policy. In the context of Germany’s *Weltpolitik* the island empire was at best granted a secondary position. Accordingly, in the Kaiser’s ‘counter-league’ project, Japan was to be instrumentalized as a temporary tool in international politics. It was only too obvious that Wilhelm’s concept was not in tune with political realities. Neither Japan nor the USA would have been willing to join the proposed league as it conflicted either with the Anglo–Japanese Alliance or the doctrine of isolation. Moreover, while the monarch argued in favour of an active role in East Asia, Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg and the Foreign Office emphasized the need for German passivity, as an active exposure in the Far East would only have resulted in a further estrangement from Russia.

Much more pressing than the Kaiser’s fantastic concept of alignment was the need for mere normalization of relations with Tokyo. A good opportunity for that seemed to arise at the end of 1910 when the negotiations for the renewal of the Anglo–Japanese Alliance met with unexpected difficulties. Considering, however, Germany’s overall focus on Europe and its restraint in East Asian affairs, a real chance to reach even a minimal understanding to break down mutual mistrust between Berlin and Tokyo was not in sight. The German policy towards Japan during the closing years of the Meiji era was largely confined to support for the pro-German press in Japan against the dominance of British-controlled foreign media and to a discreet attempt to turn the tides of negative sentiments against Germany. With these efforts, however, Germany was not very successful (GP 32, 12015 and 12018).

In summer of 1912, an opportunity for a thorough overhaul of bilateral relations seemed to arise when Katsura Tarō, on a trip to Europe, sounded out the possibility of talks with Germany.⁴ The influential pro-German Meiji politician could have been a valuable ally for improving mutual understanding, yet such a prospect was not to materialize. Upon arrival in St Petersburg, Katsura was called back to Japan due to the Meiji emperor’s failing health. When the Tennō finally died in late July 1912, the Kaiser’s younger brother, Prince Heinrich, was assigned as a special envoy to attend the funeral in Tokyo in September of that year. This gesture was regarded as a particularly friendly act in Japan, but it did not produce any political consequences.⁵

With the escalation of international tensions, a new opportunity for a rapprochement with Japan seemed to be within reach. Again, it was the Kaiser who in September 1912 took the initiative and suggested a military alliance with Japan, an idea that, however, was immediately rejected by

the Foreign Office (GP 32, 12026 and 12030; Stingl 1978: 759). When of all people Wilhelm II launched such a project, it must not be confused with a newly won sympathy of the Kaiser towards Japan, but rather should be considered a reflection of the extent of his disappointment towards Russia. The deaths of Prince Katsura in 1913 and Aoki Shūzō in early 1914 ended all speculations concerning the repair of Japanese–German relations before World War I. With them the last of the ‘pro-German group’ of Meiji politicians who were considered indispensable guarantors for Japanese–German relations had gone from the scene. (GP 32: 481, ft.; GP 39, 15613).

When World War I broke out, Japan issued Germany an ultimatum to hand over Kiao-Chow and, having received no reply, opened hostilities against the German leasehold. Germany’s colonial stronghold in China was taken after heavy fighting in autumn 1914. Thousands of German and Austrian soldiers were brought to Japanese prison camps from where the last ones were released as late as 1920. Japan’s entry into the war was not the consequence of deteriorated relations with Germany or of unresolved issues though. Much more serious conflicts existed between Japan and the other powers, such as the problems regarding immigration and the China market with the USA. Nor can it be explained by a clear decision in favour of Britain; it was simply a decision in favour of Japanese expansion on the Asian mainland. Throughout the war, the German government attempted to come to an understanding with Japan, but the ‘illusion of a separate peace’ was entirely shattered by the Japanese (Hayashima 1982).

Before 1914, there existed several obstacles against close relations with Japan on the German side. First of all, there was the impetuosity of the Kaiser and his ambivalent attitude towards Japan and the Japanese. While he favoured individual Japanese, his condemnation of Japan’s rise to great power status as expressed through the ‘Yellow Peril’ propaganda remained intact throughout his life, even in his Dutch exile after 1918. The major stumbling block, which prevented an improvement of Japanese–German relations, was, however, Germany’s inability to acknowledge Japan as an equal player in international politics, even if the forms of diplomatic proprieties were observed. The mentality of the German ruling elite was shaped by a benevolent complacency as a result of the former teacher–pupil relationship, which would concede to Japan only a subordinate role in diplomatic relations. Needless to say, the Japan policy of Wilhelmine Germany contained numerous tactical defects. Nevertheless, even a more skilful performance could not have prevented the collapse of Germany’s position in East Asia in World War I, because a shift in Germany’s attitude towards Japan would have required concessions in its China policy, which was hardly conceivable. It was China, i.e. the prospects of the Chinese market, that for a long time to come almost exclusively held Germany’s attention in East Asia. Germany’s policy towards Japan always mirrored the actual state of its China policy. To

lament ‘lost opportunities’ before World War I is misleading, because they never materialized.

Comparing the world maps of 1914 and 1919 clearly shows to what extent Germany’s international role had changed. The lost war turned the former great power into a largely demilitarized country, which had not only lost all its colonies, but also considerable parts of its territory in Europe. Millions of native Germans were thus forced to live outside their homeland. Dreams of establishing Germany as a – or even ‘the’ – world power had ended in revolution and the overthrow of the monarchy. Nevertheless, the old elites managed to keep their positions in diplomacy, the industry and the small *Reichswehr*, while only few Germans really believed in democracy. Furthermore, the Weimar Republic was burdened with high war indemnities and the notorious ‘war-guilt’ paragraph of the Versailles Treaty (§ 231), which put all the blame for unleashing the war on Germany. This verdict sharply contradicted the German self-perception of a pre-war ‘encirclement’, according to which the war had been fought to defend the country against a ring of enemies. All this meant that the nation was united in its urgent desire to revise the stipulations of the peace treaty.

While Japan’s seizure of Kiao-Chow had incensed Germans at the beginning of World War I, by its end this was little more than a distant (if unpleasant) memory. Japan’s favourable treatment of German prisoners of war meant that the military confrontation of 1914 had not left too much ill feeling between the two nations. Within one generation since the Triple Intervention of 1895, the two countries’ international standing had dramatically changed in favour of Japan. Until the Nazis turned the ‘Third Reich’ into a great power by breaking national and international law as well as moral codes, Germany was politically and militarily too weak to attract Tokyo’s interest. For that very reason, diplomatic relations, which were resumed in March 1920, remained low-key for the following years.

Yet, initiatives by individual academics, artists, businessmen or military officers led to a rapid renewal of contacts between related circles in both countries. In this respect, private associations like the Japanese–German Society (*Nichi–Doku Kyōkai*), the German–Japanese Society (*Deutsch–Japanische Gesellschaft*) and the German East Asiatic Society (*Deutsche Gesellschaft für Natur- und Völkerkunde Ostasiens, OAG*) offered plenty of opportunities for Germans and Japanese to meet and thus played an important role during the early stages of bilateral rapprochement after World War I.

Among the first areas in which contacts were re-established was the military sector. As a result of striking changes in military technology during 1914–18, the Japanese army had lost its edge. After World War I, in fields such as aviation, submarines, tanks, etc., Japan lagged dramatically behind. Therefore, the army as well as the navy were looking for advanced technology. The weaponry that Japan had received as spoils of war

convinced the Imperial forces that Germany had to offer what they were looking for. Although Germany disposed of the related expertise, the stipulations of the Versailles Treaty strictly limited the application of this knowledge. Until 1922, Tokyo's alliance with London allowed for some kind of technical co-operation between Japan and Britain. The termination of this alliance, however, fuelled Tokyo's interest in German military technology. By the mid-1920s, there were semi-official and secret contacts between both navies as well as between the Imperial Army and German arms brokers, aviation experts, etc. As B.J. Sander-Nagashima explains in his article, these activities effectively meant that Japan as one of the major victorious powers acquired military equipment and expertise, which the Weimar Republic was officially prohibited to possess or develop, via the back door.

While the Imperial Navy first of all focused on the mechanical aspects of warfare, the army developed further-reaching interests. Its officers were fascinated by the ideological background of World War I, particularly by Ludendorff's concept of 'total war' (*totaler Krieg*). Quite a few Japanese actually went to see the retired General before his death in December 1937. In this context, S. Saaler's contribution discusses the Imperial Army's adherence to the Prusso-German model even though the *Reich* had been defeated in 1918.

One of the major reasons why the Weimar Republic tried to improve its relations with Tokyo was that Japan represented one of the most influential voices in the League of Nations, which in turn was important for Berlin's desire to re-negotiate the amount of the war indemnities. Though Germany had unmistakably lost its great power status, in terms of culture and scholarship, the country was still considered one of the world leaders. This perception was particularly widespread in academic circles in Japan, where proficiency in German was common. But not only academics read German books, as can be seen from the high number of Reclam's famous paperbacks (*Universal-Bibliothek*) exported to Japan.⁶ In fact, many contemporary Japanese leaders had acquired a good reading ability of German at high school and university. Some of them had actually spent years in Germany and spoke the language quite fluently. Due to Japan's well-known 'German' academic tradition and its deeply rooted interest in German arts, Berlin considered foreign culture policy (*auswärtige Kulturpolitik*) one of its most valuable assets in establishing closer contacts with Japan. In fact, Weimar diplomats thought of culture as a decisive means of Germany's revisionist policy.

Through the economic boom during World War I Japan had become a direct competitor for the German export industry. However, this newly won affluence enabled Japan to support German culture in many ways. Especially during the early crisis years of the Weimar Republic, Japanese individuals sponsored cultural activities as well as scientific research in Germany, a topic dealt with by T. Katō in this volume. Apart from that, he

also discusses the little-known activities of the Japanese (academic) community in Berlin in the 1920s and early 1930s.

In the later half of the Taishō period (1912–26), Japan's relations with the British Empire and the USA turned sour. The outcome of the Washington Conference (1921–2), the termination of the Anglo–Japanese Alliance (1902–22) and the anti-Japanese immigration laws in the USA (1924) led to diplomatic frictions between Tokyo and its former wartime allies. About the same time, Germany was accepted into the League of Nations (1926) and immediately gained a permanent seat on the council alongside Britain, France, Italy and Japan. Even though this meant that the country had visibly re-entered the international stage, in terms of political clout Germany was no match for its peers. Nevertheless, these changes in the international situation along with Japan's growing affection for Weimar culture (*Waimaru bunka*), helped to create a favourable atmosphere in relations between Berlin and Tokyo.

The first German ambassador to Japan after World War I, Dr Wilhelm Solf, was perfectly suited for the contemporary emphasis on cultural relations. He was a scholar and top diplomat at the same time. After studying Sanskrit, Hindi, Urdu and Persian, he joined the German colonial service and became Governor of German Samoa (1900–11), Colonial Minister (1911–18) and Foreign Minister (1918). The differences in the way the German representative was received indicate how much things had changed during his eight years in Japan. When he arrived in Tokyo in August 1920, his foreign colleagues tried to avoid him as much as possible. By the mid-1920s, however, Solf served as president of the International Club and of the Asiatic Society. When he reached retirement age, the Japanese government requested that he stay at his post at least until after Emperor Hirohito's inauguration ceremony. The Japanese wanted Solf as the much-respected *doyen* to preside over the diplomatic corps on that occasion. The fact that he was well received in Japan is confirmed by a special issue published by the *Japan Times* before he returned to Germany (Schwalbe and Seemann 1974: 89). Of all people engaged in post-war relations with Japan, Solf knew best that Germany held two trump cards as far as Japan was concerned: culture and science, and he deliberately took that into account in discharging his office. In this context, it should not come as a surprise that he was one of the driving forces behind the foundation of two culture institutes in Tokyo and Berlin in 1926 and 1927 respectively.⁷ These institutes, which were co-sponsored by the two governments and each jointly headed by a German and a Japanese director, represent an outstanding example of Germany's application of foreign culture policy.

There was, however, one serious problem with transforming culture into a means of foreign policy: it worked only one-way. Compared with the widespread Japanese interest in German culture, affection for Japanese culture in Germany was largely confined to those who had experienced

life in East Asia. Consequently, the asymmetry in bilateral contacts – so obvious before World War I – continued through the 1920s and during much of the 1930s. Until 1945 only the Universities of Berlin (1887), Hamburg (1914) and Leipzig (1932) had established departments of Japanese Studies. Moreover, it was not before 1935 that German Japanologists came together in their first official conference in Berlin. What is more, even some of the best-known contemporary ‘experts’ on Japan, such as Karl Haushofer or Oskar Nachod had only limited language skills. By the end of the Weimar Republic, the number of Germans who could fluently read and write Japanese was – according to one of them – only about a dozen.⁸ Considering this lack of linguistic competence on the German side, the later Nazi propaganda of a *Völkerfreundschaft* (friendship of the peoples) rings hollow.

The well-known political changes that occurred in Japan and Germany in the early 1930s can be attributed to a great number of domestic as well as external causes. The repercussions of the world depression (1929) were undoubtedly among the most important factors. The collapse of the fragile German economy produced millions of unemployed, which in turn led to a strengthening of the political fringes on the left as well as on the right, thereby destabilizing the largely unloved democracy. For Japan, the dwindling demand as well as the sharp drop in price for silk forced many peasants into outright poverty. As the army’s officer corps had its roots in the peasantry, these developments meant that the more radical among them turned to extreme actions such as various attempted *coup d’états*, assassinations, etc. Domestic problems finally turned into a large-scale diplomatic crisis when Japanese troops occupied Manchuria in autumn 1931. The government proved unable to stop the ‘Manchurian Incident’ and was soon confronted with a *fait accompli*, leading to the foundation of the puppet state of Manchukuo in 1932. As a reaction to international criticism, Japan in 1933 became the first nation to withdraw from the League of Nations, a step that sent shockwaves through the post-war system and effectively isolated the country. Domestically, the ‘Taishō Democracy’ collapsed and the armed forces developed a dominating role within the complex oligarchy, leading to totalitarian tendencies in the government structure.

At about the same time, Hitler’s seizure of power in January 1933 abruptly ended the Weimar Republic. This meant that Nazi racism became the state ideology, but it was impossible to foresee the later bilateral rapprochement between Germany and Japan. In his book *Mein Kampf*, Hitler described the Japanese as the sole example of a ‘culture-bearing’ (*kultur-tragend*) race, a label that sandwiched them between the Germans (in Hitler’s terminology ‘Aryans’) as ‘culture-creating’ (*kultur-schaffend*) and most other races, which he described as ‘culture-destroying’ (*kultur-zerstörend*). For the Japanese, who had in vain propagated racial equality at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, such a

disparagement was unacceptable. How controversial this element of Nazi ideology was can be seen by the fact that almost all contemporary Japanese translations of *Mein Kampf* omitted the relevant section.⁹

It is therefore no surprise that the inauguration of the Nazi regime did not automatically lead to closer Japanese–German relations. For some years, Germany’s industrial and military leaders as well as the foreign ministry under Konstantin von Neurath (1932–8) continued to favour China, mostly for economic reasons. During the 1920s and 1930s, Sino–German relations prospered in various areas, particularly in the military field. For over a decade a semi-official group of German advisers counselled Chiang Kai-shek on military matters (Martin 1981). It was only after the so-called ‘Marco Polo Bridge Incident’ (*rokōkyō jiken*) in July 1937 that Japan’s involvement in China led to a full-fledged Sino–Japanese war. Consequently, Germany (like all other countries) had to choose between China and Japan. When the *Wehrmacht* had finally been brought in line and a thorough *revirement* of the diplomatic executive had established Joachim von Ribbentrop as foreign minister, the military advisers along with Germany’s ambassador, Oskar Trautmann, were withdrawn in 1938, thus ending diplomatic relations between Germany and China.

When trying to explain the Nazis’ interest in Japan, one has to distinguish carefully between contemporary propaganda, political intentions and ideological racism. Often these aspects are closely intertwined, like the distorted Nazi understanding of the ‘samurai spirit’ (*bushidō*). While some features of it unmistakably impressed them, the whole concept – embedded as it is into Japanese social and military history – remained beyond their comprehension, so that they wrongly interpreted ‘the spirit’ as an innate characteristic of the Japanese mentality. Nazi propaganda went as far as comparing *bushidō* with the SS ethos.¹⁰ In general, Nazi circles favoured Japan chiefly for ideological and propagandistic purposes. First of all, the Far Eastern Empire was conceived as a strict anti-communist bulwark. Furthermore, both countries seemed to share the fate of being ‘have-not’ nations, whose demographic pressure demanded territorial expansion. With its withdrawal from the League of Nations in spring 1933, Japan set an example for Hitler to follow a few months later. Both countries were obviously challenging the international status quo, but in 1933 they did so independently without any form of co-ordination. Nevertheless, foreign observers suspected a common cause, long before the idea of a tie-up was to gain ground in Berlin and Tokyo.

In March 1935, the ‘Third Reich’ introduced universal conscription, which constituted an open breach of the stipulations of the Versailles Treaty. When the army entered the de-militarized zone along Germany’s western borders one year later, it became apparent that Nazi Germany was about to destroy the post-war system in Europe. This impression was confirmed by the simultaneous abrogation of the Locarno Treaty, in which the Weimar Republic had acknowledged its western borders in 1925.

While these developments seem to have nothing to do with Japanese–German relations, in fact they constituted indispensable prerequisites to any bilateral rapprochement. As long as Germany’s military forces were considered a *quantité négligeable*, an alliance with Berlin was of no interest to Tokyo. This changed, however, with the establishment of the new *Wehrmacht* in 1935, which was a *conditio sine qua non* for any rapprochement. Likewise, the notorious ‘Nuremberg Race Laws’, announced in September 1935, at first glance seem to have been an entirely domestic issue; they had, however, far-reaching international repercussions. Other than Hitler’s above-mentioned three-fold ‘race system’, the new legislation was two-fold, singling out the Jews as the only explicitly inferior race. By doing so, all other peoples – including, of course, the Japanese – became ‘honorary Aryans’. Thus, the Nazis had cleared another obstacle out of the way. Without these moves, a rapprochement between the ‘Third Reich’ and Japan would not have been possible.

In contemporary Tokyo, various concepts circulated regarding Japan’s future domestic and foreign policy. Despite Japan’s concerns about the race question, the leadership-principle (*Führersystem*) of the Nazi party gained a certain attraction as a model for some Japanese. Already since the mid-1930s, an anti-party movement existed in Japan. G. Krebs looks at developments that led to the later establishment of the ‘Imperial Rule Assistance Association’ (*Taisei Yokusankai*) under Prince Konoe Fumimaro. As the structure agreed upon after lengthy negotiations was a compromise between those who wanted a Nazi-style party structure and others who rejected it, the result was a toothless institution, which barely affected Japan’s war-time policy.

After Japan’s withdrawal from the League of Nations (1933) and Tokyo’s failure to reach a new naval agreement with London and Washington (1935–6), the imminent problem Japan was confronted with was its international isolation. There were two possible roads ahead: either to side with the developing Fascist camp or to re-approach London and Washington. The latter policy would have meant making major concessions in China, a move only the most liberal-minded within the Tokyo oligarchy would have been prepared to accept. Yet, after the ‘Manchurian Incident’ (1931) and even more so after the outbreak of hostilities in China in 1937, Japan’s public opinion became increasingly jingoist, making any such step nearly impossible. In general, the army as well as many ‘radical’ politicians favoured co-operation with the new ‘Axis’ of Germany and Italy, while the navy, liberal politicians and the court tried to come up with ways to appease Japan’s former allies. This roughly fifty-fifty split meant that successive governments found it hard to pursue any consistent diplomacy towards either side.

Germany faced similar diplomatic alternatives. Within the Nazi leadership, the role intended for Japan differed from person to person and changed over time. Until the outbreak of World War II, the *Wehrmacht*

was not particularly interested in an alliance with Tokyo. This was largely due to the geographical distance, which made any kind of close co-operation nearly impossible. In Ribbentrop's concept of power politics, Japan increasingly played the role of a counter-weight to Britain and possibly an integral part of a 'transcontinental block' stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific. In contrast to that, Hitler's favourite ally had always been Britain, but London was not prepared to accept German domination in Europe. For Hitler, Japan remained a racially inferior nation, a diplomatic substitute at best. The only thing that made Japan interesting was the fact that Germany and Japan – ideologically as well as geopolitically – faced the same opponents, above all the Soviet Union. Yet, even after the attack on the USSR, Hitler for some time preferred to win without the direct support of his 'coloured' ally. Instead, he asked Japan to open hostilities against Singapore, thus indirectly weakening the British in Europe and their support for the Red Army.

Even though it would be beyond the scope of this introduction to go into the details of bilateral negotiations or treaties, the two most famous agreements must briefly be mentioned here. One of the underlying reasons for the conclusion of the Anti-Comintern Pact in 1936 directly becomes apparent from the clauses of the later Tripartite Pact. In that treaty, signed in autumn 1940, the signatories divided Europe, Northern Africa and Asia between them to avoid any friction. This was the basic idea underlying Japanese–German relations in the Nazi era. Both sides approached one another because they wanted to avoid isolation but were not prepared to compromise on their own drive for expansion. In this respect, Berlin and Tokyo were 'ideal' partners. It is generally assumed that Ribbentrop along with Japanese military attaché and later ambassador to Germany Ōshima Hiroshi initiated bilateral co-operation. N. Tajima, however, argues that it was rather Admiral Wilhelm Canaris, the head of Nazi counter-intelligence, who was responsible for most of the important bilateral treaties.

What is often overlooked is that even in the Axis years relations between Berlin and Tokyo were characterized by much unsteadiness. A case in point is the history of the Anti-Comintern Pact. It was signed with great fanfare in November 1936, and joined by Italy one year later. Intensive negotiations between Berlin, Rome and Tokyo about the further strengthening of their co-operation dragged on for months in 1938–9, mostly because the Japanese government was unable to reach a decision. With the conclusion of the Hitler–Stalin Pact in August 1939, however, the Anti-Comintern Pact suddenly sank into oblivion. The Japanese in particular (who at that time were involved in prolonged border skirmishes with the Red Army near Nomonhan) saw Berlin's co-operation with Moscow as an outright betrayal of the anti-communist basis of Japanese–German relations. As a consequence, the stunned Hiranuma cabinet resigned and bilateral contacts dropped off considerably. After the

Wehrmacht had conquered the Netherlands and marched into Paris in early summer 1940, Dutch as well as French colonies in East Asia seemed easy prey, fuelling Japan's interest in re-establishing close ties with Berlin. Under these circumstances, negotiations in September 1940 in Tokyo produced the Tripartite Pact in a matter of days rather than months. On his much-publicized European tour, Foreign Minister Matsuoka Yōsuke concluded Japan's own non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union in April 1941 to guard the rear for Japan's southward advancement. Only ten weeks after Matsuoka and Stalin had signed this treaty in the Soviet capital, Hitler ordered the opening of hostilities against the USSR. After all these twists, the Anti-Comintern Pact – a fact seldom mentioned in recent scholarship – was revived on 25 November 1941 when delegates from six countries signed a five-year extension.¹¹

Despite all the propaganda and regardless of many treaties signed between Berlin and Tokyo (as well as Rome), no common military strategy existed among the Axis powers. One of the few areas in which Germany and Japan actually co-operated was bacteriological and chemical warfare. In the present volume, B. Martin examines the background of this secret collaboration. In effect, this means that there was some German influence on the Imperial Army's notorious 'Unit 731', and consequently on Japanese warfare in China. Generally, though, the European and African theatres of war remained separate from the Pacific battlefield, at least as far as Axis warfare was concerned. This was due partly to the geographical distance, and partly to the strategic differences required by the fact that the foremost adversary of each was dissimilar. While the *Wehrmacht* was mainly fighting the Soviet Union for living space in Eastern Europe (*Lebensraum im Osten*), Japan was trying to establish the so-called Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere (*dai-tōa kyōeiken*). To implement this policy, Japan's armed forces were engaged in a war of attrition in China as well as fighting the United States (and the British Empire) in the Pacific.

The frequent reference to the opposition between 'have' and 'have-not' nations as well as the regular use of terms such as living space (*Lebensraum* and *seikatsu-kūkan* respectively) in official announcements and contemporary newspapers or journals should not be overlooked. Before and during the war, pseudo-academic geopolitical terminology was used in both countries to justify territorial expansion as a Social Darwinist search for living space. Germany's foremost geopolitician, Karl Haushofer, provided a link between the German school of geopolitics and its Japanese counterpart. In his article, C.W. Spang shows to what extent Haushofer's ideas had an impact on Japanese–German relations.

The changes that bilateral contacts underwent between the two World Wars can be exemplified by a look at Germany's ambassadors to Tokyo. While Dr Wilhelm Solf (ambassador 1920–8) had been revered as a man of letters, Germany's fourth inter-war ambassador, Eugen Ott (1938–42),

was a highly respected General. Ott had come to Japan as a military observer in 1933, and became military attaché in 1934 before being appointed German ambassador four years later.¹² Both men are therefore icons of the state of contemporary bilateral relations. While Solf was known to be a Nazi critic, Ott tended towards a left-wing National Socialism, but was no Nazi as such. It was therefore only under Nazi Germany's last ambassador to Japan, Heinrich G. Stahmer (1942–5), that the 'Nazification' of the embassy reached its final 'highpoint'. Stahmer was a glowing admirer of the Nazi system and presided over relations that consisted of propaganda without substance.

Looking back at Japanese–German relations up to 1945, the turning points were the Triple Intervention in 1895 and Germany's crushing defeat in World War I. These events had much more immediate impact on bilateral relations than Hitler's seizure of power in 1933. If one asks for continuities, they can be found in Germany's exemplary role for Japan in the academic, cultural, technological and military fields. The focus of Japan's interest saw few changes between the 1880s and 1945. Germany's attitude towards Japan always remained, at best, ambivalent because Berlin's diplomacy was focused on European affairs. German aspirations in East Asia were directed towards China, whose economic opportunities prevailed over Berlin's Japan policy until the mid-1930s. During the inter-war years, relations between Germany and Japan were dominated by cultural exchanges and Japan's need for German military technology. Furthermore, there are remarkable parallels between the Japan images of Wilhelm II and Hitler: both were convinced of Germany's pre-eminence over Japan. In the old Empire, such an assumption was based on German cultural, economic and military power. The Nazis, however, believed in a pseudo-scientific racial superiority of the Aryans over all other races. Nevertheless, on the eve of World War I the Kaiser toyed with the unprecedented idea of a military alliance with Japan. Likewise, the *Führer* approved co-operation with Tokyo. While the emperor's ideas remained idle pipe dreams, the pacts formed by Nazi Germany never gained the political importance attested to them by the propagandistic firework staged upon their signing.

Notes

- 1 Japan obtained full-fledged sovereignty only in 1911, when it received its tariff autonomy. The stipulations of the Prusso–Japanese Treaty of 1861 were transferred to the North German Confederation in 1867 and to the German Empire in 1871. A new treaty was concluded between Tokyo and Berlin in 1896, which came into force in 1899.
- 2 For this Japanese mission refer to Pantzer, P. (ed.) (2002) *Die Iwakura-Mission. Das Logbuch des Kume Kunitake über den Besuch der japanischen Sondergesandtschaft in Deutschland, Österreich und der Schweiz im Jahre 1873*, Munich: Iudicum.

- 3 Wilhelm II conducted an extensive correspondence with his younger cousin, Tsar Nicholas II, on Far Eastern affairs from 1895 onwards (the ‘Willy–Nicky’ correspondence). Herein the Kaiser not only developed and propagated his fears of the ‘Yellow Peril’, but also constantly emphasized Russia’s role of protecting European interests in East Asia against the expansive Japanese, who were almost exclusively identified with the ‘Yellow Peril’.
- 4 The Berlin government had great expectations for Katsura’s visit to Germany, scheduled for October 1912. These were apparently based on a conversation Katsura had with the German ambassador in Tokyo, Count Rex, before his departure for Europe, in which he had hinted that he wished to talk frankly while in the German capital. Rex rated the forthcoming visit as ‘highly political’, though he might have attached too much significance to it. It is certain, however, that it was generally assumed that the influential pro-German politician, who held the office of Lord Privy Seal, would be appointed the next Prime Minister. See GP 32, 12021, 12022 and 12024.
- 5 After having been Prime Minister from 1908 to 1911, Katsura formed a short-lived cabinet again (1912–13), which, however, took no initiative to foster Japanese–German relations. See GP 32, 12027 and Stingl 1978: 757.
- 6 Mathias, R. (1990) ‘Reclams Universal-Bibliothek und die Japanische Reihe Iwanami-Bunko’, in J. Kreiner and R. Mathias (eds), op. cit.: 361–84.
- 7 A third institute was established in Kyoto in 1934 at the initiative of German Ambassador Voretzsch. See Wippich, R.-H. (1990) ‘Ernst-Arthur Voretzsch – Deutscher Botschafter in Tokyo im Übergang von Weimarer Republik zum “Dritten Reich” (1928–1933)’, *ibid.*: 129–62.
- 8 Trautz, F.M. (1928) “‘Kulturbeziehungen’ und “Kulturaustausch” zwischen Deutschland und Japan’, *Ostasiatische Rundschau*, 9–2: 42–4.
- 9 There is a Japanese version of *Mein Kampf* (*Hitorā ‘Main Kanfu’*), initially published in six booklets (1941–2), later issued in one volume (1943), that includes Hitler’s evaluation of the Japanese. Its translator, Ishikawa Junjūrō, mentions in his introduction that the book was completed in 1939 but was held back for some time due to the political situation, i.e. the repercussions of the Hitler–Stalin pact. Another unabridged translation (*Ware tōsō*), prepared by the East Asia Research Institute (Tōa Kenkyūjo) in 1942–3, remained unpublished though. The vice-director of the institute, Okura Kinmochi, wrote in his preface that it was decided not to market the book because of the negative effect it was expected to have on bilateral relations. All these concerns clearly show how sensitive Hitler’s race concept was for the Japanese.
- 10 See for example Heinrich Himmler’s foreword to Corazza, H. (1937) *Die Samurai – Ritter des Reiches in Ehre und Treue*, Berlin: Zentralverlag der NSDAP and Quarrie, B. (1983) *Hitler’s Samurai – The Waffen-SS in Action*, Cambridge: Stephens.
- 11 A short report on this can be found in the section ‘March of Events’ in *Contemporary Japan*, 11–1: 3–4.
- 12 The two ambassadors serving 1928–38 were traditional diplomats: Ernst-Arthur Voretzsch (1928–33) and Herbert von Dirksen (1933–8).

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Part I

Military background

2 The Imperial Japanese Army and Germany

Sven Saaler

Introduction

Japanese–German relations from the late nineteenth century until the end of World War I were characterized by frequent and radical changes, by ruptures unknown during the early Meiji period (1868–95). The activities of German advisers contributing to Japanese modernization, particularly in the fields of medicine, law, education and constitutional matters (Andō 2000; Iklé 1974: 270–1; Mathias-Pauer 1984: 116–68), had brought about a ‘Golden Age of German–Japanese Relations’ (Mathias-Pauer 1984: 117) in the late nineteenth century. But also German military instructors and Japanese students of the military system sent to Germany became of crucial importance in the process of Japanese modernization (Lone 2000; Westney 1998; Yoshida 2002). Even after the ‘Golden Age’ of bilateral relations had come to a quite abrupt end with the Tripartite Intervention of 1895, many close personal relations between Japanese and Germans remained intact in the military sector, and, in particular, Japanese army officers continued looking to Germany as a model.

This contribution aims to trace German influence during the modernization of the Japanese army in the late Meiji (1895–1912) and Taishō (1912–26) eras. It will demonstrate that the ‘German model’ played an important role throughout this period.¹ Furthermore, it will analyse the views entertained by some of those army officers who had close contacts with Germany. By examining the German influence as it was felt in Japan rather than tracing German vanity regarding its own influence on the Far Eastern Empire, this chapter would like to answer the question of why Japanese army officers continued to consider Germany as a model notwithstanding diplomatic frictions and the collapse of the German Empire in 1918. Several biographies, autobiographies and diaries from Japanese army officers, who went to study in Germany and were central figures of the ‘German school’ within the Japanese Imperial Army, are valuable sources for this inquiry. For example, Ugaki Kazushige² starts his diary in 1902 – when he arrived in Germany – with the following lines:

1. The Nature of Germans

Integer, honest, loyal – these three virtues are historically the nature of the Germans and even characterize their behaviour in daily life. The member of every class is loyally working to fulfil his duty according to his place in society; honestly keeping every oath made; and integer they do not bend to passion.

(Ugaki Nikki I: 3)

Ugaki's characterization of 'the Germans' can be considered representative of the views held in the Imperial Army. Such ideas were to become the basis for continuous co-operation of the Japanese army with its German counterpart, or at least for ongoing Japanese study of the German military system, only interrupted by the short military confrontation that was part of World War I in 1914 (*Nichi-Doku sensō*).

Overview

Japan and Germany often are said to share similarities in terms of historical peculiarities, attributed with a 'unique path' (*Sonderweg*) towards modernization and national unification. Both countries are said to have shared similar social structures and problems due to a long tradition of feudalism, autocratic government and weak democratic traditions. Moreover, in Germany as well as in Japan, the military is usually attributed with a special role in society, politics and even the daily life of the nation. All this sometimes led to the proclamation of a 'kinship by choice' (*Wahlverwandschaft*) of both countries that seemed founded in the similarities of the 'national soul' and 'national character' (Hayashima 1982: 22). These lacunae can be found throughout the history of Japanese–German relations and were particularly important in the military field. For the Japanese army establishment there were also geo-strategic reasons, which seemed to make co-operation with Germany quite a 'natural' choice. As early as 1906, the above-mentioned Ugaki proposed an idea that sounded much like the concepts on which the bilateral co-operation of the late 1930s and early 1940s were based:

As a means to keep Russia down in case our own forces will not be [strong] enough, I would rather prefer a Japanese–German alliance than a Japanese–Chinese one. Suppressing Russia and China from two sides, East Asia will come under our hegemony, Western Europe under Germany's.

(Ugaki Nikki I: 52)

Japan and Germany were latecomers in terms of national unification. In both cases, the centralized nation-state had been founded as late as 1871. While the German Empire was proclaimed under the leadership of Prussia

after the victory over France, the Meiji state obtained its modern structure by the abolition of the feudal domains and the introduction of a centralized government system. When confronted with problems during the development of a modern nation state, Japan as well as Germany turned into totalitarian regimes that waged wars of aggression in Europe and East Asia, respectively. Due to these historical parallels, the concepts of Japan as a 'natural' ally and a 'spiritually' related friend of Germany have been very influential. Based on suggested similarities in history, society and politics, Japan was not only known as the 'Germany' or the 'Prussia of East Asia', the Japanese soldiers were also given the nickname the 'Prussians of the East'. Moreover, the Japanese statesman Itō Hirobumi was called the 'Bismarck of the Orient', and army general Kodama Gentarō was hailed as the 'Moltke of Japan' (Fane 1920: 806; Hayashima 1982: 22; Krebs 2002: 125; Kurono 2002: 55; Mathias-Pauer 1984: 125, 138).

As some of these allegories indicate, the anticipated Japanese–German 'kinship by choice' was to a large degree rooted in the military field, but did not ignore Japan's emulation of Bismarck's *Realpolitik*. A 'lesson in power politics' was given to the members of the Iwakura Mission, received by German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck in 1873, when he told them:

When a large empire has differences with another state, it will completely follow international law, as long it is advantageous for it; if this is not the case, it will not care for international law and pursue its aims with force.

(Andō 2000: 40–1)

This was a clear message, and Japan has followed this Social Darwinist approach in foreign policy and diplomacy ever since. As the modernization of the country was, above all, aiming at securing national independence, the build-up of strong armed forces received highest priority in Japan from the early part of the Meiji era (Itō 1957, I: 26; Samuels 1994: IX). Implementing the slogan 'Rich country, strong military' (*fukoku kyōhei*) (Samuels 1994: 37–8), Japan put strong emphasis on the development of the army, and it was in this context that the 'Prusso–German model' came to play a crucial part in the modernization of Japan.

French or German model?

Since the 1850s, the Tokugawa Shogunate had employed French advisers to modernize its armed forces (Kerst 1970: 41–3; Saigō 1974: 154; Sims 1998). Only a few Germans were active in Japan before 1873. Neither the Meiji Restoration of 1868 nor the German victory over France in 1870–1 changed Japan's orientation towards France in military matters. As late as 1874, the school for army officers (*Rikugun Shikan Gakkō*) was founded in Tokyo according to the French model of St Cyr and staffed mainly with

French officers (Krebs 2002: 130; Saigō 1974: 155–6; Tobe 1998: 91–5; Westney 1998: 252–3). It was only during the following decade that Germany gradually began to replace France as the leading nation in military matters, France having already lost an important proponent with Ōmura Masujirō's death in 1869 (Crowley 1974: 5; Kerst 1970: 46). More and more young officers went to Germany to study or were assigned to the legation as military attaché, vice military attaché or aide (*hosakan*), such as Katsura Tarō (1870–3 and 1875–8),³ Nogi Maresuke (1887–8), Ōi Shigemoto (Kikutarō) (1890–5 and 1902–6), Ugaki Kazushige (1902–4 and 1906–8), Ishiwara Kanji (1922–5),⁴ Ōshima Hiroshi (1921–3 and 1935–8)⁵ or the military doctor who later became a famous writer, Mori Ōgai (1884–8). Many of these officers seemed to prefer the professional attitude of German officers to that of their French counterparts, which they had experienced as instructors in Japan or on leave in France and which they considered 'lacking discipline and military seriousness' (Kerst 1970: 50, 57).

In the 1880s, promoted by Katsura (Lone 2000: 15–24; Saigō 1974: 159–60) and others, the shift to the German model accelerated. In 1882, the war college (*rikugun daigakkō*) was founded along the lines of the German *Heereshochschule*,⁶ and German instructors were hired for this new institution despite the opposition of the French advisers. By 1888, German advisers had completely replaced the French. One of the most prominent and influential among them was Major Klemens W.J. Meckel, who worked for the Japanese General Staff from 1885 to 1888, teaching military tactics (Kerst 1970; Krebs 2002: 134–5; Lone 2000: 19; Saigō 1974: 159–60; Tobe 1989: 97–8). He was followed by Hermann von Blankenburg and Ernst von Wildenbruch in 1888. After a tour by 14 army officers through Europe under the command of General Ōyama Iwao from 1884 to 1886, the system of the standing army was also reorganized along German lines. The garrison system was abolished and in 1888 replaced with a divisional form of organization (Kerst 1970: 50; Saigō 1974: 158; Tobe 1989: 111–14). The infantry drill regulations (*hohei sōten*) of 1891 were only a slightly altered version of their 1888 German blueprint (Yamada 2004: 253–4). Already before that Katsura had insisted on the establishment of a Japanese General Staff (*sanbō honbu*) modelled after the Prusso-German *Generalstab*. It was introduced in 1878 (Crowley 1974: 9; Lone 2000: 9–11; Uno 1993: 94–5; Westney 1998: 258) and was to become one of the cornerstones of the independent position of the Imperial Army within the Japanese political system, which later led to the militarization of Japanese politics (Saaler 2000, 2003).

The independent position of the army in politics was part of the dominance that the Chōshū clan – politicians and officers coming from the former feudal domain of Chōshū, which had played a central role in the overthrow of the Tokugawa Shogunate – possessed in the Meiji state. Leaders such as Katsura Tarō, Kodama Gentarō, Tanaka Giichi, Terauchi

Masatake, Yamada Akiyoshi, Yamagata Aritomo and others were central figures in the army, but also influential politicians of their time. Altogether, during the Meiji era, military officers held 39 per cent of the cabinet posts (Nagai 2002: 96), including the posts of army and navy minister which always had to be held by officers on active duty due to a regulation dating from 1900 (*gunbu daijin gen'eki bukan-sei*) (Ōe 1982: 140–1; Saaler 2000: 35–7). Military exponents such as Katsura or Yamagata were also appointed as Home Minister, Minister of Justice and even Prime Minister.

Securing independence from civilian control can be considered one of the major motives for the shift from the French to the German model during the 1870s and 1880s. While in France during the Third Republic civilian control over the military was implemented, in Japan by adopting the German military model an independence of its own was secured (*tōsuiken no dokuritsu*) (Saaler 2000: 28–39; Westney 1998: 263–4). As a basis for this, the army built a close relationship with the Imperial House and the emperor. According to Article 11 of the Meiji Constitution (1889), the Tennō himself was Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces. All male members of the Imperial House had to join the armed forces (Matsushita 1984, I: 95–7); some of them reached the highest positions. High-ranking army officers had the right of direct access to ‘their’ emperor (*iaku jōsō-ken*) – a privilege that empowered the military to reach supremacy over civilian authorities, as the army demonstrated in 1912 for the first time, when the resignation of War Minister Uehara Yūsaku led to the so-called Taishō crises and the downfall of the second cabinet of Saionji Kinmochi (Saaler 2000: 33, 43–7). The close relation with the throne resulted in the self-assessment of the army as representing ‘the army of the emperor’ (*Tennō no guntai* or *kōgun*) rather than the army of the people.

Drifting apart?

German influence on the ideology of the Japanese army officer corps was strongly established by the end of the Meiji period. In fact, German military advisers had a high reputation in Japan, but then again, Germans themselves were also proud of their own achievements, as could be noted in commentaries on Japan’s victory over China in 1894–5 (Krebs 2002: 137–8; Wippich 1997: 41–99). It seemed clear that only ‘German virtues’ had enabled the military of a small country such as Japan to defeat China, the traditional centre of the East Asian political order. During the Russo–Japanese War, 1904–5, German sympathies again were overwhelmingly with Japan, as can be seen for example in the recollections of Prince Carl Anton von Hohenzollern who had been dispatched to Manchuria as a military observer (Hohenzollern 1908).

At the same time, Japan became aware that it was particularly the

military successes that brought about international acknowledgement as a first-rate power. Ugaki noted in his diary in 1907:

The Prussian General Staff translates the first chapter of the new drill book for our infantry. They are keen to learn about our experiences and from our new knowledge.

(Ugaki Nikki I: 62)

Though the German military showed interest in Japan's victories, German politicians continued to be far less interested in Japan. Emperor Wilhelm II even ordered a restriction on the number of Japanese officers being allowed to study the military system in Prussia.⁷ This was an indication of increasing diplomatic frictions that had started with the Triple Intervention of 1895. Germany, after the end of the Sino-Japanese War, had joined Russia and France to 'advise' Japan not to acquire any territorial possessions on the Asian mainland (Iklé 1967: 122–30; Wippich 1987: 136–7), a move that naturally made Japan suspicious of German intentions in the Far East. Around the same time, racist remarks by Wilhelm II, warning of a 'Yellow Peril' (Gollwitzer 1962: 168, 177, 183, 206–7; Hashikawa 1976: 20–3) also affected Japanese-German relations. Since the turn of the century, the notion of 'race' (*jinsu*) and the vision of a coming 'clash of races' (*jinsu tōsō-ron*) became increasingly important in Japanese politics and intellectual discourse (Saaler 2002). When Japan entered World War I on the side of the Allied Powers in 1914, the text of the ultimatum that preceded the declaration of war suspiciously resembled the 'friendly advice' Germany submitted to Japan in the Triple Intervention of 1895 – demonstrating how deep Japanese bitterness about Germany's participation in this intervention was rooted (Pantzer 1984: 141–2).

Japan's annexation of Korea in 1910, her entry into World War I and the seizure of the German possession of Kiao-Chow (Qingdao) were integral parts of Japan's expansionist policies in Asia. By that time, Japan had become a 'continental power' (*tairiku kokka*) (Kitaoka 1978: 336) aiming to strengthen its position in China, while the great powers were preoccupied in Europe (Hayashima 1982: 23). Japan's entry into World War I therefore was not strictly an anti-German move, but more a consequence of an opportunistic foreign policy that focused on spreading Japanese influence in East Asia. In Germany the media complained about 'Japanese ingratitude' for guidance and advice over many years:

These impudent dwarfs have achieved nothing by themselves; they have learned everything from us, just in the way of sly Asians. Their whole state is our achievement, their whole life is just borrowed, their glamour stolen from us

(German newspaper *Bonner Generalanzeiger*,
cited in Mathias-Pauer 1984: 131)

Regardless of sentiments like these, Germany aimed at a separate peace treaty with Japan throughout the war (Hayashima 1982; Iklé 1974: 298–301). After the short military clash at Qingdao the captured Germans and Austro–Hungarians were treated well in the 15 Japanese internment camps (Krebs 1999: 331–2).

However, Japan's political attitude towards Germany became harsher, culminating in the notion of the 'German threat' in the last years of World War I. Japanese politicians and intellectuals were frequently talking of an anticipated 'German advance to the East' (*Doitsu tōzen*), for which German POWs interned in Russian camps in Siberia and the Far East seemed to be the spearhead (Saaler 2002: 4, 9–10). Although no proof of a German engagement can be found in German sources or recollections of German POWs in Siberia, Japan was convinced that Germany had plans for organizing German and Austro–Hungarian POWs who were partially liberated after the collapse of Russian authority in Siberia, and for sending troops to East Asia after concluding a separate peace treaty with the Bolshevik government. The final aim of these plans seemed clear – a direct attack on Japan, as was predicted in 1918 by Tomizu Hiroto, a nationalist–expansionist intellectual (Tomizu 1918: 82–5). Anti-German rhetoric, of course, was also part of the legitimization for the Siberian Intervention, the allied intervention in the Russian civil war, which was eventually exploited by Japan in order to increase its influence in Siberia, to create a buffer state and to establish direct colonial control.⁸

During the Japanese entanglement in Siberia (1918–22), we can again witness the rhetoric of a 'clash of races' in Japanese foreign policy, e.g. in documents such as the *Report on the secret organizations of Germany in Siberia* (Gaimushō 1919), which I have discussed elsewhere in detail (Saaler 2002). Racial frictions had been surfacing in Japan's relations with Germany and the United States since the beginning of the twentieth century and increasingly were articulated in the media, too. In February 1908, for example, the Japanese magazine *Taiyō* in a special issue had openly predicted a coming 'clash of civilizations' along racial lines (*kōhakujin no shōtotsu*), in which Germany was attributed a leading role as a propagator of the 'Yellow Peril' (*Taiyō* 1908: 129–41). Before the appearance of this issue of *Taiyō*, the idea that a racial clash could materialize in the near future was only rarely mentioned and harshly criticized as a self-fulfilling prophecy. Before and during World War I, the concept of race became an important aspect of Japanese–German frictions. However, it obviously did not affect at all the views that the officer corps of the Imperial Army had of Germany.

The consequences of World War I

More than the political complications since 1895, one would expect the military defeat and consequences of World War I – accompanied by

revolution in Germany and the collapse of the monarchy – to have fundamentally shaken the Imperial Army’s view of Germany. Irrespective of the outcome of the war, Germany was to retain its model function for the Japanese army throughout the 1920s. Japanese officers continued to go to Berlin and elsewhere to study the military system on the spot and the ‘German school’ remained the most influential group within the army. It is no coincidence that on 27 October 1921, in the south-western German spa of Baden-Baden four young Japanese army officers, all of whom were to become central figures of the army in the 1930s, came together to discuss the future of the army and ended their meeting with an oath on modernization and revitalization (Kurosawa 2000: 93; Ōe 1982: 108–9). Nagata Tetsuzan,⁹ Obata Toshirō and Okamura Yasuji and Tōjō Hideki¹⁰ had already in early writings emphasized the character of World War I as a ‘total war’ and predicted that future wars would demand the mobilization of the whole nation (*kokka sōdōin*), not only of the military resources, but also of the economy and the nation’s spirit (*seishin dōin*) (Barnhart 1987; Kurosawa 2000: 88–100). Probably nowhere else, not even in Germany itself, did the concept of ‘national mobilization’ and ‘total war’ as practised by the major powers in the last years of the war, find as much attention in political and military discussions as in Japan. Officers such as Nagata Tetsuzan, who became one of the core members of the ‘total war officers’ group (Barnhart 1987: 18), used the term ‘total mobilization’ in his writings as early as 1917 (Kurosawa 2000: 32–3). Due to the influence of this faction in the army, Germany remained of crucial importance for the Japanese military establishment.

The ‘total war officers’ within the Imperial Army had three reasons to stick to the German pattern. First, since the army had many similarities to the armed forces of Imperial Germany with regard to structure and position within the political system and society, to abruptly cast doubt on the German model would only have placed the army’s position in politics and in society in jeopardy. Therefore, argumentative strategies had to be found to legitimize the past and future application of the ‘German model’. Second, Germany under the military leadership of General Erich Ludendorff obviously had the most experience in practising ‘national mobilization’ and ‘total war’, which the Imperial Army decided it had to study in order to prepare for future wars. Third, since Germany eventually had lost the war, the army considered it at the same time necessary to learn from the German failure to secure national unity – the decisive factor that led to Germany’s defeat in the war, in the opinion of Japanese officers. Thus, although the German Imperial Army was dissolved in 1919 and reorganized into the *Reichswehr*, and civilian control of the military was established under the Weimar Republic (Carsten 1966: 32),¹¹ many Japanese army officers continued to go to Germany. The study of German military affairs and Germany’s war experience was to become an important field of inquiry for Japanese officers.

The Imperial Army in politics and society

The Imperial Army did not only follow the ‘German model’ in terms of military organization, tactics and training, but also with regards to the military’s privileged position in state and society. Since the Meiji Constitution had been drawn up with German advice, the position of the military in the Japanese political structure – with the monarch as Supreme Commander and an independent General Staff to execute the military command – resembled the German pattern to a large extent. After World War I and the collapse of Germany, the army’s role within the Japanese political system became the subject of harsh criticism. Did not the victory of the democratic powers prove the superiority of democracy over militarism? Some politicians, such as Takahashi Korekiyo from the *Seiyūkai*, went so far as to demand the abolishment of the General Staff, the main bastion of the army’s political influence (Saaler 2000: 426). The army’s conclusions from German defeat were quite different. Instead of pursuing reform, officers like Ugaki Kazushige rather tried to reaffirm the ‘German model’:

Germany has not lost the war. Due to disunity in the nation’s thought (*kokumin shisō*), the war had to be restrained and finally aborted. What made Germany fail, was neither militaristic thought (*gunkoku-shugi-teki shisō*) nor authoritarian etatist thought (*kokka shijō-shugi shisō*), but rather socialist thought, which was undermining the aforementioned.

(Ugaki Nikki I: 434)

Many Japanese officers had fallen victim to the propaganda of German conservatives, above all to the myth of the so-called *Dolchstosslegende* – a stab in the back of the German Imperial Army, ‘unbeaten in the field’, by elements that subverted national unity at the ‘home front’ – created by Ludendorff himself (Ludendorff 1921, 1922). Ugaki and other pro-German officers, however, took this for real (Ugaki Nikki I: 186).

Adhering to this myth meant that there was not much room for discussing the role of the Japanese military within the Japanese polity. The army’s activities in Taishō Japan indicate that it was ready to defend political privileges it had previously gained – the independence of the Supreme Command, the right of direct access to the Emperor and the regulation for the ministers of the army and the navy to be recruited exclusively from among officers on active duty (Ōe 1982: 140–1; Saaler 2000: 35–7). Actually, in Meiji Japan, civil–military relations had been largely free from controversies. In Imperial Germany, officers considered politics ‘dirty business’ and refrained from political activity with a few exceptions (Carsten 1966: 4). Yet, in Meiji Japan, military and political leaders formed a monolithic bloc. Due to the inclusion of soldier-politicians such as Katsura, Ōyama, Terauchi, Yamagata and others into the political elite,

military demands were given broad consideration in decision-making. While the Weimar constitution of 1919 established civilian control, in Taishō Japan we can notice not only a re-affirmation of the independence of the Supreme Command, but a growing separation of the military sphere from politics (Saaler 2000: 499–500).

The ‘old’ rather than the ‘new’ Germany therefore remained of crucial importance for the self-image of the Japanese army. The above-mentioned similarities of the German and the Japanese ‘national character’ seemed to demand continuous reliance upon the German pattern, although in reality it did not exist any more.¹² The fact that the German Revolution in 1918–19, which contributed to the final collapse of Imperial Germany had been initiated by revolts within the military, was soon forgotten. Although some voices in Japan warned of an exaggerated degree of enforcement of discipline (*gunki gekisei*) (Kurosawa 2000: 134–5) – as in the German and Russian armies before 1917 – the German model was re-affirmed in terms of discipline in the 1920s (Kerst 1970: 33–4; Matsushita 1984, II: 141).

National mobilization and ‘total war’

Probably the most important lesson that the Japanese Army learned from World War I was the conviction that Japan needed to prepare for ‘total war’, as it had been practised by the major belligerent powers by the end of that war. Tanaka Giichi, for example, already, in 1918, argued that ‘future wars will not be wars of army against army or warship against warship anymore. They will rather be wars of whole nations’ (Kurosawa 2000: 36). The army concluded in research papers and reports that future wars could only be fought by mobilizing not only the military, but also economic and industrial resources, raw materials, manpower and, above all, the ‘nation’s spirit’ (*kokumin seishin*).

During the war, the army had sent officers to the European front as observers and in fall 1915 had founded an institution to study warfare in Europe, the Investigation Committee for Military Affairs (*rinji gunji chōsa iin*) (Kurosawa 2000: 23–36). The Japanese observers saw new military developments, witnessed trench warfare and mobilization of mass conscript armies as well as an increasing use of modern artillery, tanks and other weaponry (Yoshida 1978: 38). The members of the Committee made their findings available to high-ranking officers and politicians in regular reports, the *Rinji Gunji Chōsa In Geppō*, which was issued (for internal distribution) from 1916 until 1922 (Kurosawa 2000: 30–6). Ugaki like many others was impressed by the German ability not only to fight a year-long war against overwhelming odds, but also of the success in mobilizing much of the nation’s resources (Ugaki Nikki I: 109, 163). The Japanese army was so interested in the German conduct of the war that in 1916 members of the Investigation Committee were dispatched to the internment camps for German prisoners of war in Japan to confiscate German newspapers, mag-

azines, letters and other documents in order to analyse and evaluate them (Kurosawa 2000: 29).

In the post-war years, the Japanese army continued to look to Germany while planning to modernize, and to prepare Japan for a future ‘total war’. German army leadership under General Erich Ludendorff in the last years of the war seemed to have accomplished a marvellous job in mobilizing all resources for the war effort. Actually, Ludendorff did not develop his ideas into a stringent policy of ‘total war’ until 1935,¹³ but in Japan, young officers such as Nagata Tetsuzan or Koiso Kuniaki¹⁴ by that time had already advocated the need for total national mobilization for years. A major point in their writings was the demand for economic autocracy, as Koiso emphasized in his paper *Raw Materials for the Imperial Defence* (*teikoku kokubō shigen*) in 1917 (Kurosawa 2000: 80–4). However, ‘total mobilization’ did go further in the minds of the army officers, as Nagata showed in his *Opinion Concerning Total National Mobilization* (*kokka sōdōin ni kan-suru iken*) in 1920, in which he examined the urgent necessity to establish a comprehensive system of national mobilization.¹⁵

The army did not represent an isolated voice though, and “‘total war-thinking’” was an extremely widespread phenomenon in the days after World War One and included many civilians, amongst whom [were] many of the most influential opinion leaders of the day’ (Stegewerns 2002: 156). For example, in 1918, Diet member Nagashima Ryūji advocated the establishment of an institution for the preparation of national mobilization in order to deal with the Siberian Intervention:

If we manage the Siberian Intervention in the way we conducted the Russo–Japanese War, we will surely fail. Rather, we have to grasp the opportunity and – just as Germany is practising it and as England, America and France have started practising – we have at first to mobilize the people’s spirit, then all kinds of goods in our country, and finally the whole economy. [...] It is clear that the Siberian Intervention is a good chance to promote the creation of such an institution [for national mobilization].

(Nagashima 1918: 37–8)

There was opposition against such plans and criticism of these developments in the warring nations. One of the most outspoken proponents of Taishō Democracy, Ōyama Ikuo, in a 1916 article compared the warring states of Europe, in their efforts to rally the population, with ancient Sparta. Although he admired German virtues and culture to a certain extent, he warned of over-estimating the Spartan values over those of ‘Athens’ – the archetypal ‘culture state’ for Ōyama (1987 [1916]: 157, 170–1). However, in Japan the political leadership quite soon launched the total mobilization of economic and financial resources to turn the ongoing Siberian intervention into the largest military and colonial enterprise

during the inter-war period, involving up to one-third of the Imperial Army's manpower in Eastern Siberia for four years, and in Northern Sakhalin even until 1925. Much more than a mere 'intervention', this operation grew into a major activation of financial, economic and of human resources as well, and finally led to an increased theoretical and ideological discussion about 'national mobilization'. For that very reason the Siberian Intervention has been called a 'total intervention' (*zenmen shuppei*) (Hosoya 1955: 226).

As demanded by Nagashima and others, the first institution for the organization of total mobilization of the national economy, the *Kokusei-in*, was founded in 1920. It became the cause of constant friction between military politicians and civilian bureaucrats, and was dissolved as early as 1922 (Barnhart 1987: 23–4; Saaler 2000: 428–9). Only with the foundation of the Office for Raw Materials (*shigen-kyoku*) in 1927, could the army start to establish control over economic affairs, a development that should eventually culminate in the National Mobilization Law (*kokka sōdōin-hō*) of 1938 (Samuels 1994: 96–7).

Uniting the nation

From the beginning of its existence, the military was probably the most important instrument for the young Japanese nation-state, to create, to preserve and to symbolize national unity (Obinata 2004). Conscription was not only a way to obtain recruits, but rather 'a way of building unity and commitment to national goals through the education of civilians in military values' (Smethurst 1974: 335).¹⁶ The importance of education – military as well as compulsory education – with regard to national mobilization increased because of the outcome of World War I. In a report from the Japanese military observers, which bore the title *On the armies of the belligerent states of Europe*, we read:

The mobilization of the people's hearts [*minshin no dōin*] is truly the basis for the total mobilization of the state

(Rinji gunji chōsa iin 1917: 29)

Indoctrinating the nation with 'military virtues' (*gunjin seishin*) was considered the most important prerequisite for a nation-in-arms in the event of a future total war. As Ugaki stated in his diary at the end of January 1918:

To prevail in a future war, we will have to raise the whole population of the country, arm all the people and keep them prepared.

(Ugaki Nikki I: 153)

Efforts geared to preparing total mobilization and indoctrinating the nation with military virtues had already begun before World War I. Yet,

the mental training and the ‘moral education’ (*seishin kyōiku*) the recruits received during their military service were deemed to be insufficient due to new developments and due to a continuous reduction of service time, which reached a low of 16 months in 1922 (Tsuchida 1995: 70). Therefore, other ways of preparing the population for military service were considered necessary. After touring Germany in early 1914 and studying various youth organizations, Tanaka Giichi, one of the most important advocates of ‘total war’ thinking in Japan, embarked on a reform of the Japanese youth organizations (*Seinendan*) upon his return and centralized them on a national level (Saaler 2000: 136–7; Smethurst 1974: 26–31). In the following years, the *Seinendan* developed into a means of paramilitary training for Japan’s youth in order to compensate for shortened conscription periods.

Already some years earlier, in 1910, the Imperial Veterans Association (*Zaigō Gunjin-kai*) had been founded, which on the local level organized military training, including ideological education in ‘military virtues’ and patriotism. The *Zaigō Gunjin-kai* also has been called ‘the most important mass patriotic pressure group in pre-war Japan’ (Storry 1979: 131), and as Richard Smethurst has demonstrated, already in the period immediately following World War I ‘quickly made itself a potent force for educating civilians’ in military matters (Smethurst 1974: 21). With the revision of the association’s statutes in 1917, 1921 and 1925, its role in spreading military virtues and military training in broad parts of society steadily increased. In Japanese villages, the society organized ‘military festivals’ and military training to contribute to the preparation of the youth for military service. Its ‘activities to instil patriotism’ (Smethurst 1974: 163–5) before long extended to compulsory education. From 1921 on, principals of elementary schools had to join the association (Obinata 2004: 58–9).

Gaining influence on compulsory education became an objective of utmost importance for the army from World War I. Ugaki in 1915 claimed that ‘the most important task of education is to produce good soldiers’ (Ugaki Nikki I: 101). Precisely what was intended was to create ‘good citizens’ who at the same time were ‘good soldiers’ (*ryōmin soku ryōhei*) (Kurosawa 2000: 88). In the post-war period, the army openly aimed for an ‘ultimate fusion of military and civilian education’ (Ugaki Nikki I: 119) and demanded the inclusion of military contents in school lessons as well as in extra-curricular activities of students. Educating the entire nation under the auspices of ‘military virtues’ came to be considered as the only way to prevent a recurrence of the German failure. A report by the Commission for the Investigation of Military Affairs explained:

The state which does not succeed in the strengthening of the spiritual unity (*seishinteki ketsugō*) will become weak in terms of immaterial military strength, as the present Great War has given proof for.

(Rinji gunji chōsa iin 1917: 28–9)

The most important conclusion the Japanese army drew from World War I was not to rid itself of the ghost of the German model, but to learn from the lessons of Germany's defeat and to improve Japan's military, economic and political structure accordingly. Although the assumption that Germany had not been defeated in strictly military terms, but had been forced to surrender because of the lack of political support for the military and revolutionary uprisings at home, was an invention of German conservatives around Ludendorff, it was widely believed in Japan, as the entries in Ugaki's diary testify. Strengthening integration and unity thus became one of the most urgent tasks of the army. The 'German model', whether real or just imagined, did not cease to play an important role in securing the predominant role of the military in state and society and as an instrument to enforce national integration.

Conclusion

Although Japanese–German relations between 1895 and 1918 have been characterized as 'basically unfriendly, if not hostile' (Iklé 1974: 272), the role Germany played for the Japanese army and its officer corps remained of crucial importance throughout this period as well as into the 1930s. The collapse of 'militarist Germany' in 1918–19 did not induce the Japanese military to reconsider the basic structure of Japan's armed forces, its position in state and society, and its political role. Although international isolation of Japan was imminent (Anonymous 1918) and increasing hostility among the allied nations against Japan's development could not be ignored,¹⁷ 'militarism' – with an affirmative undertone – and the 'German model' were accepted in the Imperial Army in the era after World War I without criticism. Close personal relations of army officers as well as diplomats with their German counterparts reasserted the military 'role model', and younger Japanese officers kept going to Germany for study purposes. The illusion of a special, 'spiritual' relationship between Germany and Japan remained influential until the 1930s, and thus opened the opportunity for a renewed rapprochement before World War II. In 1929, the Japanese ambassador in Berlin, Nagaoka Harukazu (1877–1949), wrote:

It is two bonds that bind the peoples of this earth together: the community of interest and the community of the soul. [...] The community of the soul can also prosper where there is no community of interest.

(Nagaoka 1929: 2–3)

This imagined and invented, but still influential idea of a unique Japanese–German relationship or a 'kinship by choice' became an important dimension of bilateral co-operation during the 1930s, when army officers

again took the lead in bringing about the rapprochement between both countries.

One proponent of close Japanese–German relations in the 1930s was Lieutenant General Ōshima Hiroshi, son of General Ōshima Ken'ichi who had been war minister, 1916–18, and later became a member of the House of Peers and the Privy Council. The son followed his father's footsteps and went to Germany in 1921 as the first deputy military attaché after World War I, in which he had fought against German forces based in Qingdao. It was Ōshima Hiroshi, who as military attaché in Berlin, in 1935–6 played a central role in the negotiations leading to the Anti-Comintern Pact (25 November 1936) and later served as Japanese ambassador to Germany (1938–9 and 1941–5).

Eventually, just as the proclaimed 'spiritual' relationship and national friendship (*Völkerfreundschaft*) between Japan and Germany proved to be a myth, the alliances, concluded in the late 1930s and early 1940s including the Tripartite Pact along with Italy (27 September 1940), turned out to be no more than an illusion that neither led to substantial political nor military co-operation (Iklé 1974: 327; Sommer 1962: 492).

Notes

- 1 Although the German impact is usually dealt with in works on the history of the Japanese army, it has, however, never been studied systematically. Not even recent works such as Edgerton 1997 or studies focusing on the idea of 'total war' in the Japanese army (Barnhart 1987) pay much attention to the German influence.
- 2 Alternative readings are Issei or Kazunari. All biographical data in this chapter are based on Hata 1991 unless otherwise specified.
Ugaki (1868–1956) had a successful army career, which culminated in his appointments of Minister of War 1924–7 and 1929–31. After that, he was governor-general in Korea. In 1937, he was asked to form a cabinet, but could not secure the support of the army. In 1938 he served as Foreign and Colonial Minister under Konoe. For contemporary English comments on Ugaki's later role in Japanese politics, see Baba, T. (1938), 'General Ugaki as Foreign Minister', in *Contemporary Japan*, 7–2: 197–207 and the English translation of a Kaizō article by Itō Masanori (1938) in *Contemporary Japan*, 7–3: 509–12 (the editors).
- 3 Katsura actually became the founder of the first Japanese–German Society (*Nichi–Doku Kyōkai*) in 1911. See Iklé 1974: 271.
- 4 For Ishiwara Kanji see Barnhart 1987: 31–5; Itō 1996–9; Peattie 1975; Schölz forthcoming.
- 5 Ōshima was later Japanese ambassador to Germany 1938–9 and 1941–5.
- 6 The German *Heereshochschule* enjoyed considerable prestige in Japan. Imperial Prince Kitashirakawa-no-miya Yoshihisa, who studied in Germany from 1871 to 1877, graduated from this supreme place of training of the Prusso–German army before returning to Japan.
- 7 Prussian War Ministry to German Foreign Office, 26 October 1903; PAAA, R/18633.
- 8 Even though it started as an allied enterprise confined to the region of Vladivostok with contingents of 6,000 troops for each participating country, Japan

- eventually dispatched as many as 72,000 troops to Siberia and engaged in full-fledged activities to colonize the region. See Hara 1989 and Saaler 2000 for details.
- 9 Nagata (1884–1935) had been promoted to the position of Director of the Military Affairs Bureau in the General Staff in 1934, but was murdered in his office by Aizawa Saburō, one of the *kōdō* (Imperial Way) faction's radical younger officers (the editors).
 - 10 While Okamura had just arrived in Europe (Funaki 1984: 32) and Obata was stationed in Berlin, Nagata joined the others from Switzerland. They met in 'Hotel Stephanie' (now 'Brenner's Park-Hotel'), with Tōjō Hideki arriving one day later. A few weeks before their meeting in Baden-Baden, Okamura and Obata had met on 8 October 1921 in Leipzig with Tōjō and Yamashita Tomoyuki (Funaki 1984: 32–3).
 - 11 At the same time, the allegedly most powerful army in the world, the Tsarist Russian Army, also had taken a leading role in the revolts that triggered the downfall of the Romanov dynasty – one more reason for the Japanese army leadership to be alarmed. See Kurosawa 2000: 134 and the entry in Ugaki Kazushige's diary: Ugaki Nikki I: 127.
 - 12 The Wilhelminian moustaches of some influential army officers in the 1930s, such as Araki Sadao (1877–1966), can be seen as visual proof of continuing pro-German attitudes in the Japanese military. Araki was one of the leaders of the *kōdō* (Imperial Way) faction. He was Minister of War 1931–4 and later Minister of Education under Konoe and Hiranuma 1938–9. After World War II, he was tried as a class 'A' war criminal and sentenced to life imprisonment (the editors).
 - 13 Ludendorff's basic ideas were published in his recollections of the Great War (Ludendorff 1921, 1922), but developed into a stringent theory of 'total war' not until 1935 with the publication of *Der totale Krieg*.
 - 14 Koiso (1880–1955) was a leading member of the *tōsei* (Control) faction. He was Minister for Colonization 1939–40, governor-general of Korea 1942–4, and Prime Minister 1944–5. After World War II, he was tried as a class 'A' war criminal and sentenced to life imprisonment (the editors).
 - 15 This report also appeared in *Rinji Gunji Chōsa Iin Geppō*, in which Nagata was one of the most frequent writers (Kurosawa 2000: 32). It is reproduced in *Kōketsu* 1981: 213–44, Koiso's report can be found, *ibid.*: 206–12.
 - 16 See Frevert 2001 for the case of Germany.
 - 17 A British source in 1916 criticized Japan's 'Prussian militarism' and expansionism: 'Japan is in fact an expansionist country. [...] It is not an exaggeration to say that Japan is the Prussia of the Orient. [...] Since England's ideals and Japan's ambitions are very different, it is impossible to create a common base [for co-operation] in the future' (Kurono 2002: 55).

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3 Naval relations between Japan and Germany from the late nineteenth-century until the end of World War II

Berthold J. Sander-Nagashima

Introduction

The subject of the relations between the Japanese and the German navies is an interesting one, because their rapprochement, starting soon after World War I, developed into the most serious threat to British predominance at sea in history. By 1942, the Japanese and German armies were involved in campaigns against China and the Soviet Union. These campaigns were impossible to win as long as Chinese and Russian troops still had their vast continental hinterlands to retreat to after losing battles and as long as their lines of supply to the Anglo-American allies were not cut. At the same time, successful operations against Britain and the United States depended on naval preconditions. Control of the high seas was a decisive factor in a world war. Successful coalition warfare might have been the key for Japan and Germany to overcome Anglo-American superiority and thus take a privileged position in the international system.

After World War I, the navies of both Germany and Japan found themselves in a position of inferiority vis-à-vis the Royal Navy and the US Navy, as stipulated by the framework of the Versailles and Washington treaty systems. Consequently, naval circles in both countries wished to change this situation as soon as possible. Thus, a common basis of naval 'revisionism' existed, which soon formed the basis of closer relations.¹

Before 1918: the establishment of official relations, the Russo-Japanese war experience and World War I

It is noteworthy that one of the first ministers of the German Reich in Japan, Karl von Eisendecher, who served in Tokyo between 1875 and 1882, was a naval officer. The first official representation of the Imperial German Navy in Japan was established in 1877 by the foundation of the German Naval Hospital (*Deutsches Marinelazarett*) at Yokohama. It was mainly used for the treatment of foreign patients and was in operation until 1911, when it was closed down. The reasons for that decision were

financial considerations and the availability of similar facilities in Germany's leasehold Kiao-Chow (Qingdao).

The Japanese Navy sent its first attaché to Berlin in 1890, a certain Captain Kataoka Shichirō. The German side followed in 1899 by appointing *Kapitänleutnant* Rebur-Paschwitz as naval attaché to Tokyo. However, due to the outbreak of the Spanish–American war as he was travelling to Japan via the USA, his orders were changed and he stayed in Washington while *Korvettenkapitän* Gühler was sent to Tokyo instead. At the turn of the century, then, bilateral naval relations had officially been established.

Both navies shared common organizational features. On the German side there were several positions that enjoyed the privilege of direct access to the throne (*Immediatrecht*), the most important of these being the *Admiralstab* (Admiralty Staff) and the *Reichsmarineamt* (Imperial Naval Office). These were mirrored on the Japanese side by the *Gunreibu* (Naval General Staff) and the *Kaigunshō* (Navy Ministry). An important difference was that while matters of personnel were handled in Germany by a third influential and independent institution enjoying direct access to the Kaiser, the *Marine-Kabinett* (Naval Bureau of Personnel), its Japanese counterpart, the *Jinji-Kyoku*, was incorporated into the Navy Ministry.

Such an organizational structure was designed to guarantee the monarch a maximum of direct control over the forces. While in Germany, however, Kaiser Wilhelm II actually tried to exercise a form of 'personal rule' and became increasingly burdened with decisions he was simply untrained to make; the situation was different on the Japanese side. Since the Meiji Restoration, all decisions of importance had been made by a group of oligarchs 'in the name of the Tennō'; the latter would give his consent to his advisers' proposals without much ado. As they were inclined to observe at least a certain degree of consensus, this resulted in a higher degree of steadiness in decision-making than seen in Germany, where Wilhelm II's erratic temperament led to decisions which produced results that were changed only a short time later. Because the Kaiser was very fond of his navy, these results could be felt in naval matters as well. Since the turn of the century, Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz, the *Staatsekretär des Reichsmarineamts* (a position which was effectively equivalent to Minister of the Navy) had embarked on a policy of building a fleet that was to become strong enough to win a decisive battle against the Royal Navy in the North Sea and inherit the mantle of naval predominance which had traditionally belonged to Britain. This would have made Germany Britain's successor as the superpower of the period. Tirpitz was anxious, however, to carefully camouflage his real intentions so as not to provoke a British pre-emptive strike. At the same time, the Japanese had just established their navy with British help and concluded the Anglo–Japanese Alliance (1902), which had made them an acknowledged partner of one of the great powers for the first time.

When the Russo–Japanese War erupted in 1904, Germany, although declaring its neutrality, associated itself with the Russians by allowing German shipping companies to supply the Russian naval reinforcements sent from the Baltic to the Far East. This was only one sign of the rather friendly German attitude vis-à-vis the great rival of the British. As a result, the German naval attaché in Tokyo, *Fregattenkapitän* Konrad Trummler, was largely confined to official Japanese announcements and could report little of interest about the war.

The German Navy, eager to learn about the naval aspects of the war in the Far East, dispatched observers to the Russian Headquarters at Port Arthur. *Korvettenkapitän* Albert Hopman, a Russian-speaking career officer of the Admiralty Staff and *Kapitänleutnant* Hentschel von Gilgenheimb of the German Far Eastern cruiser squadron were appointed as official observers in mid-March 1904.² They arrived there a month later as the very first foreign observers and stayed until August when they were withdrawn because of the imminent Japanese assault against the fortress. During their assignment they could move freely, talk to Russian officers as they wished and inspect the damage that Russian vessels had sustained. They were also allowed to send their reports to Germany uncensored and Hopman's reports had a considerable influence on the views of the top echelons of the Imperial German Navy.³

During World War I there was very little fighting between German and Japanese forces besides the siege of Qingdao, which ended in victory for the Japanese side within a couple of months. Some Japanese destroyers based at Malta saw action in the Mediterranean during the war as convoy escorts but both the army and navy avoided being drawn into the fighting to a greater degree. Thus, professional enmity was not very deep rooted. The German and Austrian POWs were treated very well in the Japanese camps and approximately seven per cent of the roughly 5,000 men decided to stay in Japan after the war (Sander-Nagashima 1998: 65).

1919–24: The Japanese 'run' on German naval expertise

Although Germany and Japan had been enemies in World War I, after the end of the war relations between the navies of the two countries quickly became closer. During the war, Japan's policy towards China had alienated Tokyo from the Anglo–American powers, who had become Japan's main rivals in the naval arms race. Since the naval development plans threatened to drive the country into bankruptcy, the government welcomed the opportunity to limit them by means of the Washington Treaties in 1921. This, however, meant the end of the Anglo–Japanese Alliance and the locking up of a 3:5:5 ratio in the tonnage of capital ships vis-à-vis the Royal Navy and US Navy. Influential figures in the Japanese Navy such as Admiral Katō Kanji strongly disagreed with this, but were held at bay for some time by Navy Minister Admiral Katō Tomosaburō, who also

became prime minister shortly after the Washington Treaties were concluded (Asada 1977: 150). The latter died prematurely in 1923 and from then on the surging tide of the 'fleet faction' (*kantai-ha*) within the navy could not no longer be successfully checked by the 'treaty faction' (*jōyaku-ha*).

In addition, the Anglo-American sources for naval technology had dried up for the Japanese. Thus the *Kantoku* (lit. 'overseer'), which was basically an organization of the Imperial Navy established to obtain naval expertise from abroad, shifted its activities increasingly to Germany. There, the navy had not only become a hotbed of mutiny and revolution at the end of the war, but with the foundation of the Weimar Republic the Kaiser's former favourite toy had finally lost its privileged position. By the time of the Versailles Treaty, the German fleet had been reduced to a *quantité négligeable* that comprised only some five percent of the pre-war personnel and only three dozen small and outdated vessels. Modern armaments like submarines and planes had become taboo. Large amounts of naval material were discarded and well-trained personnel were dismissed. As spoils of war, the Japanese had acquired some German U-boats, torpedo boats and several aircraft (Sander-Nagashima 1998: 52). However, the Japanese Navy was not content with that. Against the background of the dire economic and social situation in the early Weimar years, an almost ideal opportunity for the Imperial Japanese Navy to skim the German arms market presented itself.

As early as April 1919, senior naval personnel had accompanied Tōgō Shigenori's delegation to Germany (Chapman 1984: 234; Tōgō 1952: 31). However, the most important visit was the one by Katō Kanji in autumn 1920. Katō was on a one-year tour of inspection to the USA and Europe. After returning to Japan, he reported enthusiastically on his findings in Germany and even presented them to the imperial family (Tahira 1975: 333). From now on, a Japanese run on German naval technology set in which lasted until the mid-1920s. The Imperial Japanese Navy took the initiative in three ways: by making contacts with civilians who had good relations with the German Navy, by sending Japanese officers and civilians in large numbers to Germany to study, and by re-establishing official relations by dispatching a naval attaché to Germany.

With regard to the German Navy's civilian connections, the key figures were Dr Friedrich-Wilhelm Hack and Wolfram von Knorr. Hack had been captured by the Japanese when they conquered Qingdao in 1914 and had spent several years in Japanese POW camps. During his captivity, he learned Japanese and then worked for Mitsubishi Corporation. Hack's brother Wilhelm was a naval officer who had also served at Qingdao. After the war, he continued to work for the German *Marineleitung*, although he had officially retired from the navy (Sander-Nagashima 1998: 58). Friedrich-Wilhelm Hack also seems to have been acquainted with Canaris, who later became head of the *Abwehr*, the German military

intelligence service (Sander-Nagashima 1998: 58). After his return to Germany in 1920, Hack worked for a group of Japanese industrialists who travelled Europe, especially Germany. One year later, he started a business co-operation with Adolf Schinzinger, who had been a representative for Krupp in Japan before the war and was now the Japanese honorary consul in Berlin.⁴ Hack also became an important go-between for the Japanese Navy and the German aircraft designer Ernst Heinkel (Thorwald 1953: 355). In 1923, Schinzinger and Hack offered the *Marineleitung* their services in negotiations with the Japanese concerning the exchange of technology.⁵ Already in 1921, Heinkel had received an order from Araki Jirō, who was the first Japanese naval attaché in Berlin after World War I (Nowarra 1980: 86; Thorwald 1953: 111). The order was remarkable since – according to the Versailles Treaty – it was an illegal act for an official representative of one of Germany's former enemies. In 1924, the Japanese again ordered aircraft designs from Heinkel. When Heinkel mentioned the ban on constructing military aircraft in Germany, the Japanese immediately assured him that they would give him early warning whenever the allied commissions intended to inspect his facilities. Heinkel commented on it in his memoirs later: 'That day a co-operation with Japan evolved that was to last for decades' (Thorwald 1953: 130). This case was by no means an isolated one since the Japanese went to considerable effort to support other designers as well as to benefit from their work (Chapman 1986: I158).

Wolfram von Knorr had been in Tokyo as Germany's last naval attaché before World War I but was now retired from the navy. In 1920, he had returned to Tokyo as a newspaper correspondent and representative for Stinnes Heavy Industries.⁶ Apparently, Knorr had been successful in negotiating a contract between Stinnes and the Japanese Navy regarding a huge amount of steel for shipbuilding purposes.⁷ In the early 1920s, he founded his own company, the *Auslands GmbH* in Berlin, where he also had insider contacts with the *Marineleitung* through another retired officer named Johann Bernhard Mann. Like about a dozen former officers, Mann was at the disposal of the Commander-in-Chief of the *Reichsmarine* (*Chef der Marineleitung*).⁸ It seems that he later worked for Japanese naval intelligence during World War II. Nevertheless, the German Navy preferred to work with Schinzinger and Hack in the long term (Sander-Nagashima 1998: 108).

The Japanese let it be known that they would appreciate the assignment of a German naval attaché to Tokyo or at least the delegation of some naval experts.⁹ Such an idea, however, met with stalwart resistance from the German Foreign Ministry, where unpleasant memories of the independence of the military representatives before World War I were still extant. Thus, German attachés were not reintroduced until 1933. German naval experts were, however, enthusiastically sought after by the Japanese Navy, with some even acting as advisers to the Japanese delegation at the Washington Naval Conference.¹⁰

By June 1923, top-secret negotiations were underway between the two navies to exchange expertise. The later agreement to build submarines for the German Navy in Kobe, using German blueprints, materials and personnel, seems to have its roots here.¹¹ Three U-boats were built at the Kawasaki shipyard in Kobe with the help of German engineers and under the supervision of retired *Kapitänleutnant* Robert Bräutigam. This was, of course, a highly delicate undertaking since it meant the active support and use of German naval technology. Such a venture was attractive to the Germans as well, though it contradicted the stipulations of the Versailles Treaty. Encouraged by the Imperial Navy's friendly stance, the *Reichsmarine* initiated direct talks with the Japanese naval attaché Komaki Wasuke in early 1925. He was not only informed about the top secret and illegal German development of torpedo bombers and aircraft engines, but the Germans also inquired about a possible co-operation with the Japanese Navy.¹² The Japanese side warmly greeted such an idea, even though they apparently preferred to work directly with the companies involved. Consequently, negotiations between BMW¹³ and Kawasaki concerning the construction of aircraft engines evolved; these were concluded successfully in 1927, when the first prototype of the engine was built under German direction.¹⁴ German aviation experts dominated the field when it came to foreign support for Japanese development.¹⁵

1924–33: German special naval envoys, training cruises and the crisis of the Washington Naval Treaty system

From 1923 onwards the *Reichsmarine* was finally able to return to a normal peacetime routine, conduct exercises and resume overseas training cruises. With the restoration of normality Admiral Behncke, the Commander-in-Chief of the *Reichsmarine*, undertook to sound out the state of relations with the Japanese, which had become friendlier since the end of the war. He did so by sending an officer to Japan under the pretext of having him inspect the progress and any possible needs of the German-aided submarine construction project at Kobe. A couple of months later, just after he retired from the navy, Behncke visited Japan himself.

The officer picked as Behncke's special envoy was Wilhelm Canaris, a promising former U-boat officer. When he arrived in Japan in summer 1924 he was received immediately by the top brass of the Navy Ministry and the Naval General Staff, including the heads of the technical and intelligence departments. Thus Canaris, who was a mere *Korvettenkapitän* (a junior grade Commander) at the time, was received at the Navy Ministry by some of the most senior officers of the Japanese Navy. The Japanese were also quick to acquaint him with their best technical experts with whom he conferred for three days. Canaris was careful not to reveal too much, but he informed his interlocutors of the top-secret measures that the *Reichsmarine* had taken to preserve the forbidden expertise on U-boat

construction by founding an engineering company in the Netherlands. In his final report, he stated that the Japanese Navy was very interested in acquiring German naval technology because of the quality of the German products. By then the Royal Navy was – for political reasons – unwilling to provide such expertise any more. Canaris, however, saw no common interests between the Imperial Japanese Navy and the *Reichsmarine*, which would serve as a basis for co-operation. In his opinion, the German side lacked an essential prerequisite for it: sufficient military weight to be viewed as a potential ally (Chapman 1986: 126).

An event that was to be of the utmost importance for the further development of naval relations between Berlin and Tokyo was the London Conference in 1930, which basically aimed at extending the stipulations of the Washington Treaty to cruisers. Katō Kanji, by now head of the Navy General Staff, vigorously opposed Navy Minister Takarabe's intention to once again adhere to the 3:5:5 ratio vis-à-vis the Anglo-American powers.¹⁶ In order to prevent the signing of the treaty Katō insisted on his constitutional right to directly advise the Tennō of his views on the matter. But since his opponents had better connections with court circles, they were able to manipulate the timing of Katō's reception in their favour. Consequently, the Emperor had already granted his consent for the signing of the London treaty before Katō could present his objections. Thereupon, Katō had his Chief of Staff, Suetsugu Nobumasa, inform the press about what had happened. Katō considered it a violation of the Emperor's privilege of supreme command (*tōsuiken*) that he had not been able to present his case before the decision had been made. Although he subsequently had to resign and could not prevent the signing of the treaty in London, he had public opinion and – even more important – the opinion of the majority of the middle-ranked naval officers on his side. Subsequently, adherents of the *jōyaku-ha* were successively removed from key posts in the navy. It soon became clear that the naval treaties would most likely not be prolonged by the Japanese side beyond 1936. Thereafter a new naval arms race could be expected, and in this, the relative importance of Germany as a source of technology would grow more prominent. The possibility of an armed conflict with Britain and the USA would increase, and in such a situation comrades-in-arms would be an asset. Thus, the German Navy became at least a possible ally and was soon treated as such by its Japanese counterpart.

1933–7: Drawing closer: Japanese development aid, disappointment and exchange of intelligence

The early 1930s held some important changes in store for the German Navy as well. The first was the decision of the government to re-establish military and naval attachés abroad. Thus, in 1933 *Fregattenkapitän* Paul Wenneker arrived in Tokyo. Second, German planning began to leave the

limitations of the Versailles Treaty behind: already in 1932, the navy had planned to include an aircraft carrier and submarines in its fleet and to establish a fleet air arm.¹⁷ With the end of the Washington Treaty system in sight, the Japanese Navy was interested in developing closer ties with the *Reichsmarine* and in granting it development aid that might make it a potentially much more powerful factor in the future.

One of the first steps in that direction was the visit of Admiral Matsushita Hajime to Berlin in May 1934. Matsushita was the Commander of the training squadron and while his ships visited southern France, he made a round trip to Paris, Berlin and London. The very cordial atmosphere of Matsushita's visit to Berlin was also noted by foreign observers, who even speculated about a secret alliance.¹⁸ That the Japanese really meant business became clear at the end of the year when they took the unprecedented step of acquainting a former German naval officer, Joachim Coeler, who now worked for the Air Ministry (*Reichsluftfahrt-Ministerium*) with the fleet air arm.¹⁹ Coeler was in Japan for that purpose for two months. During that time, he and Wenneker were granted a tour aboard the aircraft carrier *Akagi*. Wenneker rated the visit as an extraordinary step and his report was even read by Hitler.²⁰ Wenneker had been granted visits aboard other ships as well and had been able to talk with Katō's confidant, Admiral Suetsugu. The latter had hinted that the Japanese would claim full parity with the Anglo-American powers at the forthcoming naval conference and would not accept anything else. When Wenneker stated that the Japanese would then have to face British hostility, Suetsugu answered that the Japanese side would accept this calmly.²¹

The Germans reciprocated with the admission of Japanese officers for an inspection of their modern *Panzerschiff* (pocket battleship) *Admiral Scheer*. This was followed by a Japanese offer to invite German specialists to Japan for an in-depth technical study of aircraft carriers in exchange for the latest German dive-bomber design.²² Shortly thereafter, the Japanese indicated that they were interested in a mutual exchange of design engineers. They even offered to train German naval air arm crews and grant assistance in the difficult initial stages of carrier operations after the completion of the ships.²³ In autumn 1935, a German commission of specialists inspected a Japanese carrier. They were given full information on all technical matters, were able to watch flight operations aboard and were even allowed to participate themselves. Both the members of the commission and Wenneker were baffled about the degree of co-operation (English translations of the relevant parts of the related reports can be found in Krug *et al.* 2001: 105–8).

This clearly indicated that the Japanese Navy placed high hopes on co-operation in the field of naval aviation, which was considered of special importance by Admiral Yamamoto Isoroku in November 1934.²⁴ Despite the kind treatment of the German aircraft carrier commission, the Germans were reluctant to adequately repay their partner's efforts, which

led to a certain degree of disappointment on the Japanese side. They nevertheless still treated Wenneker better than the other foreign attachés when it came to requests for visits of naval facilities.

In spring 1935, the Hitler government had unilaterally declared the re-establishment of the country's *Wehrhoheit*, the right to independently decide on the size, armaments and stationing of Germany's armed forces. This was a clear breach of the Versailles Treaty, but it was enthusiastically greeted by the Japanese Navy, which hoped that a German naval build-up would increase the pressure on the Royal Navy in Europe and thus create a diversion from which they hoped to benefit in the long run. Wenneker was repeatedly congratulated by Japanese officers who had this perspective in mind.²⁵ However, the Japanese were soon deeply disappointed by the Anglo-German Naval Agreement in 1935, in which Germany agreed to confine itself to 35 per cent of the tonnage of the Royal Navy. In the Japanese Navy, there had been hopes that the Germans would adamantly resist any limitations and thus put pressure on the British. With this in mind, the Japanese had even advocated German participation in the London Naval Conference. The Japanese bitterly remarked that they regarded the agreement almost as an alliance.²⁶ Although that was not the case, from this point on Wenneker was approached repeatedly by his British and American counterparts in Tokyo, who tried to use him as a source on Japanese intentions regarding the London Naval Conference and subsequent naval development plans. But apart from the fact that Wenneker did not show any inclination to disclose useful information, the Japanese were also very careful and kept their plans strictly secret, even from the Germans. With the failure of the London Conference, naval arms limitation expired by the end of 1936 and a new arms race erupted.

Although disappointed, the Japanese wished to maintain good relations with the German Navy. For that purpose, they tried to co-operate in the field of intelligence; a limited exchange of information about the Soviet Union was agreed on by the end of 1935. It was extended in 1937 and again in 1939, this time to include intelligence on France, Great Britain and the USA. From 1938 onwards, the conduct of these intelligence operations was taken over by the *Abwehr* and the *Oberkommando der Wehrmacht* (OKW), the successor of the War Ministry. Early in World War II intelligence co-operation included the linking of networks of agents in the USA and signal intelligence against the US Navy.

The signing of the Anti-Comintern Treaty in November 1936 seemed to be a signal for the rapprochement of Germany and Japan. However, in the *Kriegsmarine's* view, the treaty had no particular importance, and the Imperial Japanese Navy had only grudgingly accepted it. In fact, neither of the navies had been involved in the negotiations. Since the treaty was part of an anti-Soviet policy, Japanese naval officers feared that it might be supportive of the army's 'northern thrust', which focused on a possible military operation on the Asian mainland against the USSR. Such plan-

ning, however, was contrary to the intentions of the navy, where a 'southern thrust' to acquire the rich South-east Asian oil fields was favoured. Japanese naval circles feared that a war against the Soviet Union would be Japan's ruin no matter how the war ended and had therefore only assented to the treaty after they had received assurance from the army that such a war was not being considered.²⁷

1937–45: From crisis to war and the limits of co-operation

In the meantime, the friendly relations between the two navies were displayed with ostentation. The cruiser *Ashigara* visited Europe in May 1937, with the mission of representing the Imperial Japanese Navy at the festivities for the coronation of King George VI. After that, the ship made a call at Kiel – the first visit of a Japanese warship to Germany. At Kiel both sides celebrated their naval commemoration days: 27 May, commemorating the Battle of Tsushima for the Japanese and 31 May, *Skagerraktag*, commemorating the Battle of Jutland, for the Germans. Japanese propaganda specialists on the 'Ashigara' shot footage of the journey that was released later. Two-thirds of it dealt with the cordial welcome the ship had received in Germany. The propaganda specialists had been approached by crew members telling them 'with tears in their eyes' about their overwhelmingly friendly reception from the German population. Captain Joachim Lietzmann, naval attaché in Tokyo (1937–40), rated the movie as 'the best I've ever seen'.²⁸

However, Lietzmann also had more relevant things to write about. His reports on the Japanese Navy's attitude vis-à-vis Britain later proved to be of the highest importance for the *Marineleitung* early in World War II. Lietzmann cited the judgement of 'his old friend', the Chief of Naval Intelligence Nomura Naokuni, regarding the US and the Royal Navies. With regard to the clashes that had occurred in 1937 between Anglo-American and Japanese forces in China, Nomura considered that the Americans had turned out to be generally 'reasonable and calm'. According to Nomura, it was possible 'to talk with them'. The British on the other hand had lost the sympathy of the Japanese, and anti-British sentiments especially, among the navy's younger officers, had reached a point, which made 'occasional excesses in current armed hostilities understandable'. Nomura said that the navy should even support these kinds of feelings, because it was necessary to be as well prepared as possible for a conflict 'that sooner or later would occur'.²⁹ At the height of the *Sudeten* crisis in Europe in the summer of 1938, Admiral Inagaki Ayao, the navy's official delegate at the 1935 London Conference, told Lietzmann that 'in case of a European conflict the German Navy could be sure [...] that the Japanese Navy would side with Germany and would use the opportunity to move against England'.³⁰ Lietzmann concluded that if Britain was tied down somewhere else the Imperial Navy would take advantage of such a 'possibly unique chance', the most likely target being Singapore.³¹

With the possibility of war with the British Empire within reach, the *Kriegsmarine*, with Hitler's approval, officially approached the Japanese Naval Attaché Kojima in September 1938 to open talks about Japanese support of the German war effort by means of intelligence, logistical support and propaganda.³² Kojima replied that the Imperial Navy was 'basically' ready to comply with German wishes but that details had to be decided on a case-by-case basis.³³ In the context of the *Seekriegsleitung's* (Naval War Staff) operational thinking, Japan from this point on appeared as a counterweight to the United States and as an important factor for German economic warfare. In early 1939, the German Naval War Staff considered maritime areas under Japanese control as being among the few in which the supply of German naval forces would be possible for an extended period of time.³⁴ The Japanese Naval General Staff had begun, in strict secrecy even from the Navy Ministry, to inform Lietzmann about movements of French and British forces in the vicinity. Lietzmann had also asked the Navy Ministry to provide protection for German merchantmen, especially in and around Shanghai. He received the reply that Japanese naval forces would prevent French and British attacks against German ships 'if possible'.³⁵ That left all possibilities open. Thus, Inagaki's above-mentioned words were not to be taken at face value.

Such an attitude reflected the very reluctant stance of the Japanese Navy, or – to be more precise – of Navy Minister Yonai Mitsumasa. It was, however, opposed by the majority of the middle-ranked officers, who strongly resented the 'weak-kneed' attitude of their conservative senior officers. Yonai was especially opposed to the alliance negotiations that the Japanese ambassador to Germany, Ōshima Hiroshi, had taken up with the German Foreign Minister Ribbentrop in the summer of 1938. Viewed from the navy leadership's perspective, a co-operation of some sort and a certain degree of technical exchange with Germany was fully sufficient for the time being. Yonai and his supporters, Yamamoto Isoroku (his deputy) and Inoue Shigeyoshi (head of the Department for Naval Affairs), wished to avoid any kind of obligation that could involve Japan in a war with the Western powers in Europe. In their opinion, the 'southern advance' plan was best served if pressure was put on Britain and France in Europe by Hitler's threats. This could be used for a *fait accompli* in South East Asia. Yonai and his followers feared that a full alliance with Germany and Italy could result in an intervention of the United States in support of Japan's opponents, something that had to be avoided at any cost.³⁶ Yonai, of course, met resistance against his position not only from the navy but also from the army. However, being a well-versed tactician he was able to use the cumbersome decision-making process of the Japanese political system to his advantage. Premier Hiranuma's cabinet was divided on this question and Yonai, together with Finance Minister Ishiwata and Foreign Minister Arita was able to fend off all efforts to conclude an alliance from the German side, the

army and Ōshima until the negotiations stalled as an effect of the German–Soviet Non-Aggression Pact of 23 August 1939. The pact actually represented a godsend to the Imperial Navy. While the army and public opinion were shocked about it, Lietzmann found no such reaction in the Navy Ministry when he explained the treaty.³⁷

When war broke out in Europe on 1 September 1939, the *Seekriegsleitung* inquired about the extent of possible support by Italy, the USSR and Japan for Germany's war at sea. It specifically asked for the pocket battleships that were used as commerce raiders to be granted access to facilities in the Far East.³⁸ In November, the Germans were informed that the Japanese were not willing to openly compromise their neutrality by allowing the German Navy to use their ports but were willing to cooperate along the lines that had been agreed upon in 1938.³⁹ Meanwhile German victories in Europe caused concern in Japan. A German attack against the Netherlands was expected sooner or later and that raised the question of what was to become of the rich Dutch colonies in Southeast Asia, which were the main target of the Imperial Navy's 'southern advance' plans. In particular, the navy feared that the United States might declare a protectorate there. From November onwards, Japanese naval forces were prepared for operations against the Dutch East Indies (Tahira 1975: 387, 431), while the Germans focused their attention on trade war. Britain tried to inhibit neutral shipping of German goods and the Japanese reaction to this was noted with keen interest by German observers. British seizure of German goods aboard Japanese ships was considered a violation of international law and the Japanese answered by threatening to confiscate equal amounts of British merchandise in the Far East, which was good news indeed for the *Seekriegsleitung*.⁴⁰

The Japanese Navy constituted the world's third largest fleet and therefore the Japanese threat of retaliation was not to be taken lightly by the British. Even if not allied with Japan formally it might pay for the Germans to be on friendly terms with the Japanese because this might render the traditional British naval strategy of blockade useless or at least severely limit its effectiveness. London obviously also saw this as an important question and seems to have decided to test the Japanese readiness to react to provocation. On 21 January 1940 the Japanese steamer *Asama Maru* was stopped by a British cruiser not far from Yokosuka Naval Station and 21 Germans were abducted from the ship.⁴¹ This incident led to a public outcry in Japan and was protested against by the Japanese government, although it did not come as a complete surprise to the *Seekriegsleitung*. Already four days after the war had started the Japanese Navy Ministry had answered a query that according to international law they could not guarantee the safety of Germans aboard Japanese ships.⁴² Japanese 'retaliation' for the incident turned out to be very harmless: three days later, a British steamer was stopped in Chinese waters, but only the papers were checked.

The German successes in the campaigns against Scandinavia and Western Europe in spring and summer 1940, however, sparked off Japanese worries about a possible, highly unwelcome allied involvement in the Dutch East Indies. Therefore, measures were announced to land troops there immediately in case 'third powers' would intervene.⁴³ From April 1940 onwards the Germans were offered safe anchorages for their auxiliary cruisers in the Carolines and Marshall Islands. Yet, it was not until March 1941 that the Japanese Navy agreed to supply German ships in East Asian waters.⁴⁴

Auxiliary cruiser operations peaked in the winter of 1940–1. Through successfully cracking the British codes, the *Kriegsmarine* gained a spectacular booty in autumn 1940: On 11 November the British steamer *Automedon* was captured and highly classified papers of the British War Cabinet fell into German hands. The papers clearly revealed the vulnerability of Singapore and the inability of the Royal Navy to send a fleet there to defend the base in case of a Japanese attack. The Japanese Navy was duly informed in December. Raeder and his staff seem to have hoped that these findings represented that 'unique opportunity' that Lietzmann had mentioned in 1938. At a conference with Hitler in December 1940, Raeder even proposed setting war against the Soviet Union (code-name '*Barbarossa*') aside in favour of intensified warfare against Britain, considering a Japanese attack on Singapore a key element in this scheme (Wagner 1972: 173–4). However, the Imperial Navy could not be moved to take a more aggressive stance against Britain. When Admiral Kondō of the Navy General Staff was pressed in March 1941 to take active steps in that direction, he answered that the preparations for an attack against Singapore had been made but an assault would only be launched 'when the time has come and no other path remains open'.⁴⁵ German naval leaders seem to have failed to clearly recognize Japanese dependency on raw materials imported from the United States and the threat the US Navy was considered to be by the Japanese Navy.⁴⁶

After the Tripartite Pact had been concluded in September 1940 the Japanese Navy dispatched a large 'inspection group' to Germany, led by the above-mentioned Admiral Nomura.⁴⁷ However, no liaison for the purpose of an exchange of operational intentions or views was intended by this.⁴⁸ Actually, throughout World War II, the navies never shared operational plans. Even the conclusion of the military alliance in early 1942 only resulted in a division of operational spheres that was identified as 70° East longitude. In addition, no advance information was exchanged between the respective partners, even about significant events like the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor in early December 1941.

There was a certain amount of blockade running activities both by German ships and Japanese and German submarines (Krug *et al.* 2001: 199–232). Moreover, in December 1942 the Japanese Navy offered the *Kriegsmarine* the use of bases in the Indian Ocean, which resulted in the

deployment of some U-boats there, codenamed 'Monsun'. These activities were, however, of little significance for the war in general.

German support for their Japanese comrades-in-arms in the second half of World War II was very limited. The reason for this was mainly the scarcity of assets, but also the fact that the new Chief of the *Kriegsmarine*, Karl Dönitz, showed little inclination to actively co-operate with the Japanese. On Hitler's orders two U-boats were donated to the Tennō (Sander-Nagashima 1998: 519), but when the Japanese Navy applied for the deployment of modern 'Walther' boats to the Far East, Dönitz declined,⁴⁹ and when they asked for German submarines to support the defence of the Philippines against US attacks only a single boat was made available by the end of 1944. On the other hand, the Imperial Navy was not willing to use the German technicians that had been sent to Japan to help with the reproduction of the donated German U-boats.⁵⁰ At the root of this was a different philosophy on the part of the Japanese Navy regarding the way submarines were to be used in warfare.

Conclusion

After World War I, both the German and Japanese navies had a common interest, namely the revision of the Anglo-American-dominated treaties. A result of this was the remarkable Japanese interest in German naval technology and the readiness not only to turn a blind eye to illegal German developments but even to participate actively in these ventures. The Imperial Navy's development aid to the Germans in the field of aircraft carriers was unprecedented in so far as no other foreign power had ever been granted anything comparable. The traditional roles of teacher and student had been reversed for the first time: now the Japanese taught an industrialized Western power high-tech.

But the limits of naval co-operation became obvious very soon. Unwilling to closely co-ordinate with their Japanese counterparts and showing mistrust towards them, the German naval leaders were reluctant to wholeheartedly pay back the favours they had received. When it came to decision-making on issues of grand strategy the *Oberkommando der Wehrmacht* prevailed while the navy only played a secondary role. Furthermore, leading German naval officers misinterpreted the basic principles of Japanese naval policy. Thus, in 1940, the high hopes placed on a possible Japanese attack against Singapore were disappointed. On the other hand, the German war of annihilation against the Soviet Union was a factor that the Japanese Navy absolutely could not endorse. Any participation in such a war would have been detrimental to its 'southern thrust'.

What remained was a certain amount of anti-Anglo-American sentiment in both navies, a focus on technical exchange and, most remarkably, the absence of even the intention to closely co-ordinate policy and strategy.

Notes

- 1 For a more detailed version for the part after World War I see: Sander-Nagashima 1998 and Krug *et al.* (eds) 2001.
- 2 BA-MA, RM 5/5764, Wilhelm II to Büchsel, 13 March 1904.
- 3 See Admiralstab der Marine (1906–9) *Der Krieg zwischen Russland und Japan 1904–05*, 3 vols, Berlin and BA-MA, RM 3/4314, Dienstschrift der kaiserlichen Marine Nr. LXII. *Erfahrungen und Folgerungen aus dem russisch-japanischen Kriege für den Bau und die Armierung von Kriegsschiffen*, 22 March 1905. Both publications were intended for internal use only.
- 4 NARA, RG 38, 14166-A C-10-1, Report of US naval attaché in Berlin, 23 Feb. 1923, Serial No. 50.
- 5 BA-MA, RM 20/1638, Schinzinger and Hack to *Marineleitung* (KL Steffan), 13 June 1923, J. No. 1369 H/Z.
- 6 NARA, RG 165, Box 548, report of US military attaché in Tokyo, 27 July 1920, 1766-L-14(1) and *ibid.*, ONI to MID, 1 July 1920, 1766-L-12(1).
- 7 NARA, RG 165 Box 548, US naval attaché Tokyo to ONI, Sept. 1921 (no day given), 1766-L-38.
- 8 BA-MA, RM 6/380, handwritten list of the *Herbststellenbesetzung der Marineleitung* (list of personnel in the Naval High Command as per autumn) 1923 (Kontr.Nr. 15), undated and no B.Nr., gKdos.
- 9 NARA, RG 165 Box 548, report of US military attaché, Tokyo, 1 Feb. 1921, 1766-L-23(1).
- 10 NARA, RG 165 Box 57, letters of US military attaché Tokyo to Army Chief of Staff G2, 6 Dec. 1921 and 15 Dec. 1921, 60–223(412) and 60–223(414). Those indicate that the Americans monitored von Knorr's telegram correspondence.
- 11 See RM 20/1638, fol 7, Schinzinger and Hack to *Marineleitung* (KL Steffan), 13 June 1923, J.No. 1369 H/Z. Important parts of the agreement were, due to the delicacy of the matter, not put down in written form but kept orally. They are, however, mentioned in BA-MA, RM 20/1635, Bericht des Korvettenkapitän Canaris über die Reise nach Japan vom 17.5. bis 30.9.1924, undated, B.Nr.A II 500/24 Geheim. Stabsache. This document will be cited henceforth as 'Canaris report'.
- 12 BA-MA, RM 20/1638, Unterredung mit dem japanischen Marineattaché, am 6 Februar 1925, 6 Feb. 1925, B.Nr. A II 93/25 geheime Stabsache.
- 13 The company was founded in 1916 as *Bayerische Flugzeugwerke* and changed its name to BMW (*Bayerischen Motoren Werke*) in 1922. It was not until 1929 that BMW produced its first car. In the meantime, the company had established itself as well-known producer of aircraft engines (the editors).
- 14 BA-MA, RM 20/292, Bericht des Generalkonsulates Kobe über den Einfluss des deutschen Flugzeugbaues in Japan, 12 Sept. 1925, Ber.Nr.143 (II F 448/26) and *ibid.*, RM 20/283, Bericht des Generalkonsulates Kobe über die Entwicklung des japanischen Flugwesens, 7 Dec. 1927, B.Nr. II F 306, BS 611/28.
- 15 See Chapman 1986: 126, who cites from a letter of the German specialist Professor Baumann: 'Japan ist voll deutscher Flugtechniker. Wir Deutschen haben die französischen und englischen Sachverständigen, die hier waren, völlig verdrängt.'
- 16 The London Conference and the ensuing controversy have been comprehensively researched. See for instance Crowley 1966.
- 17 This planning took place even shortly before the Nazi government launched large-scale rearmament. See the document 'Umbau der Reichsmarine' signed by Chancellor Schleicher and CINC of the navy Raeder, Mar.B.Nr. 20120/32 Gkds, 15.11.1932, printed in Dülffer 1973: 565–6.
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 46 There is a controversy about the impact of the ‘Automedon’ papers on Japanese planning. While some researchers have argued that the papers were of decisive influence, I doubt this. I have analysed the discussion in Sander-Nagashima 1998: 480; see also Krug *et al.* (eds) 2001: 262–8.
 47 Senshibu, 1 Zenpan 242, Shōwa ichijūroku. Kaigun kendoku gunji shisatsudan hōkoku. Kaigun kendoku shisatsudanchō Nomura Naokuni.
 48 The term *shisatsudan*, i.e. ‘inspection group’ as the official name was very meaningful. On the German side the *Kriegsmarine* posts to be inspected were warned against revealing anything that would point to current operations or at lessons learned from former ones. See KTB Skl, vol. 13, p. 183, entry of 13 March 1941.
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Part II

Mutual perceptions

4 Japan-enthusiasm in Wilhelmine Germany

The case of the Sino–Japanese War,
1894–5

Rolf-Harald Wippich

Introduction

For more than two decades, from the 1870s to the mid-1890s, Germany provided numerous much-needed blueprints for Japan's ambitious modernization during the reign of the Meiji emperor (1868–1912). Though Prussia had already established diplomatic relations with the Shogunate in 1861, it was, however, only after the foundation of the German Empire in 1871 that Germany began to attract the attention of the Meiji politicians. Above all, it was the German military victory over France in 1870–1 that suggested a certain reorientation in Tokyo. Slowly but steadily German models and instructors from a variety of fields, such as medicine, constitutional law, education and military, were introduced to Japan. In the 1880s, Germany's outstanding cultural impact on Japan was obvious. The *German measles*, as Japan's infection with German culture was so aptly called, became a source of anger to other Western nations who envied Germany's privileged position.¹ The 1880s, when Japanese–German relations were particularly intense, were regarded as the 'golden decade' in the friendly contacts between Berlin and Tokyo. Theodor von Holleben, Imperial Germany's envoy to Japan from 1885 to 1892, was held as the guarantor of good Japanese–German relations. Yet, the Sino–Japanese War of 1894–5 was to alter this intimacy abruptly.² After a brief outline of that war, this chapter contrasts Germany's official attitude during the Far Eastern conflict, culminating in the Tripartite Intervention (together with Russia and France) against Japan, with the lesser-known attitude of the German man in the street.³

The Sino–Japanese War and Germany's official reaction⁴

The deeper cause for the outbreak of the war between China and Japan in the summer of 1894 was the unresolved status of Korea. Traditionally, China claimed Korea to be an integral part of its tributary system considering itself as Korea's overlord in the external relations of that East Asian

peninsula. Japan, on the other hand, emphasized Korea's sovereignty towards China from the outset of the Meiji Restoration in 1868. As early as the 1880s, China and Japan had been at loggerheads over the 'Land of the Morning Calm'. Back then, differences had been settled peacefully because of the willingness of the two opponents to make concessions. The immediate cause of the crisis of summer 1894 was the spread of the anti-Western and anti-modern *Tonghak* Movement in Korea. As the Koreans were unable to quell the insurgence themselves, they appealed to China to send military help to suppress the *Tonghaks*. Japan, though not officially contacted by the Koreans, dispatched troops to Korea, too, in accordance with the Sino-Japanese agreement of 1885. The looming conflict between China and Japan escalated because both powers refused to withdraw their troops from the peninsula even after the insurgence had been crushed. The question whether Korea was independent or a Chinese tributary state was just about to be decided.

Japan considered the political and military escalation over Korea as a welcome opportunity to take full advantage of the growing conflict with China. What the Japanese government, however, needed was a pretext that would make a military clash with its rival China both plausible and justifiable to the Western world. A reform project to be conducted jointly by Japan and China to modernize Korea appeared to be the ideal solution for Tokyo. The Japanese government was fully aware, though, that the Chinese would consider such a project as provocative and interfering. As expected, China turned the demands down when contacted by Japan in July 1894. With that refusal China became an object of suspicion in the West through appearing to be obstructing Japan's well-intended 'civilizing' efforts in Korea. Japan had its *casus belli*: citing the implementation of modern reforms in Korea against Chinese obstinacy. Thereby Japan could easily make its name as the champion of modernization in the East, while China soon became stigmatized as the epitome of stagnation and anti-modernization.

Hostilities broke out in late July 1894. With the official Japanese declaration of war on 1 August 1894, a new dramatic chapter in the history of East Asia was opened. Germany proclaimed its neutrality in the war right from the beginning. In accordance with that policy, the German government refused to assign a military observer to the Japanese army as proposed by Tokyo. Germany thus deprived itself of the opportunity to know the military progress of its 'disciple' at first hand (Wippich 1987: 97–8). Testifying to the German Foreign Ministry's initial lack of interest in the political and military facets of the conflict, a statement made by a high official saw only one advantage that the European powers could derive from the war between the Chinese and the Japanese, and that was selling them war material (Jerussalimski 1954: 483).

The military conflict in East Asia developed into an inexorable triumph for the new Japanese army. In the West, the war was followed partly with surprise, partly with suspicion. At the onset of hostilities, opinions were

anything but unanimous about the outcome. China's recent military reform efforts, as superficial as they were, aroused respect among many contemporary observers. Most European pundits therefore assumed that it would be only a matter of time before China would make short work of the daring, but hopelessly outnumbered Japanese (Hardin 1973: 56; Paine 2003: 138–9). Yet, two months after the outbreak of the war they were stunned by Japan's show of strength. Not only had the Chinese been driven out of Korea, but also the Japanese had succeeded in destroying the Chinese fleet off the Yalu River (17 September 1894) and gained naval supremacy in the Yellow Sea. Unimpeded by the Chinese, the Japanese Second Army could land on the South Manchurian Liaodong Peninsula (24 October 1894) and take the fortified port of Port Arthur by the end of November. At the same time, the First Army crossed the Yalu River into Northern Manchuria (25 October 1894) and began to carry hostilities into China proper. Now it was for the whole world to see how poorly the Chinese fared against the Japanese. A foreigner's comment gave expression to the despair and hopelessness that had befallen the Chinese, with hardly any chance of turning the tide of war: 'A more hopeless spectacle of fatuous imbecility . . . it is impossible to conceive' (Kiernan 1995: 160).

Towards the end of the year fighting in East Asia came to a temporary standstill. By then Western governments had begun to study the possible consequences of the war more closely. Statesmen and diplomats alike were watching with great concern that China seemed to lack any form of systematic military efforts amounting to a co-ordinated defence of its homeland. Sooner or later, so it seemed, Japan would bring the Qing dynasty down to its knees. Such a prospect, however, would plunge the traditional East Asian order into chaos and severely affect the treaty system on which Western predominance in East Asia rested.

While in the European capitals diplomatic activities were underway to limit the war on account of its detrimental consequences for Western interests, the political and military leadership in Japan got entangled in some disagreement over its future strategy. The Japanese government was aware that a military advance through Southern Manchuria towards Peking, a plan ventilated in army circles, would most likely meet with strong opposition from the Western powers. Such a plan would seriously have jeopardized everything the Japanese army had achieved so far on the Chinese mainland. The recall of Yamagata Aritomo, the most outspoken proponent of the risky march to Peking in December 1894, and his replacement by General Nozu Michitsura, was a clear signal that in the dispute between army and government, the latter and its diplomatic considerations had carried the day.

When fighting resumed in January 1895, fresh military initiatives quickly deemed the recent leadership crisis in Japan forgotten. Yet, almost immediately a new conflict arose between the army and the navy about the future direction of military operations. While the army put emphasis on

consolidating its position on the Liaodong Peninsula and still clung to the idea of carrying the war to Central China, where the decisive battle was expected, the navy proposed instead a southern thrust aiming at the seizure of the island of Taiwan, which offered both an alternative as well as a relatively low-profile target compared to the more sensitive Chinese-capital.

On the South Manchurian front, the Japanese troops reached the Liao River by early March 1895, where the Japanese advance was stopped. During the last engagements in Manchuria, the Japanese army faced better-trained Chinese units, which put up heavier resistance to the invaders. In late January 1895, combined Japanese land and naval forces launched an attack against China's last stronghold on the Shandong Peninsula, the naval base of Wei-hai-wei. Even if the capture of Wei-hai-wei on 12 February proved not to be decisive for the outcome of the war, the elimination of China's northern fleet took away the threat that China could have exerted at sea. Thereafter the Japanese military was in full control of maritime communications between Japan and the Asian continent.

Since February 1895 at the latest, the Japanese government knew from diplomatic reports that any further military advance in China was about to precipitate serious complications with the vested interests of the Western powers. Several warnings from the Japanese legations abroad and from Western representatives in Tokyo about the continuation of the war could simply not be ignored. With that in mind, to proceed with the advance in Central China after the seizure of Wei-hai-wei in February 1895 meant a risky enterprise for the Japanese. To avoid a confrontation with the Western powers, the only alternative was to pursue as cautious a course as possible. This, however, turned out to be a difficult balancing act considering the excessive demands of the army and the bellicose public mood, which demanded territorial gains for Japan (Paine 2003: 248–9). The attack on the relatively unpretentious target of Taiwan in February 1895 thus offered a realistic way out of the strategic dilemma at least.

With the military operations in Taiwan still underway, peace negotiations between China and Japan seriously began with the arrival of Li Hongzhang as Chinese Plenipotentiary in Shimonoseki on 19 March 1895. After about one month of negotiations, which were conducted on the Japanese side by Prime Minister Itō Hirobumi, Japan was able to realize its peace terms despite Chinese obstruction and an international public that widely remained sceptical about the final terms. An assassination attempt on Li Hongzhang (24 March 1895) accelerated the completion of negotiations and compelled Japan to accede to certain concessions. When the peace treaty was finally signed on 17 April 1895, it represented in many ways a compromise between the opposing positions of the navy and the army. The major provisions of this peace treaty were: the cession of the Liaodong Peninsula including Port Arthur, the cession of Taiwan, and an indemnity of 300 million Taels (Paine 2003: 260–73).⁵

Not even one week after the conclusion of the peace treaty, Russia, France and Germany raised an official objection to the cession of the Liaodong Peninsula to Japan on 23 April 1895. Although this diplomatic *démarche* did not come entirely unexpectedly for Japan, it was the way in which it was conducted that left Japan humiliated and at the mercy of the three powers. Germany's participation in this intervention was met with bewilderment as it officially joined hands with the Franco–Russian Alliance, notwithstanding its strained relations with France. Considering Germany's friendly relations with Japan in the past, this abrupt about-face required an explanation.

The strong words used by the German envoy, Felix von Gutschmid, and his unnecessary exposure while delivering the protest in Tokyo ('Japan must give in, no hope of fighting against three great powers'; GP 9: 2252, cf. GP 9: 2245), contrasted sharply with Germany's previous attitude and came as a shock to the Japanese. Only in early March, the German government had transmitted a 'friendly advice' to Tokyo to hasten the peace process and not to overstretch its demands. In particular, Berlin had warned that territorial demands with regard to the Chinese mainland might provoke an intervention (GP 9: 2226). The eventuality of an intervention had long been anticipated in Tokyo, though its actual enforcement was not predictable (Lone 1994: 176). The official reason that Germany gave for joining the other two powers (in what soon came to be known as the Tripartite Intervention) was that the Japanese peace terms were considered 'excessive' and a violation of European and German interests (GP 9: 2245). The annexation of Port Arthur was regarded as 'a regrettable obstacle for the establishment of good relations between China and Japan and a constant threat to the peace in East Asia' (GP 9: 2237). As Japan saw no chance to repudiate the great power *démarche*, it had to renounce the cession of the Liaodong Peninsula (including Port Arthur) in May 1895.

Germany's driving force for joining the diplomatic intervention can be attributed to three major factors: first, the intention to protect Germany's commercial interests in East Asia, second, to launch a rapprochement with Russia to improve Germany's political basis in Europe and to drive a wedge between the allies France and Russia, and, last but not least, to realize the long-cherished dream of a coaling station or a naval base on the Chinese coast (Wippich 1987: 143–5). Most important of all and to a certain extent the guiding principle of the Imperial government was the firm conviction not to come away empty handed when the expected partition of China began.⁶

The Sino–Japanese War 1894–5 and the popular response in Germany

The political *volte-face* of 1895 left many Germans baffled. A short time previously, Japanese victories not only had excited the German public, but

had shifted public opinion from that of sympathy to glowing admiration. It seemed as if the recent participation in the Tripartite Intervention against Japan would only provide new proof of Germany's political zigzag course under Wilhelm II. Throughout the war everybody in government circles in Berlin, beginning with the Emperor himself, had ostentatiously been on Japan's side, 'celebrating Japanese victories almost like German ones', as Alfred von Waldersee revealed (Merker 1997: 23). According to a well-informed source, the fascination with Japan's military performance even led to the conviction 'that he who did not wish the Japanese luck was regarded both as an idiot as well as a wicked man' (ibid.: 23). August Bebel, Chairman of the Social Democratic Party, confirmed the pro-Japanese sentiments in a parliamentary speech in 1896:

When war broke out between China and Japan, nobody would deny that the sympathies of the press and those of the entire public opinion were with Japan. Enthusiasm for Japan increased proportionately to this small country's ability to eliminate big China, to win one battle after another. Several German newspapers even liked then to apply the allegory by saying: Japan is East Asia's Prussia.

(Stingl 1978: 103)

Many officials were anything but happy about the unexpected shift in the Empire's Far Eastern policy and the departure from the traditionally friendly course towards Japan. For the old Chancellor, Prince Bismarck, the Triple Intervention bore a resemblance to 'a leap into the dark', because it lacked any diplomatic consistency and did not provide any political advantage for Germany. Similar opinions were expounded by Germans who had worked in various functions in Japan not long before. Among this group criticism of the Triple Intervention as a 'foolish policy' was common currency, for it had sacrificed Japan's friendship for 'very problematic purposes'. Karl von Eisendecher for example, who had served as German minister in Tokyo from 1875 to 1882, flatly rated the intervention as 'a wrong decision', because it represented 'an utter reverse of our policy'.⁷ In retrospect, Georg Michaelis, who had been a German legal adviser to Japan in the 1880s and later was to become Imperial Chancellor during World War I, passed a clear verdict that was shared by many others: 'If Holleben would still have been ambassador to Japan in 1895, the unfortunate Peace of Shimonoseki would presumably not have come about' (Krebs 2002: 136–8). Prince Bismarck agreed wholeheartedly:

Under the Old Course Germany's participation in the intervention against Japan would probably not have happened at all, or, if it had, would have happened only if there had been guaranteed advantages for Germany.

(Wippich 1987: 145–6)

A remarkable proof of popular pro-Japanese sentiments during the East Asian war was produced by the spontaneous reactions of ordinary Germans who expressed their sympathies in individual letters of congratulation to Tokyo. These letters deserve to be remembered for the simple fact that they mark a growing popular response to international events. But at the same time they indicate the emergence of new stereotyped images of nations at the close of the nineteenth century.

In the year 1900, a small booklet was published in Tokyo that was memorable in every respect. The booklet bore the title *Doitsubun Nisshin Senshō Shukujū*,⁸ which can be translated as ‘German Congratulations to Victorious Japan during the War against China’. It contained 50 letters of congratulation conveyed by ordinary Germans to the Japanese Ministry of War, or precisely the Ministry of the Army (*rikugunshō*), as it was then called. Actually, several Austrians managed to smuggle into this collection of letters as well, unnoticed by the Japanese editor.⁹ The letters were addressed to General Ōyama Iwao, who was not only the commander of the Second Japanese Army at the time of the Sino–Japanese War, but also served as Minister of the Army. In these letters the writers expressed their effusive and unreserved admiration for Japan and the Japanese, conveyed their congratulations for the Japanese feat of arms, and, last but not least, pinned their hopes on the opportunity of seeing further heroic deeds on the East Asian battlefield. Altogether 214 letters of congratulation from all over the world arrived at the *rikugunshō* during the war years of 1894–5, all of them more or less assuring the Japanese of their moral support for their bravery and military victories.

Numbers of congratulatory letters sent to the Japanese Ministry of War 1894–5

Germany	161
Austria-Hungary	33
USA	6
Switzerland	4
Rumania	2
Java (Dutch Indies)	2

One letter each originated from the following countries: England, France, Russia, Italy, Sweden and Denmark. Germany’s striking top rank in dispatching letters to Japan seems to indicate a pronounced pro-Japanese sympathy among the German population. Details of the origin of this publication remain sketchy. Apparently, it was the *rikugunshō* that, for reasons unknown, handed over the bundle containing the 161 letters from Germany to a certain Serizawa Tōichi.¹⁰ Serizawa, who used to work as an interpreter at the Belgian legation at the time of the Sino–Japanese War of 1894–5, selected not quite a third of the original German letters and edited

them together with a Japanese translation. The purpose of this publication, the intended reference group and the number of copies of this brochure are not known. It appears, however, most likely – and the publication shortly after the Triple Intervention might be an indication of this – that it was commissioned for political purposes. The brochure was apparently targeting Germans and German-speaking circles by emphasizing the prevalence of widespread popular sympathy with Japan that differed strikingly from the official German attitude towards the peace treaty. The fact that Ōmura Jintarō (1863–1907), the Director of the *Doitsu Gaku Kyōkai Gakkō* (The School of the Society for German Science),¹¹ wrote the foreword seems to suggest that Germans were to be primarily targeted with this booklet. A deliberate selection of only the German letters for publication would have been a clever means to react to Germany's participation in the Triple Intervention. In a semi-official way, Japan could thus express its misgivings about the recent humiliation and also articulate its disapproval of the entire diplomatic intervention.¹²

In these 50 letters, the war enthusiasm of the man in the street is enunciated in a plain way. From the spontaneous reaction to a remote and, as it appeared, limited military conflict, which soon, however, grew into a diplomatic conflagration of unforeseen proportions with repercussions on the international system, it is possible to gain insights into the militarized psyche of German society at the close of the nineteenth century.

The Sino–Japanese War was a seminal event in world history. It affected international diplomacy and stimulated public attention in the West to the East Asian hemisphere (Paine 2003: 3–4). Besides, it was a media event of the first order. The popular press in Europe and America reported on the war between China and Japan regularly and in great detail.¹³ The use of the telegraph made it possible to quickly transmit newspaper stories from remote battle locations to Western editorial offices. Before the outbreak of hostilities, the Western press had only extended limited coverage to the situation in East Asia. Notable exceptions were the Western papers located in East Asia. These papers offered on-the-spot passionate coverage of the events throughout all stages of the war. But they were also the product of an era which had unlimited confidence in the superiority of Western civilization. Consequently, journalists did not exercise restraint when they deemed something wrong among non-Western peoples, but fervently preached the civilizing gospel of Western culture instead (ibid.: 109). Western culture was conceived as an antidote against anything barbaric, unorganized, dirty or unreasonable, and that was what ‘uncivilized’ was all about.

More important, however, was that the Sino–Japanese War represented a turning point for the kind of information transmitted to the West about the East. Until the outbreak of hostilities, travel reports accompanied by occasional academic analyses made up the flow of information about East Asia. After 1895, the increase of politically

motivated reports on current affairs began to change this pattern (Mathias-Pauer 1984: 122).

With the British newspapers taking the lead, the Western press devoted a remarkable amount of space to the struggle between China and Japan and furnished complete and, for the most part, correct coverage of all the distant military campaigns. Special correspondents to the Western capitals transmitted the news from the Far Eastern theatre of war. German newspapers back then, however, hardly understood the significance of war correspondents. Because of that they depended in their coverage of the war largely on British or agency-related reports (Lerg 1992: 410). With few exceptions, these correspondents' reports pandered to the bloodthirsty taste of the day. These reports were hitting on just the right taste of a war-infatuated readership that was thrilled by being allowed to closely witness a major conflict overseas. Watching this war spectacle from an impartial distance was another attraction, as the outcome of the war did not directly concern the lives of the German newspaper-reading public. Therefore thrilling accounts of battles and soldierly bravery could be reported (and consumed) from both sides with no fear of spoiling the readers' exultant mood about examples of military ingenuity (Knightley 1975: 42–4).

China and Japan pursued entirely different policies towards the admission of Western war correspondents. While the Manchu Empire did not permit any foreign journalists to accompany its troops – the only foreigners permitted on the Chinese side were the instructors and military observers of the men-of-war – Japan took every opportunity to welcome correspondents to come and see the fighting on its side. This was particularly true after the decisive victories in the land battle at Pyongyang and the naval battle off the Yalu River in mid-September 1894, which had demonstrated Japan's military prowess to the world. Though the Japanese government, like their Chinese counterpart, was not prepared to disclose military secrets in terms of accurate casualty reports, compared to China it imposed less restrictions on Western media throughout the war. These different approaches to the foreign press made it almost inevitable that press coverage in the West tended towards a slightly pro-Japanese attitude. Whenever responding to the Western hunger for news, Japan deliberately fostered a 'positive' image of itself by disseminating 'authentic' information from the battlefield to the public. Unlike the Chinese, the Japanese knew how to utilize modern technology and modern means of communication. The island nation thereby succeeded in Western eyes in taking on a distinctively modern and progressive profile. China's reputation, already battered by the Opium War (1839–42), sank, on the other hand, to the level of a backward and barbaric entity hostile to the Western-style modernization that its opponent Japan so impressively embodied (Paine 2003: Chapter 8).

The newspaper reports described the war between nations not yet firmly rooted in the public awareness as fully-grown international players, in a narration of adventures, without comments or moralizing statements

so that it was digestible to the man in the street. By meticulously listing battles and skirmishes, armaments, strategies and tactics of the opposing armies as well as introducing their commanders-in-chief, the press was catering to the appetite for sensations of a mass audience. The proportion of publicity that the East Asian war received in the West was remarkable indeed. Even in German regional papers, which could not afford to engage correspondents overseas, let alone special war correspondents, and therefore largely depended for their coverage on news agencies, national papers or correspondents in European capitals, the Eastern imbroglio represented something of a dividing line. Thereafter, until World War I, East Asia, especially Japan, became a recurrent theme with them (Mathias-Pauer 1984: 123). Interest in the war, however, was not only stimulated because of its sensational aspects, but also because of the enigmatic Orient in which it was set. Most important of all, the Orient guaranteed to make good copy to a ready audience.

In addition to detailed newspaper reports, the Eastern civilizations began to be discovered as comic objects for cartoons rendering blueprints for new clichés. In Germany, humorous magazines such as *Kladderadatsch* or *Der Wahre Jacob* contributed largely to the popularization of the Far Eastern war with the help of their easily accessible cartoons of the Chinese and Japanese. To a certain extent, therefore, the letters of congratulation from Germany reflect the state of knowledge about the Sino-Japanese War that ordinary people could have acquired at that time. Seen from that perspective, the letters can be taken as an honest manifestation of the German *petite bourgeoisie's* bellicose mentality as expressed in the unconcealed admiration for the 'plucky little Japs' (Wippich 1987: 78).

All the German congratulatory letters date from the first half of 1895 and refer directly to the Japanese victories at Port Arthur (21 November 1894) and Wei-hai-wei (12 February 1895). By far most of the letters were correctly addressed to the Ministry of War in Tokyo. Only a few letters were sent to an unspecified 'Dear Colonel', a simple 'Dear Sir', or bore no form of address at all. Two Germans added precise details about where the Japanese Ministry of War was located, namely in 'Tokio Nagasaki (!)' (No. 46)¹⁴ or in 'Tokio Japan Asia' (No. 47). Geographically, the selected letters stem from all over Germany, including large cities as well as provincial towns. To an overwhelming extent the contents of the letters reveal a rude and uncouth tone reflecting both a familiarity with the characteristic military jargon of Wilhelmine Germany as well as a state of wild excitement of their authors. The writers apparently thought crude explicitness combined with military terseness instead of a refined letter-style appropriate for this occasion. As a perfect example of such a rather aggressive military tone, we may take the appeal to Japan by a lawyer from Zweibrücken: 'On to Peking! Beat the Hell out of the Chinese! Hurrah to the brave Japanese army!' (No. 18).¹⁵ Congratulations that went along with a 'Hurrah' were rather the rule than the exception, as Otto Jacob

from Saxony reveals in his epistle addressed 'To His Excellency the Chief of Cabinet of the Ministry of War (!)'. After having presented a 'heartily congratulation', he added 'a thundering Hurrah as well to the entire Japanese navy!' (No. 26).

The majority of the letter-writers were convinced that the Japanese army was pursuing a kind of a 'holy' mission by spreading 'Western civilization' throughout China. Consequently, they looked forward to the Japanese entering Peking with nervous anticipation. A good many Germans urged the Japanese not to let up before the whole 'caboodle' was definitely crushed. It was obvious to the authors that the Japanese victories mirrored the triumph of Western civilization over barbarity. Most such congenial feelings were expressed in a clumsy and patriotic poem, which praised the 'Mikado' as 'the Defeater (*Besieger*) of China'. The letter-writer, who liked to have his poem read by the Meiji emperor, composed it in such a way that the initial capitals of each verse, when read from top to bottom, produced the word 'Japan':

Japanese Empire!
Asias's pearl you are!
Prussia says Hail to you!
All the world learns and supports your glory!
Now accept Germany's congratulations!

(No. 1)

The defeat of Chinese 'barbarism' was considered an act of historical necessity. To a man from Saxony Japan's successes were 'identical with the victory of civilization over barbarism', because they 'resulted from intelligent objectives of the people (*intelligente Volksziele*)' (No. 17). The swift conquest of Peking or even better of all of China (No. 13) was the final goal the writers were feverishly longing for. 'May the heroic Japanese soon make their solemn entrance into the walls of Peking', requested the German skittle club which was fittingly named *Die Japaner* (The Japanese) (No. 45). Collective congratulations such as the previous one were, however, the exception.

Several writers mentioned their occupation (clockmaker, journalist, lawyer, etc.) or their social status (student, apprentice, factory owner), or proudly pointed to their military career (reserve officer!). What is remarkable here is that three out of the 50 writers had had contacts with Japan or the Japanese in the past, which they proudly emphasized. A 'long-time resident of Japan', who had lived in the northern towns of Akita and Hakodate during the years 1869-70, expressed his 'most respectful congratulations on the continuous victories of the brave Japanese army', wishing for further triumphs (No. 3). One man from Bavaria gave as the reason for his great interest in the Japanese victories the fact that 'because I was a soldier myself and served from 1888-91 in the Bavarian Infantry

Life Regiment in Munich, where during that time a certain Japanese Captain Fushimoto had been detailed for duty' (No. 6).¹⁶ And there was the German emigrant Hugo Windhoevel from the nondescript town of Bridgeport in North America. As a veteran of the German army, he remembered having met four Japanese officers who had been assigned to his regiment in the years 1889–90 (No. 31). Military memorabilia also worked the other way round. Together with a militarily short congratulation to 'the ministry of war in Japan' for the victories, a Mr Peschl from Passau attached two photos to his letter on 5 February 1895 showing Bavarian cavalry and infantry in the hope 'that you will find them interesting' (No. 32).

Only three of the letters in the collection can be attributed to women, yet they do not differ from the others in style and tone at all, as can be seen in the letter of a certain Elsbeth Flaig:

The brilliant victories of Japanese arms over Chinese barbarism must make every heart, which fully appreciates human civilization, fill with lively satisfaction. Particularly we Germans have good reason to sympathize with the victories of the Japanese army. May Your Excellency [i.e. the Japanese Minister of War, Wi] therefore allow an ordinary German woman, who, however, has an alert mind for what is going on in the world, to express her full admiration to the Japanese people who are carrying out their great cultural mission so splendidly. I am certainly articulating the feeling of all my German compatriots who are proudly welcoming the victories of their Japanese comrades-in-arms.

(No. 8)

Another writer strongly believed that 'Japan will get the same credit in this campaign like my glorious fatherland Germany in the years 1870–1871' (No. 14).

An interesting fact is that some of the letters of congratulation were indeed answered by the Japanese. Apparently, the letters from Germany were not simply regarded as oddities in Tokyo, but were rather appreciated as signs of honour for the military achievements from a highly-appreciated and revered 'model nation' in the military sphere. A Fritzi von Canaval had indeed received a letter of thanks from Japan for having hailed Japan as 'the nation of the future' in her congratulation of 26 February 1895. Fritzi, who claimed to be 'an admirer of Japan', not only felt honoured, but was encouraged to write again to 'the noble nation that incorporates the three features of reason, energy and perseverance'. Compared with these characteristics the Europeans did badly. 'Although I am a European', this lady from Austria stated, 'I must tell you that our great powers have behaved like envious chicken (*neidige Hühner*) by the end of the war' (No. 4). In one case, at least, the Japanese reply card caused prob-

lems. C. Tettenborn from Hamburg came away empty-handed when only his friend received an answer to their joint congratulation and now was trying to have the Japanese send a new postcard exclusively to himself (No. 41). Previously, the same writer had been eager to learn about the exact dates of the declaration of war and of the first battle (No. 11).

Not only did a few Germans give expression of their enthusiasm for the Japanese by sending letters several times; in addition, they would also send reminders to Tokyo in case the first letter had remained unanswered. Richard Seiffert, who wrote on behalf of several merchants from Berlin and Venice, asked to confirm the receipt of his congratulation 'because two letters have already got lost!' (No. 34). Nobody perhaps was closer in revealing the actual state of mind of the war-infatuated *petit bourgeois* than the young aficionado who enthusiastically confessed: 'Over the years, I have witnessed all the battles and skirmishes in my mind's eye' (No. 42).

Some letters did not content themselves with just conveying the congratulations to the victorious Japanese, but revealed the astonishing requests of their authors. They not only asked for authentic information about military operations, but also begged for souvenirs from the theatre of war, such as photos, autographs of the commanders-in-chief, coins or stamps. 'I have been a collector of stamps and coins for years', admits someone from Silesia, 'and since there are some old and rare stamps and coins in Japan and Korea which cannot be acquired in Silesia, I beg you to send some samples' (No. 43). There was also 15-year-old J. Roehsler, a native from Leipzig, another collector, who introduced himself as 'a great friend of soldiers'. 'Since Chinese or Japanese stamps are hard to come by in Europe', he pointed out, 'I would like to ask you to send me some stamps from East Asia plus some rare ones from among the Chinese stamps your soldiers have captured' (No. 42). A rather unusual request was, however, articulated by a man from Tyrol, who confessed that 'he had been sympathizing with the Japanese people even before the outbreak of war'. Following closely Japan's progress in the industrial and technological sectors, news had reached the Austrian about the latest acquisition of the Tennō's army: long johns made of paper. That news had taken his 'most lively interest' and at the same time had stimulated his wish 'to learn more about such an outfit'. Consequently, he asked for a specimen to be delivered to him by mail. He did not forget to mention that he dared to take the liberty of conveying his request only because he trusted the Colonel's kindness and 'the well known politeness of the Japanese' (No. 9). Compared to the previous requests, Eugen Raspi's wish was confined more to the bare necessities of his profession. As a journalist, he pragmatically asked for Japanese support to be able 'to write a comprehensive account of the East Asian struggle and of its significance in military and cultural terms' (No. 5).

A student from the Royal Bavarian *Realschule* in Traunstein regretted very much that the great oceans prevented him from shaking the hands of

every Japanese (No. 23). No one, however, was more fervent in his passionate admiration of Japan than Hermann Schreke from Nuremberg. Hermann, being entirely convinced of his military vocation, hoped, in all seriousness, that he would be given the opportunity of serving in the victorious Japanese army one day (No. 48).¹⁷

Japan as the ‘Prussia of the East’: the correlation between Japan-admiration and war-enthusiasm

The war in East Asia appealed to the war-proneness of the German lower middle class in many respects. The exotic names of battlefields and military leaders as well as the old age of the combating civilizations contrasted strikingly with the modernity of weapons and tactics. In particular, it was the collision of cultural peculiarity with technological modernity which gave the Far Eastern war its thrill and contributed to its fascination among Germans from all walks of life. Above all else, the war satisfied the tendency towards the exotic and combined it with the all-time favourite, the bellicose – a blend that proved to be irresistible. Sympathy towards Japan was largely based on the belief that a victorious Japan would represent the advance of progress, commerce and civilization, whereas a victory by China would only prolong barbarism, stagnation and cultural haughtiness. To let Japan carry through a civilizing mission in China or, as one contemporary put it, to let Japan ‘knock sense into the dull obstinate Chinese heads’, was seen as a precious gift to the world (Hardin 1973: 54). It was an enticing experience to watch Japan fighting against China, particularly since Japan was almost regarded as Germany’s military foster-child. Since German expertise had been decisive for Japan’s military modernization, to see the Japanese fight now with bravado against the Chinese offered a welcome outlet for surplus nationalist energies. The East Asian war, moreover, served as a surrogate for the temporary lack of a major European war, for Germany had not seen any military action against a foreign foe since its victory over France in 1870–1.

The German (and Austrian) letter-writers were full of benevolent praise for Japan’s machine-like discipline as well as her ‘Teutonic’ pugnacity. There was a barely concealed feeling of triumph that Western civilization had prevailed at last in the Land of the Rising Sun, and that, above all, modern military expertise came to bear through the island nation. Japan seemed to make every effort to be acknowledged as a full-fledged member of the ‘civilized’ world. Moreover, it seemed eager to pay heed to the standards of modernization as set by the Western nations. More than anything else that meant being able to master the art of war. Japan’s praiseworthy performance on the battlefield seemed to give undeniable proof that Germany’s military experiment in Japan had in fact paid off. In particular, Klemens Jacob Meckel, the first German military instructor to Japan (1885–9), was seen as the one being responsible for the transfer of

Prusso-German efficiency to Japan. Many sympathizers of Japan believed that Japan's military accomplishments actually had to be credited to him (Krebs 2002: 135–6).

Undoubtedly, the Japanese, or the 'Prussians of the East', as they soon came to be hailed, had won much sympathy among the *petit bourgeoisie* in Germany. Japan's recent history, particularly her similar warlike attachment, appeared for many Germans to epitomize their own country's turbulent experiences. Though parts of Japan's popularity in Germany might have been a reflection of the widely held belief in the superiority of the Prusso-German military system, there was also genuine admiration for Japanese achievements. The Germans identified themselves with a vigorous and dynamic Japan, in whose military impetuosity Prusso-Germany's glorious past was brought to life again. Accordingly, the commanders of the victorious armies, Yamagata Aritomo and Ōyama Iwao, who almost seemed to have become household names then,¹⁸ were revered icons of soldierly valour and steadfastness, worthy of being placed on an equal footing with Germany's war heroes (Lone 1994: 49). In reviving Prussian military virtues, such as iron discipline and perfect organization, Japan's modern army helped to promote war-enthusiasm in Germany. In that sense, 'Japan could function as a mirror image', as Rosemary Anne Breger argues, 'over-idealized, romanticized, and hence presented in a state of near perfection, full of effervescent energy expressed as a model to emulate' (Breger 1990: 8).

From the Western point of view, the Sino-Japanese War did help Japan to liberate herself from the restrictive bonds of the past and to constitute her own distinct cultural identity as clearly separate from China's (Schuster 1977: 56). In the eyes of the West the Sino-Japanese War converted Japan from a mere copycat of Chinese culture into an Asian model for Western-style modernization. In that sense, Japan's first modern war was an expression of her determined efforts to learn new technologies from the West and to work hard to achieve success. This stood out sharply against the 'negative' example of China. Japan's military efficiency and prowess impressed the West since the Chinese Goliath was in no way able to live up to the military challenge and to defend his homeland in a manly fashion. Failing in the art of war, however, was unforgivable in the heydays of late nineteenth-century imperialism. While in East Asia 'Japan became the yardstick by which China always fell short' (Paine 2003: 312), China became for the West 'the archetype of obstructive conservatism' (Kiernan 1995: 155).

Japan had impressed the West with the strength of its military and the fervour of its patriotism. Nevertheless, there was an unwelcome and ambivalent corollary of this impression. From now on disquiet about Japan's designs became apparent in the West and voices began to warn of Japanese aggression. Admiration for Japan soon turned into the kind of apprehension that caused the 'yellow peril' hysteria. Almost inevitably,

the all-too-rapid rise of the East Asian country was viewed with suspicion (Stingl 1978: 68–74; Wippich 1987: 156–60). From now on Japan became an ominous factor in international politics, and its image in the West altered accordingly. The war against China raised Japan's international profile. It failed, however, to stabilize its political and cultural ties with the West.

Conclusion

Germany's participation in the Three-Power Intervention of 1895 against Japan is generally held as the turning point in Japanese–German relations. With good reason, Frank Iklé defined the intervention as 'Japan's lesson in the diplomacy of imperialism' (Iklé 1967: 122). Undoubtedly, the Triple Intervention represented the official and most dramatic reflection of how the Sino–Japanese War of 1894–5 was perceived in Germany. Contrary to what the diplomatic *démarche* against Japan might suggest, the German public took a lively interest in the Japanese victories. Throughout the war, the ruling elite of the Reich shared such sentiments as well. As a consequence of Japan's swift victories, however, political doubts and concerns about the prospect of getting Japan as a new destabilizing force in the East Asian world began to loom large in early 1895.

Beneath the surface of German great-power politics, Japan received widespread sympathy from all walks of life. The island nation was not seen as a threat at all, as the notorious catchword of the 'Yellow Peril' suggested. In an age intoxicated by nationalist and militarist sentiments, the victories of Japan's modern army rather met with enthusiastic applause. In a time when Europe did not have military clashes on its doorstep, when memories of the Franco–Prussian war had begun to fade and the supposedly glorious German armies were confined to manoeuvres and drills, reports from the Far Eastern battlefield offered a compensation for the real thrill and kept the military spirit alive. The fascination of the 'exotic' conflict at large and the enthusiasm about the 'Prussians of the East' in particular seemed to have found an ideal outlet in the direct communication with Japan. Out of scores of congratulatory letters addressed to the Japanese government during the war by foreigners from all over the world, the vast majority were dispatched from ordinary Germans. These Germans were not only excited by the East Asian confrontation, but also bestowed praise upon the Japanese for embodying Prussian military virtues. The letters mirrored a pro-Japanese mood, and therefore did not differ very much from the Japan sympathies in government circles, even considering that the Triple Intervention hardly corresponded with the popular response. The way the Japanese armies performed on the battlefield aroused unanimous admiration by many Germans. This even goes for the Kaiser who attentively followed the military campaigns in East Asia and acknowledged Japan's achievements. His future 'Yellow Peril' propa-

ganda as well as the diplomatic turnabout caused by the Triple Intervention must therefore not be equated with an anti-Japanese attitude within Germany's political leadership right from the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War. Unlike the man in the street who retained his sympathies for the 'Prussians of the East', the German government's political and strategic considerations prevailed at the end of the day. Wilhelm II apparently had no problems at all separating his sympathies for individual Japanese and the collective image of a threatening Japan that he himself conjured up. The erratic Emperor was able to distinguish between a Japan distorted as a bogey and the single Japanese as an addressee of his majestic benevolence.¹⁹

For many observers though, the Triple Intervention symbolized a deeper structural crisis, namely that the friendship with Japan had been sacrificed for both questionable as well as short-term targets. In an age in which aggression was not considered an insult to one's honour, but rather as an indication of exceptional strike power, Japan had passed the entrance examination into the exclusive community of Western civilization with style and élan. In this respect, Japan had really become a Prussia *en miniature*.

Notes

- 1 A term coined by contemporary British observers to illustrate Germany's outstanding cultural influence upon Japan in the 1880s. Due to Japan's infection with the contagious 'German measles', it appeared as if the accomplishments of other Western competitors were not acknowledged (Wippich 1987: 45; Wippich 1993: 61).
- 2 For a concise study of Germany's role in the modernization of Japan, see Martin 1995: 17–76.
- 3 Apart from contemporary treatises, there is no comprehensive and critical account of the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–5 available in Western languages. The following titles provide some information: Dotson 1951, Wippich 1987, Lone 1994 and Paine 2003.
- 4 Wippich 1987 and Merker 1997 provide the necessary background information on that topic.
- 5 Throughout the nineteenth century the nominal relationship between Tael and US-Dollar was 72:100 (Paine 2003: 265, ft. 90); the ratio between Tael and German Mark was about 1:4.5 (Eberstein 1988: 198).
- 6 For the Three-Power intervention at large, see Iklé 1967, Nish 1982 and Wippich 1987: 129–60.
- 7 PAAA Berlin, Eisendecker Papers 2/6–8.
- 8 The work carries a German title as well: *Deutsche Glückwünsche an das siegreiche Japan im Kriege gegen China*.
- 9 The editor seems to have overlooked that letters nos. 4, 46 and 47 were written by Austrians.
- 10 Serizawa Tōichi (*1873) studied Law and German Language at the *Doitsu Gaku Kyōkai Gakkō* (1888–95). After graduation, he served as an interpreter for the Belgian legation in Tokyo and worked for the *rikugunshō* until in 1899 he was officially appointed consular interpreter. Promoted to Senior Interpreter in 1904, he saw service during the Russo-Japanese War. After the war,

- he entered the Japanese business world in various executive functions and finally served in the Tokyo City Council for more than 20 years (Taishō Jimmei Jiten 1987: 386; Serizawa 1992: 13–14, 19–20).
- 11 This school was maintained by the *Doitsu Gaku Kyōkai*, the ‘Society for German Science’, which had been founded in 1882 by prominent Japanese *Germanophiles* to promote German culture and learning.
 - 12 A copy of the original publication is held in the Japanese Diet Library in Tokyo. Quotations are taken from the new edition (Wippich 1997).
 - 13 From Japan alone, a total of 114 correspondents, 11 artists and four photographers were covering the war in East Asia (Lone 1994: 99).
 - 14 The numbers of the letters are identical with the ones of the original Japanese publication by Serizawa.
 - 15 All translations into English are mine, if not otherwise stated.
 - 16 According to Rauck 1994: 67, there was a certain Captain Fujimoto Tarō (1855–1940) in Germany around that time.
 - 17 As unrealistic as such a request might sound, the young man from Nuremberg, however, was not alone in his desire to serve the Meiji state. Reports from overseas Japanese legations testified to numerous Westerners hoping to enlist in and fight with the Tennō’s forces (Lone 1994: 49; Hardin 1973: 54).
 - 18 Both Japanese military heroes found their way into popular German encyclopaedias by the time of the Russo–Japanese War 1904–5. See for example Ōyama: *Herders Konversations-Lexikon*, 3rd edn, Freiburg, vol. 6 (1906), columns 837–8; for Yamagata: vol. 8 (1907), column 1742.
 - 19 See A. Iikura’s contribution in this volume for a discussion of the ‘Yellow Peril’ problem.

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5 The ‘Yellow Peril’ and its influence on Japanese–German relations

Ikura Akira

Introduction

After the establishment of official diplomatic contacts in 1861, the relations between Japan and Germany developed in a friendly way over most of the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Germany provided valuable models for Meiji Japan’s modernization. In a sense, particularly the 1880s can be described as a process of Germanization. Taking the Prussian constitution as a blueprint, the Meiji Constitution was promulgated in 1889. German influence was also notable in other fields such as education, medicine, military or the new Imperial court system. It was at the time of the Sino–Japanese War 1894–5, however, when the German Kaiser Wilhelm II (1859–1941; r. 1888–1918), ventilated the idea of the menace of a unified yellow race that the bilateral relations began to turn sour. This idea soon came to be known as the ‘Yellow Peril’.

Underlying the ‘Yellow Peril’ was the image of hordes of the ‘barbarous’ yellow race invading from the East, assaulting the Europeans and looting the wealth of the continent. This image of a ‘savage’ yellow race can be traced back to the age of the Mongol incursions in the thirteenth century or even to the Hun invasions of Europe in the fifth century. Although these two historical examples taken from the pre-modern period can be considered in the West as precursors of the antagonism between the Orient and the Occident, it was not until the mid-nineteenth century, when Chinese immigrants rushed into California and stirred up racial confrontation in America (Gollwitzer 1962: 24–8, 68–79; Hashikawa 1976: 7–14; Thompson 1978: 2, 3, 7–15), that the ‘Yellow Peril’, expressed as fear of Asian people, began to flourish.

The ‘modern’ Yellow Peril idea was first advocated in the mid-1890s. It became widespread at the turn of the century in the Western world.¹ Though not being the author of the ‘Yellow Peril’ concept, the German Kaiser advocated the idea most fervently and popularized it in the West. He was imbued with the idea around the time of Germany’s participation in the Triple Intervention of 1895 alongside Russia and France against Japan, which marked the turning point of Germany’s diplomatic about-

face towards Japan. This incident completely changed the Japanese perception of Germany. It is a well-known fact that Wilhelm II propagated the idea through a drawing, which he completed in summer 1895 with the help of his former painting teacher Hermann Knackfuss. This picture expressed the monarch's perception of the imminent danger caused by the yellow race, and it soon became one of the most infamous political illustrations of the day. Although the Kaiser's noisy propaganda as well as his picture were occasionally ridiculed and rarely taken seriously, he continued throughout the years to advocate the danger of the yellow race again and again, particularly during and after the Russo-Japanese War.

This chapter examines Germany's role, especially the Kaiser's, in the 'Yellow Peril' propaganda from 1895 to 1914 and the negative consequences it had on the state of Japanese-German relations. Contemporary Japanese sometimes overestimated the effect of Wilhelm II's 'Yellow Peril' advocacy and equated it with Germany's official East Asian policy. It was understandable therefore that they developed strong antagonistic feelings not only towards him but also towards Germany. The author contends that the propagation of such fears played a paradoxical role in restraining Japan from conducting a more aggressive foreign policy such as the formation of an anti-Western Pan-Asiatic bloc.

The Triple Intervention and the menace of the yellow race

The Sino-Japanese War of 1894-5 ended with the signing of the Treaty of Shimonoseki on 17 April 1895 by which Japan gained as its major territorial concession the Liaodong Peninsula in Southern Manchuria. Russia, Germany and France, however, objected to the treaty and delivered a joint ultimatum to Tokyo. Backed by military force, the three countries urged Japan to renounce its newly won possession in continental China, because it was regarded as a permanent danger to the peace and stability of East Asia. Without any military support from other powers, Japan eventually had to comply in the face of the three-power threat. The Japanese felt humiliated by what later came to be called the Triple Intervention. The contemporary slogan *gashin shōtan* (suffer privation for revenge) expressed the national sentiment in Japan in the aftermath of that incident. Out of this experience, a new nationalism arose in Japan, which supported a jingoistic foreign policy and gave birth to very bellicose sentiments towards the three powers. It was at this very time that the Kaiser started advocating the threat of the 'yellow race'.

Germany's involvement in the intervention came as a shock to the Japanese public, which believed Germany was touting Imperial Japan as a 'Prussia in the East'. It is true that Foreign Minister Mutsu Munemitsu had anticipated some form of intervention before the signing of the Shimonoseki Treaty. After it, however, he felt that the danger of an intervention had gone (Hiyama 1997: 77-8, 81). Therefore, the *démarche* was a surprise

to the Meiji leaders and the Japanese public alike, who had been rejoicing in the victory. This diplomatic action marked the end of friendly relations between Germany and Meiji Japan.

With regard to Germany's participation in the Triple Intervention, Aoki Shūzō,² who was Japan's minister in Berlin at this time, assumed that Germany had taken the initiative for its formation. He also pointed out the German fear because of the rise of the yellow race, and emphasized that the German government had suspected an alliance between China and Japan to enhance the power of the yellow race to the detriment of the white nations (Aoki 1970: 284–6). In a similar vein, Shimada Saburō, a politician and journalist, wrote in an article published in *Chūō Kōron* magazine in 1904 that all Japanese readers should know that the 'Yellow Peril' fear had come into existence and helped initiate the Triple Intervention. Shimada alluded to the Kaiser by saying that the 'Yellow Peril' idea had been produced by the imagination of the person who had power in Germany. He maintained that the 'Yellow Peril' fear had once actually been used as a factor in politics (Shimada 1904: 22). A leading article in *The Times* of 7 January 1905 also referred to the 'Yellow Peril' as being originally invented to justify the robbing of Japan of the fruits of its victory over China, and their appropriation by European powers. These comments suggest that the Kaiser's perception of the danger of a unified 'yellow' race had played a major role in the decision-making process leading to the intervention. Although the comments seem to overemphasize both the role of Germany and the idea of the 'Yellow Peril' as decisive factors for the realization of the intervention, they were nevertheless shared by many contemporary Japanese, Germans and other Westerners.

Actually, there had been attempts by the great powers to intervene in the war as early as October 1894, when Britain took the initiative to suggest a diplomatic move; it, however, came to nothing. At that time, the Western governments considered joint action as premature. In addition, the Russian government needed time to respond properly to the East Asian developments because of the death of Foreign Minister Giers in late January 1895. Not exactly knowing what the true motives for the diplomatic silence were, the German government thought it best to deliver a 'friendly advice' notice to Tokyo in early March 1895. This warning was to inform the Japanese side that if it would demand territorial concessions in continental China, such a demand would most likely provoke an intervention by Western powers. The reason for this step was to make sure that Germany was not ignored in any kind of joint action by the powers and thus was to participate in the slicing up of China should that ever happen (Wippich 1987: 106–14). At last, in March 1895, Russia decided to intervene in the Far Eastern conflict and proposed joint action to Britain, France and Germany. While the British government no longer showed interest in participating, Paris and Berlin signalled their willingness to act in principle. Therefore, Russia – not Germany – initiated and master-

minded the intervention of spring 1895. For Germany, the co-operation with Russia offered a veritable chance to re-establish friendly relations again between the two empires after the bilateral contacts had become frosty with the dismissal of Bismarck in 1890 and the non-extension of the Reinsurance Treaty of 1887. Russo–German alienation delighted France, who had been isolated in European politics since its defeat by Germany in 1870–1, and, before long, Paris and St Petersburg drew closer together to finally conclude the Dual Alliance in 1894. While Germany supported the Russian initiative largely for political and strategic purposes – it saw a possibility to undermine the strength of the Franco–Russian co-operation – France whether it liked it or not had to follow its ally though French interests in East Asia were rather minimal (Fujimura 1973: 151–6, 164–8, 171–80). Thus, in late April 1895 the ‘East Asian Triple Entente’, as the co-operation of the three powers soon was called, came into being (Wippich 1987: 115–28). It was only after the Triple Intervention, however, that the Kaiser propagated the common danger of the ‘yellow’ race to the West. In this sense, the idea of a threat posed by it was conjured up partly by the complexities of European power politics. It should be kept in mind though that the ‘Yellow Peril’ was not the major cause of the intervention, but a means to justify it.

More than anyone else it was Max von Brandt, a former German Minister to Japan (1862–74) and China (1874–93) and later an influential expert on German Far Eastern policy, who succeeded in imbuing a sort of ‘Yellow Peril’ idea in the mind of the German monarch (Diósy 1898: 328; Gollwitzer 1962: 205–6). It is interesting that the German medical doctor Erwin Bälz, who for some time had been the personal physician to the Meiji emperor (1852–1912; r. 1867–1912) and was befriended by many Meiji leaders, wrote about Brandt’s influence on the Kaiser. In his article, ‘Anti-German Sentiment in Japan and its Causes’, he stated:

The opinion of Herr von Brandt had a great deal to do with the mistaken contempt for the Japanese, which prevailed in the leading circles of Germany [. . .] Unfortunately he had such a contempt for the Japanese (whom he knew only during the first years of the Restoration period), that when he was returning from China to Europe by the Pacific route, he did not trouble to make even a short stay in Japan in order to see what advances had been effected during the [. . .] years of his absence.

(Bälz 1932: 228–9)

Germany’s involvement in the intervention was received with the utmost astonishment, not only by the Japanese but also by those Germans who had close contacts with Japan. Well-informed circles in Britain assumed that the ‘Yellow Peril’ had only been invented in order to justify the intervention. Testifying to this is the analysis of Arthur Diósy, the

President of the Japan Society in London. According to him ‘the “Yellow Peril” bogey was brought out and plainly exhibited, like a yokel’s turnip-and-sheet “ghost”, to scare the lieges’. Diósy even went so far as to say that ‘this artifice of state-craft was admirably suited both to the German national character, predisposed to take a deep interest in great racial problems, [...] and to the Kaiser’s idiosyncrasy’ (Diósy 1898: 330).

Just three days after the announcement of the intervention, Wilhelm II revealed the idea of the Yellow Peril in a letter to his cousin, Tsar Nicholas II (1868–1918; r. 1894–1917), dated 26 April 1895:

I thank you sincerely for the excellent way in which you initiated the combined action of Europe [the Triple Intervention] for the sake of its interests against Japan. [...] It shows to evidence how necessary it is that we should hold together, and also that there is existent a base of common interests upon which *all* European nations may work in *joint action* for the welfare of all, as is shown by the adherence of France to us two. [...] I shall certainly do all in my power to keep Europe quiet, and also guard Russia’s rear so that nobody shall hamper your action towards the Far East! For that is clearly the great task of the future for Russia to cultivate the Asian Continent and to defend Europe from the inroads of the Great Yellow race.

(Grant 1920: 10–11)³

The Kaiser’s intention to spread the idea of the ‘Yellow Peril’ has been interpreted in connection with his *Weltpolitik*, Germany’s version of global activity in the age of Imperialism. It was his intention to incite Russia to engage itself in the Far East and thus divert it away from Europe. Wilhelm’s concept was to kill two birds with one stone because a continuous engagement of Russia in East Asia was to have serious repercussions on the strategic situation in Europe in general. While on the one hand it would have led to a reduction of Russia’s threat on Germany’s eastern borders as well as brought relief to Germany’s ally, Austria–Hungary, from Russian pressure in the Balkans, it would, on the other hand, have weakened the position of Russia’s ally, France, towards Germany (Kurobane 1982: 11–17).

At first glance, it seems that the Kaiser succeeded in egging Russia on to an adventure in the Far East by exploiting the danger of the yellow race to its limits. Yet, such an interpretation ignores the fact that neither the Tsar nor the Russian government were much affected by the spectre of the ‘Yellow Peril’. On the contrary, they retained a rather sceptic attitude towards Germany throughout these years (Cecil 1985: 114–20 and 1996: 178; Clark 2000: 9).

The Yellow Peril picture and the Japanese

The Kaiser tried to visualize his ideas in a drawing. The picture embodying his perception of the danger of the yellow race shows Valkyrie-like figures clad in armour standing high on a cliff under the Sign of the Cross. According to Wilhelm's interpretation, these Valkyries were to personify the European nations. At the head of these deities, the Archangel Michael stands with a sword in one hand, pointing to the East with the other. In the foreground, European cities are burning. Far in the East, a dragon can be seen depicted as 'the demon of destruction' carrying Buddha, a 'heathen idol'. In the monarch's interpretation, 'the Powers of Darkness' approached here 'to the banks of the protecting stream', which seems to be 'no longer a barrier' in the near future (Grant 1920: 18–19). The Kaiser provided the following legend: 'Nations of Europe! Join in the defence of your faith and your home!' He ordered reproductions of the picture to be made and gave them as gifts to other monarchs as well as Western statesmen. According to Diósy (1898: 327), the picture caused 'a sensation throughout the world, on its production in 1895, [...] a sensation heightened when the original was sent to the Tsar'. Among contemporaries, there was no doubt that the picture had a decisive impact on the propagation of the Yellow Peril (Cecil 1996: 38–9; Gollwitzer 1962: 206–8; Thompson 1978: 1–2).

In late 1895 or early 1896, the Japanese government learned about the picture for the first time. In March 1896, the Japanese oligarchs, Itō Hirobumi, Mutsu Munemitsu, Yamagata Aritomo and others saw a copy of it, and then it was shown to the Emperor Meiji as well (Iikura 2004b: 95–7; Kunaichō 1973: 32–3). In the May 1896 issue of the popular magazine *Taiyō*, Komatsu Midori, a critic who later became a Foreign Ministry official, stated:

The German Emperor Wilhelm II, who is famous for his clever conspiracy, drew a caricature for himself, presented it to the Russian Emperor and showed that a monster in the East could disturb the West at last.

(Komatsu 1896: 15–20)

Originally, the picture had no title except the bellicose caption that the Emperor had supplied. Nevertheless, for the contemporary observer the link between the picture and the Yellow Peril catchphrase was obvious. This was exactly what the Kaiser had in mind: namely to use the picture as a shorthand means to easily point to the imminent danger looming in the East. Wilhelm II considered himself the inventor of the phrase. In 1907, he maintained that he had already recognized the 'Peril' for a long time: 'In fact it was I, who originated the phrase "Yellow Peril"' (Davis 1918: 102). Although this is not quite correct, as the Kaiser seems to have started

using the exact phrase not before 1900 (Gollwitzer 1962: 42), apparently he most ardently propagated the catchphrase in the Western political world. It is notable that the Yellow Peril phrase began to be widely used for example in the French press in the mid-1890s (*ibid.*: 44–6).

With the picture, which in Germany became known as ‘the Knackfuss picture’, the Kaiser intended to warn the West of the rise of the yellow race to power. The dragon in the picture obviously referred to the Chinese as it was called a ‘Chinese dragon’ in the German semi-official organ, the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* (Grant 1920: 18–19). As far as Japan was concerned, there was no comparable clear-cut symbol for the country. Whatever intention the Kaiser had, there were nevertheless many contemporaries who assumed that Buddha symbolized Japan. It was therefore no wonder that the Japanese, above all the Meiji oligarchs, took the picture very seriously. A Japanese interpretation of the Kaiser’s ‘Yellow Peril’ picture, which appeared in the *Review of Reviews* notably, showed this:

When a year or two ago a distinguished Japanese statesman visited Mowbray House when he was in London, he paused before the picture [the Kaiser’s Yellow Peril picture], [...] and laying his finger upon the image in the East he exclaimed, ‘That is Japan!’ On my expressing the opinion generally entertained in this country that the Kaiser meant to symbolise in Buddha the Yellow Peril without special reference to Japan, my visitor persisted. ‘No,’ he said. ‘He meant that for Japan. That is altogether his idea.’

(*Review of Reviews* 1904b: 551)

Although no name was given, it can be assumed that this ‘distinguished Japanese statesman’ was in fact Itō Hirobumi (1841–1909), a four-time prime minister, who was in England in 1901–2 after visiting Russia and Germany. Erwin Bälz described another comment by Itō on the Kaiser’s notorious picture as follows:

The German Emperor painted a picture to show the way in which the Mongols threatened the most sacred treasures of European civilization. There can be no shadow of doubt that the Mongols he had in mind were chiefly the Japanese; for, if any Mongol power should threaten Europe, it could not be impotent China, but only Japan, the rising power of the Far East. In this picture of your Emperor’s we were represented as incendiaries and assassins.

(Bälz 1932: 222)

In Europe, the Knackfuss picture soon became the subject of amusement. The German humorous periodical *Der Wahre Jacob*, brought a socialist parody of the Kaiser’s picture entitled ‘Rise, Police of Europe!’ in

December 1895 and ridiculed the suppression of socialist movements by the European rulers (*Review of Reviews* 1896: V). Another caricature somehow alluding to the Emperor's picture was published in Germany a few months before the outbreak of the Russo–Japanese War. This parody shows a Cossack on a hill riding on a bear, an obvious reference to Russia. On the opposite side, a Chinese soldier stands behind the Great Wall, and a Japanese soldier with a bayonet is at the ready on a remote island. The title given was 'People of Asia, Defend your Rights!' (*Review of Reviews* 1904a: 37).

Due to his advocacy of the anti-yellow race idea, the Kaiser became an unpopular figure in Japan at the turn of the century. Kōtoku Shūsui (1871–1911), a famous Socialist, praised the Tennō while criticizing Wilhelm II in his early work, *Imperialism, Spectre of the Twentieth Century* (*Nijū-seiki no kaibutsu teikoku-shugi*). According to Kōtoku, who later turned to anarchism and was executed because of his failed plot to assassinate the Meiji Tennō, the Kaiser liked 'wars, despotism, and a vain reputation'. Furthermore, Kōtoku asserted:

The Tennō is different from the young German Emperor. The Tennō does not like wars and respects peace. He does not like despotism and respects liberty. He is not pleased with a barbaric vanity for only one country and hopes for the well being of civilization for the world.

(Kōtoku 1901: 33–4)

Mori Ōgai (1862–1922), a famous writer and a military surgeon who had studied medical science in Germany, gave a lecture on the 'Yellow Peril' in November 1903, a few months before the outbreak of the war with Russia. Based on this lecture, his book *An Outline of the Yellow Peril Concept* (*Kōkaron Kōgai*) was published in May 1904. In this book he referred to and criticized a German volume entitled *Die gelbe Gefahr als Moralproblem* written by Hermann von Samson-Himmelstjerna. Ōgai maintained that he selected this book as a typical account of the 'Yellow Peril' hysteria in the West. The German author assessed China highly, especially its morality, while evaluating Japan in a much more negative light (Mori 1904: 539–68). Ōgai disapproved of the assumed superiority of the white race and of any kind of defamation of the Japanese evoked by the 'Yellow Peril'.

The Russo–Japanese War and the propagation of the 'Yellow Peril' in Germany

'There is no more popular theme in the Continental press and periodicals today than the alleged approaching combination of the yellow races, welded and led on by Japan', wrote Demetrius C. Boulger, an English historian, a month before the outbreak of the Russo–Japanese War (Boulger

1904: 30). With the opening of hostilities, the propagation of the ‘Yellow Peril’ idea reached new heights. In particular, Russian, French and German writers and politicians attempted to persuade the West that if Japan succeeded in crushing Russia and controlling East Asia, it would become the head of a Pan-Asiatic bloc threatening the West. Some even contended that a Japanese victory over Russia would make the ‘Yellow Peril’ a reality (Eltzbacher 1904: 910; Iikura 1992: 174–96). Contemporary Japanese statesmen therefore vigorously stated, though in vain, that there was no reason to fear that Japan would form a Pan-Asian alliance against the West.

One of the most enthusiastic propagators of the idea during these crucial years was again Wilhelm II. Despite the new wave of ‘Yellow Peril’ propaganda, the Kaiser suggested putting the German naval hospitals in Yokohama and in Kiao-Chow at the disposal of the Japanese government at the beginning of the war. The Yokohama hospital had been offered once before for the use of Japan during the Sino–Japanese War of 1894–5. A Belgian diplomat remarked: ‘The gracious act of the Emperor is greatly appreciated [by the Japanese] and one sees in it proof of Germany’s friendly disposition towards Japan’ (Lensen 1967: 182–3). This offer was interpreted as a sign of the German intentions to preserve strict neutrality during the war. Yet, this ‘gracious act’ concealed the real intention of the Kaiser who, in fact, was outspoken in his support for Russia. At the beginning of the twentieth century also the ruling elite of Germany watched with concern the ‘Yellow Peril’ as manifested by the Japanese victories. A correspondent in Berlin mentioned the opinion of an anonymous senior German official, who – immediately after the outbreak of the war – had expressed hopes for a Russian victory. According to this official, a Japanese victory would only mean that ‘Japanese influence would be supreme in China and that the cry would go up, “Asia for the Asiatics”’ (*New York Times*, 14 February 1904). In a letter to the Tsar written on 6 June 1904, the Kaiser boasted of being ‘the Author of the Picture “Yellow Peril”’ (Grant 1920: 118). When Wilhelm II made his views on the East Asian entanglement public in August 1904, he stated that the Russo–Japanese War would turn into a final conflagration between the two great religions, Christianity and Buddhism, and would produce a decisive clash between the Western and the Eastern civilizations. He assured the Tsar of German sympathy for Russia and explained that what was at stake was not only the future of Russia but also that of all of Europe (Hirakawa 1974: 281). In autumn 1904, *The Times* quoted a Russian journalist’s interview with the Kaiser. The journalist, Prince Mestchersky, summarized his impressions in the following way:

The Emperor, I am told, desires our success in this war not merely out of sympathy for Russia and friendship for our Tsar. He is also inspired by his interest in the object of this war, which he regards as the first

collision between the vanguard of Europe and the rising power of the yellow race. There must in any case be a connexion between his celebrated picture of the Chinese dragon (it was really a picture of Buddha seated upon a thunder-cloud) and his conception of the present war between Russia and Japan.

(*The Times*, 9 September 1904)

The Kaiser focused largely on the racial aspects of the war. Max von Brandt, who was reactivated as a diplomatic adviser on East Asian affairs for another term, in contrast held more pragmatic views. He believed that 'what he [the Kaiser] calls the Pan-Asiatic tendencies of Japan will for many years be held in check by the exhaustion due to the war, and that from the German point of view Japanese success need not be deplored' (*The Times*, 18 October 1904). Considering the long-term prospects for the security of Germany's eastern borders as well as for its colony in China, Kiao-Chow, the Russo-Japanese War unmistakably offered political and strategic advantages. In order to reduce both the Russian and the Japanese threat, a long drawn-out war of attrition without a clear winner therefore was the most desirable scenario.

According to the *New York Times* in December 1904, the German government had received reports from China, which provided evidence that the 'Yellow Peril' had become a reality. They apparently revealed Japan's penetration into every part of China. Japan, so the reports maintained, distributed pamphlets in China claiming Asia for the Asians, proclaiming that European Powers were not entitled to have any privileges in Asia and that Japan was fighting against Russia on behalf of all of Asia. Therefore, the article stated, the German government foresaw possible disturbances in China in the form of another Boxer Uprising⁴ or a similar popular movement against foreigners in China. This uprising, the government believed, would be led by the Japanese who were laying the basis for an immense Oriental Empire that might expand to the Ural Mountains (*New York Times*, 4 December 1904).

However, the German public was not monolithic. While the Kaiser and his government sympathized with Russia, there were other opinions in Germany as well. The Social Democratic Party (SPD) criticized the Kaiser and the German government. The major reason for their support for Japan was the traditional Russo-phobia of the Socialists (Pinon 1906: 209). Their chairman, August Bebel, was reported to have said: 'In my opinion, German sympathies are far more on the side of Japan than on that of Russia' (*New York Times*, 10 May 1904). Moreover, Karl Kautsky, the leading figure of contemporary Marxism, declared in the SPD weekly *Die Neue Zeit* that German democracy despised Tsarism and hoped for the victory of Japan. He feared that a Russian victory would have ill effects on German Socialism (Pinon 1906: 209). On 11 May 1904, a *New York Times* editorial confirmed that 'German sympathies in the war are probably

divided strictly on party lines. [...] The Agrarians and the Junkers⁵ are in favour of Russia. The Liberals and the Socialists must be in favour of Japan.' The newspaper then concluded, 'the German people sympathize with Japan, but that the German Government sympathizes with Russia'. This observation of German public opinion exaggerated the pro-Japanese sentiment in Germany. It should be taken into account here that many of those Germans who supported Japan did so mainly due to their Russophobia.

In order to create a favourable atmosphere towards Japan, the Tokyo government sent two emissaries, Suyematsu Kenchō and Kaneko Kentarō, to Europe and America respectively at the beginning of the Russo-Japanese War. The major purpose of this mission was to prevent the outbreak of 'Yellow Peril' hysteria in the West, as Tokyo feared the revival of a joint intervention by the Western Powers (Matsumura 1980: 7–8, 40 and 1987: 12). As the war went on in favour of Japan, a considerable section of the Western press began to emphasize the fact that a victorious Japan posed a much more realistic threat than the imaginary 'Yellow Peril' ever did.

In fact, after the fall of Port Arthur in early January 1905, arguments which regarded Japan as a new international menace spread all over the West. Now that the Japanese threat was perceived as real, it was not necessary for the writers and politicians who dreaded the rise of Japan to raise the somewhat outdated and obscure fear of the 'Yellow Peril' (Iikura 1992: 241–52). The Kaiser was one of those scaremongers who adhered to the original idea. In a speech delivered in March 1905, he described Japan as a 'scourge of God', a phrase which had especially been coined for Attila, the leader of the invading Huns in late antiquity (*The Times*, 9 May 1905). When Russia appeared to be on the brink of defeat, Wilhelm II expressed his disappointment with the developments on the battlefield saying 'now that Russia has shown itself too weak to resist the Yellow Peril, the task of checking this peril may fall on Germany' (*New York Times*, 13 May 1905). While the propaganda campaign focusing on the 'Yellow Peril' continued in Europe, the Japanese maintained a low profile on the issue. *The Times* correspondent in Tokyo highly valued this silence and said that the Japanese made no fuss about the 'Yellow Peril' preachers and their doctrines. 'They evidently think', he said, 'that to bandy words would serve no useful purpose' (*The Times*, 22 April 1905). After Russia's Baltic fleet was almost annihilated in the naval battle at Tsushima in May 1905, the spectre of the 'Yellow Peril' reappeared. This was particularly true for the German press, whose reports regularly were quoted in the international press as well. The *Preussische National-Zeitung* published an alarmist article, suggesting that Japan would 'one day attempt to organize the East in a military and political sense under their flag' (*The Times*, 31 May 1905).

By the time the peace talks were under way in summer 1905, the 'Yellow Peril' fever, however, had somewhat died down. Both belligerents

were exhausted and the other powers were beginning to develop an interest in establishing peace. This went particularly for France who did not like to see its Russian ally further weakened and thus becoming less important as a deterrent towards Germany. Even the Kaiser, who had persistently encouraged his cousin, Tsar Nicholas II, to continue the fighting began to change his mind after the devastating naval battle at Tsushima and to think about peace. In such a situation, evoking the 'Yellow Peril' appeared no longer to be opportune. However, the temporary restraint was not to last for long. Around the time of the conclusion of the peace treaty between Russia and Japan in Portsmouth, United States, the Emperor came back to his favourite idea as if he had just been waiting for this moment. In a reception he gave for American Congressmen, Wilhelm II remarked that 'the Japanese would follow up their military successes by closing the "open door", and, by their command of cheap labour, forcing Europe and America out of the Oriental markets. The Japanese [...] would indirectly own China.' The Kaiser went on to say that 'it was necessary for the white nations to stem the yellow peril by uniting. The only power that Japan feared was America, and it was a good thing for the world that the United States was on one [opposing] side of the Japanese Empire' (*New York Times*, 6 September 1905). The Kaiser's revelations appeared on the front page of the *New York Times*, which had welcomed the conclusion of the peace treaty a day earlier.

The Kaiser's blunder and Germany as a hypothetical enemy

After the Russo-Japanese War, especially after the conclusion of the Anglo-Russian agreement of 1907, the Triple Entente of Britain, Russia and France laid a diplomatic siege against the Triple Alliance of Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy. In the same year, Japan concluded agreements with Russia and France respectively. As an ally of Britain since 1902, Japan was expected to play a complementary role in strengthening the Triple Entente. Germany's failed efforts to conclude another three-power alliance consisting of the United States and China around 1907 irritated Japan (Yoshii 1984: 84-8). Furthermore, the Kaiser continued his propagation of the 'Yellow Peril'. In a later suppressed interview, which the Kaiser granted in 1908, he referred to the danger caused by the 'Yellow Peril' to *New York Times* correspondent William Bayard Hale and lamented about the result of the Russo-Japanese War. He conceived it as the first racial war between the 'white' and 'yellow' nations and finally deplored: 'What a pity it was not fought better! What a misfortune.' The Kaiser did not think the Russians in any way prepared for the war against the Japanese, and exclaimed with self-flattery: 'My God! I wish my battalions could have had a chance at them! We would have made a short work of it.' Furthermore, he stated: 'The danger to us is not Japan, but Japan at the head of a consolidated Asia. The control of China by Japan, which is

sharply and bitterly antagonistic to the White man's civilization – that would be the worst calamity that would threaten the world.' He claimed that preventing 'Japan's swallowing of China' was the special 'duty' of the 'white' man. 'The Japanese are devils', the Kaiser declared, 'that is the simple fact. They are devils' (Gaimushō Gaikō Shiryōkan 1908: 1–2–3–5). Although this interview was regarded as a fabrication, contemporary Japanese statesmen such as Ōkuma Shigenobu took it as evidence for the resurgence of the 'Yellow Peril' doctrine.⁶

As both Germany and Japan were constitutional monarchies, it was considered ungracious for the Japanese media to defame a foreign monarch. Therefore, it followed a policy of restraint in high official matters. Yet, this taboo was violated by the *Mainichi Denpō*, which in a series of articles in 1910, revealed the disability of Wilhelm II, whose left arm was crippled due to a complicated birth. The newspaper also exaggerated his defects saying that he had inborn disease in his left leg and that his stock was that of formidable cancer (Kōson 1910). In Japan, some newspapers condemned the provoking report as a 'very much immodest article', which overstepped the unwritten press code towards the Imperial Family and foreign rulers.

World War I and the 'German Peril'

When World War I broke out in Europe, the Japanese press began to abandon its previous restraint and attacked Wilhelm II more openly. In autumn 1914, Ukita Kazutami, a political scientist, wrote an essay entitled 'The German Kaiser disturbing world peace' which was published in a special war issue of *Taiyō*. This article condemned the Emperor by asserting that he had underestimated the energetic reactions of Russia. It went on to accuse the monarch of being a 'diplomatic politician who is full of conceit and ignorant of the actual situation of the [involved] powers'. For Ukita it was obvious that Germany only had to go to war to save 'the honour of the Kaiser's letter to the Tsar' in March 1909 – on the occasion of Vienna's annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina – indicating that Germany would be prepared to fight alongside its ally, Austria-Hungary, should Russia decide to help Serbia by opening hostilities against the Habsburg dynasty. This letter, Ukita believed, was the main root of the war. For this very reason he impeached the Kaiser for causing the war: 'The Kaiser, being a ruler of a Christian country, ignored humanity very much and, as a monarch of a great power who decides the fate of sixty-five million people, reacted too irresponsibly.' Ukita assumed that the German Emperor was inspired by an aspiration to conquer the world by controlling Europe (Ukita 1914: 2–15).

With the Japanese declaration of war against Germany on 23 August 1914, both powers became belligerents. Uchida Roan, a critic and writer, blamed the Kaiser even more openly than Ukita. He maintained that the

Germans had an 'arrogant exclusionist mind' and that they would prevail in every corner of the world with the 'intent of aggression'. Especially Wilhelm II was seen as the one who intensively stirred up national sentiments among the Germans. Although Uchida reproached the Germans for displaying an arrogant national character that would only conceal 'their barbaric and dirty ferocity under the mask of civilization', he nevertheless expressed his sympathy with regard to the cause of the war. 'It was not the Germans but the Emperor who was responsible for the war', Uchida stated, and continued to say: 'This war is the Kaiser's blunder and is not that of the Germans. This is a war for war's sake and it is fought for the Emperor's ambition and amusement.' These strong comments seem to have been caused by Uchida's animosity towards the Kaiser who 'forced Japan to return the Liaodong Peninsula to China [in 1895] and inflamed Europe by propagating the Yellow Peril' (Uchida 1914: 20–33). The title of Uchida's essay was given in plain English and characteristically read 'The German Peril'.

Conclusion

Japan's attitude towards Germany deteriorated considerably over the period under consideration from the 1890s to World War I. The first factor responsible for the bilateral estrangement was Germany's participation in the Triple Intervention of 1895; the second and apparently more decisive factor was the Kaiser's reckless propagation of the 'Yellow Peril'. The author contends, however, that though the Japanese policy-makers took the 'Yellow Peril' propaganda very seriously, it eventually urged them to act cautiously and be very sensitive in international diplomacy (Iikura 2004b: 119–23). A good example to illustrate this was Japan's involvement in the Boxer Uprising in China along with the Western powers in 1900–1. When the Japanese cabinet decided to participate in the international military suppression of the anti-foreign Boxers in 1900, it had already reached consensus to withdraw the troops as quickly as possible in order not to raise any fears alluding to the 'Yellow Peril' (Akita and Itō 1895: 108). A few months before the outbreak of the Russo–Japanese War the Japanese government acted in a similar way. At that time the Katsura cabinet decided not to force China to go to war with Russia because such a political move amounting to a Sino–Japanese alliance most likely would have aroused concerns about the unified Asian nations and would have surely reactivated the bogey of the 'Yellow Peril' (Beasley 1987: 80–1). In addition to this apparent political restraint, the Meiji oligarchs did not support any form of Pan-Asianism, which the West could have taken as direct proof of the truth behind the 'Yellow Peril' propaganda. On the contrary, Japan sought for collaboration with the Western powers instead. Such attempts and efforts, however, aiming at international co-operation began to disappear in Japanese politics from the 1920s onwards. Imperial Japan,

which after the Washington Conference in 1921–2, became more and more isolated in international relations, later preferred to approach its former enemy Germany to conclude the Anti-Comintern Pact in 1936 which represented the first step in the political and military rapprochement between the two ‘revisionist’ countries. Japanese–German relations became more intimate at last with the conclusion of the Tripartite Pact (together with Fascist Italy) in 1940. It may be considered an irony of history that, while Nazi Germany banned the use of the phrase ‘Yellow Peril’ in 1935 (Ichinokawa 2004: 113), Pan-Asianism became Japan’s war aim in the form of the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere (*dai-tōa kyōei-ken*). From the viewpoint of the Western colonial powers, this was perceived as a sort of a realization of the ‘Yellow Peril’ (Dower 1986: 163).

After his abdication in 1918, Wilhelm II fled to the Netherlands, where he lived in Doorn until his death in June 1941, rejecting Hitler’s offer to return to Germany. The former Kaiser was still preoccupied with the Yellow Peril and continued to warn against it. He even used postcards showing the Knackfuss picture (Cecile 1996: 38, 318, 351, 446). Both the bogey and the picture were the Kaiser’s long-time favourites even in exile until he died.

Notes

- 1 For a comprehensive view of the ‘Yellow Peril’ see Gollwitzer 1962, Thompson 1978 and Hashikawa 1976. On the ‘Yellow Peril’ idea and Wilhelm II see also Lehmann 1978, Hirakawa 1971 (rpt 1987), 1974 (rpt 1985), Wippich 1996 and Iikura 2004a and 2004b.
- 2 Aoki Shūzō (1844–1914) was foreign minister in 1889–91 as well as in 1899–1900. Besides he was three times Japan’s minister to Germany (1874–9, 1880–5 and 1892–8) and ambassador to the USA (1906–8).
- 3 Even though the quotation is not grammatically correct, this is the way it was originally published.
- 4 The Boxer Rebellion was an uprising by anti-foreign religious activists, in China from 1898 to 1900. They attacked missionaries, foreigners including diplomats and Chinese Christians. Some German and Japanese diplomats were killed. Finally, the rebellion was suppressed by Western and Japanese forces in 1900.
- 5 The Junkers were the landowning aristocrats in the eastern part of Germany.
- 6 Ōkuma Shigenobu (1838–1922) was prime minister in 1898 and again during the first half of World War I (1914–16). On this Hale interview, see: Esthus 1966: 258–9, 261 and 1970: 126–30, Cecil 1996: 141–2. As for the Japanese reactions see for example: ‘Hakokaron Okuma-haku dan’, *Tokyo Niiroku Shinbun*, 25 November 1908.

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6 Exoticism in early twentieth-century German literature on Japan

Gerhard Schepers

Introduction

Elements of exoticism as well as stereotypes and clichés based on exoticism can still be found in present-day literature on Japan and in the popular image of Japan in Europe. The end of exoticism indicated by the title of Irmela Hijiya-Kirschnereit's book (*Das Ende der Exotik*) is still not in sight (Giacomuzzi 2002: 167; Ophüls-Kashima 1995: 89), in spite of the wealth of information on Japan available now and the growing number of Europeans who have had the possibility to personally experience the real Japan. The persistency of these instances of exoticism already indicates that it will be important to take a closer look both at the factors that gave rise to exoticism as well as at the function they serve in the relations between cultures. The fact that, in Germany, exoticism and enthusiasm for Japan reached a high point at a time when the political relations between both countries were at a low point is of particular interest in our context.¹

Images of Japan until World War II

One might suspect that the images of Japan found in exoticism originated mainly from the time of the early contacts between Europe and Japan, or that they were due to the fact that Japan was almost unknown to Europeans until the middle of the nineteenth century, as Wilkinson (1981: 35) and Wuthenow (1990: 19) claim. Both assumptions, however, are misleading. The Jesuit missionaries who came to Japan in the sixteenth century painted a generally positive picture of Japan and its people. They even found qualities superior to those of Europeans (Kreiner 1993: 18–20). Their reports generally lacked the elements of exoticism found either in Marco Polo's description of *Zipangu* as a paradisiacal island or, much later, in the enthusiastic praise of Japan in European exoticism. Moreover, from the sixteenth century, Japan was much better known in Europe than is often assumed. George Sansom claims: 'There is relatively little reference to Japan in European literature [...]' and speaks of 'the general

ignorance of Japan which prevailed in the West until the beginning of the nineteenth century, and even longer' (Sansom 1952: 8–9). But that this cannot be true is sufficiently demonstrated by the wealth of material on Japan for this period that Peter Kapitza has collected in two large volumes (Kapitza 1990; Kreiner 1984: 2, 25).

Some elements of later exoticism can already be found in the earliest reports on Japan, particularly in accounts of the Japanese that put them close to the ideal of the 'noble savage'. But a 'radical change of views' (Kreiner 1993: 21) in the second half of the eighteenth century, under the influence of the Enlightenment, led to an increasingly negative evaluation of the Japanese (*ibid.* and Kreiner 1984: 33). When, at the end of the nineteenth century Europeans discovered, or actually rediscovered, the kingdom of the Ryukyu and the Ainu, two ethnic groups in the south and north of Japan, these peoples were described according to the ideal of the 'noble savage', whereas, ironically, their negative traits were attributed to the bad influence of the Japanese (Kreiner 1993: 22–3).

With the opening of the country in 1853, more and more Europeans were able to gain first-hand experiences in Japan. Their reports generally presented a realistic picture of the country and led to a sympathetic and increasingly deeper understanding of Japan and its culture in Europe. Among the Germans, most influential in this respect were the experts invited to Japan in the 1870s and 1880s. Their books and reports, mostly written in the decades after 1880, form the basis of an image of Japan in Germany that remained influential well into the twentieth century, and partly until today (Mathias-Pauer 1984: 116–21). It is an image with mostly positive traits. 'Oriental' qualities can only be found occasionally, and then only with reference to certain negative traits of character that, however, are refuted by other scholars (Freitag 1939: 123–4; Mathias-Pauer 1984: 119; Yasui and Mehl 1987: 73–6).

Merchants, travellers and other visitors to Japan usually gave dispassionate, objective descriptions in their reports and tended to emphasize positive aspects. An example is the book by Heinrich Schliemann (better known for his discovery of ancient Troy) who viewed Japan with the sober eye of a merchant (Schliemann 1867). Travel diaries which became very popular in the second half of the nineteenth century tend to emphasize more the 'exotic' aspect of Japan but only towards the end of the century can we notice a tendency to refer to motives found in exoticism, as will be discussed in the next section.

By the end of the nineteenth century, political relations between Japan and Germany had turned sour (Triple Intervention 1895).² The focus of interest of the German public now shifted towards Japan's increasing military and economic power, a tendency reflected in numerous articles on the actual situation in Japan and its theatres of war. Regine Mathias-Pauer has shown how this was reflected in local German newspapers. The early enthusiasm accompanying Japan's victory over China in 1895 (Wippich

1997: 21–34), expressed in phrases like ‘the Prussians of East Asia’, changed to mixed feelings of respect, disappointment and fear (Mathias-Pauer 1984: 122–31).

Exoticism since the end of the nineteenth century

During the last decades of the nineteenth century, Japanese art and craftsmanship began to exert a growing influence on European arts and crafts, accelerated by the various World Fairs from the 1860s. The *ukiyo-e* (woodblock prints) and European *Japonism* are probably the most remarkable phenomena to be mentioned in this context. They added new aspects to the image of Japan in Europe and were the cause of a growing interest in the country. From around 1900, group tours around the world, organized for wealthy tourists, became increasingly popular (Pekar 2003: 137–40; Schuster 1977: 80–1). Max Dauthendey, whose writings on Japan will be discussed later, joined such a tour organized by Cook’s Travel Agency in 1905–6, visiting Egypt, India, China, Japan and America. Many of these travellers felt compelled to write about their experiences. This travel literature, often with illustrations, helped Europeans to gain a more detailed knowledge about Japan and various aspects of its culture but, increasingly, we can also find in it elements of exoticism.

Defining exoticism

Before we discuss these elements of exoticism in detail it will be necessary to clarify in what sense the term ‘exoticism’ is used in this chapter. In a wider sense, one might use it in reference to the way people relate to phenomena regarded as exotic. However, the interest in exotic things or the curiosity or even fascination aroused by these alone does not justify the use of the term. It should be reserved for the historical phenomenon where exoticism has a distinctly new dimension. The background for this phenomenon could be described briefly as follows. Since about the middle of the nineteenth century, a growing number of Western artists and intellectuals, dissatisfied with and critical of European civilization, created imaginary exotic counter worlds by arbitrarily choosing real or imagined elements of distant cultures and by projecting their own dreams and wishes on them. Similar phenomena or at least some elements of these can be found in European history since ancient times as well as in other cultures, but they hardly ever had an impact as massive as the influence of exoticism on Europeans since the end of the nineteenth century.

According to Hermann Pollig, technological progress and the increasing rationalization and complexity of modern life are felt to be a threat and thus evoke compensations of the psyche. ‘The loss of meaning leads to an escape into an irrational imaginary counter world of paradisiacal and obsessional wishes and daydreams. The escape into exoticism is one of the

possibilities of regaining psychic balance in the search for a harmonious life'³ (Pollig 1987: 16). Or, as Linus Hauser puts it:

Thus, we can conclude that in an age of scientific technology, exotic man representing pre-scientific, even pre-historic harmony with nature is presented as an ethical model for a highly technological society. Naturalness, spontaneity, blissful harmony with oneself and the world are what a highly technological society longs for since it seems to be impossible to realize these things in daily life.

(Hauser 1987: 41)

This leads to escapism and often a rejection of one's own culture, to a flight into utopian and paradisiacal worlds. In the second half of the eighteenth century, through the reports of Louis-Antoine de Bougainville and Georg Foster, the South Pacific and its islands, especially Tahiti, were discovered as an earthly paradise where a 'free, blissful and orgiastic life' could be found (Pollig 1987: 19), and these islands then became the object of exotic dreams by Paul Gauguin and others at the end of the nineteenth century. 'The tropical islands became a metaphor of the exotic as such' (Pollig 1987: 19).

Earl Miner distinguishes between primitivism and exoticism which are both seen, in the nineteenth century, as 'idealizing a culture different from one's own. If the idealized culture is simple, then the urge to idealize it is primitivistic; if it is less primitive than unfamiliarly refined, then the idealizing is exoticism. The International Exhibition [of 1862] laid the basis for an exoticizing of Japan which lives on to this day.' Miner continues by stating that 'Walpole, Mr. Burges, and Oscar Wilde saw common ideal and exotic elements in the distant European past and in the newly discovered art of Japan' (Miner 1958: 29), thus indicating a common source of both European romanticism and exoticism. In line with what has been discussed above, Miner explains the 'seemingly indestructible appeal of Japan as an ideal image' by pointing out that 'exoticism is as much a search for what is ideal and what ought to be imitated as for what is merely different in nature' (Miner 1958: 269).

But enthusiasm and longing for exotic counter worlds are not the only elements found in exoticism. It also contains opposing, and frequently hidden, elements of fear and anxiety (Pollig 1987: 16). The *locus classicus* in this context can be found in Thomas Mann's *Der Tod in Venedig* ('Death in Venice'), written in 1912, in a passage at the beginning that shows the source of the exotic fantasy in the human soul and the power, possibly both creative and destructive, it can set free.

Exoticism in Thomas Mann's 'Death in Venice'

The protagonist of the novel, Aschenbach, a successful writer, utterly absorbed in his work, has sacrificed his artistic creativity and energy for a

career within the confines of bourgeois society. One day, exhausted by his work and disappointed by his continuous lack of inspiration, he sets out for a late afternoon walk. His fantasy is kindled by the encounter with an exotic-looking stranger and he suddenly feels 'the most surprising consciousness of a widening of inward barriers, a kind of vaulting unrest, a youthful ardent thirst for distant scenes' (Mann 1955: 9). And then he is almost seized by a vision: 'He beheld a landscape, a tropical marshland, [...] a kind of primeval wilderness-world [...]' (ibid.). The landscape described by Mann displays a striking resemblance to a picture by Henri Rousseau, one of the exponents of exoticism in painting, namely 'The Dream', which he created in 1910, two years before Mann wrote his novel. It is typical of his jungle paintings, which demonstrate his need for dream and escape, an escape that had actually led Gauguin, Rimbaud and Loti (whose portrait Rousseau painted) to Tahiti, Africa and East Asia. The picture and the novel both show 'the marvels and terrors' (ibid.) of a tropical landscape but there are also remarkable differences.

The most conspicuous one is the presence of a naked woman on a sofa in Rousseau's painting. It indicates the important, sometimes almost exclusive, role of eroticism within exoticism. This element is not completely lacking in Mann's description but indicated only indirectly through words like 'rank', 'hairy palm-trunks',⁴ 'lush', 'naked roots' or 'milk-white blossoms' (ibid.).⁵ The moral constraints of bourgeois society are reflected in Mann's landscape. The danger lurking here is indicated by the gleaming eyes of a crouching tiger,⁶ an element that we also find in Rousseau's picture. The latter, actually, has two beasts of prey and a snake but still the whole atmosphere depicted does not justify a word like 'terror' that Mann uses twice.

Mann's text shows how the suppression of basic human feelings and urges results in exotic dreams and longings that, the more they are suppressed, may turn into powerful and extreme reactions, threatening to shatter a well-ordered life. In *Death in Venice*, Aschenbach tries to control his longing, but the lure of the other world is too strong. It heightens his creative imagination but he finally succumbs to its destructive powers. The end is announced in a 'fearful dream' (Mann 1955: 74–6) where again 'fear and desire' mix, an orgy of wild excesses, violence, obscenity and promiscuity, a 'Dionysian' intoxication (although more negative than Nietzsche saw it).⁷ And for all this Aschenbach did not have to travel far away. A short trip to Venice was sufficient because the exotic and even the orgiastic he carried with him as possibilities in his soul could come alive through dreams and fantasy.

That our excursion has not completely led us away from our topic of Japan can be seen from some words of Nietzsche: 'I like to be in Venice because something Japanese could easily happen there...' (Nietzsche 2003, vol. 7: 127). Actually, the same impulse that drove Aschenbach to Venice made Europeans travel further and further to countries that had

still retained an aura of exotic charms. Japan was included among these only at a later stage. The country became, for many Germans, 'an attractive destination of travels to far-away countries, often in succession to the longing for the south previously directed towards Italy' (Pekar 2003: 137).

Exoticism in the descriptions of Japan by Europeans

During the first decades after the opening of Japan, there were hardly any indications of exoticism in the descriptions of the country by Europeans, but this changed at the end of the nineteenth century. Probably the most important event in this context was the publication of Pierre Loti's *Madame Chrysanthème* in 1887. Although Loti's novel is more sophisticated than is often assumed (Pekar 2003: 301), the tradition he created in literature and art resulted in a cliché of Japan that is still influential today. It is the concept of Japan reduced to that of the 'geisha' as Western men saw her in their erotic fantasies,⁸ an image similar to that of women of other 'exotic' countries and still alive in the sex tourism of today (Schwarz 1995: 13, 19). Eroticism can be seen as one aspect of exoticism. However, when it is the only one it would be better not to speak of exoticism but replace the 'x' by an 'r' and call it what it is, namely, just eroticism (Kleinlogl 1987: 415–18; Littlewood 1996: 109–56; Pekar 2003: 273–333).

Another element in the traditional image of Japan is Mount Fuji, the 'holy mountain'. Detlev Schauwecker has analysed about 30 descriptions of Mount Fuji in German literature on Japan, which throw some light on changes in attitude towards Japan (Schauwecker 1987). The early descriptions are objective and unemotional. A change occurs not before the late 1890s. With a few exceptions, we now frequently find words like 'holy', 'divine', 'reverence', 'adoration', 'paradise', 'divine majesty', 'eternal purity', 'dreamy magic', 'ecstatic bliss', all in texts written between 1897 and 1913 (Schauwecker 1987: 109–15).

Two quotes from books in English may suffice to illustrate how the tendency towards exoticism gradually emerged in the writings on Japan at the end of the nineteenth century. Henry T. Finck already indicates this in the title of his *Lotus-Time in Japan*, written in 1895. In his preface, he announces his intention to give an overview of 'the principal points in which Japanese civilization is superior to our own' (Finck 1895: viii). He then states:

[...] in view of the American tendency to estimate Japanese civilization from a purely material and military point of view [...] I have tried to show that the Japanese have as much to teach us as we have to teach them, and that what they can offer us is, on the whole, of a higher and nobler order than what we can offer them. Japanese civilization is based on altruism, ours on egotism.

(Finck 1895: ix)

We can see here an attempt to perceive Japanese civilization as an alternative to the West, emphasizing spiritual against materialistic values. Similar opinions can be found frequently in texts of the following decades. Sir Edwin Arnold, a Victorian poet, in 1889 told a Japanese audience at the Tokyo Club:

I have never before visited any land where I envied so much the inhabitants and the residents. [...] if Japan be not exactly a Paradise, it appears to me as close an approach to Lotus-land as I shall ever find. By many a pool of water-lilies in temple grounds and in fairy-like gardens, amid the beautiful rural scenery of Kama-Kura or Nikko; under long avenues of majestic cryptomeria; in weird and dreamy Shinto shrines; on the white matting of the teahouses; in the bright bazaars; by your sleeping lakes, and under your stately mountains, I have felt further removed than ever before from the flurry and vulgarity of our European life. [...] that simple joy of life, that universal alacrity to please and be pleased, that almost divine sweetness of disposition which, I frankly believe, places Japan in these respects higher than any other nation. [...] Retain, I beseech you, gentlemen, this national characteristic, which you did not import, and can never, alas, export.

(Arnold 1891: 240–3)

The fact that a word like ‘bazaar’ slips into his description of Japan indicates that what he is dealing with here is the Orient as European fantasy has created it rather than the real Japan. That Japanese should stay as they are, or rather as what Europeans in their search for alternatives to European culture imagine them to be, is often expressed by those to whom traditional Japanese culture has a special fascination. No one has stressed this wish more and no one has contributed more to the emergence of exoticism in European literature on Japan than Lafcadio Hearn.

Hearn could no longer find his home in European society and hoped to experience a past ‘golden age’ in a dreamy provincial town in Japan (Kreiner 1993: 25). When he died in 1904, he had lived in Japan for about 14 years and published over ten books on Japan through which he became the main interpreter of Japan for the West. Whether he has contributed to a deeper understanding of Japanese culture or rather has been the source of misunderstandings is a topic that has been a controversial subject up to the present day (Hirakawa 1997: 1–13; Ota 1997: 210–22). What is important in our context is the fact that, in spite of his own disappointments and negative experiences in Japan, Hearn deliberately created, in the spirit of exoticism, a romantic picture of Japan, or more correctly of ‘Old Japan’, that corresponded to his own dreams of Japan and to those of many in the West (Pekar 2003: 128–9).⁹ His books appeared in German translations

since the 1890s and were reprinted in quick succession. It is difficult to imagine that anyone interested in Japan at that time had not read at least some of them. The impact of his writings could be felt immediately in German literature in the years before and during World War I.

Exoticism in German literature around 1910–20

A noticeable interest in Japan, under the influence of *Japonism* and particularly through the works of Hearn, can be found in a number of German writers at the beginning of the twentieth century. Most of them, however, cannot be classified under exoticism as understood in this chapter, their interest being limited to the new aesthetic possibilities Japanese culture seemed to offer. One could name here authors like Hugo von Hofmannsthal (who wrote a preface to Hearn's *Kokoro*), Klabund, Rainer Maria Rilke, Bertold Brecht and perhaps Stefan George (Yasui and Mehl 1987: 77–85). A strong tendency towards exoticism can be found, however, in several other writers who are less well known today.

Dauthendey

Max Dauthendey (1867–1918), who originally intended to become a painter, was fascinated by Japanese art. In 1906, he was able to visit Japan for about a month during a voyage around the world. In *Die geflügelte Erde* ('The Winged Earth'), he refers to his first impressions upon his arrival at Nagasaki (23 April 1906). What he describes, however, is not the actual landscape before his eyes but rather an imagined picture resembling Japanese paintings he had seen before: 'With black ink painted on white silver [...] Like Japanese paintings on porcelain or silk.' Everything is 'tiny' in this landscape, as if inhabited by assiduous 'dwarfs' (quoted from Yasui and Mehl 1987: 86–7). The real Japan did not interest him that much; he found it even distressing in part. His attitude towards Japan is expressed in a revealing passage contained in a letter he wrote from Japan to his wife: 'If I did not remember Japan how it always impressed me as so beautiful while at home, I could almost call it boring and sad now' (Dauthendey 1930: 146).

It seems that Dauthendey did not take any notes whilst in Japan, so he could create his Japanese stories in *Die acht Gesichter am Biwasee* ('The Eight Visions at Lake Biwa') in 1911 according to his own fantasy, freely mixing his own experiences and typical elements of the popular image of Japan in Europe, particularly those found in *ukiyo-e* woodblock prints (Yasui and Mehl 1987: 87). As he wrote in a letter in 1918: 'Only the titles and the eight natural sceneries are Japanese. The stories are entirely a Dauthendey-invention. Everything nicely made-up' (Dauthendey 1933: 21, 214). According to Ingrid Schuster, for Dauthendey 'Asia' meant more or less 'Japan', and 'the "real" Japan for him was not the country itself but

his image of Japan. And since this essentially corresponded to the image of his compatriots, Dauthendey's readers perceived his exotic stories as particularly "genuine" (Schuster 1977: 79). Nagome Keiko called attention to 'un-Japanese' elements in these stories, their fairytale-like form, and the projection of Dauthendey's ideals into them, though she also senses authentic elements in some of the descriptions (Nagome 1991: 388–90). Like Hearn, Dauthendey decries the negative influences of Westernization that demolish the Japan of his dreams (Dauthendey 1957: 8–9): 'An image of Japan is destroyed which Europe had created for itself' (Yasui and Mehl 1987: 87).

Kellermann

Bernhard Kellermann (1879–1951) spent about a year in Japan and wrote down his experiences in two books, *Ein Spaziergang in Japan* ('A Promenade in Japan') (1910) and *Sassa yo yassa* (1912). Like Dauthendey, he tended to portray Japan as he knew it through *ukiyo-e* (Kellermann 1920a: 5, 17–18; 1920b: 60–1). Like him, he feared that the old Japan would be destroyed by European ideas (1920a: 272). Kellermann emphasized that, in contrast to European estrangement from nature, the Japanese lived in harmony with nature and that even the smallest things fitted in harmoniously with the whole (Kellermann 1920a: 21–2; Günther 1988: 186). Kellermann's book contains many realistic, partly humorous, observations and descriptions of everyday life in Japan, but his interest is almost exclusively directed towards Japanese teahouses, theatre, dances and festivals, which he contrasted with European culture (Günther 1988: 179–81). While he criticized European theatre for its 'barbarian pomp and luxurious comfort', he praised its Japanese counterpart for 'something the European theatres did not possess, namely the great mystery' (Kellermann 1920a: 179). Interestingly, he often referred to the exotic Japanese phenomena in terms of Nietzsche's Dionysian (in contrast to the Apollonian elements in European culture). Unlike Thomas Mann who saw the exotic in the sense of Dionysian as mostly negative, Kellermann emphasized its positive aspects. Most important, however, is the fact that Mann explores a scene of the soul, an inner experience, whereas Kellermann used Dionysian terminology to explain the reality he found in Japan, however inappropriate his terminology may have been. The Dionysian was one way in which Europeans tried to create a counter world to the culture of their time. Given also the fact that Dionysus, 'the stranger god' (Mann 1955: 75) came to Europe from Asia, the idea of the Dionysian could be combined with exoticism in an attempt to imagine it as something actually existing in an Asian cultural setting.

At the end of *Ein Spaziergang in Japan*, Kellermann records a performance on stage where two 'wild' men fight with 'enormous clubs', and while the fight 'rages wilder and wilder' snow begins to fall until the 'furious'

men disappear in it. This scene he regarded as a symbol: the (Dionysian) elements of 'old Japan' were being buried by the 'new ideas that came from the West', each flake being an (Apollonian) 'clear, cold, unemotional, European idea' (Kellermann 1920a: 271–2). On another occasion, he observed what he calls a 'procession' where a small shrine (Kellermann calls it a 'golden temple') was carried through the streets, while 'the whole town is shaking with ecstatic noise' (ibid.: 77–8). The participants are portrayed as 'fanaticized [...] streaming with sweat, with greasy hair, the veins at their temples swollen blueishly, with a distorted grinning, with eyes sick with exertion, disfigured by the furore' (ibid.: 78–9, 160–1). Even a scene in a teahouse, in his view, reveals a Dionysian dimension:

The shamisen were tuned, the drum resounded, and suddenly the most indescribable noise I have ever heard in my life burst forth. [...] The shamisen clinked, the drum thundered, the voices of the female musicians yelled, a strange, wild, ecstatic music, mixed with the mewling and crying of wild animals, panthers, and leopards. [...] What was that? These poses, this pacing, shaking of heads, squinting, the vibrating fans, this play of wonderful shapes, these little, sweet, and mewling cries, that occasionally slipped out of the lips of the infatuating creatures – that was like a seductive spell. I felt dizzy.

(Kellermann 1920a: 10–11)

Thomas Pekar, who quotes this passage, rightly points out that what is conjured up here is Dionysus, the 'Asian' god of intoxication, as many details in Kellermann's description indicate (Pekar 2003: 314). Like in the tropic landscapes painted by Rousseau and Mann, we find here both the wild beast(s) and female seduction. Pekar also stresses that Kellermann remains an outside observer who watches the whole as a theatrical performance and that he stays within the realm of European concepts (ibid.: 314–15), unlike the protagonist in *Death in Venice* for whom the 'fearful dream' is a deeply disturbing inner experience in which finally 'the dreamer was in them [the adherents of Dionysus] and of them, the stranger god was his own' (Mann 1955: 75).

Keyserling

Count Hermann Keyserling (1880–1946) travelled to India and the Far East, including Japan, in 1911 and became famous when he published the two volumes of his *Das Reisetagebuch eines Philosophen* ('The Travel Diary of a Philosopher') in 1919.¹⁰ Anne Marie Bouisson maintains that Keyserling's journey neither meant an escape from civilization nor an exotic dream (Bouisson 1991: 395). This may be true if one only considers his philosophy, which aimed at an integration of all religions and cultures. But in his description of Japan, there are many passages that show an

almost crude form of exoticism, a nostalgic longing for a past feudal age that in his imagination was still existent in rural Japan:

The nature of the Japanese backwoodsman is more sympathetic to me than that of any other that I have ever seen. It possesses all the sweetness, gentleness, thoughtfulness, all the charm and good-heartedness which have made the lower classes of these latitudes seem so lovable to me since I have read Lafcadio Hearn. [...] Perhaps they show me their best side because [...] I treat them as at home, as a feudal lord, I treat my patriarchally minded peasantry. In the out-of-the-way valleys of Yamato the Middle Ages are not yet past; there the era of Meiji has hardly begun; there the peasants still expect superiority, magnanimity, distance, from their lord, they expect that consciousness of absolute superiority which, for this very reason, allows extreme familiarity. There they still want to look up. How gladly I reverted to a part, which our world offers less and less opportunity for playing! In addition, the practical result was that people were found everywhere who rendered me service and showed attention without wishing to accept payment for it.

(Keyserling 1925: 146–7)

Keyserling has not the slightest doubt that the reality may have been different because he created it himself in his imagination as a result of his wishful dreams (Schauwecker 1987: 102–3). With the same patronizing attitude and unwavering certainty he knew that every Chinese coolie had perfectly solved the problem of happiness and lived the eternal truth and that even simple people in India had a deep consciousness of the metaphysical (Günther 1988: 172). What he particularly liked in Japan were the children and the way in which ‘everyone seemed to live joyfully for others, contributing his portion so that the whole should become as harmonious as possible’ (Keyserling 1925: 147).

What attracted him the most in Japan were, however, the women: ‘The Japanese woman is one of the most perfect, one of the few absolutely accomplished products of this creation’ (ibid.: 201). It soon becomes clear, however, that what he meant were traditionally (he says ‘well’) educated Japanese ladies in contrast to the – according to him – too conscious and intellectual modern women in the West (ibid.: 201). Japanese women ‘cannot be taken seriously as a personality’ (ibid.: 202) but they are ‘nothing but gracefulness’ (ibid.: 201). Unfortunately, he feared that they were ‘a type of the past’. He worried that with them ‘one of the sweetest charms on earth will pass away’ (ibid.: 202–3).

Finally, it is interesting to note Keyserling’s view of the general differences of ‘East’ and ‘West’ as listed by Sidney Lewis Gulick (1963: 122):

EAST	WEST	EAST	WEST
Contemplative	Active	Weak	Strong
Placid	Restless	Passive	Aggressive
Gentle	Rough	Negative	Positive
Courteous	Sincere	Feminine	Masculine
Patient	Impatient	Submissive	Masterful
Quietistic	Bustling	Onlookers	Participators
Thinkers	Doers	Mystical	Realistic
Introspective	Objective	Apathetic	Ambitious
Conservative	Progressive	Traditional	Liberal
Communalistic	Individualistic	Drifters	Purposeful
Imitative	Initiative	Profound	Superficial
Philosophical	Practical	Mythological	Scientific
Religious	Ethical	Pessimistic	Optimistic
Heteronomous	Autonomous	Authoritarian	Self-determinative

These opposing elements can be found, with some variations, as pre-conceived ideas in many discussions on the differences between what is supposed to be ‘Eastern’ and ‘Western’, and they are used in exoticism to define what is imagined as a counter-world to Western culture. They also frequently appear in discourses of otherness between Japan and Europe.

Hesse and the overcoming of exoticism

Hermann Hesse (1877–1962) was well known for his interest in Asia. From his childhood, under the influence of his grandfather Hermann Gundert, who had lived in India, he developed a strong enthusiasm for the religion and culture of India, an enthusiasm that later gradually shifted towards China. With Japanese culture, he had only a loose connection through Wilhelm Gundert, his ‘cousin in Japan’ as he called him when he dedicated to him the second part of his *Siddhartha* (1922). Yet, in some of his poems, one can still find a certain Japanese influence. In our context, it is on the one hand interesting to notice the enthusiasm and exoticism he originally shared with the other authors introduced here and, on the other hand, how he was able to overcome it. In 1911, he travelled to the East. Much of what he saw there was, however, disappointing and very different from what he had in his mind.¹¹ On his way back from Indonesia, he travelled no further than Ceylon and did not actually visit India as he had planned.

In a later remark about exotic art, he clearly saw the Orient as a contrast world to Europe. ‘It reveals to Europe its counter image, it breathes origin and a wild urge to beget, it smells of jungle and crocodile. It leads back to stages of life, to conditions of the soul that we Europeans seem to have “overcome” long ago’ (*Exotische Kunst [Exotic Art]* 1922, in Michels 1975: 316). In a description of the yearning that he originally shared with

many of his contemporaries we find typical elements of exoticism: ‘We come to the South and East full of longing, driven by a dark and grateful premonition of home, and we find here a paradise, the abundance and rich voluptuousness of all natural gifts. We find the pure, simple, childlike people of paradise.’ Then he continues: ‘But we ourselves are different; [...] we lost our paradise long ago, and the new one that we wish to build [...] lies within us [...].’¹² This is the decisive point. The authors discussed above did not want to see the real Japan and tried to cling to the Japan of their dreams. Hesse, however, through the soul-searching that he practised so often in his life, realized that the exotic world he longed for existed only in himself; it was created in his soul as a counter world to the European reality he despised:

That is why then [in 1911] I fled from Europe, for my journey was a flight. I fled it and almost hated it [...]. I travelled to India and China not by ship or train. I had to find all the magic bridges myself. I had to stop looking there for the rescue from Europe, I had to stop being hostile to Europe in my heart, I had to make the true Europe and the true East my own in my heart and mind [...]

(*Besuch aus Indien* [‘A Visitor from India’, 1922], in Hesse 2003: 422–3)

Other authors at that time were not affected by exoticism from the outset. Many of them criticized or even ridiculed it. With regard to Japan, Klabund and Arno Holz (Schuster 1977: 82–3), also Otto Julius Bierbaum and Kurt Tucholsky (Hijiya-Kirschner 1988: 12–13) should be mentioned here. Moreover, growing anti-Japanese feelings in Germany before and during World War I made the public increasingly critical of the enthusiasm for Japan (Schuster 1977: 83–4).

Haunhorst

One more interesting example of exoticism in German literature, or rather on its fringe, may conclude this section. The work originated at the end of the period discussed in this chapter but the history of its publication spans the period from the high point of exoticism through the Nazi period until the post-World War II era and illustrates some of the major cultural and political factors in this process. The book in question, *Das Lächeln Japans* (‘The Smile of Japan’), was written by Hans Anna Haunhorst who, in 1910–11, spent six months in Japan, working at the German embassy in Tokyo.¹³ According to Haunhorst, he originally wrote the manuscript in 1923–4. It is ‘a declaration of love to Japan as the Land of Smiles, of aestheticism, of morality, and of tranquillity in contrast to the materialistic West’, embellished by his love of a Japanese woman called Haru (Krebs 1990: 79).

Haunhorst denounced the 'brutal spirit of the Europeans' and the 'hateful noise of a day with Europeans' (Haunhorst 1936: 72, 13) and praised Japan as a 'dreamland' (ibid.: 11), a paradise: 'Would Milton still have spoken of the lost paradise if he would have known you, land of bliss?' (ibid.: 50). 'Could you, holy Japanese soil, cast away from yourself all the mud of ethic and aesthetic depravity which that world of the Europeans has brought into your harbours and commercial centres!' (ibid.: 39). Searching for tranquillity, he praised, 'the restrained and subdued sounds of the shamisen and koto' in the 'serene teahouses' (ibid.: 13),¹⁴ which Kellermann, as we saw above, had experienced as a noisy, ecstatic, Dionysian performance. Sharing the same patriarchal attitude with Keyserling,¹⁵ he believed that 'the Japanese worker' was happy in spite of very low wages and a frugal life, and warned against the danger that 'this sunny people' may be caught by the 'pestilence' of materialism (ibid.: 74). When Haunhorst left Japan after only six months he was sure he would never forget this land, 'which has become mine through deep, trembling experience',¹⁶ and with his work he aims to win over other 'believers' in Japan (ibid.: 13).

But when his book was published, in 1936, times had changed. The enthusiasm of many authors for Japan at the time of exoticism was no longer popular. Haunhorst's negative view and sharp criticism of European, particularly German, culture was unacceptable to Nazi ideology. This seems to be the reason why his publisher later inserted a notice, written in 1937, in which Haunhorst fully subscribes to Hitler's ideology and claimed that his book was written under the impact of Hitler's putsch in 1923 and that he denounced, like Hitler, the 'soulless materialism' that the Nazis undertook to overcome with their 'renewal of the German man'. It seemed as though 'Haunhorst probably did not want to encourage suspicions that he described an idealized Japan as a counter world to present-day Germany [...]' (Krebs 1990: 78).

After the war, in 1948, the book was re-published with a different, typically nostalgic title: *Versunkenes Japan* ('The Lost World of Japan'). Haunhorst omitted all references to Nazi ideology and even claimed, wrongly, as Gerhard Krebs has shown, that the book could not be published in 1936, because the Nazis prohibited it (ibid.: 75–7).

Conclusion: exoticism past and present and Japanese self-exoticizing

Unlike the widespread interest in things that have a flair for the exotic, exoticism in the sense used in this chapter was limited to a very brief period. With regard to German literature on Japan, the representative texts referred to above were almost all written during the years 1910–20. Exoticism, however, had a powerful impact at that time as one can infer from the examples of Thomas Mann and Henri Rousseau. A major reason

for this can be seen in the general crisis of European culture immediately before the outbreak of World War I. This is also indicated by the fact that typical examples of exoticism could be found especially in the years 1910–13 (Rousseau, Mann, Dauthendey, Kellermann and Hesse, in our context). That Japan became a focus of exoticism was prepared by Japonism and then mainly caused by the books of Lafcadio Hearn, as we have seen above.

The creative, sometimes ecstatic, power found in exoticism is due to strong urges in the human soul searching for alternatives at a time of crisis. The counter worlds imagined in response to this may vary, as we have seen, depending on the personality of the author. Escapism and Nietzsche's idea of the Dionysian were related and similarly powerful phenomena at the time around 1900. Images created during the period of exoticism can still stir up dreams and longings for alternatives to the present situation. As such, like exoticism itself, they can have a positive function (Pekar 2003: 29–30). Fantasy and dreams are necessary in order to become aware of new possibilities, to set free creative energies, and to integrate all parts of one's personality. They become problematic when they are taken for reality or projected on reality, as happened with exoticism.

Many of the stereotypes and clichés created at the beginning of the twentieth century are still influential today and tend to distort the reality of present-day Japan in the eyes of the general public in Germany. This phenomenon continues in spite of the wealth of information on foreign cultures that we now have. What is even more astonishing is the fact that many Japanese have adopted a number of these clichés and patterns of exoticism when trying to define their own culture in contrast to 'Western' culture.¹⁷ This can be seen especially in the *Nihonjinron*, the discourse in which the Japanese have tried and still are trying to establish a unique identity. Earl Miner gives a possible reason for this phenomenon when he discusses Hearn's continuous popularity in Japan:

[. . .] in this century, when the Japanese found they had become rather too drably the Westernized nation which they had once sought to be, it was pleasant for them to be able to return to his [Hearn's] praise in the hope that what he saw was still basically true, after all. In a sense, the Japanese have fallen prey to a foreign exoticizing of themselves.

(Miner 1958: 65)¹⁸

According to Ota Yuzo, when the Japanese 'were beginning to reject Western values and emphasize their uniqueness' they discovered 'that Hearn's writings on Japan interpret Japan in the way the Japanese themselves wanted it to be interpreted' (Ota 1977: 215). What we can see here is an attempt to create a Japanese identity through self-exoticizing.¹⁹ Mishima Kenichi criticizes this, when he speaks of

that neurotic effort to create a cultural profile and portrait of oneself [. . .], that cultural process, namely that the intellectual representatives of a non-European culture, in our case of the Japanese culture, for one thing, readily accept images and views of them which the Europeans have invented, and then, second, reconstruct their own tradition with the help of these images in order to contrast themselves with the West and to hold their own.

(Mishima 2001: viii)

Exoticism in German literature, on the whole, is not much more than a marginal phenomenon, even if we include other countries besides Japan. Nevertheless, it is important to study it because it continues to be influential in shaping the image of Japan, not only from a European but also from a Japanese perspective. The timeless power of dreams and longings present in the notion of exoticism is obviously so strong that images can be evoked repeatedly against the evidence of reality, particularly where there is no control of reason.

Notes

- 1 Kloefer 1994: 244 admits this fact, though on p. 242 he claims that the politico-historical situation is reflected almost exactly in the history of the literary reception of the Far East.
- 2 See the article by R.-H. Wippich in this volume (the editors).
- 3 If not stated otherwise, all translations into English are mine.
- 4 According to Schwarz 1995: 12–13, palms, in the contemporary literary context, connote ‘exotic femininity’, ‘paradise’ and ‘fertility’.
- 5 There are a number of differences between the translation and the original but, in the context of this chapter, the English translation sufficiently reflects the meaning of the German text.
- 6 Beasts of prey, according to Schwarz 1995: 13, signalize ‘eroticism and danger’. In contemporary literature, the tiger appears as an ‘incarnation of the feminine’ (ibid.: 14).
- 7 Schwarz 1995: 18 points out similar elements in the discourse of exoticism.
- 8 Frühauf 1988: 7 points out that Loti, in his works, did not so much describe his often disappointing experiences in foreign countries but rather what he had dreamed of before his departure.
- 9 Hearn ‘seems to have gone to Japan as if he expected to find a Utopia, and in any case wrote as if he had’ (Miner 1958: 64). ‘It is true that during the first several months of his stay in Japan, Hearn was full of enthusiasm for the country. [. . .] However, it did not take long before disillusionment set in’ (Ota 1997: 211). ‘Hearn apparently thought it wise not to betray his disillusionment with Japan in his books’ (ibid.: 212).
- 10 I quote from the English translation of the book, published in 1925.
- 11 Ziolkowski 1965: 148; Boulby (1967) *Hermann Hesse*, Ithaca and London: Cornell UP: 122: ‘a severe disappointment’; R. Freedman (1979) *Hermann Hesse*, London: Jonathan Cape: 215: ‘a crushing personal failure’.
- 12 Hesse (1911) *Pedrotallagalla* (included later in *Aus Indien* [1913]) in Hesse 2003: 278. Translation quoted from Ziolkowski 1965: 148.
- 13 Krebs 1990: 75. Not 1909–11 as Hijiya-Kirschner 1988: 9 has it.

- 14 See also Haunhorst 1936: 53: '[...] sounds of an unearthly music in which there was a delicate fragrance like out of calyxes.' In a similar vein, he calls his 'o'Harou'san' a 'delicate fairy' (ibid.: 120) or 'ethereally delicate' (ibid.: 121).
- 15 Haunhorst 1936: 70–1 regrets the spread of Western 'bloodless excessive intellectualism' and the decline of the old aristocracy, and he defends the worship of the emperor against 'rationalistic thought'.
- 16 Haunhorst 1936: 50: 'Drunk with beauty', 'to the point of intoxication'.
- 17 Compare, e.g. the tables showing contrastive features between the 'West' and 'Japan' in Dale 1986: 44–6 with the list by Gulick (based on Keyserling) above.
- 18 See G. Schepers (1994) 'Shinran im interkulturellen Kontext', *Hōrin: Vergleichende Studien zur japanischen Kultur*, 1: 38–9.

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Part III

Culture and science

7 Personal contacts in Japanese–German cultural relations during the 1920s and early 1930s

Katō Tetsurō

The Weimar Republic as a short interlude?

In Japanese contemporary studies on Japanese–German affairs, the Weimar era (1919–33) seems to be a relatively ignored period. In the cultural sphere though, it was marked by an extraordinary strengthening of bilateral exchanges. After the breakdown of diplomatic relations between Berlin and Tokyo during World War I, post-war international politics offered various possibilities for such a rapprochement. Various studies have focused primarily on the 1889 Meiji Constitution and its military system, which was strongly influenced by the Prussian Constitution. Others concentrated on the Anti-Comintern Pact of 1936 and the Tripartite Pact of 1940. Some remarkable features seem to emerge from this. First, many works tend to ignore the peacetime exchanges between the two countries. Second, they marginalize the importance of the 1920s by viewing them merely as a prelude to the wartime axis. Third, they tend to omit contemporary private and semi-official contacts between Germans and Japanese. Consequently, the historical significance of the Japanese living in Germany and that of the expatriate Germans in Japan has been overlooked.

A widely used textbook on German History for Japanese students for instance contains a chapter on ‘German History and Japan: The History of German–Japanese Relations 1639–1945’ written by Miyake Masaki (Miyake and Mochida 1992: 332–44). It describes Germany as a basic model for Japanese modernization in the Meiji period, points out the conflict over Kiao-Chow (Qingdao) in 1914, skips the 1920s and goes on to highlight the Japan–German–Italian axis of the late 1930s and early 1940s. Miyake points out the similarities between the political systems of Imperial Germany and Meiji Japan. Yet, while the monarchy in Germany collapsed after World War I, it continued to exist in Japan. Therefore, the so-called ‘Taishō Democracy’ was based on the old Meiji system, whereas the ‘Weimar Democracy’ featured a new republican constitution. Partly for that reason, the ‘Weimar Democracy’ was often viewed as being similar rather to the Japanese post-war democracy than to the ‘Taishō

Democracy' in the 1920s (Miyake and Mochida 1992: 346). Mochida Yukio's older comparative history of Germany and Japan also omits the Weimar period (Mochida 1970). Mochida later maintains that German fascism arose from the Weimar parliamentary democracy, but argues that Japanese militarism was based on the strong position of the Tennō, whose power was barely limited by the Diet (Mochida 1988: 66–7). In his most recent study, Mochida compares the 'Taishō Democracy' with the Weimar Republic and states that there was never anything like a 'Weimar Democracy' in modern Japanese history. Nevertheless, in the 1920s many Japanese saw the new German state as a role model for an ideal social system. They were not aware of the contradictions and weaknesses of the Weimar Republic, which was a 'democracy loved by no one' (Mochida 2004: 23–52).

This chapter examines some largely overlooked aspects of Japanese–German relations during the 1920s and early 1930s as well as the political impact of Weimar culture upon Japanese intellectuals. It argues that the cultural exchange between the two countries was one-sided, the stream of influence running from Germany towards Japan. The political significance of cultural contacts was, however, ambivalent. Looking beyond the 1920s, it becomes apparent that these cultural relations had a two-fold effect. On the one hand, they directly served the co-operation between the Nazis and the Japanese, but on the other hand, a different tradition survived after the mutual defeat in 1945. Some Japanese who studied German culture and the Weimar system played a significant role when Japan faced demilitarization and democratization under the American occupation (1945–52).

German cultural and ideological influences on Japan

When Germany adopted its republican constitution in 1919, it provided for extended social rights as well as for freedom of speech, of thoughts and expression. Although Japan's relations with Germany were weak after World War I, the cultural influence of the latter became more widespread than before the war. While for contemporary Germans, Japan remained an exotic island country in the Far East, many Japanese saw the new German culture, the so-called *Waimāru bunka*, as a model for the future development of their country.

The Weimar Republic and its constitution reminded the Japanese of central constitutional features, such as, first, the meaning of democratic liberties; second, the importance of social rights of workers and peasants to found unions and to protest against their employers; third, the idea of party politics with male and female franchise as well as of a party-based government; and fourth, the possibility of abolishing the emperor system. Likewise, the German democratization process and especially the Weimar constitution had a strong ideological impact on Japanese liberal and left-wing thinking as well as on Japanese social movements in the 1920s.

More Japanese learned the German language and read German literature in translation or even in the original than during the Meiji era. Scholars and artists adopted Weimar culture as a new trend. Of course, there were competing ideas as well. First, there was the Soviet Union, which was called the 'worker's homeland'. Sympathy for the USSR led to more radical ideas through the Japanese section of the Communist International (Comintern) and the Japan Communist Party (*Nihon Kyōsan-tō*), which was illegally established in July 1922. The USA, on the other hand, was a centre of new popular music, movies and consumer goods. Nevertheless, among Japanese intellectuals, the traditional affection for the cultural accomplishments of Germany was still vibrant in the 1920s.

Among the more influential organizations dealing with Japanese–German relations, there were the German East Asiatic Society (*Deutsche Gesellschaft für Natur- und Völkerkunde Ostasiens, OAG*) as well as the Japanese–German Society (*Nichi–Doku Kyōkai*), which had both been founded in Tokyo before World War I. There had been a corresponding German–Japanese Society (*Deutsch–Japanische Gesellschaft, DJG*) as well, but it had been dormant for many years before it was re-founded in Berlin in 1929. The organizational and academic background of this development has been summarized by Günther Haasch. Particularly, the important role of Kanokogi Kazunobu and his students in Berlin should be noted here:

Diplomatic relations between Japan and Germany were restored in 1920. In 1926 a cultural research institute on Japan was founded in Berlin, 1927 its sister institute, the Japanese–German Cultural Institute, came into existence in Tokyo. Both institutes were supervised and partly funded by the Japanese and German Foreign Offices. On the Japanese side, the main promoter of this new form of cultural foreign policy was Gotō Shinpei, on the German side the institute was promoted by Wilhelm Solf, then ambassador in Tokyo, and the scientist Fritz Haber. The first Japanese Professor to work at the Berlin research institute was Kanokogi Kazunobu, a philosopher from Kyūshū Imperial University and a political visionary influenced by the concepts of geopolitics and Pan-Asianism. He became president of the 'German–Japanese Study Group' formed by his German and Japanese students. [...] In November 1929 the study group took the traditional name of 'German–Japanese Society' and changed its regulations to include members without academic ambition, especially from the sizeable Japanese community in Berlin, and to organise purely social meetings between Japanese and Germans. In spite of these changes and a program of monthly lectures open to the general public and a remarkable exhibition about Japanese theatre, membership grew only at a very slow pace to about a hundred persons.

(Haasch 1996: xxiv–v)

Spreading of German culture in Japan in the 1920s

During the last years of the Taishō era (1912–26) and the first years of the Shōwa era (1926–89) Japan saw a staggering extension of middle and high school education. It was also a time in which Japanese–German academic co-operation grew tremendously. The German language was widely taught as an obligatory foreign language required by the new statutes of Universities (*daigaku-rei*) and High Schools (*kōtōgakkō-rei*), both established in 1918. The statistics of Japanese education show the significant increase of schools and students in the 1920s (see the Appendix at the end of this chapter). In 1930 alone, over half a million students attended middle schools and institutions of higher education (high schools, higher normal schools, colleges, universities, etc.). They usually had to select two foreign languages from among the available course offerings of English, German and French. Chinese and Korean were not yet part of the curriculum.

Proficiency in German was obligatory for some specialized professions, particularly at universities and colleges. Since the days when Erwin Bälz and Julius Scriba had taught Medicine at Tokyo Imperial University, Japanese medical doctors had to write their diagnoses in German, because almost all names of diseases were expressed in that language. In mining technology and civil engineering, knowledge of German was indispensable as well. In philosophy and law, German academic schools were dominant. In geography, meteorology or music, many scholars first had to learn German before being able to focus on their respective disciplines.

There are no exact statistics on the number of students who learned German, but – by a rough estimate – at least half of Japanese students in middle and higher education, i.e. several hundred thousand youths attended German language classes every year. This surely offered many opportunities for publishers of textbooks and language teachers. It is therefore not surprising that in the 1920s there were several specialized journals for Japanese studying German language and literature. *Doitsugo* (German language), a pioneer on the scene, was published since 1914. *Shokyū Doitsugo* (German for beginners) and *Dokubun Hyōron* (German Review) were other well-known monthlies.¹ German literary works like those of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Friedrich Schiller, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing and Hermann Hesse, etc. were translated into Japanese. They gained great popularity and went through many editions. A series of German literary works published along with Japanese translations was edited in 18 volumes entitled *Doku-Wa taiyaku sōsho* (Nichi–Doku Kyōkai 1974: 42–8).

Especially at high schools and at universities, German style liberal arts (*kyōyō-shugi*) were popular. Poems of Heinrich Heine or novels such as Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther* were widely read. In the Japanese student culture scene of the 1920s, a song 'Dekansho' was widely sung, whose title was an abbreviation of the surnames of René Descartes ('de'),

Immanuel Kant ('kan') and Arthur Schopenhauer ('sho'). The purpose for this was obviously to encourage students to study Western ideas. Japanese students also used German words in their everyday life, such as *schön* (beautiful) or *mädchen* (girl) for their girlfriends, *essen* for eating and *Geld* for money. In students' jargon *arbeit* (work) was used for students' part-time labour and has remained *en vogue* ever since.²

Liberal and left-wing ideologies became popular because of this appreciation for German culture. Scholars and students alike read Marxist literature in its German original, which became very fashionable in the elite universities from the mid-1920s onwards. One reason for this was the fact that Japanese translations of these publications were often censored by the government (Garon 1987; Hoston 1986). Radical students learned German to be able to read the complete text of Karl Marx's *Kommunistisches Manifest*. Fukuda Tokuzō of the Tokyo College of Commerce, who had studied under Karl Bucher and Lujo Brentano in Munich, introduced socialist thoughts from Europe. The book *Binbō monogatari* ('The Story of the Poor') by Kawakami Hajime of Kyoto University became a bestseller and his students studied Marxism enthusiastically (Bernstein 1990). The students of Yoshino Sakuzō of Tokyo University organized a group called *Shinjin-kai* (New Man Society), which became the core of the radical student movement in the 1920s (Smith 1972).

Japanese scholars and students in the Weimar Republic

One important index of the closer and wider relationship between Germany and Japan in the 1920s is the number of scholars sent by the government to study abroad. This *Monbushō* (Ministry of Education) programme offered two-years' scholarships to encourage academic research in foreign countries. Since many Japanese intellectuals and artists saw the Weimar Republic as a symbol of new advanced academic freedom, it attracted a large number of applicants.

In the late nineteenth century, the Meiji government had begun to invite many instructors from foreign countries (*o-yatoi gaikokujin*) to promote Japan's modernization. The number of these advisers peaked at 580 in the mid-1870s. Later many students and scholars were sent abroad. Among them, Germany soon became the most popular destination. Before the Russo-Japanese War (1904–5), there were altogether 683 students studying abroad under government sponsorships. As many as 80 per cent of them went to Germany and attended courses in Berlin, Leipzig and other cities. Additionally, many Japanese were sponsored by local authorities or by their families (Ōshio 1994: 41).

Some statistics are available about those sent abroad by the *Monbushō* from the early Meiji period. The number of these scholarships was 11 in 1875, 5 in 1885, 11 in 1895 and 17 in 1905. Thereafter, it increased dramatically up to 1922, but later decreased due to financial strains caused by the

Kantō earthquake (1 September 1923), the World Economic Crisis (1929) and Japan's diplomatic isolation after the 'Manchurian incident' (*Manshū jihen*) in 1931.

Table 7.1 Number of government-sponsored scholarships to study abroad (1915–30)

<i>Year</i>	1915	1916	1917	1918	1919	1920	1921	1922	1923	1924	1925	1926	1927	1928	1929	1930
Scholars	25	33	45	60	110	129	174	208	154	138	163	165	178	158	113	32

Out of 277 governmental scholars studying abroad in 1929, 151 went to Germany. Many of these who stayed in other European countries had plans to study in Germany on the conclusion of their stay in Britain or France, etc. In 1932 again, over 50 per cent of the Japanese scholars studying abroad went to the Weimar Republic. This suggests that studying in Germany carried an extraordinarily high status in Japanese academic circles.³

Table 7.2 Japanese government-sponsored scholars in Europe and the USA in 1929 and 1932

<i>Country</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Germany</i>	<i>Britain</i>	<i>USA</i>	<i>France</i>	<i>Spain</i>	<i>Austria</i>	<i>Other countries</i>
1929	277	151	34	34	29	9	6	14
1932	164	83	23	21	21	3	6	7

For more than half of the young elite scholars studying abroad, the Weimar Republic apparently was the most attractive academic destination in the world. They were mainly associate professors of national elite universities. In 1929 for example, 30 were from Tokyo University, 32 from Kyoto University, 29 from Hokkaidō University, 20 from Kyūshū University, 13 from Tōhoku University, 12 from Tokyo College of Commerce, etc.⁴ Most of them were natural scientists. Nevertheless, in other fields, such as economics, law, literature and medicine the number of young scholars was also quite considerable as the figures in Table 7.3 show.

Table 7.3 Subjects studied by Japanese scholars abroad in 1929 and 1932

<i>Major</i>	<i>Literature</i>	<i>Law</i>	<i>Economics</i>	<i>Physics</i>	<i>Engineering</i>	<i>Medicine</i>	<i>Agriculture</i>
1929	76	21	46	90	80	66	37
1932	27	11	20	36	29	37	16

After World War I, when the Allied Reparations Committee set the total reparation to be paid by Germany at £6,600,000 (132 billion Gold Mark) in annual instalments, Germany was heavily burdened by the war

indemnity and outraged by the size of the sum. In 1923, the Berlin government was unable to pay the reparations required under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. France and Belgium responded by sending in troops to the Ruhr area, the main centre of Germany's coal, iron and steel production. This occupation led to the collapse of the German economy. As a result, there was a massive inflation and a large increase in unemployment. Germany was now unable to pay any reparations at all. While the German Mark was valued at 64 to one US Dollar in January 1921, by November 1923 the exchange rate reached the historic low of 4,200,000,000,000 Marks per US Dollar.

One of the major domestic goals of contemporary Japan was to attain the Western standard of living and to become a 'first-class country' (*ichiryū koku*). The economic devastation of the Weimar Republic was ironically an advantage for many Japanese: it offered a financially affordable opportunity to study in Germany. This turned out to be another reason why many Japanese in the 1920s looked to Germany as a source of orientation. Moreover, this situation enabled them to acquire what was regarded as the treasures of German culture as well as advanced technology because they benefited from the high value of the Japanese Yen against the German Mark. They used this financial advantage to buy many books for themselves as well as for the libraries of their universities back home. During these years, some well-known academic collections were brought to Japan and were incorporated into the libraries of Tokyo Imperial University, Tokyo College of Commerce (Hitotsubashi University) and Hōsei University, etc.⁵

According to the statistics of the *Gaimushō* (Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs), there were only 92 Japanese in Germany in 1920, but five years later, this figure had increased nine-fold. The early 1930s saw about 500–600 Japanese in Germany, while their number was usually slightly higher in France. Right after World War I there had been nearly 800 Japanese in Great Britain, but their community halved in number in the following years. By 1930 though, their number had increased again and during the following years there continued to be nearly three times as many Japanese in Great Britain than in Germany.

Besides the sheer numbers, it is important to consider what kind of people stayed in these countries. Generally speaking, the Japanese living

Table 7.4 Number of Japanese in Europe by countries (1920–35)

Year	Germany	Britain	France
1920	92	799	229
1925	837	434	974
1930	576	1,470	771
1935	514	1,381	507

Table 7.5 Number of Japanese in Germany by occupation (1920–35)

<i>Year</i>	<i>Public officials</i>	<i>Army/navy</i>	<i>Businessmen</i>	<i>Scholars/students</i>
1920	32	0	36	6
1925	73	4	176	380
1930	50	33	33	326
1935	104	25	53	92

in London were mainly engaged in business activities, while those living in Paris were artists (mainly painters). Berlin, however, was the unrivalled centre for Japanese scholars and students in Europe, particularly so from the mid-1920s to the early 1930s (Gaimushō tsūshō-kyoku 2002).

The records of Berlin University show that an average of 11 students were studying there in the late 1920s and early 1930s.⁶ The enrolment figures of the University's German Language Institute (*Deutsches Institut für Ausländer*) provide some further interesting data. The lists show that from 1925 to 1939 Japanese always constituted one of the biggest groups of foreigners studying at the institute. Almost all Japanese who came to Berlin improved their practical German-speaking ability during a two to six month stay at the institute.⁷

Japanese papers published in Germany

From 1929 to 1932, the *Yamato*, a German language journal, edited by the already mentioned Kanokogi, was published as the organ of the DJG. Its content was a typical expression of exotic Orientalism, Japonism and Spiritualism strongly influenced by the personal connection between Kanokogi and German Japanologists such as Fritz Rumpf and Kurt Erich Simon. It did not have a large circulation, but was read only by the narrow circle of specialists in both countries.

There were also some journals published in Japanese. *Linden* for instance was a monthly issued between 1921 and 1924. It included information about the 'Japanese Society' (*Nihonjin-kai*) in Berlin and offered an advertisement section for Japanese companies in Germany. In 1924, a journal was published called *Nichi-Doku Hyōron* (Japanese-German Review). Since 1926, *Doitsu Jijō* (German Affairs) appeared four times a month. *Berurin Shūhō* (Berlin Weekly) began its publication in 1928 and continued until 1935. In 1929, *Doitsu Geppan* (German Monthly) was launched, and from 1930, the weekly *Doitsu Jihō* (German Information) appeared (Ebihara 1936: 68–73; Katō 2003: 45–57). From 1922 through to the 1930s, Nakakan Shoten, a Japanese book and convenience store in Berlin, edited a free weekly called *Nakakan Jihō* (Nakakan Times). It contained useful information and news on Germany as well as on Japan. Additionally, there was a German Study Group (*Doitsu kenkyū-*

kai) that met every week at the shop. Its members were mainly Japanese scholars, who used the occasion to exchange their views on German politics, economics and culture. This group published contributions such as 'National Holidays in Germany', 'Education System in Germany', 'Political Parties in German Parliament', 'Household Economy of Ordinary Germans', etc. in Japanese (Katō 2003: 45–57). These articles provided very practical, but important, information for the Japanese in Germany.

One gets a vivid impression of Japanese life in the Weimar Republic by reading Hirai Tadashi's three-volume compilation called *Berurin* (Berlin). It contains diaries, memories and reflections by Japanese who lived in the German capital at the time. Many of those enjoyed their life in Germany. The Japanese in Berlin had their own community and interacted with ordinary Germans in their daily life. They shared political, economic and cultural information through the papers and journals mentioned above. Besides, there were special tourist agencies, hotels, a Japanese store as well as at least five Japanese restaurants (*Fujimaki*, *Kagetso*, *Matsunoya*, *Tokiwa* and *Tōyōkan*). Furthermore, two of the most famous Japanese trading companies (Mitsui and Mitsubishi) had branch offices in Berlin. The Mitsubishi office opened in 1921, that of Mitsui in 1925 (Mitsubishi Shōji 1997: 284; Mitsui Bussan 1979: 34–5). Even this small community, however, reflected the political divisions of contemporary Japan, with its rivalry between right, centre and left-wing groups (Hirai 1980–2; Katō 1997: 489–529).

The German–Japanese Society and German emigrants

In the early Weimar period, German ambassador Dr Wilhelm Solf, asked Gotō Shinpei⁸ for Japanese support for German scholars in times of financial hardship. Gotō referred this request to Hoshi Hajime, a Japanese businessman who was the owner of the Hoshi Pharmaceutical Company and an important sponsor of Gotō's political activities. Hoshi contributed two million Reichsmark (about 80,000 Yen at the time) to the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gesellschaft from 1919 through 1925. This was called the 'Japan Fund' (*Hoshi-Ausschuss*). Fritz Haber, the 1918 Nobel Prize winner in chemistry, managed this fund in Germany (Yō 1998: 43–7). Hoshi invited Haber privately to Japan in 1924. Haber expressed his gratitude by offering important chemical licences to Hoshi's company, but Hoshi rejected it, saying that his contribution was not for the sake of his business but a personal voluntary service (Hoshi 1978: 84–6). The 'Japan Fund' did not only help Haber but also sponsored Richard Willstätter (1915 Nobel Laureate in Chemistry), Max Planck (1918 Nobel Laureate in Physics), Otto Hahn (1944 Nobel Laureate in Chemistry, a member of the Manhattan Project which developed the first atomic bomb to be dropped later on Hiroshima), Leo Szilard (a student of Albert Einstein and also an important member of the Manhattan Project) and others (Japanisch–Deutsches Zentrum

Berlin 1997: 239–40; Ōshio 1994: 43–9). In 1927, when the Japanese–German Cultural Institute was established in Tokyo, Hoshi again contributed crucial financial support.

It is true that Kanokogi played a key role in creating both the Cultural Research Institute on Japan in Berlin and the Japanese–German Cultural Institute in Tokyo.⁹ Nevertheless, Kanokogi was not the best-suited person to represent Japanese scholars in Germany. He was an extreme right-wing ultra-nationalist and later became an admirer of Adolf Hitler. Kanokogi's view differed considerably from the majority of those Japanese who studied German culture at the time. It was very unfortunate that someone like him became a kind of representative of the Japanese–German cultural exchange after World War I. One of the reasons why the Japanese government appointed Kanokogi as the Japanese founding director of the Berlin Institute (1926–9) was the fact that he could read, speak and write German fluently.¹⁰ Another reason might have been the fact that he was not considered as a 'dangerous' left-wing scholar, but got along with the Japanese government very well.

Kanokogi interpreted the essence of Japanese spiritual life as *Yamato kokoro* (Japanese mind) with the *Tennō* at the centre.¹¹ In the relatively free and liberal atmosphere of Taishō Japan, such an irrational and extreme idea was not very popular, but rather exceptional. Notwithstanding, Kanokogi dominated the official route of Japanese–German cultural exchanges even beyond his direct personal involvement. In 1927 for instance, he recommended his close friend Professor Tomoeda Takahiko of Tokyo Higher Normal School as the Japanese director of the Japanese–German Cultural Institute in Tokyo. Tomoeda, just like Kanokogi, was a Germanist focusing on ethics. As director, he played an important role in co-operation with his German counterpart, Wilhelm Gundert (Yō 1998, 1999).¹²

Although the DJG had formally neither a political nor an economic character, many (left-wing) Japanese scholars who were interested in Weimar democracy or advanced German technology did not – for political reasons – participate in its activities. Likewise, they avoided co-operation with the *Japaninstitut* in Berlin as it was unfortunately based on irrational chauvinism. Therefore, neither the institute nor its journal *Yamato* could become a medium of exchange of Japanese in Germany.

The German side faced a different problem. Only very few Germans were interested in Japanese culture. One of the key persons of the DJG was Fritz Haber, the famous chemist of Jewish decent. Some other Jewish scholars and artists were active members of the DJG and took part in activities of the *Japaninstitut* (Friese 1980: 12–13; *Japanisch–Deutsches Zentrum Berlin* 1997: 233–42, 246–8). Thus after 1933 the DJG faced 'the Jewish problem', as indicated by Haasch:

In 1933, a few months after Hitler's coming to power, several members with national–socialist leanings staged a coup against the

elected board, especially against the Jewish president Wilhelm S. Haas, a cultural sociologist, who had been president since Kanokogi's return to Japan, and the Jewish Japanologist Alexander Chanoch, a founding member of the study group. The German Foreign Office and the newly founded Ministry of Propaganda as well as the Japanese Navy Bureau became involved in the ousting of the elected board. The Japanese apparently were interested in creating a Japanese–German Society, which was politically and socially more representative than its predecessor, but not in putting the society under national–socialist control. Therefore, ordinary Jewish members were not formally excluded and Wilhelm Solf, former ambassador to Tokyo, now honorary president of the society and anti-Nazi, remained in office, Solf died in 1936; the names of Jewish members disappeared from the membership list in 1937, although these members were then still living in Berlin.

(Haasch 1996: xxv)

Among the Japanese who experienced the first few months of the Nazi regime in Berlin, was Yumeji Takehisa, a popular romanticist painter of the Taishō era. He was originally a humanist, influenced by Japanese socialists like Kōtoku Shūsui and Sakai Toshihiko. After he had become a fashionable painter of Japanese romantic girls, he studied Western arts in the USA in 1931–2 and moved on to Berlin thereafter. Here he watched the early development of Nazi oppression against the Jews in 1933. At that time, he taught oriental painting at the Johannes Itten School, which had been part of the former *Bauhaus*. His students were mostly young Jews and therefore Yumeji witnessed the effects of Nazi anti-Semitism. He not only expressed his outrage in his paintings, but also helped some Jews to flee from Germany through the underground network of Christian churches. He returned to Japan in September 1933 and died the following year (Sekiya 2000: 168–202).¹³

Japanese–German relations after Hitler's seizure of power were strongly influenced by Kanokogi and his friends, the Japanese Army and pro-Japanese members of the Nazi Party. Besides these official exchanges, there were other possibilities, however, for the Japanese to meet with non-Nazi-affiliated Germans, particularly in Japan. Fortunately for Jewish scholars and artists, Japan accepted German emigrants of Jewish descent, because there was no anti-Semitic policy despite the growing diplomatic intimacy between Tokyo and Berlin. The Japanese did not discriminate against Jews but rather felt a kind of sympathy, because they themselves felt the discrimination against Asians in Germany (Furuya 1995; Shillony 1993: ch. 21). Under the surface of official Japanese–German contacts there remained some opportunities to keep alive universal values and to promote humanity.

The typical case was that of the famous German philosopher Karl

Löwith, who – due to his Jewish background – had to flee Nazi Germany. In 1936, he was invited to teach at Tōhoku University in Sendai by Kuki Shōzō and other Japanese scholars, who had studied in Germany. Löwith, who had published many books on the history of German thought, stayed in Sendai until 1941 when he moved to the USA. Thus, in the 1930s, at least some Japanese students could study German philosophers from Hegel to Heidegger, not based on Kanokogi's ultra-nationalistic interpretation but on the basis of Löwith's more universal views.¹⁴

A different case was that of Bruno Taut. This well-known German architect left Germany for political reasons and came to Japan in 1933 at the invitation of Japanese artists. He lived in Takasaki, Gunma prefecture, and received financial support from local businessman Inoue Fusaichirō. While in Japan he wrote a book on the 'Rediscovery of Japanese Beauty', focusing on the Katsura Detached Palace in Kyoto, which he described as the 'quintessence of Japanese taste' (Taut 1939: 125–52). For about three years he lived mainly in Takasaki and later moved to Istanbul in Turkey, where he died in 1938. Partly because of the timing of his arrival in Japan, and partly because many Japanese had problems differentiating Jewish from other emigrants, he was often mistaken for a Jew.¹⁵

Another tradition succeeded in post-war Japan

After the promulgation of male suffrage in 1925, a number of small 'proletarian parties' such as the *Rōdō-Nōmin-tō* (Labour-Farmer Party) and the *Nihon Rōnō-tō* (Japan Labour-Farmer Party) were founded in Japan. New kinds of mass media, large-circulation newspapers, general monthly journals such as *Chūō Kōron* or *Kaizō* and inexpensive paperback books by Iwanami Shoten and other publishers similar to the German *Reclam Universal-Bibliothek*¹⁶ propagated cultural trends and the latest ideas from the Western world, especially from Germany, France, the USA and the Soviet Union.

After Japanese troops had invaded Manchuria in September 1931, Chinese nationalist leader Chiang Kai-Shek appealed to the League of Nations and to the USA for help. America protested and the League sent a fact-finding commission to Manchuria led by Lord Lytton whose report condemned Japanese aggression in December 1932. By then, Japan had already renamed Manchuria as Manchukuo in March 1932, and continued to control it as a puppet state. In 1933, Japan finally left the League of Nations. During the 1930s, Japan continued to expand its operations, waging a brutal war in China, partly in an attempt to secure more resources for its growing economy.

Soon after the beginning of the occupation of Manchuria, an international movement organized mainly by the Japanese in Berlin began to protest at Japan's expansionism. It was named the 'Association of Revolutionary Asians' (*Die Vereinigung der revolutionären Asiaten – Kakumei-*

teki Asia-jin Kyōkai). Interestingly, its most prominent members were Japanese intellectuals sent to Germany by their government. Among them were artists and students from rich and famous families. This association, which was strongly influenced by the 'International League against Imperialism' whose world bureau was in Berlin at the time, opposed Japan's war of aggression in Northern China, supported the independence movements of Asian nations, and protested against the increasing power of Hitler's Nazi Party.

The origin of this association, which was called the 'anti-imperialist group in Berlin' (*Berurin Hantei* group) or 'left intellectual group in Berlin' (*Nihonjin Sayoku* group) in the secret documents of the Japanese Intelligence Agency (*Gaiji Keisatu Gaikyō*), can be traced back to the end of 1926. Some associate professors of national universities who were in Germany on government scholarships began a reading circle of leftist literature that year. Its first advocate was Rōyama Masamichi, a political scientist at the Law Department of Tokyo Imperial University. However, the main theoreticians of the group were Arisawa Hiromi of the Department of Economics and Kunizaki Teidō of the Department of Medicine at the same university. Having experienced the 'Taishō Democracy', these scholars saw the Weimar Republic as a new model of democracy and thought it necessary to learn about the latest trends in social ideas, including Marxism, from Germany.¹⁷

These young academics developed a lively interest in German politics. They sent many reports to leading Japanese monthlies like *Chūō Kōron*, *Kaizō*, *Senki*, etc., expressing alarm about the dangers of fascism in the West and of the Japanese aggression in the East. Furthermore, they arranged public meetings to make Germans aware of Asian problems, performed street theatre on the themes of resistance movements, and published at least five issues of a German journal, named 'Revolutionary Asians' (*Revolutionäres Asien: das Organ der Vereinigung der revolutionären Asiaten*), between March 1932 and January 1933 when Hitler came to power.¹⁸

Several members of this group had close connections with Katayama Sen in Moscow, a communist leader of the above-mentioned 'International League against Imperialism', which organized the International Anti-War Conference in the Dutch city of Amsterdam in summer 1932. They joined the Communist Party of Germany (KPD), belonged to the Japanese language section of the KPD in 1930–2¹⁹ and established secret contacts with members of the forbidden Japan Communist Party. Some German anti-Nazi activists supported these activities.²⁰

Despite the above-mentioned contacts with communists in Berlin, Moscow and Japan, the group originally included members from diverse political backgrounds, stretching from leftists to liberals to conservatives. For example, there were communists like Kunizaki Teidō and Kobayashi Yonosuke as well as conservatives such as Yamamoto Katsuichi, a censor

of thoughts at the *Monbushō* after 1932 and a Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) Diet member in the post-war period. It is interesting that in this German-based organization, both the associate professors from the rival Imperial Universities of Tokyo and Kyoto as well as later *Kyōza-ha* (pro-communist) theoretical leaders like Hirano Yoshitarō and Yamada Katsujirō and the *Rōnō-ha* (social-democratic) leaders such as Arisawa Hiromi and Tsuchiya Takao communicated with each other. This is surprising, because in Japan these proponents of different schools of thought would have had severe disputes with each other.

These experiences in Berlin were surely exciting and impressive for Japanese intellectuals and artists. Most of them were young democrats or liberals. They later played important roles in the process of democratization in post-war Japan by applying their knowledge of Weimar democracy. For example, Arisawa Hiromi became the leading economic planner helping to rebuild Japan after World War II. Senda Koreya was the founder of the new democratic theatre movement (Katō 1997: 489–529; 2002b: 78–133).²¹

Thus, in some ways the most valuable long-term legacy of Japanese–German relations in the inter-war period were neither the official cultural policy of the 1920s nor the ideological rapprochement of the 1930s and early 1940s, but the experiences of the Japanese who studied in the Weimar Republic as well as their personal networks. Meanwhile in Germany they dreamed of a democratic future for Japan and later became the architects of the new Japan (Arisawa 1957; Senda 1975).

Appendix

Middle schools (Chūgakkō)

Year	Number of schools				Total number of students
	Total	National	Public	Private	
1901	241	1	206	34	88,050
1920	368	2	282	84	176,412
1930	557	2	434	121	344,689

Normal schools (Shihan Gakkō)

Year	Number of schools				Total number of students
	Total	For male	For female	Co-educated	
1901	54				13,900
1920	94	48	37	9	25,074
1930	105	59	46		43,852

Higher women's schools (Kōtō Jogakkō)

Year	Number of schools				Total number of students
	Total	National	Public	Private	
1901	70	1	61	8	17,540
1920	514	3	407	104	125,583
1930	975	3	731	241	341,572

High schools (Kōtō Gakkō)

Year	Number of schools				Total number of students
	Total	National	Public	Private	
1901	8	8			4,361
1920	15	15			8,784
1930	32	25	3	4	20,551

Higher normal schools (Kōtō Shihan Gakkō)

Year	Number of schools		Total number of students
1901	2		860
1920	2		1,293

Professional colleges (Senmon Gakkō)

Year	Number of schools				Total number of students
	Total	National	Public	Private	
1901	57	8	4	45	17,888
1920	74	8	4	62	39,835
1930	111	8	8	95	70,100

Universities (Daigaku)

Year	Number of schools				Total number of students
	Total	National	Public	Private	
1901	2	2			3,612
1920	16	6	2	8	21,915
1930	46	17	5	24	69,605

Notes

- 1 The latter one was for some time rather critical of the Nazi system, a stance against which the German embassy officially complained to the Japanese Foreign Ministry. See for details: PAAA, R 85939 – R 85942: ‘Japan: Pressewesen (1920–36)’ (the editors).
- 2 See <http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/komachi/reader/200201/2002012800002.htm> (accessed 29 March 2005).
- 3 The data are from Gaimushō (rpt 2002). It was originally a guidebook for those who got a scholarship. The author got a copy of the 1929 version from the family of Ninagawa Torazō who was associate Professor of Kyoto University and studied at Berlin University in 1928–30. Later he was governor of Kyoto Prefecture (1950–78). The 1932 version was from the family of Okabe Fukuzō who studied from 1931 to 1933 at Berlin University and later taught German Literature at Yamagata High School.
- 4 In 1932, 24 scholars came from Tokyo University, 16 from Kyoto University, nine each from Tōhoku University, Kyūshū University and Hokkaidō University, three from Tokyo College of Commerce (today’s Hitotsubashi University). These numbers symbolized the hierarchy of Japanese universities at the time.
- 5 The collection of Carl Menger, Otto F. von Gierke and P. Eltzbacher were brought into Japan through the bookseller Hugo Streisand and Japanese professors in Berlin such as Tatsuo Morito of Tokyo University. A detailed list of 734 special collections at Japanese libraries can be found in M. Koch (2004) *Universitäre Sondersammlungen in Japan*, Munich: Iudicium (the editors).
- 6 The monthly *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Instituts für Ausländer* carried the number of students enrolled at the institute. For the years between 1924 and 1933, the following number of Japanese (the two numbers indicate the Winter and the Summer Semester respectively) studied German there: 1924–5: 15, 13; 1925–6: 20, 12; 1926–7: 17, 25; 1927–8: 15, 6; 1928–9: 6, 6; 1929–30: 10, 14; 1930–1: 12, 9; 1931–2: 15, 15; 1932–3: 10, 10; 1933–4: 6, 5; 1934–5: 1, 2.
- 7 For details see: <http://members.jcom.home.ne.jp/Katori> (accessed 29 March 2005).
- 8 Gotō Shinpei (1857–1929) was a medical doctor by training and received a Ph.D. from Munich University (LMU) in 1891. He spoke German and was an active member of the OAG. Later he served as Minister of Communications (1908–11 and 1912–13), as Minister of Home Affairs (1916–18), Minister of Foreign Affairs (1918), as Mayor of Tokyo (1920–3) and again as Minister of Home Affairs (1923–4) (the editors).
- 9 The official name of the institute in Tokyo was ‘Institut zur Förderung der wechselseitigen Kenntnis des geistigen Lebens und der öffentlichen Einrichtungen in Japan und Deutschland (Japanisch–Deutsches Kulturinstitut)’, while the Berlin Institute was officially named ‘Institut zur Förderung der wechselseitigen Kenntnis des geistigen Lebens und der öffentlichen Einrichtungen in Deutschland und Japan (Japaninstitut)’. Furthermore, there was the Japanese–German Research Institute in Kyoto (Japanisch–Deutsches Forschungsinstitut), founded in 1934.
- 10 Besides that, Kanokogi’s wife was German as well. Therefore, he had plenty of opportunities to speak German. It should be mentioned here that there were also quite a few left-wing Japanese who were married to German wives, like Kunizaki Teidō, Senda Koreya, Suzuki Tōmin, Katsumoto Seiichirō, etc.
- 11 Kanokogi wrote his master thesis on Friedrich Nietzsche at Columbia University in the USA and got a Ph.D. degree for his thesis on *Das Religiöse. Ein religionsphilosophischer Versuch* from Jena University in 1912. He taught at Berlin University as a Visiting Professor from 1923 to 1926. He stressed not only ‘spiritual life’ and demanded ‘equal exchange of culture’ between Germany and

- Japan. Nevertheless, for ordinary Germans Japanese culture meant 'exotic', while contemporary Japanese regarded German culture as modern. There could have been possible directors of the Cultural Institute other than Kanokogi; for example, Yashiro Yukiō and Ueno Naoteru. Both were eminent scholars of Japanese arts who had studied in Berlin and had close connections with German cultural circles. Ueno, an associate Professor of Seoul Imperial University at the time and the first dean of Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music after World War II, was an active member of the DJG during his stay in Berlin. He left some important documents on the DJG and the *Japaninstitut* in which he described the inner contradictions and personal problems of the society. He also left big collections of first-hand materials of Weimar culture (journals, newspapers, etc.) which he got in Berlin in the 1920s and which are now kept by his daughter Ueno Aki.
- 12 See for example Tomoeda, T. (1936) 'Germany and Japan', *Contemporary Japan*, 5-2: 211-18. There is also a 1938 brochure of 23 pages by him, entitled *Japan und Deutschland: Geschichtlicher Rückblick auf ihre kulturellen Verbindungen*, Tokyo: Japanisch-Deutsches Kulturinstitut (the editors).
 - 13 See: <http://homepage3.nifty.com/Katote/yumeji.html> (accessed 29 March 2005) as well as: <http://www.ff.iij4u.or.jp/~Katote/ousukeyumeji.html> (accessed 29 March 2005).
 - 14 See Karl Löwith's book (1941) *Von Hegel bis Nietzsche*, Zurich: Europa Verlag. For Löwith refer to: <http://web.kyoto-inet.or.jp/people/j-yasuda/kuki1.htm> (accessed 29 March 2005).
 - 15 See: <http://www.city.takasaki.gunma.jp/syoukai/taka100/taka43.htm> (accessed 29 March 2005).
 - 16 See R. Mathias (1990) 'Reclams Universal-Bibliothek und die japanische Reihe Iwanami-bunko – Einflüsse auf das japanische Deutschlandbild in der Zwischenkriegszeit', in R. Mathias and J. Kreiner (eds) *Deutschland – Japan in der Zwischenkriegszeit*, Bonn: Bouvier (the editors).
 - 17 Many young scholars, who later became academic and cultural leaders in post-war Japan, belonged to this reading circle. Besides Rōyama, Arisawa and Kunizaki, some further associate professors like Horie Muraichi, Taniguchi Yoshihiko, Yamamoto Katsuichi, Yamada Katsujirō who were former students of Hajime Kawakami at Kyoto University (economics) were founding members of this circle. Between 1927 and 1930, Yokota Kisaburō (international law), Hirano Yoshitarō (civil law), Tsuchiya Takao (economic history) of Tokyo University, Kuroda Itaru (constitution), Yagi Yoshinosuke (economics), Ninagawa Torazō (statistics) of Kyoto University, and Kikuchi Isao (labour law), Funabashi Junnichi (labour law) of Kyūshū University joined it just like Kudō Ichizō (Judo). They read many socialist and Marxist books in German and discussed in Japanese. Sometimes they enjoyed excursions or dining parties as friends. They also invited German Marxist thinkers like Hermann Duncker, August Thalheimer and Karl Korsch to their meetings.
 - 18 This journal was discovered by the author in 1973 in Berlin (Ost) and is now kept in the BA Berlin (Kawakami and Katō 1995: 134-206).
 - 19 The Japanese language section of KPD existed at least from 1929 through 1933 (Kawakami and Katō 1995: 237-86). According to the personal memoir of Katsumoto Seiichirō, this Japanese group printed the underground paper *Rote Fahne* after Hitler destroyed the official KPD in 1933 (Katsumoto 1965: 123-4).
 - 20 Besides Walther Friedrich, the names of these supporters are unknown today. Some of the Japanese members, Kunizaki Teidō, Horie Muraichi, Arisawa Hiromi, Senda Koreya, etc. approached the KPD, although they were never communists in Japan. Between 1930 and 1933, when this group was politically most active, Kunizaki and Senda, who stayed in Berlin with German wives,

were joined by Miyake Shikanosuke of the Seoul Imperial University (economics), Oiwa Makoto of Kyoto University (political science), Nomura Heiji of Waseda University (labour law), Hattori Eitarō of Tōhoku University (social policy) and Saegusa Hiroto (philosophy) as active members. In addition to these above-mentioned Japanese, there were artists and journalists in Berlin like Sano Seki and Hijikata Yoshi (theatre), Kinugasa Teinosuke and Okada Sōzō (movies), Katsumoto Seiichirō and Fujimori Seikichi (literature), Shimazaki Ōsuke, a son of Shimazaki Tōson, the most influential novelist at the time (painting), Yamaguchi Bunzō (architecture), Okagami Morimichi (Asahi Shinbun), Suzuki Tōmin (Dentsu) and Yosano Yuzuru (freelance journalist). Many young students of Berlin University were also active members. Among them, Kitamura Hiroshi, Ureshino Masuo, Adachi Tsurutarō and Inoue Kakutarō later became Japanese correspondents in Europe during the war. Kobayashi Yoshio, Ōno Shun-ichi, Senzoku Takayasu and Kitamura Hiroshi were outstanding scholars in post-war Japan. For further details refer to: <http://www.ff.ij4u.or.jp/~Katote/Berlin.html> (accessed 29 March 2005).

- 21 Although the Japanese members were at the heart of this organization, other Asians were also important. Chinese members were mainly young communist leaders in Berlin who had close contact with the Chinese organization in Paris, which was founded by Chuu Woung Raii. They became important figures of post-war Chinese diplomacy and played a key role in rebuilding Chinese–Japanese relations. Based on their earlier Berlin contacts, Arisawa and Senda became the founders of post-war cultural exchange programmes with China in the 1950s. One Korean member, Lee Kang Kuk, and a Japanese member Miyake Shikanosuke were arrested in Seoul in 1934 on the charge of anti-Japanese activities in colonial Korea (the so-called ‘red purge of Seoul University’). Miyake was Professor of Financial Theory at Seoul Imperial University at the time, and Lee was a research assistant of the Law Department of the same university. Japanese political police knew about their connection in Berlin before they joined the university. These personal contacts paved the way for a new peaceful relationship in the post-war period. It is interesting to remember that this post-war network had its origin not in Beijing, Seoul or Tokyo, but in Berlin in the 1920s.
- 22 See: http://www.cc.matsuyama-u.ac.jp/~yamada/database/index_e.html (accessed 29 March 2005).

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8 Karl Haushofer re-examined

Geopolitics as a factor of Japanese–German rapprochement in the inter-war years?

Christian W. Spang

Introduction

While rather a lot of research has been done on Karl Haushofer's involvement in the formation of Nazi *Lebensraum* ideology – some of it easily accessible in English (Herwig 1999; Polelle 1999) – his role in Japanese–German relations has been largely overlooked. He was born less than two years before the foundation of the German Empire (1871). About one year after the surrender of the 'Third Reich' (1945), he committed suicide together with his wife. Within this period of roughly 75 years, German diplomacy and warfare undoubtedly influenced the course of world history. This chapter broaches the question as to whether Haushofer also did.

Born in 1869 in Munich, Karl Haushofer grew up in a bourgeois academic family. His father, Professor Max H. Haushofer, was a known political economist, politician and prolific author of academic as well as literary works. Even today, his books can still be found in library collections around the world. Karl Haushofer joined the Bavarian Army in 1887 to become a member of the kingdom's general staff.¹ In 1909–10, he spent nearly 18 months in East Asia. While stationed in Japan as the first Bavarian military observer, he also travelled to Korea, China and Manchuria. Before and after his assignment, Haushofer taught War History at the Military Academy in Munich. During World War I, he served as a commanding officer, leaving the army in 1919 as Major General. Around the same time, he made friends with Rudolf Hess, who later became deputy leader of the Nazi Party. Their familiarity formed the basis of the mistaken assumption of an equally close contact between Haushofer and Hitler.

After his return from East Asia, Haushofer published extensively on Japan and the Pacific Ocean, establishing himself as one of Germany's foremost experts regarding the Far East. With this reputation established, he went on to (co-)found the geopolitical monthly *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik* (ZfG), whose (co-)editor he was until it was suspended towards the end

of World War II. The journal circulated not only in Germany but was available at libraries all over Europe as well as in the USA, Japan and other countries. Because he was a founding member and sometime president (1934–7) of the *Deutsche Akademie* (German Academy), Haushofer was known in circles far beyond his own academic field (Norton 1968). At a time when radio was the most up-to-date form of mass media, Haushofer furthermore broadcast monthly radio lectures on the international political situation. This *Weltpolitischer Monatsbericht* – on air between 1925–31 and 1933–9 – made him a household name in contemporary Germany. Already in 1926 he was among ‘51 leading Germans’ whose views on the country’s future role in world politics were published by a German monthly (*Süddeutsche Monatshefte* 1926: 183–4).

Haushofer and the academic world: outsider or ‘star’?

During his stay in East Asia, Haushofer aggravated a lung disease. While on sick leave from the army, he wrote his first book, *Dai Nihon* (1913). His doctoral dissertation (1914) as well as his second major thesis (*Habilitation*, 1919) both dealt with Japan and were submitted to the Department of Geography of Munich’s Ludwigs-Maximilians University (LMU). Even though Haushofer taught there until 1939, he did not receive any income from his *alma mater* because this would have interfered with his generous military pension. He never held a chair either, nor did he have his own office in the department (Louis 1969: 24, 27). It would be wrong, though, to conclude that he was not accepted in the geographical field. He actually declined two chairs offered to him by the universities of Tübingen (1920) and Leipzig (1933), most probably because he did not need the money and preferred to stay in Munich, where he was well connected.

Statements made by allied authors during World War II, indicating that Haushofer was the head of a huge *Institut für Geopolitik* – which they saw as a hybrid between a think-tank and a centre of espionage (Sondern 1941a, 1941b) – are therefore entirely erroneous, as no such institute ever existed (Spang 2000: 594–7). The most striking example of this grossly mistaken allied propaganda occurred in the 1942 movie *Geopolitik – Hitler’s plan for empire*. The relevant part of the description states:

[...] a vast plan of conquest, drawn up [...] by one of the strangest and [most] significant figures of our time [...] Dr. Karl E. Haushofer, president of the German Academy, Major-General of the Reichswehr and master-planner of Nazi world conquest. [...] Haushofer’s Munich institute is the nerve center of a highly organized world system of espionage. [...] By the patient work of some 9,000 operatives [...] Haushofer has collected [...] what is believed to be one of the most

[...] knowledge – geographical, political and strategic – ever assembled about the peoples and lands of this earth. And on this information he has based [...] the science of geopolitics, or: “the military control of space”.

*(Geopolitik – Hitler’s plan for empire 1942:
transcript of movie narration)*

When it came to publishing, Haushofer was hyperactive. He wrote hundreds of articles, reviews, comments, obituaries and scores of books, some of which went through up to five editions. Approximately half of his writings dealt with Asian topics (Spang 2000: 592–3). Haushofer actually arranged for many top Nazis, such as Goebbels, Göring, Hess, Himmler, Hitler, Ribbentrop as well as leaders of Germany’s armed forces such as von Blomberg, Canaris or Raeder to receive copies of his works. We can therefore assume that many contemporary German leaders were – at least roughly – familiar with his theories.

The question as to whether Haushofer was an academic outsider or a ‘star’ cannot be simply answered. In the 1930s, he was so popular among students that he sometimes had to change to bigger lecture halls. His – often much younger – fellow geopoliticians saw him as the godfather of a new, seemingly up-and-coming discipline. As many other German geographers had, in one way or another, strongly supported the war effort during World War I, Haushofer was generally well received in the field. In contrast, he somehow remained an outsider among Germany’s small group of Japanologists. This was partly due to his rather weak Japanese,³ partly to his long military career. Some of those who professionally dealt with Japan did not consider him a fully-fledged academic. Yet, his high military rank opened doors to him, which were closed to ordinary professors.

The transcontinental bloc theory: may dreams come true?

Haushofer’s sojourn in the East was crucial for the formation of his political outlook. His conversations with Japanese statesmen and generals such as Gotō Shinpei, Itō Hirobumi, Katsura Tarō or Terauchi Masatake, etc. had been stimulating for the 40-year-old Major. His ideas were based on the geographic trajectory of his own experiences. In 1908–9 he had travelled to Japan via the Suez Canal, India and Singapore. In 1910, he had returned by the not yet fully completed Trans-Siberian Railroad. He had thus encountered both the omnipresence of the British Empire at sea as well as the huge landmass of Russia.

In his first book, Haushofer advocated an alliance between four Empires: Austria–Hungary, Germany, Japan and Russia (Haushofer 1913: 262). Such a transcontinental bloc would have been strong enough to challenge what Haushofer, like many Germans, perceived as ‘British–

American supremacy'. Yet, of those four monarchies only the Japanese one survived World War I. Therefore, Haushofer had to adapt his geopolitical hypothesis to post-war realities.

Apparently, it was only around 1920 that Haushofer learned about Sir Halford J. Mackinder's famous 'heartland theory' (Mackinder 1904: 421–37). Haushofer used this concept as a backdrop for his already established transcontinental bloc idea. The basic difference between the two models was to be found on the intentional level. While the German geopolitician wanted to change the international status quo, the British Professor's aim was to protect it. In the preface of the second edition of Mackinder's *Democratic Ideals and Reality* (1942: viii), General Fielding Eliot came up with a striking comparison to elucidate this point: 'Never was there a better secular example of the devil employing scripture to his purpose than Haushofer twisting the principles of Mackinder, set forth for the preservation of democracy, to serve the Nazi ends.'

Haushofer looked at the world from a particularly German point of view. His foreign policy concept grew out of the political circumstances before and after World War I and has to be judged as part of the contemporary *zeitgeist*. His interpretation of world affairs can only be fully understood if one sees it within the framework of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century thinking. A comprehensive elaboration of these intellectual trends would be beyond the scope of this chapter. Only the most important ones can be briefly mentioned here.

Among these currents, Social-Darwinist ideas – represented by Herbert Spencer (Britain), William G. Sumner (USA), Ernst Haeckel (Germany) and others – proved to be the most influential ones. The slogan 'survival of the fittest' played a decisive role in the formation of many different intellectual concepts, including political geography and geopolitics. Besides, pseudo-academic 'race-studies', initiated by Joseph-Arthur Gobineau (France) and Houston St. Chamberlain (Britain/Germany), were well received in the imperialist era, when various forms of jingoisms were rampant in many countries. Europeans and (white) Americans were convinced of their respective superiority. Many nationalists were sure that their nation was the best in the world. These claims had to be backed up by military might, leading to the arms race of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Not only in Germany, but also in other countries like France, the British Empire or Japan, army as well as navy officers gained an extraordinary high social standing, leading to a growing military influence on society and politics. Strategic models claiming a general opposition between 'land power' and 'sea power' were widespread. Mackinder's 'heartland theory' states that any continental power that rules Eastern Europe along with the western part of Russia would be in a position to dominate the world. His American counterpart, Alfred T. Mahan (1890, 1900), however, was convinced that the sea powers would continue to rule the world.

While the above-mentioned ideas are more indirectly linked to the development of geopolitics, the following ones can be considered as its immediate stepping-stones. First to be mentioned here is Friedrich Ratzel, the 'father of Political Geography', who was a founding member of the radical *Alldeutscher Verband* (Pan-German League). Not only did he invent the term *Lebensraum* but he also developed the *Gesetz der wachsenden Räume* (law of growing spaces), which explains that states have to enlarge their territories or lose out. In the early twenty-first century it is hard to believe that anyone considered Social-Darwinist 'laws' like this applicable to international relations. Yet, they seemed much more plausible in the late nineteenth century, i.e. at a time when there still was an American 'frontier' and countries like France, Germany and others continued to gain new territories either in Africa or in a region which Haushofer used to call the 'indo-pacific space'. Rudolf Kjellén, the Swede who invented the term 'geopolitics', came up with the 'state-as-organ' theory by combining biology, geography, history and politics. States were interpreted as living organisms. Like in Ratzel's *Gesetz*, they had to grow or vanquish.

After World War I, ideas like these were *en vogue* in Germany, where (anti-Versailles) revisionism was widespread. According to many observers, a new antagonism had appeared between 'have' and 'have-not' nations. Under these circumstances, the term *Lebensraum* became part of popular culture in Germany. Hans Grimm's novel, *Volk ohne Raum* (people without space, 1926), became a bestseller in Germany. Later, at the height of the geopolitical boom, its Japanese version (1940–2) also sold well. All these currents constitute the background one has to keep in mind when discussing the development of 'classical' geopolitics.

Haushofer strongly rejected Communism. Therefore, he differentiated strictly between the Soviet system and 'Russia' as a political-geographical entity, which he continued to see as a 'land-bridge' between Germany and Japan. By the mid-1920s, he adapted the contemporary 'have-not' theory to position China in addition to a hypothetically independent India alongside Germany, Japan and 'Russia' against the USA, the British Empire and France (Haushofer 1924: 142; 1925: 87).

Haushofer considered the Anti-Comintern Pact of 1936 only as the first move *en route* for a multiple alliance. The signing of the Hitler–Stalin Pact in August 1939 seemed to be the second step towards the implementation of his transcontinental bloc concept. With the conclusion of the Tripartite Pact between Germany, Italy and Japan in September 1940, as well as the Japanese–Soviet Neutrality Pact in April 1941, Haushofer's grand scheme appeared to be realized. Around that time, ideas of a fully-fledged Four Power Bloc including the USSR were discussed in certain circles in Japan. In his booklet *Der Kontinentalblock* (1941), Haushofer presented such an alliance as a political fact. Less than two years after Ribbentrop had negotiated the Hitler–Stalin Pact in Moscow, the German surprise attack on

the USSR in June 1941 abruptly ended any dreams of a transcontinental bloc though.

Haushofer and the Nazis: the Hess factor

The event that was to shape Haushofer's relationship with the Nazis occurred before the party even existed. Early in 1919, he became acquainted with Rudolf Hess, who was a close associate of Haushofer's World War I *aide-de-camp*. In spite of their 25-year age difference, the two men quickly became close friends. In 1920, they went to some of Hitler's early rallies at a time when party membership could still be counted in scores. Hess was immediately fascinated and quickly joined the *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* (NSDAP). Haushofer supported revisionist, i.e. anti-Versailles views, but he neither liked Hitler's personality nor the style of the new party. Due to differences in their family backgrounds and their military and academic achievements, Haushofer remained sceptical, and for some time continued to look down on Hitler (I. Hess 1955: 24, 44; W.R. Hess 1987: 334; Hildebrandt 1949: 35).

After the failed 1923 Munich putsch, Hess and Hitler spent most of the following year in jail together. There, Hess acted as private secretary while Hitler composed *Mein Kampf*. It is well known that Haushofer visited the Landsberg prison several times and brought books with him, among them Clausewitz and Ratzel.⁴ Besides, Rudolf Hess mentioned in a letter dated 18 May 1924 that the future *Führer* was reading one of Haushofer's volumes on Japan (Hess 1987: 328). Apparently this had some impact. In December 1924 Hitler told his Munich acquaintance Ernst Hanfstaengl about the importance of Japan for Germany's future foreign policy, an idea the latter thought Hitler must have obtained from Haushofer.⁵ There are thus strong hints that the geopolitician influenced Hitler's early attitude towards Japan.

Japan's aggressive advancement into Manchuria (1931–2) and its withdrawal from the League of Nations (1933) impressed Hitler, refuelling his above-mentioned earlier interest in a co-operation with Tokyo. In 1933 or 1934, he therefore asked Joachim von Ribbentrop to approach Japan (Kordt 1950: 122). As Hitler's foreign policy adviser had no knowledge of East Asian affairs whatsoever,⁶ he urgently needed advice. By that time, Ribbentrop was officially part of Hess's staff. It is thus not surprising that he requested Haushofer's opinion at times. He even attended one of Haushofer's open lectures on East Asian problems in Berlin (Hack 1996: 234, 245). In a letter dated 21 February 1936, Haushofer's son Albrecht refers to his father's 'close collaboration' with Ribbentrop (Hildebrandt 1969: 895–6). When interrogated by US officials in 1945, Karl Haushofer himself mentioned this co-operation as well. His interrogator, Professor Edmund A. Walsh later wrote: 'He [Haushofer] testified under oath that he had been consulted on Japanese affairs by Ribbentrop and was fre-

quently summoned to the Foreign Office in Berlin for that purpose.' Haushofer also mentioned the following: 'I even had to teach him [i.e. Ribbentrop] how to read a map' (Walsh 1948: 8, 15).

Throughout the Nazi years, Haushofer's view of internal politics was biased by his close friendship with Hess, who was the party's deputy leader 1933–41. During that time Hess managed to keep his friend's family out of trouble, despite the fact that Haushofer's wife had a (baptized) Jewish father.⁷ Being Hess's guest at four of the notorious Nuremberg party rallies (1935–8) made Haushofer a renowned figure within Nazi circles. While many Nazi leaders knew about Haushofer's foreign policy concept, few were aware of the fact that he never joined the party.⁸

Haushofer used his contacts, especially his close friendship with Hess, to foster Japanese–German relations.⁹ A secret meeting between Hess and Japanese Naval Attaché Yendō Yoshikazu¹⁰ in Haushofer's private house in April 1934 is a good example of this. In a Curriculum Vitae that Haushofer wrote in the course of investigations into Hess's flight to Scotland in 1941, he pointed out that this encounter had been arranged only after obtaining Hitler's approval for it.¹¹ More than this, Hess brought with him a personal message from the *Führer*, proving the latter's interest in a co-operation with Tokyo (Jacobsen 1979, 1: 364). As there had been no comparable exchange of views between top Nazis and high-ranking Japanese officials before this one, it might be said that the bilateral rapprochement of the 1930s effectively began in Haushofer's living room.¹²

There can be no doubt that Ribbentrop and his subordinates were influenced by Haushofer's transcontinental bloc concept. The diary of Bella Fromm, a journalist working in contemporary Berlin, mentions that Ribbentrop's semi-official bureau, the so-called *Dienststelle*, tried to improve ties with Japan and the USSR at the same time (Fromm 1993: 236). According to Fromm, it was Dr Hermann von Raumer, the head of its East Asia Section (1935–8), who was in charge of this two-fold scheme. It is noteworthy that von Raumer not only subscribed to and published in the *ZfG* but also talked about Haushofer at home.¹³ The assumption of Haushofer's influence is further strengthened by the fact that it was von Raumer who had the idea of directing the bilateral agreement under discussion in 1935–6 against the Communist International (Comintern) rather than openly confronting the Soviet Union. This concept ostensibly reflected Haushofer's differentiation between the USSR and geographical 'Russia'. The Anti-Comintern Pact, which was the result of these negotiations, therefore left the door open for later negotiations between the Nazi government in Berlin and the Soviets in Moscow.

After seeing Hitler on a number of official and private occasions, Haushofer met the *Führer* for the last time in November 1938 at Hess's Munich home. Here, Haushofer talked to Hitler about the opportunities a transcontinental co-operation would offer. By then, Hitler considered himself as a superior statesman, however. He was not interested in any

kind of unwanted advice. Instead of listening, he humiliated the Professor by turning around, leaving him standing alone.¹⁴ There can be no doubt that Hitler was well aware of Haushofer's theories. Yet, for the *Führer* anti-communist ideology and racist ideas seemed more convincing than strategic-geopolitical ones. He persisted in his anti-Semitic, anti-Slavic racist policy. For him the pact with Stalin was mere tactics. With regard to Japan, his racism meant that he was reluctant to conclude any (too) close alliance with the 'yellow' Japanese.

Looking at the broad picture, Haushofer's concept appears to have been the basic guideline of Nazi foreign policy for some time. This is reflected in the voluminous allied wartime literature on (German) geopolitics. These authors, however, vastly overstated the case when they presented the Professor as '*the man behind Hitler's war aims*' (Anonymous 1939: 62, 64;¹⁵ Sondern 1941a and 1941b; Thomson 1939). Nevertheless, a tendency to follow geopolitical models as long as they did not contradict Hitler's racism seems to have been (at least) Ribbentrop's guideline. The attack on the USSR in June 1941 proved to be the end of all this. Haushofer's later affirmative comments on the war in the East were the result of his by now much more insecure position. Within two months, his family's guardian angel, Rudolf Hess, had flown to Scotland and his foreign policy concept had collapsed.

The Haushofer 'boom' in Japan

Haushofer was on good terms with many Japanese academics, diplomats, politicians and members of the armed forces. Although he knew some of these from his sojourn in late Meiji Japan, he met most of them only after World War I.¹⁶ Haushofer's correspondence shows that he entertained close contacts with the Japanese embassy in Berlin.¹⁷ When judging these men's political weight, one should keep in mind that at a time when transcontinental travel was still limited, senior embassy staff had considerable influence on contemporary foreign relations.

Another important channel through which Haushofer's ideas reached Japan were books and articles by (or about) him. Around 1940 most of his major works on East Asia were translated into Japanese and issued by influential publishing houses such as Iwanami Shoten and Dai-ichi Shobō. His *Geopolitik des Pazifischen Ozeans* was translated three times, the earliest version being a semi-official one, issued by the Admiralty in 1940.¹⁸ Japanese interest in *Geopolitik* must be seen in connection with the planning of the so-called Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere¹⁹ as well as with the above-mentioned considerations of a Four-Power Bloc.

The late 1930s saw the development of two different schools of Japanese geopolitics (Spang 2000: 608–29; Takeuchi 1980, 2000a and 2000b). Associations such as the *Chiseigaku Kyōkai* (Japanese Geopolitical

Society) and the *Taiheiyō Kyōkai* (Pacific Society) sponsored translations of Haushofer's works in addition to the publication of Japanese books on geopolitics, many of which either adopted or commented on Haushofer's theories (Asano 1941; Ezawa 1941; Satō 1944, etc.). Both Tokyo-based associations counted many academics, politicians along with high-ranking military officers among their members. To mention just two of the most famous ones, Matsuoka Yōsuke was for some time vice-president of the *Taiheiyō Kyōkai* – later he was a board member of the same association – while General Abe Nobuyuki was affiliated with both societies.²⁰ The *Taiheiyō Kyōkai* as well as the *Chiseigaku Kyōkai* organized conferences, lecture meetings and receptions, thus offering various occasions for their heterogeneous members to come together and discuss geopolitical, strategic or other problems. Geopoliticians such as Iimoto Nobuyuki, Watanuki Isahiko and Watanabe Akira, a professor at the Military Academy, participated actively in these events. It was, however, Inokuchi Ichirō, a lecturer at Sophia University and a part-timer at Tokyo Imperial University, who more than anyone else represented the close connection between the societies. Concurrently he was deputy chief (1939–42) and later chief (1942–5) of the *Taiheiyō Kyōkai*'s information (i.e. propaganda) bureau (*kōhō-bu*) and a board member of the *Chiseigaku Kyōkai*. At the founding ceremony of the latter, a few weeks before the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, many of the speakers referred to German geopolitics in general and Haushofer in particular. Among them was the above-mentioned Yendō Yoshikazu. By then, he was in charge of the Research Institute for Total War (*Sōryoku-sen Kenkyūjo*), jointly run by the Japanese Army and the Imperial Navy. Yendō told the audience of his meetings with Haushofer and stressed the strong connection between geopolitics and his institute's research.

A separate school of geopolitics developed at Kyoto Imperial University. It was headed by Komaki Saneshige, whose extensively published ideas were based on anti-Western, 'Imperial Way' (*kōdō*) ideology – rampant in nationalistic circles in contemporary Japan. Still, Komaki (1944: 52–3) appreciated Haushofer's understanding of Japan's national policy (*kokutai*). During the war years, Komaki regularly lectured on Japanese geopolitics and headed a secret circle of young geopoliticians who met once a week in a private house near the university. Known as the *Yoshida no Kai*, this group closely co-operated with the general staff (Takeuchi and Masai 1999: 16–17, 61–3; Mizuuchi 2001). Until the late 1930s, the Japanese army had almost exclusively focused on the war in China and a possible conflict with the USSR. Therefore, it lacked any detailed knowledge about the rest of East Asia. When the south-eastern part of the continent became the most likely theatre of war, the army turned to the geopoliticians in Kyoto for advice.²¹

The money Komaki's circle received enabled them not only to pay the rent for the house they met in (including the salary of a housekeeper), but

also to buy scores of (partly foreign) books every month for over five years (1939–45). At face value, the funds came from a group of retired officers called *Kōsen Kai* (Imperial War Society). Its managing director, Colonel Takashima Tatsuhiko sometimes attended the weekly meetings. He had close contacts with the general staff and the military staff college and acted as a liaison officer between the army and the above-mentioned *Yoshida no Kai*. It should not come as a surprise that Takashima had spent the years 1929–32 studying in Germany, where he must have learned about Haushofer's ideas. As most of the related documents were deliberately destroyed between Japan's surrender on 15 August 1945 and the arrival of the occupation forces in early September, most of what is known today is based on post-war recollections. In an interview, Murakami Toshio, a wartime member of the Kyoto school of geopolitics, elaborated on a striking example for the group's co-operation with the general staff. In spring 1945, the army provided the group with special maps and detailed information about American tanks and asked them to predict where the US Army would try to land on Kyūshū, the southernmost of Japan's four main islands (Takeuchi and Masai 1999: 61–3).

Haushofer arranged for his major publications to be sent to his Japanese acquaintances and some of the Japanese oligarchs.²² Among those who received his works were three-time Prime Minister Konoe Fumimaro, pro-Axis Foreign Minister Matsuoka Yōsuke as well as influential General Araki Sadao and others.²³ Many academics and political advisers to high-ranking officials were interested in Haushofer's geopolitical theories. Notably, the renowned political scientist Rōyama Masamichi, possibly the most famous member of the *Shōwa Kenkyūkai* (Shōwa Research Association),²⁴ not only wrote a positive review about Haushofer's *Geopolitik des Pacifischen Ozeans* (Rōyama 1942), but also an extensive entry about geopolitics in a contemporary dictionary of social sciences (Rōyama 1941: 101–9). Already in 1938, another member of the association, Professor Kamei Kan'ichirō, travelled to Germany and met Haushofer, Hess and others. After the war, he said that the reason for his voyage was to find ways to promote transcontinental co-operation by developing contacts between Haushofer, Konoe and a representative of the Comintern (Nihon Kindaishiryō Kenkyūkai 1970: 190, 199–202). Most likely Kamei was chosen for his fluency in German and went to Europe with the group's full support.

Kuboi Yoshimichi, a Member of Parliament and close friend to Matsuoka, sent a letter to Haushofer, dated 24 April 1941.²⁵ In it, he expressed his opinion that the Tripartite Pact of 27 September 1940 and the Japanese–Soviet Neutrality Pact of 13 April 1941 were deeply rooted in Haushofer's transcontinental bloc model. Kuboi also mentioned that he had told Matsuoka about the importance of a foreign policy based on geopolitics before he accompanied the minister on his famous trip to Berlin, Rome and Moscow. This letter proves that Matsuoka not only got

some of Haushofer's books but also received further instructions about Haushofer's theories before his talks with Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin and others. This awareness must have reinforced Matsuoka's willingness to come to terms with Moscow – regardless of him being a strict anti-communist like Haushofer.²⁶

Given that the modern Japanese army had been modelled on the Prussian one, it is not surprising that its officer corps was among the driving forces promoting a Japanese–German rapprochement.²⁷ An influential group of military leaders, centring on wartime Premier Tōjō Hideki and radical officer Ishihara Kanji, had spent some time in Germany after World War I and were to some extent pro-German. The diplomat-turned-general Ōshima Hiroshi, an acquaintance of Haushofer, was a declared admirer of the Nazis,²⁸ working hard for a closer tie-up. Furthermore, in 1937 the army, navy as well as the foreign minister and other high officials received Haushofer's son, Albrecht, when the latter was in Tokyo as special envoy for Ribbentrop. On 14 September Prince Kan'in, an uncle of the Tennō and chief of the general staff (1931–41), thanked the younger Haushofer for his father's efforts to deepen the understanding between the two countries.²⁹ This demonstrates that Karl Haushofer's works and activities were well known within the army leadership.

Unlike the Japanese Army, the Imperial Navy focused more on the traditional sea powers. Nevertheless, after the expiration of the Anglo–Japanese Alliance (1902–22) naval contacts between Germany and Japan intensified as well.³⁰ The mere fact that the Admiralty was involved in the translation of Haushofer's major work proves that there was a pro-German faction within the navy, which was attracted by geopolitical theories. Certain remarks made by the above-mentioned Yendō strongly support this assumption. In a letter written to Haushofer a few days after the signing of the German–Italian–Japanese Pact, Yendō wrote: 'This Tripartite Pact is totally based on your ideas. Despite the long period of time it will involve, I am convinced that your final aim [i.e. the transcontinental bloc] will be achieved [...]'.³¹ Considering that Yendō had been chief naval adjutant to the Tennō in 1935–8 and adding Prince Kan'in's comment to the picture, one can assume that even court circles must have been aware of Haushofer's foreign policy concept.

Conclusion

Haushofer's position was based both on his double career as a military officer and an influential academic as well as on his first-hand experiences in East Asia. He was known in Germany and within pro-German circles in Japan, where his writings were translated and widely read. The Japanese as well as the Nazis saw Haushofer as one of the foremost experts on East Asian affairs. This allowed him to play an important role in the bilateral rapprochement of the 1930s. Haushofer made use of his widespread

contacts to pave the way for Ribbentrop's *Dienststelle* to negotiate the Anti-Comintern Pact with the Japanese Military Attaché Ōshima Hiroshi.

We have seen that Haushofer was able to affect Adolf Hitler's foreign policy outlook in the mid-1920s. He continued to exert some influence on others like Hess and Ribbentrop regarding their view of Japan. For some time Nazi leaders considered the transcontinental bloc concept worthwhile. There was, however, a substantial difference between Hitler's and Ribbentrop's view. For Hitler Haushofer's idea was a temporary means, useful only to gain time while winning the war on the Western front. For Ribbentrop – who was less racist and ideological in his worldview – a Four-Power Bloc seemed to be a convincing basis for German foreign policy.

On the Japanese side, the interest in Haushofer's writings can only be understood in connection with pro-German academics, political advisers and officers planning the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere and considering a joint war against the so-called A-B-C-D coalition, i.e. against America, the British Empire, China and the Dutch East Indies (today's Indonesia). By the late 1930s, the Japanese army was essentially unprepared for the southward advancement, i.e. the occupation of Southeast Asia. This lack of preparation led to the co-operation between the general staff and the Kyoto school of geopolitics.

Judging from the course of events, it has to be concluded that some people used Haushofer's authority to support their own aim of fostering anti-Soviet co-operation between Berlin and Tokyo. They overlooked the fact that Haushofer's emotional attachment to Japan was one thing, his rationale another: When it came to suggesting a concept for German and Japanese foreign policy, he persisted in his pet project, a transcontinental bloc, i.e. on including the Soviet Union alongside Germany, Japan (and Italy). Before German troops opened the war against the USSR on 22 June 1941, Haushofer never indicated that he thought about conquering that space. As he had a thorough understanding of war history as well as geography he knew the outcome of such a struggle. When Japan decided not to join Hitler's war against the Soviet Union, Haushofer was aware of the fact that Nazi Germany was doomed.

To return to the initial question, as to whether Haushofer influenced world history, I would like to argue that he did – if only in a limited way and for a short period of time. If we imagine that the Bavarian General Staff – as it first intended³² – had sent Captain Kurt Scherf to Japan instead of Haushofer, this hypothesis might be easier to appreciate. A more archetypal soldier, Scherf would have informed his superiors of his impressions, only to continue his military career as many other (mostly Prussian) officers had done before. Haushofer instead returned, came up with his own foreign policy concept, started an academic career, wrote books and articles, founded German geopolitics, maintained some of his military and Japanese connections, became acquainted with Rudolf Hess and other leading Nazis as well as with many of the Japanese embassy staff. In short,

he developed and spread his own geopolitical theories – based on his transcontinental bloc idea. Most of the time, Haushofer followed his motto ‘let us educate our masters’ (Hildebrandt 1949: 37). Some of them listened, some did not. If we subtract Haushofer from the equation of Japanese–German relations, events might have developed along a somewhat different path.

Notes

- 1 Until World War I, Bavaria and other South German states kept their independent army and postal service. In peace-time, those armies were under the command of their respective king.
- 2 The adjective between ‘most’ and ‘knowledge’ is unintelligible. It sounds like ‘penecrit’.
- 3 Please refer to the forthcoming monograph by the author for more details.
- 4 According to Jacobsen 1979, vol. 1: 239, the Landsberg records indicate eight calls by Haushofer. Despite the fact that his visits were meant for Hess, an article in the Nazi organ *Völkischer Beobachter* (H.H. 1934) mentions that Haushofer came to see Hitler every week. Although this was not true, it shows that Haushofer was perceived as a close associate of the *Führer*.
- 5 According to Hanfstaengl 1970: 168, Hitler told him the following (my translation from the German edition): ‘Only an alliance with the hard-working, soldierly and racially unified Japanese nation, which is a people without space like the Germans and therefore our natural partner against the Bolshevistic government in Moscow, can we lead Germany to a new bright future.’ Hanfstaengl’s comment on this is of particular interest: ‘“Amen” was what I thought [...] recalling the theories of the circle around Haushofer who are striving for a German–Japanese alliance.’
- 6 See Erich Kordt’s unpublished manuscript ‘German–Japanese Relations’, page 3 (IfZ Munich, ED 157/28). In it, Kordt, a senior member of the German Foreign Ministry, mentions a conversation with Ribbentrop, which indicated that the latter was completely ignorant of Japanese political history. He mistook ‘Shimonoseki’, i.e. the port city where the Japanese–Chinese peace treaty was signed in 1895, for a Japanese politician and asked: ‘Who is he?’
- 7 Hildebrandt 1949: 51 mentions a document saying that all matters related to the Haushofer family had to be approved by Hess. According to Martha Haushofer’s diary (BA Koblenz, NL 1122, vol. 127, entry 20 and 22 June 1933), Hess offered them some kind of security. He did the same for the couple’s two sons (ibid., entry 19 August 1933).
- 8 Even SS-Chief Heinrich Himmler addressed Haushofer in a private letter, dated 14 October 1940, with the phrase ‘Dear Party Comrade’ (BA Koblenz, NL 1122, vol. 54). See also University Archive LMU, Folder ‘OC – N 14: Dr. Karl Haushofer’. In a letter written on Christmas Eve 1938, Haushofer – without further explanation – mentions that he did not become a party member as a camouflage.
- 9 See Sloan 1988. On page 33 he quotes from an interview with Ilse Hess on 25 July 1978: ‘Haushofer’s geopolitical teaching had a great and lasting effect on my husband’s [i.e. Rudolf Hess’s] strategic thinking.’ Sloan quotes her again on page 40, saying: ‘It is in the Nazi foreign policy towards Japan that the influence of Haushofer and his geopolitical ideas were important.’
- 10 Although there is no ‘ye’ in modern Japanese, I maintain Yendō’s own romanization of his name. Otherwise, it would be ‘Endō’. Transcribing Japanese

names with ‘ye’ was standard practice before 1945 as can be seen in *Contemporary Japan*, where names are spelled as follows: ‘Fumimaro Konoye’, ‘Takahiko Tomoyeda’, etc.

- 11 In her diary (loc. cit., 5 May 1939), Martha mentions an encounter between Haushofer and Yendō on that day and recalls the earlier meeting, which she described as the beginning of the rapprochement. Karl Haushofer’s 1941 CV can be found in BA Koblenz, NL 1413, vol. 5. The relevant hint appears on page 8.
- 12 One might argue against this interpretation, saying that the private talk at Haushofer’s home involved Naval Attaché Yendō, while the later negotiations were conducted by Military Attaché Ōshima. Yet, even if there should be no direct connection on the Japanese side, there seems to be ample continuity on the German side. Hitler knew about both negotiations. It is most likely that Hess as well as Haushofer mentioned the conversation to Ribbentrop. Possibly via his son Albrecht, Haushofer might even have informed Hermann von Raumer, who was Ribbentrop’s subordinate and in charge of the negotiations leading to the Anti-Comintern Pact. Finally, there is a certain chance that Haushofer informed Ōshima directly, thus providing the missing link on the Japanese side.
- 13 Von Raumer’s son, Dietrich, mentioned this in an interview with the author in 1999. See also H. von Raumer (1929) ‘Beiträge zur Geopolitik der Mand-schurei’, *ZfG*, 6: 684–96.
- 14 In a letter to the author (dated 25 May 1999), Wolf Rüdiger Hess reports that his mother, Ilse Hess, told him that Hitler and Haushofer met in their house on 8 or 9 November 1938 and were discussing Japan and transcontinental co-operation. The content of the letter is reproduced in Spang 2001: 128–9. See Hildebrandt (1949: 38) for a different version of the encounter.
- 15 To illustrate this point a little further, two sections from the article that appeared in *Life* 1939 shall be quoted here. On page 62, the anonymous author states: ‘Adolf Hitler, too, has his ultimate war aims. They were drafted in detail by the nearly unknown man [...] Professor Major General Karl E. Nikolaus Haushofer and Dr. Albrecht Haushofer. Karl Haushofer is the inexhaustible Idea Man for Hitler, Hess, von Ribbentrop and the inner elite of the Nazi Party.’ On page 64 the following conclusion is offered: ‘Today he [i.e. Karl Haushofer] has absolute hold on the Nazi leadership.’
- 16 A good example of those Japanese whom Haushofer knew since his stay in Japan was Baron General Kikuchi Takeo, who had been a fellow officer in the sixteenth Japanese division. Kikuchi later became a member of the House of Lords. In 1945, he was arrested as a war criminal, but was later released without trial.
- 17 Haushofer’s ‘Japanese’ correspondence can be found in scores in BA Koblenz, NL 1122. There are a particularly large numbers of relevant letters in vols 155, 162 and GD 2859. Among those who corresponded with Haushofer were Military and Naval Attachés such as Banzai, Kashii, Kawabe, Omura, Yendō and Yokoi. A letter from Kikuchi Takeo (dated 12 January 1935) explicitly mentions Haushofer’s constant contact with representatives of the Japanese army. On request of the President of the German–Japanese Society, Admiral Behncke (ibid. vol. 3), Haushofer organized the visit of the Japanese embassy’s delegation to Munich in June 1935. According to Martha Haushofer’s diary (loc. cit.) Mushakōji, Ōshima, Yokoi and Furuuchi enjoyed a private afternoon tea with both Haushofers on 17 June. This indicates how close Haushofer’s contacts with the Japanese were.
- 18 For a full listing of all translations, please refer to the author’s forthcoming book.

- 19 In November 1938, Prime Minister Konoe declared that Japan was striving for a 'New Order in East Asia' (*tōa shin-chitsujo*) centring on Japan, China and Manchukuo. In August 1940, Foreign Minister Matsuoka for the first time used the term 'Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere' (*dai-tōa kyōei-ken*), which was to include Southeast Asia as well.
- 20 It should be mentioned here, that for a long time there was no president of the *Taiheiyō Kyōkai*, making the two vice-presidents the actual leaders. Matsuoka was famous in Japan because he had been the delegate to the League of Nations who announced the country's withdrawal from it in 1933. Abe, who was Prime Minister 1939–40 and later President of the *Taisei Yokusankai* (Imperial Rule Assistance Association: IRAA), was a board member at the *Taiheiyō Kyōkai* and a supporting member (*sanjoin*) at the *Chiseigaku Kyōkai*. Please refer to the author's forthcoming book for further details.
- 21 Among the most important reasons for this strategic switch were the army's heavy losses in a number of border conflicts with the Red Army, most notably those at Changkufeng (July–August 1938) and Nomanhan (May–September 1939). After the German *Wehrmacht* overpowered the Netherlands and France in 1940, those countries' resource-rich Southeast Asian colonies seemed to be easy prey.
- 22 BA Koblenz, NL 1122, *passim*. Not all of these transactions can be restored, but a number of documents show that Ōshima (while military attaché) received many works for Haushofer's military acquaintances as well as prominent leaders in Japan. See for example Ōshima's letters to Haushofer, dated 13 November 1934 (*ibid.* vol. 108) and 19 December 1934 (*ibid.* GD 2859) as well as a letter from Haushofer to Kikuchi Takeo, dated 3 May 1941 (*ibid.* vol. 155).
- 23 Prince Konoe Fumimaro was Prime Minister in 1937–9 and again 1940–1. Baron Araki Sadao was one of the most influential army leaders of the 1930s. The fact that Araki had been military attaché in Moscow in the 1920s might have made him more receptive to Haushofer's concept of co-operation between Germany, Japan and the USSR. Later he served as Minister of Education (1938–9) under Hiranuma and Konoe. All three were designated as class 'A' war criminals after World War II.
- 24 The group was a think-tank consisting of academics, bureaucrats and journalists. It was founded in November 1936 to assist Konoe Fumimaro and ceased to exist in October 1940, in connection with the establishment of the IRAA. For further details refer to Krebs's contribution in this volume.
- 25 BA Koblenz, NL 1122, vol. 19. The letter, dated 24 April 1941, is extensively quoted in Spang 2000: 613–14. Writing in very good German, Kuboi asked permission to translate Haushofer's *Der Kontinentalblock*. This led to the publication of the translation of this booklet along with parts of Haushofer's *Weltmeere und Weltmächte* in 1943.
- 26 See for example the German translation of two of Matsuoka's speeches, delivered in 1936–7 when he was president of the South Manchurian Railway Company (Matsuoka 1938). It should be mentioned here that Lu 2002: 140 wrongly claims that this translation never materialized.
- 27 Please refer to Saaler's article in this volume for further details.
- 28 Shirer, a US Correspondent in Berlin until 1941, wrote the following about Ōshima's pro-Nazi attitude: 'Ōshima [...] had often impressed this observer [i.e. Shirer] as more Nazi than the Nazis' (Shirer 1991: 872). There are many hints that Haushofer knew Ōshima well (BA Koblenz, NL 1122, *passim*). In her diary (*loc. cit.*: 3 April 1942) Martha Haushofer calls Ōshima an 'old friend' of her husband.
- 29 See Haushofer's *Familien-Stamm-Buch*, page 56. The volume is in the family's possession. I want to thank Regine und Rainer Haushofer for their kind support of my research.

- 30 Please refer to Sander-Nagashima's contribution in this volume for further details.
- 31 BA Koblenz, NL 1122, GD 2859. My translation from the original German.
- 32 See HStA-IV, Gen.-Stab 322. The Bavarian Minister of War, Karl F.W. von Horn, mentions in a letter that Scherf would be perfect for the post. Yet, because Scherf was indispensable, Horn suggests that Haushofer should be considered instead.
- 33 For a full bibliography, please refer to the forthcoming book by the author.

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Part IV

Rapprochement and war

9 The Berlin–Tokyo Axis reconsidered

From the Anti-Comintern Pact to the plot to assassinate Stalin

Tajima Nobuo

Introduction

The origins of the Berlin–Tokyo Axis have generally been traced to the 1936 Anti-Comintern Pact between Japan and Germany. In the conventional view, the Pact was primarily the work of German ambassador plenipotentiary for arms limitation Joachim von Ribbentrop (who became Germany's ambassador to Britain in the summer of 1936 and Foreign Minister in February 1938) in co-operation with the Japanese military attaché to Germany, General Ōshima Hiroshi. It is thought that Ribbentrop, who had been seeking ways to develop Germany's alliance with Japan, brought about the Pact after co-operating with Ōshima on political affairs since the autumn of 1935 and later secured Adolf Hitler's support for the treaty. The so-called Anti-Comintern Pact Reinforcement Negotiations, held from July 1938 to August 1939, and the Tripartite Pact, signed by Japan, Germany and Italy in September 1940, are also regarded as the results of Ribbentrop's initiatives. This account of these developments may be called the 'Ribbentrop-centric theory' (Michalka 1980). The aim of the present chapter is to criticize this theory and to reinterpret the political origins of the Berlin–Tokyo Axis from a different perspective (Tajima 1999).

Japanese–German naval technical co-operation in the 1920s

The Treaty of Versailles, signed in June 1919, was intended to deprive Germany of its potential for rearmament and development of military technology. On the Japanese side, the termination of the Anglo–Japanese Alliance in December 1922 forced the Imperial Navy to seek a new military partnership. In this way, international political conditions conducive to co-operation between the Japanese and German navies in the area of military technology were established (Aizawa 2002; Hirama 1998).

Under the terms of the 1918 armistice agreement with Germany, the Japanese Navy had already acquired seven German submarines as spoils of war. After the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, the Japanese Navy sent a delegation to Germany led by Admiral Katō Hiroharu.¹ It

purchased submarine engines and a variety of armaments, and returned to Japan indicating admiration of Germany's sophisticated military technology. In 1921, the Japanese Navy sent Matsukata Kōjirō, president of the Kawasaki Shipbuilding Company in Kōbe, to Europe for negotiations. Matsukata invited German engineers to Japan, and Kawasaki Shipbuilding subsequently began constructing submarines based on German models.²

At that time, military recovery was the German Navy's top military and technological priority. For that purpose, the German Navy, with the approval of its Commander-in-Chief, Admiral Paul Behncke, established a shipbuilding design office headed by retired Lieutenant Commander Blum and Dr Hans Techel in the Dutch city of The Hague. The office was 'to maintain the highest standard of technological development by constantly applying submarine construction technology in practice through business activities for foreign navies'. That the Japanese Navy was one of this office's main customers is evident in the fact that Techel, then regarded as one of the world's leading authorities on submarine design, assumed direct supervision of submarine construction at Kawasaki Shipbuilding in December 1924.³

Wilhelm W. Canaris' visit to Japan

Such technical co-operation between the Japanese and German navies was promoted on the political side by Dr Friedrich W. Hack of the trading company Schinzingler & Hack, and Lieutenant Commander Wilhelm Canaris of the German Naval General Staff. Hack had been taken prisoner by the Japanese Army when it seized Germany's leasehold Kiao-Chow (Qingdao) in China in the early stages of World War I. After the war, he used his connections and command of the Japanese language to support the bilateral arms trade, and continued to figure in Japanese-German relations up to the end of World War II.⁴ Canaris, meanwhile, played a leading role in German intelligence, being appointed Chief of the *Abwehr* (German military intelligence) in January 1935. On 9 April 1945, he was executed for his involvement in the plot of 20 July 1944 to assassinate Hitler (Höhne 1976: 529–72).

In June 1923, Captain Araki Jirō completed his term as the first Japanese naval attaché in Berlin after World War I and returned to Japan. Hack then proposed to the German Navy that any exchange of expertise between the German and Japanese navies was to be conducted through Araki. On the basis of this proposal, the German Navy dispatched Canaris to Japan in July 1923. His primary purpose was 'to gather information on the submarines being constructed by Kawasaki Shipbuilding and to provide necessary assistance'.⁵

Accompanied by Captain Araki, Canaris first visited Kawasaki Shipbuilding in Kōbe, noting what he called its 'highly advanced construction

techniques' and receiving a warm welcome from his hosts, including company president Matsukata. Canaris wrote in his report on the visit that he had verified Kawasaki's methods of constructing German-style submarines to be sound, and that he had gained a very favourable impression. He thereafter went to Tokyo to meet with top Japanese naval officials, including Navy Minister Takarabe Takeshi and Vice Minister Abo Kiyokazu, and spent about two weeks discussing submarine and torpedo technology, primarily with technical experts. Based on this experience, Canaris submitted the following assessment of the situation:

Should the Japanese Navy be strengthened, the countries of the entente will have to shift their foreign policy priorities from Europe to the Far East. In that event, in order to ensure stability to their rear, the countries of the entente will become more willing to resolve European problems.

(Report by Canaris, 30 September 1924)⁶

From this he drew the conclusion that 'Germany should pursue a policy of supporting the Japanese Navy'.⁷

Canaris as chief of the *Abwehr*

In January 1935, Canaris was reassigned from the navy to the post of Chief of the *Abwehr* in the War Ministry. The pro-Japanese views he had acquired during his naval service were now applied in a different context. The prime concern of German intelligence at the time was the activities of the Soviet Union and the Communist International (Comintern). The Comintern branded Germany, Japan, Italy and Poland as 'fascist states' at its Seventh Convention in the summer of 1935 and was intensifying its opposition against those states through popular-front tactics. Vehemently opposed to these activities of the Soviet Union, Canaris stated in September 1935 that 'the new German Reich has taken upon itself the responsibility of taking Russia to task as the bearer of the communist idea' (Chapman 1967: 43–4).

In order to oppose the activities of the USSR and the Comintern, Canaris focused on forming a kind of anti-Soviet 'encirclement' of intelligence built on exchange of Soviet-related information with potential German allies. Specifically, from spring to fall 1935, Canaris actively approached the military authorities of countries to the west of the Soviet Union – including Hungary, Estonia and Finland – to discuss the sharing of information on the USSR and ways to systematize such exchanges. He also continued his efforts to establish co-operative relations with the Italian military.⁸

At a summit meeting held in Stresa in northern Italy on 23 March 1935, Italy, together with Britain and France, had expressed opposition to

Germany's declaration that it would rearm (the so-called 'Stresa Front'). After Germany assumed a position supporting Italy's invasion of Ethiopia in autumn 1935, Rome gradually altered its anti-German policy. Canaris was also interested in the intelligence potential of expatriate Germans living in Eastern Europe. In Germany this issue was being handled by the Council of Expatriate Germans (*Volksdeutscher Rat*), an organization led by Karl Haushofer, a professor at Munich University and a close friend of Rudolf Hess. It was through the activities of this council that Canaris established connections with Ribbentrop.⁹

Canaris wasted little time in getting in touch with Ōshima Hiroshi, the Japanese military attaché in Berlin, who had taken up his post in April 1934. Both men found themselves to be kindred spirits. The Japanese wanted the Chief of the *Abwehr* to provide military information on the Soviet Union, and Canaris regarded Japan as an important factor in his scheme to create an intelligence network against the USSR and the Comintern. In the meantime, Hack, who had established a close working relationship with Canaris through the Japanese–German naval contacts of the 1920s, was now acting under the Chief of the *Abwehr* as an active intelligence operative (*Vertrauensmann*) in the area of Japanese affairs.

Japan–Germany negotiations involving Canaris and Ribbentrop

Early in 1935, Ribbentrop made approaches through Hack to Admiral Yamamoto Isoroku, who was in Europe to attend the London Naval Conference as Japan's chief representative. Ribbentrop quietly dispatched Hack to meet Yamamoto, invite him to Germany, and arrange for him to meet with Hitler. Hack was required to 'discreetly gauge Japan's attitude towards the possibility of a Japanese–German–Polish alliance against the Soviet Union'.¹⁰ However, this overture towards the Japanese Navy failed due to opposition from Matsudaira Tsuneo, the Japanese ambassador to Great Britain.¹¹ He feared that a meeting between Yamamoto and Hitler could be (over-)interpreted by Britain and France as a sign of Japan's rapprochement with Germany.

Hack's next opportunity came roughly six months later. This time the Japanese Army took the initiative through its military attaché to Germany, Ōshima Hiroshi. In September 1935, in the latter stages of talks regarding the provision of military gliders, Ōshima sounded out Hack on the possibility of a Japanese–German military treaty focusing on their common opposition to the Soviet Union. As this question referred to military matters, Hack had to consult with Canaris first. It was Canaris, not Ribbentrop, who, through frequent talks with Ōshima over the next two months, represented Germany in carrying forward negotiations on the details of the treaty.¹²

It was not until 15 November that year that Ribbentrop personally took part in these negotiations. Having secured Hitler's basic consent, Canaris

and Ribbentrop then set about writing a draft of the treaty. The preamble to ‘the general treaty’, which was to be announced publicly, provided for ‘mutual collaboration’ in the area of defence (*Abwehr*) against the Comintern threat through ‘exchange of information regarding the Comintern’s subversive activities both within and beyond each of the two signatories’ borders’, while a secret supplementary protocol provided for a certain degree of military co-operation against the USSR.¹³

With these developments in the background, Canaris formulated a basic plan of operations for military intelligence activities in February 1936. The plan covered a wide range of measures, including close collaboration in counterespionage among army, navy and air force; establishment of private firms as a cover for spy organizations; conferences of officials in charge of counterintelligence and counterespionage training sessions; and collaboration with foreign ministry representatives posted abroad. In connection with the intelligence network against the Soviet Union and the Comintern, the plan stated that: ‘By the means already initiated, “strategic activities”, that is, the expansion and strengthening of intelligence operations across a broad area, should be systematically advanced.’ Specifically, the aim was to increase the exchange of information with Hungary and Finland, re-establish information exchange with Italy, attempt to establish information exchange with Sweden, purchase information from Estonia, and conduct intelligence activities in the areas of Eastern Europe with a German minority population. With regard to Japan, Canaris stated that ‘exchange of information with Japan must be facilitated, with a focus on information concerning not just Russia but other countries as well’. It is not clear what ‘other countries’ meant, but the new policy was clearly indicative of Canaris’s high estimation of Japan’s capacity in intelligence gathering.¹⁴

However, negotiations between Japan and Germany had to be suspended due to political circumstances both at the international level and within the two countries.¹⁵ Hitler eventually allowed the negotiations to be renewed only after the outbreak of civil war in Spain in July 1936 – for him the signal that the threat of communism was at Europe’s door.¹⁶ The Anti-Comintern Pact was finally concluded on 25 November 1936. Its content was almost identical to the draft put forward by the German side in the previous year. The text of the Pact is as follows:

The German–Japanese Agreement against the Communist International

The Government of the German Reich and the Imperial Japanese Government, avowing that it is the aim of the Communist International, called Comintern, to destroy and overpower the existing States by all available means; convinced that the toleration of interference of the Communist International in the domestic affairs of the nations endangers not only their own tranquillity and social welfare but threatens world peace as a whole; have, in the desire to co-operate against the communist work of destruction, agreed as follows:

Article I

The High Contracting Parties agreed to keep each other informed concerning the activities of the Third International, to consult upon the necessary defence [*Abwehr*] measures and to execute these measures in close co-operation with each other.

Article II

The High Contracting Parties will mutually invite third Powers, whose domestic peace is threatened by the subversive work of the Communist International, to take defence [*Abwehr*] measures in the spirit of this agreement or to participate in the agreement.

Article III

The German and Japanese texts of this agreement are equally authentic. It becomes effective from the date of signature and is valid for a period of five years. The High Contracting Power will mutually agree, in good time prior to the expiration of this period, concerning the continued form of their co-operation.

Supplementary Protocol to the Agreement against the Communist International

Pursuant to this day's signature of the Agreement against the Communist International, the undersigned Plenipotentiaries have agreed as follows:

- (a) The competent authorities of the two High Contracting Parties will co-operate closely in the exchange of information regarding the activity of the Communist International and on the reconnaissance and defence [*Abwehr*] measures that shall be taken.
- (b) The competent authorities of the two High Contracting Parties will invoke severe measures, within the framework of existing laws, against those who, at home or abroad, directly or indirectly, serve the Communist International or further its subversive work.
- (c) To facilitate the co-operation of the competent authorities of the two High Contracting Parties as defined in (a) above, a permanent commission shall be established. This commission shall weigh and advise upon the necessary future defence [*Abwehr*] measures that shall be taken to combat the subversive activities of the Communist International.

(Saitō 1971: 115–17; translation by the author)

The Pact, which was essentially an agreement providing for collaboration between Japanese and German authorities in the areas of intelligence and subversive activities against the Soviet Union and the Comintern, clearly represented Canaris's political intentions.

The Ōshima–Canaris agreements

At the practical level, the co-operation in intelligence and subversive operations that was provided for in the Anti-Comintern Pact was to be carried out between the intelligence agencies of Japan and Germany. Specifically, this meant the *Abwehr* of the German Ministry of War and the Japanese Intelligence Bureau of the Army General Staff Office (*sanbō honbu dai-ni-bu*) as well as both countries' military attachés in Berlin and Tokyo.

Accordingly, on 11 May 1937, Canaris and Ōshima concluded two supplementary agreements to the Anti-Comintern Pact, one concerning Japanese–German exchange of information about the Soviet Union and the other concerning subversive activities against the Soviet Union. The text is as follows:

Supplementary Agreement on Japanese–German Exchange of Information about the Soviet Union:

1. Exchange of information shall be conducted as follows. The German War Ministry shall notify the army attaché of the Japanese embassy in Berlin of information the ministry has acquired. Japan shall hand over materials it has obtained to the army attaché of the German embassy in Tokyo and have a messenger immediately send the information to the War Ministry.
2. Exchange of information shall encompass the entire worthy, not yet analysed material obtained by the intelligence agencies of the two countries, especially that concerning army, navy, and munitions industry activities and that related to purely counterespionage operations.
3. The two countries may submit a written inquiry to each other at any time, and the agencies in charge shall work actively to answer the inquiry.
4. The information analysis agencies of the two countries shall assess the information received from the other country and convey its judgment of the value to that country.
5. Japanese and German military authorities shall consider to what extent they can exchange experience derived from intelligence operations.

Supplementary Agreement on Subversive Activities against the Soviet Union

1. Joint operations [in Soviet territories] shall include (a) strengthening of nationalist movements of all ethnic groups; (b) anti-communist propaganda; and (c) preparations for instigating revolutionary, terrorist and riotous activities at the outbreak of war.
2. The required preparations shall be made in respect to the entire Soviet Union, which shall therefore be divided into three spheres of

interest: (a) the region bordering Europe to the west, from Finland to Bulgaria, shall be Germany's primary sphere of interest; (b) the region bordering Europe to the southwest (Turkey and Iran) shall be a common sphere of interest to both signatories; and (c) the region bordering Asia to the east shall be Japan's primary sphere of interest.

3. The joint operations shall be conducted from 1937 to 1941, in accordance with the appended five-year plan.
4. The cost of operations in the common sphere of interest shall be borne in equal shares by both signatories.
5. Each signatory shall constantly keep the other fully informed of the subversive conditions in its primary sphere of interest.
6. The signatories shall not allow a third country to participate in their joint operations without the consent of the other.
7. The military authorities shall strive at harmonious collaboration with government authorities only within the purview of activity that requires such co-operation, as well as protect [Japanese and German] joint operations from intervention by non-responsible agencies.
8. In the event that either signatory is drawn into war against the Soviet Union, the other signatory shall use all possible means to strengthen its strategic operations in its primary sphere of interest and in the common sphere of interest, as defined in article 3.
9. At joint research meetings to be held annually, the signatories shall closely examine the achievements in all the regions and decide, in accordance with the five-year plan, on how the next year's operations shall be conducted in the common sphere of interest.

(Sanbō Honbu [without year]; translated by the author)

The attached five-year plan (see appendix to this chapter) states in detail that centres of information and subversive activities were planned, communication channels set up, and political exiles actively utilized in the common sphere of Japanese and German interest (Turkey, Iran and the Caucasus). Indeed, this agreement aimed in particular at revolutionary and terrorist activities to destabilize these regions.

The 1938 Agreement on Intelligence and Subversive Activities

Canaris and Ōshima subsequently worked on developing this co-operative relationship into formal written agreements between the military forces of the two nations. This effort was suspended, however, with the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in July 1937. In February 1938, a *coup d'état*-like transformation occurred in the power structure of 'Third Reich', as a result of which the pro-Japanese Ribbentrop followed pro-Chinese Kon-

stantin von Neurath as Foreign Minister, and General Wilhelm Keitel, a member of the pro-Japanese faction within the army, replaced the pro-Chinese General Werner von Blomberg as chief of the newly established High Command of the Armed Forces (OKW). In June the same year, Germany and China effectively broke off diplomatic relations, with the German military advisory delegation to China being recalled and the German ambassador to China Oscar Trautmann also returning to Berlin (Fox 1982: 291–331). With these developments, both domestic and international political conditions were finally in place to allow formal co-operation between the Japanese and German military forces. On 7 October 1938, General Keitel and military attaché Ōshima concluded a formal treaty in Berlin. The text is as follows:

Agreement between the Military Authorities of Japan and Germany Regarding Intelligence and Subversive Activities against the Soviet Union

In the spirit of the Anti-Comintern Pact concluded on 25 November 1936, the Imperial Japanese Army and the German War Ministry hereby agree:

1. to share military intelligence related to the Soviet Army and the Soviet Union;
2. to co-operate in carrying out defence [*Abwehr*] operations against the Soviet Union; and
3. to meet at least once a year to discuss ways to facilitate the information sharing and defence [*Abwehr*] operations mentioned in 1 and 2 as well as military matters within the scope of the Anti-Comintern Pact.

(Sanbō Honbu [without year]; translated by the author)

On the same day, Keitel and the Japanese naval attaché in Germany, Kojima Hideo, signed a naval treaty with essentially the same content, with the exception that the provision concerning defence operations against the Soviet Union was omitted. Furthermore, in order to incorporate into this naval agreement the Japanese wish to expand the targets of information exchange to include the United States, Great Britain and France, a supplementary treaty to that effect was signed in Tokyo in April 1939.¹⁷

With the conclusion of these agreements on intelligence and subversive activities, Ōshima's work as military attaché was done. On 29 October 1938, he was transferred to his new post as ambassador to Germany. Ōshima's next task was to push ahead with negotiations towards the Tripartite Pact (the so-called Anti-Comintern Pact Reinforcement Negotiations).

The background of the Ōshima–Canaris Agreements

The realities of Japanese–German co-operation based on the Ōshima–Canaris agreements are by their very nature difficult to ascertain. There is also a considerable lack of relevant historical documents, since many important Japanese and German records were destroyed during the last days of the war. It is possible, however, to piece together some of the facts. After the war, Kojima Hideo testified to the relationship between the office of the Japanese naval attaché to Germany and the *Abwehr* as follows:

Relations with the *Abwehr* under Canaris went very well. The Germans obtained information about Vladivostok and Russia, while Canaris provided the Japanese Navy with materials about the United States, particularly regarding American shipbuilding.

(Kojima Hideo in an interview with Bernd Martin
on 19 September 1969¹⁸)

What then, of the Japanese Army's relations with the *Abwehr*? Two aspects of the historical record are relevant here. One concerns the defection from the USSR of a Red Army General. Genrikh Samoilovich Lyushkov, the Director of the People's Committee of Domestic Matters (NKVD) in the Far East, crossed the Soviet border into Manchukuo on 13 June 1938 to seek asylum (Coox 1968; Nishino 1979). The Japanese authorities brought him to Tokyo, where he was interrogated by Major Kōtani Etsuo and other members of the Russia Section of the Second Bureau of the Army General Staff. In accordance with the Ōshima–Canaris agreement, the Japanese side invited Major Erwin Scholl, the acting German military attaché to attend the interrogation sessions in Tokyo. On 5 August, Colonel Greiling, a specialist in Russian affairs, arrived in Tokyo on a 'special assignment from the *Abwehr*'. Greiling and Scholl studied the transcripts of the interrogations and questioned Lyushkov directly on two occasions. According to Scholl, the interesting aspect at this juncture was the respectful approach of the Japanese. By this stage, the Japanese were treating Lyushkov not as a prisoner but as a general of an allied army, and were collaborating with him in 'preparations for the destruction of the Stalin regime'.¹⁹

After the interrogation, Greiling went to the trouble of extending his stay by two weeks, during which he visited the Japanese Army Headquarters in Korea and studied the events of a clash that had occurred in July 1938 at Changkufeng, a hilly area on the border between Manchukuo and Russian Siberia.²⁰ Scholl, too, went on a month-long inspection tour to Manchukuo in October 1938 to corroborate the Lyushkov information on the spot.²¹ In this way, based on the Ōshima–Canaris agreement, the Japanese General Staff Office provided tremendous help to the *Abwehr* in

terms of enabling it to obtain information about the Soviet Far East. Lyushkov continued collaborating with the Japanese General Staff in analysing Russian military affairs, but he was reportedly shot to death on 20 August 1945 in Dairen by a Kwantung Army officer, Captain Takeoka Yutaka, who was afraid the defector might be handed over to the USSR (Nishihara 1980: 128–32).

The other noteworthy aspect is the support the Japanese Army gave to the exiled Ukrainian anti-Soviet movement. At a reception given on 1 January 1939 to celebrate Canaris's 52nd birthday, Ōshima had 'a long and interesting talk' with Lieutenant Colonel Helmuth Groscurth, head of the *Abwehr's* Second Section (which was in charge of sabotage and subversive operations). Ōshima reportedly appeared 'beside himself with joy' to learn that contact had been re-established with the exiled Ukrainian anti-Soviet activist Pavlo Skoropadski.²²

A career soldier from a prominent Ukrainian aristocratic family, Skoropadski had once served as *aide-de-camp* to the last Tsar Nicholas II, and had been appointed head of the war department of the Ukrainian Central *Rada* (Soviet) government during the Ukrainian civil war of 1918 (Naka 1988). When the Ukraine was subsequently occupied by the German Army in spring 1918, Skoropadski became head of the pro-German puppet government, but fled to Germany when the occupation forces were driven out by the Red Army in December 1918, and he continued his anti-Soviet activities from there. Plans to utilize Skoropadski once again had begun to surface within the National Socialist regime from around January 1938. As the renewed ties between the Ukrainian and the German authorities became stronger, Ōshima associated himself with the pro-Skoropadski faction, as a fellow collaborator in anti-Soviet intelligence and subversive operations in the Far East (Zai Soren Nihon Taishikan 1938: 96)

The plan to assassinate Stalin

Ōshima initiated various subversive operations against the USSR, including the training of White Russians and Ukrainians at a terrorist training camp he established near Lake Falkensee on the outskirts of Berlin. This he did in co-operation with both the subversive activities section and the Russia Section of the Second Bureau of the Japanese Army General Staff. Anti-Soviet propaganda documents were also printed in Berlin in large volumes and spread throughout target regions, some being scattered in Russian territory via balloon, others being shipped into Romania or distributed to Crimea by motorboat across the Black Sea. Ōshima also advanced a plan for a *coup d'état* aiming at establishing an anti-Soviet government in Afghanistan, and for that purpose dispatched a Japanese military officer to infiltrate that country. The scheme was exposed in advance, however, and the Japanese officer was deported.²³

At the beginning of 1939, Ōshima and Canaris drew up and tried to carry out the most daring of all their collaborative operations: a plan to assassinate Stalin (Hiyama 1980). Mobilizing *Abwehr* units as well as Japanese military attachés stationed in Europe, the plan was reportedly for Russian terrorists to cross the Caucasus border into the Russian winter resort area of Sochi on the Black Sea and attack Stalin's villa there. The plot ended in failure, however, when the agents were shot dead while attempting to cross the border. On 31 January 1939, Ōshima gave *Reichsführer-SS* Heinrich Himmler the following partial account of this operation:

With the co-operation of the *Abwehr*, we have been carrying out subversive activities within Russia, via the Caucasus and Ukraine [...]. We also succeeded in sending ten Russians armed with bombs into Russia across the Caucasus border. These Russians were assigned to assassinate Stalin. We attempted to send many more Russians across the border as well, but they were all shot dead at the border.²⁴

(Nuremberg Document 2195–PS, Memorandum by Heinrich Himmler, 31 January 1939, in TMWC, 29: 327–8)

Based on the Anti-Comintern Pact and its supplementary agreements on intelligence and subversive activities, the plan to assassinate Stalin may be regarded as an act of state terrorism in a quite literal sense. The fact that the Japanese Ambassador Ōshima had supervised the action lends strong support to such an interpretation. In this respect, the assassination plot was one of the logical consequences of the Anti-Comintern Pact.

The German–Soviet Nonaggression Pact and its repercussions

With the signing of the Hitler–Stalin Pact in August 1939, Japanese–German co-operation in the area of intelligence and subversive operations came to a temporary halt. In his diary, Helmuth Groscurth expressed sympathy for the deep shock and disappointment this turn of events must have caused Ōshima and the office of the Japanese military attaché in Berlin.

Ōshima himself felt that the German–Soviet Pact left him no choice but to resign from his post. At a farewell gathering hosted by Canaris before the ambassador's return to Japan, Ōshima criticized 'the excesses of German foreign policy' and 'sternly warned of the threat of the Soviet Union' (Groscurth 1970: entry 20 October 1939). His words, however, were to have no effect.

Lieutenant Colonel Manaki Takanobu of the office of the military attaché expressed to Groscurth his 'severe displeasure' at the German–Soviet Nonaggression Pact, and noted that 'the Anti-Communist Pact had lost its validity'. This was undoubtedly the heartfelt sentiment of the Japanese office of the military attaché at the time. Moreover, this

reference to ‘the Anti-Communist Pact’ denoted not only the Anti-Comintern Pact itself as a purely ideological agreement, but also the entire historical background against which the pact was concluded as an expression of practical co-operation in information exchange, joint intelligence, and subversive operations against the USSR and the Comintern (Groscurth 1970: entry 24 August 1939).

Conclusion

In this chapter, the origins of the Berlin–Tokyo Axis have not been examined according to the conventional Ribbentrop-centric view, but rather from the perspective of the co-operative relationship established between the Japanese and German armies in the areas of intelligence and subversive operations. It may be concluded from this analysis that the essence of the Berlin–Tokyo Axis consisted in the close co-operative ties fostered between the *Abwehr* of the German War Ministry and the Second Bureau of Japan’s Army General Staff (as well as the office of the Japanese military attaché in Germany). At the personal level the close contact between Wilhelm W. Canaris, as Chief of the *Abwehr*, and Ōshima Hiroshi, first as military attaché and later as Japanese ambassador, played an important role.

Their relationship has remained largely unknown for a number of reasons. First, because Canaris was arrested in 1944 and executed for his involvement in the German resistance movement just before Germany’s surrender, and many documents relating to him, including his diary, were destroyed or suppressed. This loss was amplified by the systematic destruction of Japanese and German military intelligence documents. Another reason is the silence maintained by the people involved. Up to the time of his execution at the Nuremberg war crimes trials, Ribbentrop refused to speak about his previous close relationship with Canaris, who he saw as a traitor to the *Führer*. At the Tokyo trials, Ōshima, for his own protection, remained silent about the Stalin assassination plot and other aspects of his collaboration with the Chief of the *Abwehr*.²⁵ Even after his release from Sugamo prison in December 1955, Ōshima for the most part refused to talk about his co-operation with Canaris in intelligence exchange and subversive operations, let alone in connection with the Tripartite Pact. Third, in early post-war scholarship on German history, studies of National Socialist foreign policy were dominated by a focus on Hitler and Ribbentrop,²⁶ and there was a strong tendency to neglect the activities of other relevant figures, such as Canaris.

Given these circumstances, many aspects of the origins of the Berlin–Tokyo Axis remain unclear. As the present chapter has made clear, however, the Anti-Comintern Pact was in every respect created and implemented through the logic of military intelligence.

Appendix

Five-year plan

	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941
Turkey	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 establish relations with and bribe political leaders 2 establish contacts with the army 3 establish military sites on the border (camouflaged merchants) 4 start anti-Soviet propaganda 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 intensify the activities of the previous year 2 political manoeuvres through the 'Bureau Ribbentrop' to make the Turkish government stand on the side of the anti-Soviet front 3 train possible invaders 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 intensify the activities of the previous years 2 set up radio communication 3 examine the possibility of opening an airport 4 start to educate military cadre 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 intensify the activities of the previous years 2 examine and prepare air attacks on major military objects 3 bring in weapons 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 intensify the activities of the previous years 2 complete military preparations 3 build up a Caucasian Army
Iran	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 examine the political and military situation 2 establish contacts with the army 3 intensify economic relations between Iran and anti-Soviet powers through 'Bureau Ribbentrop' 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 intensify the activities of the previous year 2 build military sites on the border 3 train possible invaders 4 educate agents 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 intensify the activities of the previous years 2 build up connections across the Caspian Sea by steamers 3 set up radio communication between Caucasus and Iran 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 intensify the activities of the previous years 2 examine and prepare air attacks on major military objects 3 bring in weapons 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 intensify the activities of the previous years

Caucasus	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 research the political and military situation 1 intensify the activities of the previous year 2 continue and intensify research 3 to start propaganda 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 intensify the activities of the previous years 2 organize cells along the pipeline 3 build up Bakū–Grosnyj–Tibuli–Batumi connections between the Red Army and Caucasian guerrilla 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 intensify the activities of the previous years 2 preparation for outbreak of general riot 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 same as in previous years
European countries	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 political manoeuvres toward neighbouring countries, esp. Bulgaria and Romania, through 'Bureau Ribbentrop' 2 educate the Caucasian Army 3 pay attention to British, Italian and Polish political manoeuvres 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 intensify the activities of the previous years 2 build sites (storehouses) in the East Mediterranean 3 start training cadre in order to build up a Caucasian Army 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 intensify the activities of the previous years 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 same as in previous years
Emigrants	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 support nationalist movements: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a support of magazine 'Caucasus' b publish in many languages c propaganda in the Caucasus and elsewhere 2 pay attention to the 'Promite' group 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 intensify the activities of the previous years 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 same as in previous years 2 complete military preparations 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 same as in previous years 2 complete military preparations

Source: Bōeichō Bōeikenkyūjo Shokan Bunko Miyazaki 32.

Notes

- 1 See Katō's Diary, entries 1 January–31 March 1920, in *Shin gendaishi shiryō*, 5, 1994: 34–40.
- 2 Sander-Nagashima (1998); Chapman (1984); NHK (1987a); Bōeichō (1979). See also Captain Schüssler (1937) 'Der Kampf der deutschen Marine gegen Versailles 1919–1935', Nuremberg Document 156–C, in TMWC, 34: 530–607.
- 3 Ibid.: 565–6; NHK 1987a: 95–9.
- 4 Sanbō Honbu 2001. On Hack's role in Japanese–German relations from the end of World War I to the end of World War II, see Ōki 1995.
- 5 Dr Hack to Steffen, 13 June 1923, in BA-MA, Case 554.
- 6 BA-MA, RM 20/16. For this material, I am indebted to B.J. Sander-Nagashima of the Military History Research Institute in Potsdam.
- 7 Report by Canaris, 30 September 1924. According to Canaris, Councillor Oskar Trautmann of the German Embassy in Tokyo had not been informed of Canaris's visit beforehand and showed no interest in Canaris's pro-Japanese ideas. Trautmann later became German ambassador to China and was actively opposed to concluding the Anti-Comintern Pact. Trautmann to the Ministerial Director Hans Dieckhoff, 10 June 1936, in ADAP, Series C, vol. 5–2, no. 363: 562–6.
- 8 Höhne 1976: 233–4; Krebs 1984, vol. 1: 54–6. Report by Canaris on a conversation with Italian Chief of Intelligence, General Mario Poatta, held in Gardone on 16–17 September, in PAAA, Geheimakten II FM 11, Militär-Politik, vol. 2.
- 9 Haushofer to Ribbentrop, 24 June 1935, in Jacobsen 1979, vol. 2, Doc. 117. For an introduction to Haushofer's role regarding Japanese–German relations, see C.W. Spang's contribution in this volume (the editors).
- 10 Report by Hack, 25 September 1935, in Friedrich Hack's private papers. For this material, I am indebted to Professor Bernd Martin of Freiburg University and to the NHK 'Dokumento Shōwa' staff. See also: Martin 1978: 454–70.
- 11 Report by Canaris, 12 November 1935, in MA, RM11/2, v. Case 3/2.
- 12 Report by Hack, 11 October 1935, in Hack papers.
- 13 Report by Hack, 15 November 1935; Memorandum by Hack, 30 November 1935, in Hack papers. Hermann von Raumer, who was in charge of Far Eastern Affairs in Ribbentrop's *Dienststelle*, seems to have influenced the 'Anti-Comintern' character of the German–Japanese Pact. See von Raumer 1935–8: 7–9.
- 14 'Richtlinien für die Arbeit 1936 im geh[eimen] Meldedienst der drei Wehrmachtsteile', in PAAA, Abt. II F, Militärische Nachrichten – geheim, vol. 3.
- 15 For a more detailed analysis of the decision-making process, see Tajima 1997: 64–144.
- 16 On the German intervention in the Spanish Civil War analysed from the Hitler-centric view, see H.-H. Abendroth (1973) *Hitler in der spanischen Arena*, Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh. For a 'neo-revisionist' standpoint, see W. Schieder (1978), 'Spanischer Bürgerkrieg und Vierjahresplan. Zur Struktur nationalsozialistischer Aussenpolitik', in W. Michalka (ed.) *Nationalsozialistische Aussenpolitik*, Darmstadt: WBG. See also N. Tajima (1990) 'Supein naisen to doitsu no gunji kainyū', in Supein Shi Gakkai (ed.) *Supein Naisen to Kokusai Seiji*, Tokyo: Sairyū-sha, 123–49. On Canaris's active role in the Spanish Civil War, see A. Viñas (1974), *La Alemania nazi y el 18 de julio. Antecedentes de la intervención alemana en la guerra civil española*, Madrid: Alianza Editorial.
- 17 Refer to a 1 June 1938 report by Japanese Naval Attaché Kojima Hideo, on the negotiations with the German Navy: 'Doitsu Gunbu tonō Kōshō ni kansuru Hōkoku', in *Shōwa Shakai Keizai Shiryō Shūsei*, vol. 6: 82–3, as well as Marine Dokument 2/Skl 3739/39 gKds, 25 May 1939, in BA-MA, RM7/v. Case 553.

- 18 I am indebted to Professor Martin of Freiburg University for the transcript. The interview was conducted in German. English translation by the author.
- 19 Scholl to Tippelskirch, 10 August 1938; Matzky to Tippelskirch, 1 November 1938, in BA-MA, RH2/v.2939; *Gendaishi Shiryō* (1962), vol. 1: 265–6.
- 20 Scholl to Tippelskirch, 30 August 1938, in BA-MA, RH2/v.2939. On the Changkufeng Incident, see Coox 1977.
- 21 Matzky to Tippelskirch, 28 November 1938, in BA-MA, RH2/v.2939.
- 22 Entry 1 January 1939, in Helmuth Groscurth 1970: 164. On relations between Germany and Skoropadski see Fischer 1961: chapter 20.
- 23 Interrogation of General Ōshima, 5 March 1946 (International Prosecution Section 1993: 306–16).
- 24 See Interrogation of General Ōshima Hiroshi, 5 March 1946 (International Prosecution Section 1993: 315–16). Shown the document written by Himmler, Ōshima stated that: ‘it may be written that way there, but I actually had nothing to do with it myself. Further, the date of this document, January 31, 1939, is some three months after I became Ambassador and I would have had no connection with the matters that you are now bringing up. That is very strange. Very, very strange. I have absolutely no recollection of having talked over any such matters with Himmler. However forgetful I may be, I would remember if I had sent ten men across the border.’ Carl Boyd 1980: 61 states that: ‘If Ōshima were boastful concerning the details of his attempts to have Stalin assassinated, the idea, nonetheless, was far from bizarre from the perspective of both this Japanese general and the *Gestapo* chief’; ‘Ōshima’s denial cannot be accepted, for the gist of several paragraphs is partially substantiated by other evidence’.
- 25 Interrogation of General Ōshima, 5 March 1946 (International Prosecution Section 1993: 315–16).
- 26 For a ‘Hitler-centric’ approach, see A. Hillgruber (1965), *Hitlers Strategie. Politik und Kriegführung 1940–1941*, Munich: Bernard & Graeve; E. Jäckel (1969) *Hitlers Weltanschauung*, Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt; K. Hildebrand (1971) *Deutsche Aussenpolitik 1933–1945*, Stuttgart: Kohlhammer; K. Hildebrand (1979) *Das Dritte Reich*, Munich: Oldenbourg. For a critique of the Hitler-centric approach, see W. Schieder (1978) ‘Spanischer Bürgerkrieg und Vierjahresplan. Zur Struktur nationalsozialistischer Aussenpolitik’, in W. Michalka (ed.) *Nationalsozialistische Aussenpolitik*, Darmstadt: WBG; J. Radkau (1976) ‘Entscheidungsprozesse und Entscheidungsdefizite in der deutschen Aussenwirtschaftspolitik 1933–1940’, in *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 1: 33–65; A. Kube (1986) *Pour le mérite und Hakenkreuz. Hermann Göring im Dritten Reich*, Munich: Oldenbourg; Tajima (1992, 1997, 1999).
- 27 In some of his endnotes (particularly No. 16 and 27), N. Tajima offers an overview of the various academic interpretations of the Spanish Civil War, the Nazi system in general, etc. As many of these works are not directly related to the topic of his contribution, readers should be aware that some of these titles do not appear in his bibliography (the editors).
- 28 N. Tajima has presented the Japanese original of the five-year plan as the appendix to his book (the editors).

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10 The German Nazi Party

A model for Japan's 'New Order' 1940–1?

Gerhard Krebs

Introduction

The establishment of a single-party system in Japan in October 1940 has been seen as an imitation of the Fascist and Nazi dictatorships in Europe (Shigemitsu 1958: 199). Later studies, however, have come to the conclusion that after a longer struggle the organization had become rather toothless and did not change Japan's power structure very much (Akagi 1984; Berger 1977; Itō 1983). It is the aim of this chapter to examine which individuals and groups within the movement pressing for single-party rule in Japan followed either the German or the Italian model, and what kind of political orientation finally prevailed.

The beginning of a single-party movement

In the early 1930s in Japan and Germany, the multi-party system and parliamentarism were under permanent attack from radical groups and faced a serious crisis. In Japan, no party cabinet was installed from the time of the assassination of Prime Minister Inukai Tsuyoshi in May 1932 until the end of World War II although some party politicians were able to obtain ministerial positions in most of the governments in power during this period.

Riding on the wave of nationalistic euphoria after the Manchurian incident, the more radical of the two main parties, the *Rikken Seiyūkai* (Friends of Constitutional Government Association), won a tremendous victory over its rival, the *Rikken Minseitō* (Constitutional Democratic Party) in February 1932, winning 301 seats in the Diet against the *Minseitō*'s 174, and thus taking over the government. Mori Kaku, the secretary general of the *Seiyūkai* and cabinet secretary under Prime Minister Inukai was very active in working towards a more nationalistic policy and a closer alignment with the military. He not only opposed any armament restrictions for the navy, but also promoted the expansion into Manchuria and northern China. It was Mori who was the driving force behind Japan's withdrawal from the League of Nations, announced in

1933. After Inukai's assassination, Mori urged – with the support of other prominent members of the *Seiyūkai*, such as Kuhara Fusanosuke, as well as of the *Minseitō*, such as Adachi Kenzō – the building of a strong coalition government of the two main parties under Baron Hiranuma Kiichirō. Mori finally suggested the establishment of a single party led by Hiranuma (Kido 1966, 1: 142; Masuda 1993; Yamaura 1940: 788, 791), who was not a party member, but had spearheaded the fight against liberalism as the president of the nationalistic society *Kokuhonsha* (National Foundation Society), as minister of justice and as vice president of the Privy Council, for more than a decade. The Emperor, however, refused to appoint Hiranuma as prime minister, arguing that he was close to fascism (Harada 1950, 2: 288). Instead, a cabinet of 'national unity' was built by retired Admiral Saitō Makoto, who had a reputation as being 'moderate'. Mori now intensified his campaign for the creation of a single party, but died in 1932 without seeing his idea realized. However, like other aspects of his radical policy, it was to materialize, albeit after a certain delay.

After 1932, a number of politicians left the larger parties and founded their own political groups: the *Kokumin Dōmei* (People's Alliance) under Adachi Kenzō split off from the *Minseitō* in 1932, from which again the *Tōhōkai* (Association of the East) under Nakano Seigō separated in 1936, while the *Seiyūkai* lost its most radical members to the newly created *Shōwakai* (Shōwa Association) in 1935. These nationalistic parties tried to strengthen party influence again by closely associating themselves with the Japanese Army and with radicals among the younger bureaucracy. They developed a kind of social-nationalist – called reformist (*kakushin*) – ideology, which consisted of three main political ideas: an Asian bloc, a state-controlled economy and an authoritarian government.

The industrialist Kuhara Fusanosuke, the leader of a *Seiyūkai* faction, also called for the formation of a single party which would include the new *Kokumin Dōmei* in 1932, perhaps because he had lost the struggle for party leadership to Suzuki Kisaburō (Kuhara 1933; Kuhara denki 1970: 329–50, 372–98, 434–40; Oku 1999 and 2000). Another *Seiyūkai* member, Matsuoka Yōsuke, who as special envoy to Geneva had led his country out of the League of Nations, was to become foreign minister in 1940. After his return from Switzerland, he used his newly gained popularity to start a spectacular ideological campaign. He gave up his seat in the Diet, left the *Seiyūkai* and founded the 'League for the dissolution of the political parties' (*seitō kaishō renmei*), issuing the periodical *Shōwa Ishin* (Shōwa Restoration) as its organ.¹ In his speeches he often praised Hitler and Mussolini as models (Matsuoka 1933: 152–9; Matsuoka denki 1974: 555–8; Mori 1936: 27–30), but on other occasions sharply criticized Germany's National Socialism (Matsuoka 1933: 22) and rejected the fascist system for Japan (Matsuoka 1934: 444; Matsuoka denki 1974: 554–8, 607–8), even at a time when he openly pleaded for an alliance with Berlin (Matsuoka 1938b: 18). In August 1935, Matsuoka suddenly dissolved his 'League' and took

over the more lucrative position of president of the state-owned Southern Manchurian Railway Company.

In the mid-1930s, far-reaching changes occurred in the army leadership. The so-called *kōdō* (Imperial Way) faction around the generals Araki Sadao and Mazaki Jinzaburō – which proclaimed traditional Japanese values and with whom Hiranuma had many ideological and personal links – was replaced by the *Tōsei* (Control) faction. This change led to an attempted *coup d'état* by young officers in February 1936. Its failure frustrated the hopes of the *kōdō* faction to regain influence in the army and in national politics. Hiranuma represented an old-fashioned reactionary nationalism, while the ‘reformist’ ideas of the new rising star Prince Konoe Fumimaro, who was the head of the most prestigious noble family and at this time president of the House of Peers, were similar to those of the now dominant *Tōsei* faction. They aimed at a state-controlled economy and large-scale industrialization to enable the creation of a ‘highly organized national defence state’ (*kōdo kokubō kokka*) through large-scale rearmament and the founding of a mass party. In many ways Manchukuo, where the Japanese Kwantung Army was the *de facto* ruler and where a kind of single party (the *Kyōwakai*, or Harmony Association) existed, became a model.

These endeavours to transform Japan were in line with Tokyo’s diplomatic reorientation. In November 1936, the Anti-Comintern Pact, based on a perception of the Soviet Union as a common enemy, was concluded with Germany. From now on many observers assumed – and many feared – that Japan would follow the totalitarian model of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy.² In 1937, the army won a great success when the Emperor ordered the establishment of a cabinet under General Hayashi Senjūrō. The new prime minister included representatives of the established parties in his cabinet: Nagai Ryūtarō of the *Minseitō* as Communication Minister and Nakajima Chikuhei of the *Seiyūkai* as Railway Minister. Both were ‘reformist’ faction leaders who supported the army’s plans, and they soon called for the founding of a ‘new party’ under Konoe. After Hayashi resigned due to frictions with the Diet, Konoe finally became prime minister in June 1937.

The first Konoe cabinet and Hiranuma’s reverse course

Japan soon faced a serious political, economic and military crisis due to the war against China, which broke out in July 1937. The war facilitated the restructuring of Japan, since the patriotic mood ended the opposition against a new political structure. Since 1934, several government agencies had been created which, in contradiction to their official designations, were mainly under the influence of the army and reformist bureaucrats. In October 1937, Konoe created the most powerful of these, the Cabinet Planning Board (*kikaku-in*), endowing it with ministerial rank, to formu-

late plans for organizing Japan's wartime economy. In spring 1938, the Law for National Economic Mobilization (*kokka sōdōinhō*) and the Law for the Control of Electric Power (*denryoku kanrihō*) were promulgated. German Ambassador Herbert von Dirksen welcomed the strengthening of the reformist movement with its anti-capitalist character and nationalist-racist self-confidence, which he thought to be influenced by Nazi Germany at the expense of liberal Anglo-American ideas.³

To silence the remaining opposition against his policy, in December 1937 Konoe had chosen the inactive Admiral Suetsugu Nobumasa, a leading right-wing activist with extremely anti-liberal and anti-British attitudes, as new home minister. Suetsugu exerted great influence on national policy, to an extent unusual for a home minister. Within days of taking office, he ordered action against left-wing organizations and individuals, many of whom were apprehended (*Tokkō Gaiji Geppō*, Dec. 1937: 137–8; Totten 1966: 99–101). At about the same time, he started to promote the idea of the dissolution of all existing parties and the foundation of a single national party (*ikkoku ittō*). He used right-wing organizations to intimidate not only left-leaning groups, but also the established parties, the *Minseitō* and *Seiyūkai*, and did not hesitate to employ violence (Berger 1977: 147–8).

Many reformists thought that Japan would share a common destiny (*Schicksalsgemeinschaft*) with Germany and Italy, not only because the three powers were considered as 'have-nots' facing the same adversaries, but also because they felt an ideological intimacy. The main activists included the following: Home Minister Suetsugu and leaders of the extreme right-wing organizations, small right-wing parties like the *Tōhōkai*, the *Kokumin Dōmei*, the *Shōwakai* and the *Dai-Nihon Seinentō* (Young Men's Party of Greater Japan), Konoe's personal friends like Arima Yoriyasu, Gotō Fumio and Gotō Ryūnosuke, the prince's brain trusts the Shōwa Research Association (*Shōwa Kenkyūkai*) and the Research Association for National Policy (*Kokusaku Kenkyūkai*), minority factions of the two big parties,⁴ reformist bureaucrats, among them Shiratori Toshio from the foreign ministry and finally the *Shakai Minshūtō* (Socialist Mass Party), which under the influence of the war with China had mutated into a nationalist group, putting the party in danger of splitting up.

In 1938, the leaders of the different factions within the large parties also showed some interest in joining the movement. Among them were the right-wing members of the *Seiyūkai* under Kuhara and the party's reformist faction under Nakajima Ryūtarō as well as the Nagai Ryūtarō faction of the *Minseitō*. It must be emphasized that at this point the Nipponistic (*Nihonshugi uyoku*) or Idealistic Right (*kannen* or *seishin uyoku*) under Hiranuma and the former *kōdō* generals who were rivals of the Reformist Right (*kakushin uyoku*) also advocated a dissolution of the political parties and the formation of a 'new structure' (*shintaisei*) (Kido

1966, 2: 676–8; Harada 1952, 7: 152, 162, 165, 169–70). They were, however, of the opinion that this should not have the character of a political party, but rather be organized as an instrument of propaganda to mobilize the public against Communism.

The groups that sought to follow the Nazi pattern of totalitarianism called at the same time for the conclusion of a military alliance with Germany and Italy. Negotiations had been held toward this end since October 1938, but no progress had been made due to the demand of the European Fascist powers to direct the alliance not only against the Soviet Union but also against England and France. In Japan, only the army agreed to this proposal. Another group that supported the pro-German orientation, and had done so since the outbreak of the war with China, was the *Shakai Minshūtō* (*Tokkō Gaiji Geppō*, Oct. 1937: 4–5; Nov. 1937: 2, 84–5), which had 37 seats in the Diet. To avoid a rift between left-leaning and right-leaning members, as well as due to long-held party principles, the *Shakai Minshūtō* soon called for the conclusion of a German–Soviet–Japanese treaty of nonaggression (*Shisō Geppō*, No. 43, Jan. 1938: 28). Nevertheless, when Diet member Nishio Suehiro named Stalin alongside Mussolini and Hitler as role models for Japanese politicians in March 1938 during the struggle over the Law for National Economic Mobilization, the only thing that shocked his colleagues was the inclusion of the Soviet dictator. As a consequence, Nishio had to give up his seat (*Shisō Geppō*, No. 54, Dec. 1938: 4; *Tokkō Gaiji Geppō*, March 1938: 78–85). The party's pro-Nazi wing was very much interested in the economic progress of Germany and contacted the Nazi organization *Deutsche Arbeitsfront*, a compulsory organization incorporating labourers and employers (*Tokkō gaiji geppō*, Sept. 1937: 85–6; Totten 1966: 215–16). A leading figure in this group, Kamei Kan'ichirō, went to Berlin to study the German economy, and was received by Hitler and Foreign Minister Ribbentrop.⁵ Impressed by the Nazi ideology (Kamei 1938), Kamei in turn influenced his old friend Asō Hisashi, secretary general of the *Shakai Minshūtō*. More and more the party called for 'totalitarianism' as a guiding principle for Japan and as the basis of the future single party (*Shisō Geppō* No. 54, Dec. 1938: 96; *Tokkō Geppō*, Nov. 1938: 177, 184).

Another right-wing party with socialist leanings was the small *Tōhokai* with 12 deputies in the Diet. Since the mid-1930s, its leader, Nakano Seigō, was so fascinated by European fascism that the Japanese press called him the 'Japanese Hitler' (Inomata 1964: 331). When he left for a visit to Europe in November 1937, there was a flurry of propaganda announcing that he would be visiting Hitler and Mussolini, carrying letters of recommendation from Prime Minister Konoé (Nakano 1938: 91). Although Nakano did not have any difficulty gaining an audience with Mussolini, the German government hesitated to grant him access to Hitler, given their perception of his lack of influence as merely the leader of a small party. At last, after the intervention of Military Attaché Ōshima Hiroshi, he was

received by Hitler and others in February 1938.⁶ This obviously granted Nakano political weight in Japan, where he reported not only to Prince Konoe but also to the chief of the general staff, Prince Kan'in (Inomata 1964: 391). He gave lectures all over Japan, including some for army and navy officers, praising the fascist system, warning against 'Jewish capitalism' and demanding a military alliance with Germany and Italy. Furthermore, he called for a state-controlled economy and the formation of a 'new party' (Inomata 1964: 377, 395, 434–5, 499–509; Nagai 1978: 614–15; Naimushō 1972, 11: 287; Nakano 1938: 47–105, 147–65).

Many pro-fascist groups, such as the *Shakai Taishūtō* (Asō 1958: 476–7), the *Tōhōkai* and the *Dai-Nihon Seinentō*, introduced uniforms, symbols or flags for their own members or the members of their youth organizations similar to those in Germany, and also arranged marches. The *Dai-Nihon Seinentō* was led by Colonel Hashimoto, who was very much influenced by the Italian and German model and called for an anti-British alliance with the European Axis powers (Kōan Chōsachō 1964, 2: 785; Naimushō 1972, 10: 283–4 and 11: 243). Hashimoto had a long record as an activist in ultranationalist organizations and had been involved in *coup d'état* attempts. In December 1937, he was discharged from army service for an attack on a British gunboat in China. The radicals also had sympathizers in the foreign ministry, first of all Shiratori Toshio, who was ambassador to Italy in 1938–9. Together with the new ambassador to Berlin, Ōshima Hiroshi, he pressed for the conclusion of a military alliance with Rome and Berlin without any restrictions. He admired the totalitarian systems in Europe and became a very radical anti-Semite. Within the two large parties, only the Kuhara faction of the Seiyūkai, which counted about 50 members, uttered sympathies for a totalitarian state structure. Kuhara himself denounced individualism and democracy, while emphasizing the success of totalitarian systems like those of Hitler and Mussolini. He believed that a single party would also be appropriate for Japan, the more so, he suggested, because Japan had possessed a totalitarian system since ancient times (Kuhara 1938).

The army remained passive, although the one-party movement fitted its interests. When Konoe resigned in January 1939, Hiranuma took over the position of prime minister. Since the previous year, the Baron had vehemently refused the idea of founding a united single party, so that for a certain period the movement lost momentum. Due to his deep-rooted anti-communism, Hiranuma was shocked that many single-party activists harboured socialist ideas and sympathized with the Soviet Union. He even ended his decade-long fight against the political parties and gave ministries to two mainstream politicians. In the Diet, he openly rejected 'totalitarianism developed in the West' as incompatible with Japan's national polity (*kokutai*), the unique character of the nation with the divine emperor at the top (Yokusan 1954: 25). He feared that the whole system of Japan would be changed, finally resulting in revolution.

Hiranuma did not have to wait long for an offensive by reformist circles in which the prime minister's support for the political status quo was openly criticized (Naimushō 1972, 11: 211; Tokkō Geppō, Jan. 1939: 1–2). The *Tōhōkai* was in the vanguard, and party president Nakano Seigō refuted the opinion that national socialism and fascism would be incompatible with Japan's political structure. He did not see essential differences between Japanese thought and the concept of the state in the European Axis powers (Kōan Chōsachō 1965, 3–2: 1–11, 28–9; Naimushō 1972, 11: 211–12, 285–90; Tokkō Geppō, Jan. 1939: 62–4, 136–42).⁷ All Japan would need was a man like Hitler or Mussolini (Kōen No. 425, 20 Feb. 1939: 6). A similar stand was taken by the small *Nihon Kakushintō* (Japan Reformist Party), which had four members in the Diet and was led by Akamatsu Katsumaro, who had originally been in the communist camp (Kōan Chōsachō 1965, 3–2: 21–8; Naimushō 1972, 10: 315–22 and 11: 212, 259), as well as by the *Shakai Taishūtō*, founded in July 1932 by the merger of the *Shakai Minshūtō* and the *Zenkoku Rōnō Taishūtō* (National Labour Farmer Masses' Party) (Tokkō Geppō, Jan. 1939: 75–81).

In February 1939, the *Shakai Taishūtō* and the *Tōhōkai* announced that they would merge. Obviously intending to send a signal to revive the single-party movement, they urged the transformation of Japan into a totalitarian state and a military alliance with Germany and Italy (Kōan Chōsachō 1965, 3–2: 1–11; Naimushō 1972, 11: 362–7). Within two weeks, however, the project was abandoned. No other group had joined it, the decision to merge had split the socialists and there was no unanimity as to who should be party president (Naimushō 1972, 11: 455). Against this background, it was the process of disintegration within the *Seiyūkai* that strengthened the one-party idea. Kuhara and Nakajima, as heads of powerful factions, urged Konoe to take over the leadership of the movement again. Both were industrialists and could expect profits from an enlarged military mobilization (Harada 1952, 7: 313; Shisō Shiryō Panfuretto, Special No. 1, June 1939: 132–46). Konoe, however, remained passive, despite the pressure from the reformist camp (Harada 1952, 7: 89–91).

Other nationalistic organizations like the *Dai Nihon Seinentō* also continued to push for the foundation of a powerful new party. At the same time, they organized anti-British demonstrations to further the negotiations for a military alliance with the European Axis powers, which had come to a standstill.⁸ Right-wing groups such as the *Shakai Taishūtō* occasionally even expressed their hope that the Soviet Union could be induced to confront England and to reach an understanding with Japan (Hashimoto 1939: 73). Their agitation was often mixed with anti-Semitic rhetoric. The ground was therefore well prepared within the reformist camp when Germany and the Soviet Union concluded a non-aggression treaty on 23 August 1939. The Japanese government was shocked, and the ongoing alliance negotiations between Berlin and Tokyo ended abruptly.

With its policy gone to pieces, the Hiranuma cabinet resigned, although the Baron himself must have felt vindicated to some extent because the developments in Europe confirmed his long-standing conviction that there was a close relationship between fascism and communism. Consequently, Japanese–German relations froze, leading also to a certain revival of liberal and parliamentary currents.

At the same time, however, not only in the reformist camp but also in the army – which had lost a border war against the USSR at Nomonhan in summer 1939 – the idea of an understanding with Moscow and even the formation of a bloc with the Axis powers including the Soviet Union began to appear more attractive. Among the propagandists for this course, who were in frequent contact with other nationalistic organizations, were the above-mentioned Shiratori Toshio⁹ and Nakano Seigō, whose interest in a Japanese–German–Russian entente went back as far as World War I and had survived the Russian revolution (Kisaka 1973; Kōan Chōsachō 1965, 3–2: 192–4; Shisō Shiryō Panfuretto, Special No. 3, Aug. 1939: 332).

The second Konoe cabinet and the establishment of a 'new order'

In May and June 1940 with Germany's victories over the Netherlands and France, the international situation changed rapidly and even Great Britain seemed to be on the brink of defeat. These developments had significant repercussions in Japan, which hoped for a chance to take over the European colonies in Southeast Asia. The cabinet under Admiral Yonai Mitsumasa resigned in July 1940, giving way to the second cabinet under Prince Konoe. Several days before assuming office, the four most important members of the future government¹⁰ decided on the course to be taken. They drafted guidelines, which were approved in a cabinet meeting on 26 July as 'foundations of the national policy' (*kihon kokusaku yōkō*). Among the items mentioned were the strengthening of the war economy system, the establishment of a 'new order' in Greater East Asia (*daitōa shinchitsujo*), which would include the colonies of the European powers, and the attempt to seek a rapprochement with the Axis powers and a treaty of non-aggression with the USSR. A domestic 'new order' was another aspect of their programme. They sought the foundation of a new 'organization' to unite the whole population and to strengthen the political leadership (Nihon kokusai seiji gakkai 1963: 319–20). Since in many respects the idea was to reconstruct Japan along the lines of army-controlled Manchukuo, it is not surprising that many of the cabinet members who were chosen had a long record of engagement in Manchuria.

Only one day after his appointment as prime minister on 22 July 1940, Konoe attacked the political parties in a radio address designed to speed their dissolution. They were, in his words, selfish, power seeking and un-Japanese, influenced by ideologies like liberalism, democracy and socialism.

Konoe announced the establishment of a new political structure to enable all Japanese to support the throne, to reform the economic system, and to establish a new world order extending Japanese influence not only to China and Manchuria but also to Southeast Asia (Contemporary Japan, Aug. 1940: 1079–81).

The reformist forces saw Germany's political system as the key to its military successes; they considered it superior to democracy, which they regarded as weak (Shiratori 1940a: 88). The energetic Matsuoka Yōsuke, now Foreign Minister, declared in an interview with American journalists that in the battle between democracy and totalitarianism the latter would without question win and would control the world. According to Matsuoka, the Japanese state was better adapted than any other to achieve (non-coercive) unification of the nation under a fascist system, because of Japan's unique polity, which had an emperor at its head. The public demand for a single-party system showed that the time was ripe as he, Matsuoka, had already been claiming six years before. At that time, his had been a voice crying in the wilderness and people had thought him mad.¹¹ Former ambassador to Rome and now adviser to the foreign ministry Shiratori Toshio was another important figure in the push for a single party. He maintained that the strength of the three totalitarian nations, Germany, Italy and Japan, in creating a new world order had its foundation in their rejection of individualism and democracy. The Nazi and the Fascist movements in Europe were spreading rapidly, and their concepts would penetrate the whole world (Shiratori 1940b). Admiral Suetsugu Nobumasa also saw an ideological unity among the three powers, regarding them as fighting against an unjust old order and seeking to replace it with a new international system (Suetsugu 1940). He led the right-wing organization the *Tōa Kensetsu Kokumin Renmei* (Popular Federation for the Construction of East Asia), which had close connections with the army's *Tōsei* faction as well as with the parliamentary parties the *Tōhōkai* and the *Kokumin Dōmei* (Tokkō Geppō, Aug. 1940: 56–8; Yokusan 1954: 72–6). *Tōhōkai* President Nakano Seigō longed for Japanese leaders who could match the 'outstanding statesmen' Hitler and Mussolini.¹² Within the *Shakai Taishūtō*, Kamei Kan'ichirō was the most active planner for a reformist foreign and domestic policy (Gendaishi Shiryō 1974, 44: 186–223; Tokkō Geppō, July 1940: 66–8). He often conferred with Konoe and with Major General Mutō Akira, Director of the Army Ministry's Military Bureau (*gunmu-kyoku*), which was the centre of army policy. Mutō was the most ardent advocate of a totalitarian party within the military.

The majority parties in the Diet did not want to miss their chance either. They also had been betting on Konoe and his new order in the days of agony of the Yonai cabinet. Kuhara, in an interview with the *Tōkyō Nichinichi Shinbun* published on 10 June 1940, declared that the reason for Nazi Germany's military victory lay in its domestic political system and that Japan must learn from Germany to cope with the current situation

(Oku 1999: 509). Beginning with the *Seiyūkai*, all the political parties dissolved themselves by mid-August 1940, founding an 'Association for Promoting a New Order' (*Shintaisei sokushin dōshikai*). Only the leaders of moderate factions within the former established parties were excluded from this association. The association denounced democracy, individualism, liberalism, socialism and parliament-centred government. Instead, it called for introduction of a 'leadership principle' (*shidō genri*), which obviously echoed the German *Führerprinzip*, service to the throne and close co-operation between politicians and the military (Yokusan 1954: 56–8).

The future organization of the state still lacked a clear profile due to the numerous groups and persons who were involved in the movement. On 23 August 1940, Prince Konoe took the long-awaited initiative by asking for cabinet approval of a list of members of a preparatory committee to establish the New Structure. In addition to all the cabinet ministers, the committee was composed of 26 public figures, among them prominent reformists and Nipponists. An eight-member secretariat was established to draft plans for the future structure, which included two military officers: Major General Mutō Akira and Rear Admiral Abe Katsuo, the Directors of the Military Bureaus in the War and Navy Ministries respectively. The radical reformists were aiming at a totalitarian single party in co-operation with the army in order to establish a 'highly organized defence state' in which a planned economy was the precondition for broad territorial expansion. The goals of the moderate reformists of the Konoe circle were less radical. Although they sought roughly the same ends as the radicals, they were not ready to risk a large-scale war and tried to restrain the military. The main question still open in autumn 1940 was whether a totalitarian party following the German, Italian or even Soviet model would arise, or a conservative instrument to strengthen the spirit of sacrifice among the subjects.¹³

US Ambassador Joseph C. Grew saw reformists like Shiratori, Suet-sugu, Hashimoto and Nakano as representing the 'blackest reaction',¹⁴ while German Ambassador Eugen Ott regarded them as the personification of 'modern Japanese Nationalism'.¹⁵ The main opponent of the New Structure movement and its radical activists was the Nipponist right, which fiercely defended the *kokutai* and the foundations of the state built in the Meiji era. They accused the reformists of aiming to change the nation's character along 'Communist', 'Fascist', or 'revolutionary' lines or seeking to return to the Shogunate system, giving the prime minister more power than the Emperor (Hiranuma 1955: 77, 119, 127; Yokusan 1954: 76–8, 105, 109–11, 119–21, 126–7, 131–2). It was said that a plan to assassinate Konoe had even circulated among them (Yabe 1976: 513).

Hiranuma, who had served many years in the Ministry of Justice and had himself held the post of justice minister for a time, had a strong foothold in the bureaucracy of several ministries, where there was considerable animosity against the reformists among the older officials. The

Home Ministry in particular was concerned about losing control over the local administration if the planned network of cultural and economic sub-organizations under the New Structure was to be established (Yokusan 1954: 94–7). The power groups of economic and financial circles, fearing loss of influence under a state-controlled economy, also opposed the ideas of the radical reformists, as did the moderate circles of the former larger parties, which were now slowly closing ranks with the groups around Hiranuma (Yokusan 1954: 109–11, 114), their former main enemy. Konoe's New Structure movement also met with mistrust at the Imperial court, including the old *genrō* Saionji. The Tennō himself strongly feared that the movement would violate the spirit of the constitution. This seemed to be true as information indicated that the Nazi *Führersystem*, the Manchurian *Kyōwakai* organization, and even the ideology of the Soviet Union were contributing ideas. Similar fears were felt within the navy (Harada 1952, 8: 312–15).

In his reports to Berlin, Ambassador Ott criticized traditionalist conservative power groups for their efforts to defend the status quo against the rising power of the reformist movement and to hold on to the old ties with the USA and Great Britain. At this time, however, he did not yet realize that the strongest opposition to the New Structure came from the Nipponist right wing, which he still counted among the reformists.¹⁶

When Konoe gave a speech on 28 August 1940, opening the first session of the preparatory committee, he had to consider the different standpoints of the power groups which were participating. In his words, the new national structure movement aimed at superseding the old party politics predicated on liberalism. It could not, however, take the form of a political party or a single-party system like those of other countries. This was not acceptable in Japan, as it was contrary to the basic principle of its national polity of 'one sovereign over all'. The privilege of all subjects to assist the throne could not be monopolized by the power of either a single person or a single-party (*Tokyo Gazette*, 4, Oct. 1940: 133–6). When the text of this speech was drafted, Mutō Akira had vainly tried to include a reference to the Nazi or Fascist system as a model (Harada 1952, 8: 320).

Soon after, the international situation once again changed dramatically. After Japan's occupation of northern French Indochina with German consent in September 1940, the USA implemented first embargo measures. Japan, Germany and Italy concluded the so-called Tripartite Pact, a military defence alliance against the USA, on 27 September. They furthermore mutually recognized their respective spheres of influence: Europe for Germany and Italy, and Greater East Asia for Japan. In addition, Germany promised to mediate a Japanese–Soviet rapprochement.

At a cabinet meeting on the day the pact was signed, the name of the new national structure movement was decided on: *Taisei Yokusan Undō* (Movement to Assist the Imperial Rule). The organization that would work directly to attain the goals would be the *Taisei Yokusankai* (Imperial

Rule Assistance Association: IRAA). In a speech broadcast the next day, Konoe announced his desire to establish a new national structure, the purpose of which was to enable every Japanese to assist the throne (*Tokyo Gazette*, 4, Nov. 1940: 175). On 12 October, his 49th birthday, the Prince publicly repeated the decision he had announced the previous month. The problem of the character of the organization was solved by a face-saving compromise. Both main demands were included, i.e. establishing a party-like organization as well as a movement to strengthen public morals. With this step, politicization and de-politicization were approved at the same time (Itō 1983: 170–2).

Konoe again emphasized 'the fulfilment of the duty of Japanese subjects to assist the throne' as the basic principle, but he did not indicate in detail what this might involve (*Tokyo Gazette*, 4, Nov. 1940: 178; Yokusan 1954: 137–8). Since a nationwide propaganda campaign preceded the announcement, neither the audience at the inauguration ceremony nor the general public, who had expected the creation of a powerful organization, could believe their ears (Yokusan 1954: 138–9). Only the Nipponists applauded enthusiastically (Yabe 1976: 513). Later statements like those issued by the Cabinet Information Bureau (*naikaku jōhō-kyoku*) in November only reflected the conflict between those who favoured the German–Italian Fascist ideas and those who rejected foreign models (*Tokyo Gazette*, 4, Nov. 1940: 177–92, Yokusan 1954: 137–8).

Nevertheless, the reformist groups did not end their attempts to change the IRAA into a totalitarian party and to take over the leadership of the nation themselves. They closed ranks with army officers, particularly Mutō Akira, and founded the *Dai-Tōa Kyōeiken Kensetsu Kokumin Undō Renmei* (League for the People's Movement for the Construction of the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere) (Berger 1977: 325). Other power groups soon came together to resist them, including mainstream politicians from the former conservative parties and representatives of the industrial and financial worlds, who feared the anti-capitalist overtones of the reformists and the agenda for a state-controlled economy. Their fears became even stronger when the responsibility for economic planning gradually passed from the *Shōwa Kenkyūkai*, which was established in the IRAA in November 1940, to the Cabinet Planning Board, which was dominated by military officers and reformist bureaucrats. Opposition also arose in the Cabinet from the trade, welfare, communication and railway ministers and the higher bureaucracy in general (Nakamura and Hara 1973: 88–99).

Under these circumstances, Konoe increasingly felt the IRAA to be a burden to him. From the beginning he had indicated that he would not personally act as president of the new organization but as the prime minister *ex officio*, taking only a temporary role as leader (*Tokyo Gazette*, 4, Nov. 1940: 183). Appointing his long-time confidant Arima Yoriyasu director-general of the organization, he made it clear that he would not

direct the practical work. Furthermore, he did not attend the frequent IRAA meetings in the weeks following the inauguration of his second cabinet. From November 1940 onwards, power groups in the financial world and senior bureaucrats led a campaign against ‘communist’ elements within the organization, such as the ex-members of the *Shōwa Kenkyūkai* and former Socialists like Kamei Kan’ichirō and Akamatsu Katsumaro, who were engaged in the planning for economic control. Looking for like-minded allies, the financial groups began to contact the Nipponists and the *kōdō* generals, who for some time had led fierce attacks against the IRAA as either a ‘Nazi-like’ or ‘red’ organization, concentrating on such activists as Suetsugu, Hashimoto, Nakano and *de facto* leader Arima. This newly established alliance was remarkable, given that financial circles had avoided contact with these radicals, at least until summer 1940 (Kōan Chōsachō 1965, 3–2: 518, 564–84; Nakamura and Hara 1973: 104–5; Yokusan 1954: 199–202).

Konoe, becoming tired of his reformist associates, decided to make use of Baron Hiranuma (Kido 1966, 2: 838), the grand old man of the Nipponist right wing, even though the latter blamed the prime minister for the state of the Japanese nation. Hiranuma had warned of the danger of a powerful IRAA, which he considered a communist revolution in the making and a threat to the monarchy. When Konoe offered him the post of vice president of the IRAA, a position not filled until that time, but in which Matsuoka was interested (Yokusan 1954: 114), the Baron declined, maintaining that he could achieve nothing without a cabinet post. Konoe therefore decided at the end of November to reshuffle several ministries (Hiranuma 1955: 120). On 6 December 1940, Hiranuma was appointed a minister without portfolio and two weeks later took over the Home Ministry from the reformist-minded Yasui Eiji, while Lieutenant General Yanagawa Heisuke, a member of the *kōdō*, became Minister of Justice, replacing the reformist Kazami Akira. The newly appointed ministers carried out large-scale purges in their respective ministries to oust bureaucrats adhering to totalitarian ideas. Even Army Minister Tōjō, who had thus far been on the reformist side, had agreed with the changes in the cabinet ‘to counter communist tendencies’ (Kido 1966, 2: 844). IRAA Director-General Arima felt that he had lost Konoe’s confidence and that the period of his greatest influence was passing (Arima 2001: 404, 408, 415–22). At the same time, a new attitude towards economic policy became visible when the government – despite protests from army and reformist IRAA circles – decided on 7 December not to nationalize key industries. The government would not directly intervene in their business or control their management, but allowed them to make adequate profits.¹⁷

As uncompromising anticommunists, the new ministers Hiranuma and Yanagawa considered the Soviet Union as Japan’s major enemy, and therefore did not agree with Foreign Minister Matsuoka’s policy of seeking a rapprochement with the USSR. When they openly criticized the

IRAA, they preferred to call it 'communist' instead of 'Nazi-like' or 'Fascist', in order not to provoke a negative reaction from Japan's European allies. As Home Minister Hiranuma had the police authorities at his disposal, he was able to hunt down ideological enemies. In his memoirs, he described the task of preventing the IRAA from turning into a fascist organization as his major obligation in 1940–1 (Hiranuma 1955: 250). Ambassador Ott, however, suspected that the propaganda against the Soviet Union and against Communism was in fact directed against the Tripartite Pact, which had been held open to a Soviet membership. He feared that the Japanese efforts to save the domestic status quo could result in reconciliation with the Anglo-Saxon nations at Germany's expense.

In January 1941, during the parliamentary debate over the budget of the IRAA, many Diet members criticized the ambition of the reformist cliques to take over the IRAA leadership. These Diet members were even referred to as 'communists' (Yabe 1976: 512–14). In addition, the lawmakers reminded the prime minister of his announcement of 28 August 1940 that the aim of the New Structure was not to hand over power to a small group. Thereupon Konoë and Hiranuma announced that the organization would only serve as a public agency for economic and 'spiritual' mobilization, rather than playing any role in policymaking. It would not be a political (*seiji kessha*) but a public organization (*kōji kessha*) (Furukawa 2001: 130–8; Yokusan 1954: 174–85).

This was the decisive step after the long struggle concerning the character of the IRAA. Here lay the answer to the question as to whether Japan and its 'New Order' would follow the Nazi or Fascist pattern. In spite of the continuation of the alliance with the Axis powers the oligarchic system established during the Meiji era was to be preserved and no new elite would be allowed to gain control of the state. From this point, the depolitization of the IRAA progressed rapidly. Pressure from industrial and financial power groups saw a campaign mounted against the Cabinet Planning Board. One by one, 17 members were apprehended and sentenced to prison terms on charges of spreading communist ideas and promoting the aims of the Comintern (Miyaji 1970). In April 1941, the president of the Planning Board, Hoshino Naoki, a leading figure of the reformist camp, was replaced by career officer Lieutenant General Suzuki Teiichi. Hiranuma's involvement and the Imperial Army's compliance with it demonstrated that the army leadership sided with the Baron's reforms (Yatsugi 1974: 487). As the pressure for change of the system exerted by the reformist radicals decreased, conservative groups like the senior bureaucracy, particularly of the Home Ministry, the Nipponists, including the *kōdō* generals, the parliament, industrial and financial power groups and last but not least the Imperial court became the real winners of these purges.

As his next move, Hiranuma stirred up the distrust of the conservative power groups against the leadership of the IRAA. In March 1940, he

organized a purge against ‘red’ Arima as *de facto* head of the movement (Arima 2001: 408, 415, 421, 454; Yabe 1976: 514–15). Within days, Arima resigned from his post as director-general and was replaced by Ishiwata Sōtarō, a *protégé* of Hiranuma, who had connections with big business and was considered an anglophile (Yabe 1976: 515). The still vacant post of IRAA vice president was taken over by Justice Minister Yanagawa Heisuke, while some lower positions were filled with Hiranuma’s confidants at the expense of the reformists. Among the victims were such prominent figures as Nakano and Hashimoto, and even Konoe’s close friend Gotō Ryūnosuke. The reformist camp saw these measures as the deathblow to Konoe’s New Order.¹⁸

In early April 1941, Hiranuma announced that the IRAA would be put under the supervision and control of the Home Ministry. In the following month, the Ministry of Justice succeeded in revising the Peace Preservation Law (*chian iji hō*), which now enabled the authorities to use harsher measures against groups which were aiming at changing the *kokutai*. At this time, Japan had entered reconciliation talks with the United States in Washington, and for that reason the Tripartite Pact seemed to be in jeopardy. The German Embassy in Tokyo now recognized with disappointment that it was Hiranuma who had been responsible for the changes in the first place,¹⁹ while US Ambassador Grew, seeing a slight cooling of pro-Axis sentiments, welcomed the Baron’s measures against the hothead extremists (Grew 1944: 379). He counted Hiranuma together with Yanagawa among those who were working against close ties with Nazi Germany and for an understanding with the USA. He knew from his contacts with confidants of the Baron’s that both had been brought into the cabinet for only one purpose: to help Konoe to attain a position whereby the latter could effectively control the radical elements in the army and elsewhere.²⁰

Foreign Minister Matsuoka, who still believed in the alliance, was absent from Japan while these measures were carried through. On a long trip to Europe, he conferred with Hitler and Mussolini, and signed a treaty of nonaggression with Stalin. While in Berlin, he was informed about the changes in Japan by two telegrams from Konoe. These telegrams have not survived in their original version, although the second was intercepted and decoded by the Americans, and is available in an English translation as ‘Report #2 on the internal conditions of Japan’:

The government, intent on selecting one who could effectively lead the Imperial Rule Assistance Association, tentatively decided on Yanagawa at the meeting on the 26th [of March 1941]. The events leading up to this decision were as follows: Arima, and all other officials of the Association tendered their resignations. Since the Imperial Rule Assistance Association should be one with the government, in order to have a strong man at its head, we commanded Home Minister

Hiranuma but he refused to accept and we decided on Yanagawa. [...] Yanagawa is not only a strong military man, he is also a member of the General Mazaki [Jinzaburō] clique who are said to be opposing the government. In addition, he has been co-operating secretly with Hiranuma, so I think it can be said that he is a good choice for the purpose of maintaining the status quo. By this means, we would see some alleviation in the opposition heretofore shown toward the abrupt and revolutionary policy of IRAA by the Diet, the financial world, and other circles. In other words, the chief reason for deciding on Yanagawa was to absorb some of the strength of the opposition. This step must be considered as somewhat of a change in the heretofore revolutionary color of the IRAA and should greatly improve the atmosphere between the revolutionary and the conservative groups, and thus the many problems in connection with the renovation of the organization may not be so difficult. Thus on one hand the above steps will be looked upon as a strengthening of the IRAA, and on the other it will be regarded as a modification in character. What the reaction will be is a problem for the future.

(Telegram to Berlin embassy, 28 March 1941, in NARA, SRDJ, 113: 955–6)

When Matsuoka returned to Japan, he considered Konoe and Hiranuma enemies, not only due to the opening of reconciliation talks with the USA behind his back, but also because of the domestic changes. On the occasion of a 'welcome evening' (26 April 1941), organized by the IRAA in Hibiya Hall and broadcast on national radio, Matsuoka gave a famous speech. In it, he reported on his travels in Europe and criticized other cabinet ministers. He attacked Hiranuma in particular, blaming him for depriving the IRAA of its power. He effusively praised the political and economic system of Nazi Germany and the resolute attitude of German leadership, which could serve as a model for Japan, in contrast to the weak business leaders and politicians of his own country (Matsuoka denki 1974: 952–67). Matsuoka intended to distribute a printed version of the text in 200,000 copies, but Home Minister Hiranuma forbade it.²¹

The path to war

In 1941, Matsuoka was under the illusion that he could turn the situation around and become prime minister instead of Konoe (Kido 1966: 2, 887). In fact, he was so isolated in the cabinet that he lost his position as Foreign Minister in July 1941. He later blamed the circle around Hiranuma for this.²² The Baron himself was badly wounded in an assassination attempt in August 1941 and his influence waned. At any rate, a Pacific war had become more likely after the Japanese occupation of South Indochina the previous month. This step had been considered a low-risk expansion by

the government, but the United States unexpectedly retaliated against Japan with an oil embargo. It is an irony of history that this happened after the radicals in Japan had been excluded from power and the ‘moderate’ expansionists had regained influence. They had held the opinion that the USA would risk war only in the case of a Japanese invasion of the Dutch East Indies. Now, with Japan’s limited stock of oil, time was running out, leading to the decision to go to war. It was not Germany who pulled Japan into the war against the USA, as the enemies of the radical groups had feared, but rather Japan, which brought about Hitler’s declaration of war against America in December 1941.

Notes

- 1 His own contributions were later published in Matsuoka’s book *Shōwa ishin*, 1938.
- 2 See for instance the articles in *Chūō Kōron*, January 1937: 44–54; *Nihon Hyōron*, January 1937: 52–77; *Kaizō*, January 1937: 22–9.
- 3 See Dirksen’s reports of 2 November and 1 December 1937, PAAA Innenpolitik I.
- 4 The most prominent members were Nakajima Chikuhei, Maeda Yonezō and Kuhara Fusanosuke of the *Seiyūkai* and Nagai Ryūtarō of the *Minseitō*.
- 5 Interview with Kamei on 3 June 1978 in Tokyo.
- 6 No German document on the contents of the talks is available, but Nakano has published his impressions in several magazines in almost identical articles. See also Nakano 1938: 147–65.
- 7 See also Nakano’s speech of 20 January 1939 in *Kōen*, No. 425, 20 February 1939: 1–46.
- 8 *Tokkō Geppō*, March 1939: 35–8; May 1939: 40–6; June 1939: 49–54; *Naimushō* 1972, 11: 211–12, 246–8, 285–90; *Kōan* 1965, 3–2: 28–9, 74–81, 107–9; *Shisō Shiryō Panfuretto*, Special No. 2, July 1939: 72–4, 94–8, 106–7; Special No. 3, August 1939: 146–55. Nakano’s contributions in *Kōen* No. 433, 10 May 1939: 1–45.
- 9 *Shisō Shiryō Panfuretto*, Special No. 8, February/March 1940: 373–7; *Tokkō Geppō*, February 1940: 134, June 1940: 107 and October 1940: 124; *Kaizō*, Special No. 6, April 1940: 6; *Shiratori* 1940: 91, 131. Shiratori Toshio (1887–1949) entered the diplomatic service in 1913. After positions in China, Hong Kong, the USA and Germany, he served in the Foreign Ministry during the Manchurian Incident, and was part of the radical faction influenced by Mori Kaku. From 1933–6 he was minister in Sweden. After serving as ambassador to Italy in 1938–9, he was appointed adviser to the Foreign Ministry. In 1942, he became a Member of the Diet. He was sentenced to life imprisonment at the Tokyo war crimes trials and died in prison.
- 10 Prime Minister Konoe Fumimaro, Foreign Minister Matsuoka Yōsuke, Army Minister Tōjō Hideki and Navy Minister Yoshida Zengo.
- 11 Grew’s telegram of 21 July 1940, FRUS 1940, IV: 966–7.
- 12 Nakano’s letter to Konoe 3 July 1940, *Gendaishi Shiryō* 44: 223.
- 13 On contradictions and different orientations within the movement see *Naimushō* 12: 580–2.
- 14 Grew to Hull, 5 September 1940, FRUS 1940, IV: 976.
- 15 Ott’s report of 28 August 1940; PAAA Innenpolitik III.
- 16 *Ibid.*

- 17 Gendaishi Shiryō 43: 169–71. One result of these changes was the dismissal of reformist Vice Trade Minister Kishi Nobusuke, who disagreed with the policies of Minister Kobayashi Ichizō.
- 18 Yabe 1976: 405; Yabe's study appeared in 1946 in Gendaishi Shiryō 44: 582.
- 19 Boltze's telegram to German Foreign Ministry, 1 April 1941; PAAA Büro Staatssekretär Japan III.
- 20 Grew's telegram No. 518, 7 April 1941; NARA, Dep. of State, Internal 894.00/1020 PS/LB.
- 21 Grew's telegram to Hull, 19 June 1941; FRUS 1941, IV: 976.
- 22 Ott's telegram of 20 July 1941; PAAA Büro Staatssekretär Japan IV.

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11 Japanese–German collaboration in the development of bacteriological and chemical weapons and the war in China

Bernd Martin

Introduction

On the surface, Japan's conduct of its war in China seems to strongly resemble the style of warfare waged by the Germans in Soviet Russia. The respective motives, however, behind strategies clearly aiming at genocide, do not bear easy comparison, either on the administrative level of state structure, or on the level of individual psychology. 'The most terrible and most brutal, the most inhumane and most destructive war in all Asian history' (Wilson 1982: 1) that after a preparatory phase in Manchuria eventually took shape with the incident at the Marco Polo bridge near Beijing (7 July 1937), corresponded with the most terrible war of annihilation and enslavement of all time fought by the German *Wehrmacht* together with its rear-guard units in the East. After meticulously rational planning, which included expectations of millions of 'subhuman Slavonic' victims, this war began with the German surprise attack on the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941. In both the Asian–Pacific and the European theatres of war 'completely ordinary men',¹ heads of families as well as young recruits, willingly performed unspeakable atrocities. All of them, German and Japanese soldiers alike, were committing transgressions against the commandments of their respective ethical codes – Christian doctrine and traditional Japanese fighting ethics or '*bushidō*'² – in orgies of collective as well as individual blood thirst. And yet, both strategy and the course of action differed widely on both sides.

Looting, rape and the killing of civilians, mostly by slaughtering them with the bayonet, soon marked everyday warfare for the Japanese troops in China, as the Chinese enemy had refused open battle and had instead taken to guerrilla warfare. In the Russian theatre of war, however, the war was fought in the traditional way along closed front lines. Soviet partisan units only served additional purposes behind German lines. The aim of Chiang Kai-shek, head of state of Nationalist China and Supreme Commander at the same time, was to lure the Japanese into the Chinese hinterland to exhaust their strength, a strategy that actually encouraged Japanese atrocities committed against defenceless civilians. Stalin's 'Great Patriotic

War', on the other hand, aimed at liberating the country as fast as possible from the fascist intruders in a war conducted with highly sophisticated modern armaments. The Imperial Army as well as the *Wehrmacht* pursued a scorched earth policy. In the Japanese case, this was because despite their military supremacy they found themselves helpless; the Germans fell back on the strategy when forced to retreat. The respective native populations, however, were exposed to the same calamities: murder and arson.

Ideologically and in terms of power structure – notwithstanding their different historical development – Germany and Japan showed certain similarities that might have encouraged their attitudes towards genocide, but do not necessarily explain them.³ Both countries adhered to 'modernist' ideologies grounded on backward-looking utopian visions. Contemporary Germans as well as Japanese considered themselves the vanguard of 'young peoples' whose mission it was to overcome the established Anglo–American world order by repeating values derived from their own respective histories. The idea of the 'folk community' (*Volksgemeinschaft*) in Germany was based on Germanic myths. In Japan, the idea of the people, seen as one huge family with the Emperor as its head, was created, on the basis of legendary chronicles, only after the forceful opening of the country. National Socialist Germany as well as Japan that from 1932 on had become increasingly militarized, saw themselves as non-rational societies whose fighting spirit was supposed to overcome the merely materialistic outlook of 'the West'. Bound to this atavistic ideology in both countries was a charismatic leadership structure centring around an omnipresent leader, the German *Führer* and, in Japan, the god-like Tennō. Hitler and Hirohito, despite their alleged closeness to the people, kept themselves aloof from the masses. They also exerted their power in a paternalistic as well as arbitrary rule that veiled itself with the claim that it was safeguarding racial purity. Violence, terror, and even genocide were considered the necessary and inevitable means to liberate the world and achieve eternal peace. Compulsory conformity as a result of irrational education created frustration, especially among soldiers, that found its outlet in violence against defenceless civilians. Training in the Japanese Imperial Army, even more so than in the German SS, completely broke the individual soldier and prepared him for a heroic death; slaughtering the enemy was looked upon as a patriotic duty.

Due to the charismatic leadership structure the state's monopoly of power in both cases was broken up and divided among lower governmental echelons, giving the National Socialist district leaders (*Gauleiter*), higher ranking SS officers and the Japanese occupation or combat officers a sense of considerable self-importance. Any order given by the Tokyo civilian or military administration to the army in China – to reduce the atrocities and try to win the Chinese population over – went unheard as did the frequent orders given to the commanders of the prisoner of war camps to alleviate the conditions of the Western prisoners. In Germany,

too, orders from Berlin demanding better treatment and sufficient food for forced labourers from Eastern and South-eastern Europe proved difficult to implement. In both Japan and Germany, anyone who held a leading position, be it as a police or SS official, an officer at the front or even a foreman in a factory, felt he was acting on behalf of a superior will and could always justify even his most arbitrary decisions by referring to the *Führer's* or the god-like Emperor's will. Any crime committed in the Tennō's name was impossible for the government in Tokyo to punish. Only the Emperor himself, who was, by the way, extremely well informed, could have broken the vicious circle. But any direct interference on his part would have jeopardized his own god-like position (Bix 2000; Wetzler 1998). Therefore, he remained – for the most part – silent. The degree of irrational ideological indoctrination and ethnic homogeneity in Japan proper was much higher than in Germany.⁴ Meticulously planning the war of annihilation in the east, Hitler's subordinates were following clearly expressed orders. In Japan, no such plans for a lasting conquest of China existed, the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperty Sphere (*dai-tōa kyōeiken*) remaining the common goal. The genocidal activities of the Japanese army in China did not have to be ordered but were the seemingly self-evident consequence of centuries of rivalry between the two countries, now taking the form of a confrontation between a militarized nationalistic Japan and a China fighting for its own national identity. Genocide in China was not planned and could not be stopped once it had started.

Within four years, from June 1940 until August 1944, Japanese Forces in China deployed biological weapons a total of 18 times (Bärnighausen 1997/2002: 241–5). The dropping of small bombs containing the plague bacillus seems to have been most successful. Originally, bacteriological warfare was to be extended to the American continent. Huge paper balloons, which would be started in Japan and carried by the regular high-altitude west–east winds across the Pacific, would carry deadly viruses to the American people. Although two hundred such balloons reached North America, no viruses from this source were found on American soil. The balloons carried nothing but conventional small incendiary bombs (Wallace and Williams 1989: 130). While deploying such new weapons was an aspect of psychological warfare against the Americans, this did not apply to the Chinese theatre of war. There, the testing and frequent deployment of biological weapons against the Chinese marked the beginning of a radical policy of exterminating the local population.

Military and medical executors of the policy of annihilation

It was two Prussian military doctors (Theodor Eduard Hoffmann and Leopold von Müller) who – following an invitation by the Meiji government in the 1870s – first introduced German medicine together with strictly organized curricula to Japan (Martin 1995: 27, 47). From the begin-

ning, what mattered most was making use of Western research in order to ameliorate the poor health of the population in general and military recruits in particular; the latter were quite often suffering from malnutrition. Healing and general medical care mattered less, as patients were traditionally looked after by their own families. Western medicine was absorbed merely as a natural science. Questions of medical ethics and the Christian and humanitarian notions of charity were not rooted in Japanese society and were consequently more or less neglected. German medicine, too, under the impact of nineteenth-century scientific positivism had started, so to speak, to cut up the human being into different fields of research. Contrary to the situation in China, in Japan traditional medicine with its holistic outlook disappeared very quickly and gave way to a blind belief that medical progress would effectively cure any specific illness.

In Imperial Germany Social Darwinism soon helped to shrink medical science into a kind of zoology. The doctrine of the survival of the fittest, with its increasingly racist undertones, therefore easily took hold in Japanese medical circles. Up until 1945, German remained the language used for technical medical terms, and German medicine the much-admired model, in Japanese medicine. The Westernization of Japanese medicine in Meiji times was further fostered by two other German doctors, Erwin Bälz and Julius Scriba. The former became the first German professor at the newly founded Medical Academy, later to be incorporated into Tokyo's Imperial University. At the beginning, he taught four different medical disciplines. Bälz was professor of pathology, of internal medicine, of gynaecology – and, as was typical of the late nineteenth century – professor of biology at the same time and laid the foundations of these subjects in Japan. He taught in Japan for 28 years (1876–1904) and became the personal physician of the Imperial family in 1892. Bälz was soon joined by Julius Scriba who taught surgery, dermatology and ophthalmology at Tokyo Imperial University for more than 20 years (1881–1905). As medical doctors of their time, they were strongly influenced by Social Darwinism. The German version of genuine biological Darwinism led to studies on the different human races and their ranking. Bälz, for example, was very much interested in anthropological studies in Micronesia, although he did not share simplistic Social Darwinist theories. Together, Bälz and Scriba founded modern Japanese medicine. They were honoured by a monument on the main campus of Tokyo (Imperial) University, which is still to be seen there (near the Faculty Club). German and Japanese medical delegations have frequently paid their respect to the German founding fathers of Japanese medicine by laying down wreaths at the monument.

Japanese medicine was especially taken with the two newest branches of medical science – immunology and pathology (Vogt and Wenz 1987: 69–85). Before World War I, close links already existed with the Robert Koch Institute in Berlin in order to exchange experience in fighting

infectious diseases. Investigating the effect of certain bacteria, however, could be useful in more than one way: it could help to fight the diseases they caused, and at the same time those bacteria could be artificially cultured and used in bacteriological warfare. The close relations between German and Japanese military establishments and medical scientists re-emerged after World War I.

Despite the German defeat, the Imperial Japanese Army greatly admired the Prusso-German military, on the model of which the Japanese armed forces had been radically restructured in the 1880s. High-ranking Japanese military officers openly praised German perseverance when faced with a world full of enemies during World War I, a position they felt might well be their own in a future war against the Western powers. Middle-ranking officers who spoke German were therefore sent to Berlin to study the new German concept of total warfare. Among this 'German group' (Bergamini 1971: 323 and Ishida 1999), which met in the German spa Baden-Baden in 1921, were Tōjō Hideki, who advocated a Japanese invasion of Manchuria and later became a General and Prime Minister during the war, and Ishiwara Kanji, who later as a Colonel with the Kwantung army turned out to be the fiercest advocate of a Japanese invasion of Manchuria and who staged the army's *coup d'état* in Mukden in 1931. Other members were Okamura Yasuji, later to become commander-in-chief of the Japanese forces in China, and Colonel Nagata Tetsuzan, the mastermind and advocate of total armament.⁵

Under the influence of the circle around Ludendorff and the military historian Hans Delbrück in Berlin the Japanese guests eagerly absorbed German strategy which they later used themselves in a refined form suitable for East Asian conditions. This radical group of Japanese officers received their most decisive education from nationalist military and folk (*völkisch*) circles in Berlin and set about the business of restructuring Japan according to the experience gained in Germany. Strategic guidelines, occupation policy, and last but not least, ways to stabilize the home front – these were the subjects learned by the eager Japanese pupils. Germany's role as a model and teacher simply cannot be overestimated from the perspective of Japanese plans for expansion and the way they were carried out (Martin 1977). The idea of a quasi-natural order of living space (*Lebensraum*), conceived by the geopolitician Karl Haushofer and legally bolstered up by the specialist in international law Carl Schmitt, was widespread among Japanese officers.⁶ Haushofer's and Schmitt's ideas served as theoretical patterns and justification for establishing a Japanese-dominated New Order of East Asia (*tōa shinchitsujo*), as proclaimed by the first Kono cabinet in 1938, and ultimately, in the summer of 1940, for the proclamation of the 'Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere' (*dai-tōa kyōeiken*).

The writings of Hermann Hesse became equally popular, especially his *Steppenwolf* that, translated into Japanese, soon became a cult book in

military circles (Gibney 1995). Most of Karl Haushofer's, Carl Schmitt's and Hermann Hesse's books were translated into Japanese in the 1930s and 1940s, some of them more than once (Spang 2000: 618–19). German heroic literature boomed in Japan before and during the war. In 1937, Erich Trunz, a professor at Freiburg University and the leading German expert on Goethe, published his anthology *Main Currents of National Socialist Literature*, which, it may be interesting to note, was immediately translated into Japanese (1941) and published with a foreword by the renowned Japanese expert on Goethe, Kimura Kinji. The German version, however, became an official textbook for the increasing study of German at Japanese middle schools during the war. Clearly, an idealized image of Germany as the model to emulate was presented to the younger generation. Again, Germany was looked upon as the older and wiser brother of a developing Japan (Kimura 1994: 129–54).

The close co-operation in medical research had survived World War I, and was fostered in Japan especially by the Japanese–German Society (*Nichi–Doku Kyōkai*). Close links existed between the Institute of Pathology of Freiburg University and several Japanese medical schools. Ludwig Aschoff, the leading German pathologist and head of the Freiburg institute, became the father of Japanese war pathology. According to Japanese sources, more than half of all Japanese pathologists underwent advanced training at Freiburg during the inter-war period. It is therefore no wonder that Aschoff was invited by his Japanese pupils for a lecture tour. In the summer of 1924, he travelled Japan for almost three months giving a total of 16 lectures at different places. Aschoff, who had been working together with Japanese scientists since 1906, the year he took over the chair at Freiburg, founded German war pathology in World War I. Dissecting the bodies of as many German soldiers as possible who had died of causes such as exhaustion or malnutrition, he tried to determine the specific biological characteristics of the 'German race'. The so-called pathology of constitution (*Konstitutionspathologie*) invented by Aschoff was to become a special branch of research of National Socialist doctors under the name of 'military pathology' (*Militärpathologie*).

Franz Büchner, who as Aschoff's most prominent pupil succeeded his teacher on the chair at Freiburg University in 1936, was a specialist in 'air pathology' and was famous in this new field of research. With the beginning of World War II, Büchner's institute was officially renamed the 'Institute for Air Pathology' and became a branch of the German Air Force's (*Luftwaffe*) air pathology unit. Although it cannot be proved that experiments were conducted on living prisoners of war or convicts at Freiburg, several experiments with a low-pressure cabin were made to test the ability to fly at high altitudes. The focus of the research programme in Freiburg was oxygen deficiency. All military air crashes resulting from the pilot's collapse were investigated by dissecting the dead pilots' hearts. Experiments on living human beings were carried out at Dachau

concentration camp, supervised by doctors from the *Luftwaffe* and the SS, to test high-altitude conditions for the flying personnel of the newly-developed escort fighters like the first jet fighters (Messerschmidt 262). There was close co-operation between Büchner's Freiburg research institute and the experiments in the concentration camps of Dachau and Buchenwald. Franz Büchner, too, supervised many Japanese pathologists during their studies in Freiburg before and after World War II. He was invited to Japan in 1963 to give lectures and meet his former pupils and associates. Obviously Japanese pathology and the numerous Japanese pathologists involved in experiments on human beings had been strongly influenced by the Freiburg school of research and that connection was kept alive even after World War II.

It seems that the alliance between the military and medicine for offensive purposes was first realized in Germany. Japan obviously followed suit. On 25 January 1925, the medical service of the *Reichswehr* presented a paper on 'The Use of Bacteria in War'.⁷ The use of gas as a weapon had proved dissatisfactory during World War I; bacteria seemed much more promising. This was all the more so because contemporary German research led the world in this field. According to a report by the American counterintelligence service that immediately caused alarm in Washington, as early as 1925 a group of German medical scientists were staying in Japan to inform the Japanese about the latest developments in bacteriological warfare Germany had experimented with during World War I (Harris 1994: 162). The American report especially mentioned anthrax, dysentery and typhoid fever. Even if Dr Ishii Shirō, the commander of Japan's Unit 731, notorious for experiments on human beings, was not given direct access to the development of bacteriological weapons during his long stay in Germany years later, he would have been able to become familiar with the contents of the above-mentioned paper on bacteriological warfare.

Like most Japanese doctors, Ishii greatly admired all things German. He read and spoke German – then the language of Japanese medicine – fluently and enjoyed German classical literature and music. Thus, he could easily inform himself about German medical progress and gas warfare by studying the relevant German periodicals. In 1928, he went on an inspection tour to Europe for almost two years, of which he spent a considerable time in Germany. Although his trip is somewhat mysterious as no sources are available, Ishii seems to have undertaken it on the order of his military superiors rather than independently.⁸ In fact, the knowledge he gained in Germany enabled him to carry out both his own immunological and bacteriological research and his atrocious experiments on human beings. All his life Ishii greatly admired German politics, German National Socialism and, of course, German medicine. The development of bacteriological weapons in Japan resulted from German knowledge transferred to Japan and applied by Japanese doctors.

As the eager pupil soon surpassed his teacher and Japan in fact seemed to be using the new weapons in China, Hitler ordered a group of medical officers headed by the leading military toxicologist, Otto Muntsch (1890–1945), to stay in Japan for half a year and collect information about the new kind of warfare at the front in China. The results were published in specific periodicals enabling the knowledgeable reader to acquire precise information on the use of gas and on Japanese air raids.⁹ Feeling somewhat left behind, the German partner pressed for the exchange between medical scientists to be intensified within the framework of a cultural agreement between the two states that was concluded on 25 November 1938 (Haasch 1996: 330). A special agreement between doctors from 2 June 1939¹⁰ confirmed the co-operation with respect to a common strategy in the approaching war and included mutual free access to laboratories and research units, intensified personal contacts and the translation of scientific results. Lack of evidence prevents the concrete effects of those agreements from being clearly traced,¹¹ but the passing of a national law concerning eugenics in 1940 may have been one of the first steps towards putting German racist thinking into practice in Japan (Ishida 1999).

Hence, the emphasis placed on the development of bacteriological weapons in the two countries' joint research efforts cannot have been a coincidence. In February 1941, the army physician Dr Hōjō Enryō, Ishii's assistant and closest confidant, came to Germany and was at once attached to the Japanese embassy in Berlin as scientific attaché (Harris 1994: 167). He frequently visited the Robert Koch Institute as well as the countries under German occupation to collect information about research on bacteriological warfare.

With the express approval of his superiors, who wanted to stimulate this kind of research in Germany, in October 1941 Hōjō gave a lecture at the Berlin Military Academy of Medicine entitled 'On Bacteriological Warfare'.¹² With a frankness rare among the Japanese military staff, he quite openly presented the detailed results of Japanese bacteriological research. His German counterpart Professor Heinrich Kliewe, chief adviser on bacteriological warfare with the German military medical corps, had been unable to offer anything similar to the Japanese. Although Kliewe had warned the German Supreme Command in the summer of 1941, when Japan's use of new bacteriological weapons first became known, not to overlook the impact of the new development, Hitler himself seems to have been extremely reluctant. Whether the Supreme Commander of the German *Wehrmacht* was still suffering from the trauma of gas used during World War I or felt the fighting 'folk community' (*Volksgemeinschaft*) should not be manipulated by chemical or medical scientists – on 23 May 1942 Hitler expressly forbade any further research on bacteriological warfare (Hansen 1993: 188).

Japanese–German co-operation in military medicine was probably much closer than the Japanese later admitted when questioned by the

Americans. Allegedly, the Germans had asked for information on bacteriological weaponry but according to Ishii, the Japanese had managed to put them off (Harris 1994: 199). In fact, Hōjō had left a German questionnaire concerning more detailed information unanswered. However, despite Hitler's verdict, German research on bacteriological warfare was continued, probably because of the striking Japanese success. As late as the summer of 1943 Kliewe carried out experiments in typhoid fever and typhus on members of the Polish resistance movement on the Münster-Nord military training grounds. Since the *Wehrmacht*, however, according to Field Marshal Keitel's statement after the war, was unwilling to assume the responsibility for experiments on human beings, and since, on the other hand, the project was also fully approved by the military, it was eventually transferred to the military research institute belonging to Himmler's '*Ahnenerbe*' (an SS institution mainly focusing on racial purity). Now experiments were carried out under the supervision of Professor Kurt Blome, deputy Medical Leader of the Reich (*Stellvertretender Reichsgesundheitsführer*) and a teacher at the newly-founded German university in Poznań (*Reichsuniversität Posen*), which was annexed by Germany during the war, where he officially created an institute 'for cancer research' (Hansen 1993: 141–3; Klee 1997: 88–9).

The buildings erected at a former convent on the outskirts of Posen (Nesselstedt)¹³ strongly resembled the Japanese research plant at Pingfan (Manchuria). Experiments were to be carried out on Russian prisoners of war and the resulting bacteriological weapons were to stop the advance of the Red Army. In January 1945, Soviet combat units found the plant undestroyed. Probably in order to show his readiness for co-operation in the bacteriological field, the German expert on tropical diseases and epidemic typhus, Gerhard Rose,¹⁴ had handed over the yellow fever virus to Japan's Unit 731 at the end of the war in Pingfan, after the Japanese had tried in vain to obtain it from American laboratories before 1941 in order to use it in China (Bärnighausen 1997/2002: 135).

Facing the American invasion and expecting the Americans to use the highly contagious cattle plague virus, Himmler's Foreign Intelligence Service had tried to obtain the same virus from the Japanese (Hansen 1993: 152). In fact, the medical transfers between Germany and Japan continued until the last minute, which is clearly shown by the cargo lists of the last special submarines leaving for Japan in May 1945 containing high-tech medical apparatus such as microscopes (Martin 2001). Both the Japanese scientific attaché Hōjō and his German counterpart Kurt Blome were questioned by American experts in the summer of 1945. Hōjō presented the Americans with the manuscript of his 1941 lecture, which was immediately translated into English, and Blome generously offered them his expert knowledge on bacteriological warfare to be used – ironically enough – in the final struggle against Japan. In this way, the Americans received a rather dubious legacy that aroused the Soviets' mistrust (Harris 1994: 167).

Medical science and military strategy were closely intertwined during World War II. Medical as well as technical research could not in the long run be kept secret or even be conducted separately. Instead, the two 'fascist' aggressors were bound together by complex affinities – a common framework established by the aims of dictatorial rule and the interests of group identity. No detailed agreements were needed for military doctors to carry out their almost identical cynical experiments on human beings nor for the military's policy of annihilation in the occupied territories, whose inhabitants were generally considered subhuman. Within the historical constellation of ideologically based German and Japanese wars of expansion, the annihilation of whole populations was as self-evidently justified as the murder of individual human beings.

Legal consequences

Together with the armistice on 15 August 1945, all the Tokyo ministries were ordered to burn any incriminating materials (Russel 1958: 60). Any traces of crimes were to be covered up and guilty persons were advised to hide. No such order was needed in the Japanese outposts. A few days earlier, the special unit for bacteriological warfare (Unit 731) had vanished from the face of the earth. The plant at Pingfan was blown up, potential witnesses like the 600 Chinese forced labourers were shot and the Japanese staff were sworn to eternal silence by their leader Ishii. Fully aware of their crimes, the guilty military and medical men resigned themselves to a life in the shadows. After the formal capitulation (2 September 1945), the Americans failed to secure any relevant documents and consequently had considerable difficulties in locating the war criminals in their hideouts, being forced to rely on the co-operation of Japanese officials.

Furthermore, the American occupation forces had learned from the mistakes they had made in Germany. 'Collective guilt' and 'automatic arrest' no longer applied, the more so because their image of the enemy was entirely different in this case. After the atrocities committed in German concentration camps had become known the Germans appeared to be 'monsters' whereas the Japanese, whom the American Supreme Commander General Douglas MacArthur tended to see as immature children led astray, only needed to be educated for democracy. A certain feeling of guilt because of the use of the two atomic bombs and the destruction of all the country's big cities (except Kyōto, the editors) may also have added to the American leniency towards the Japanese.

At the International Military Tribunal for the Far East (IMTFE) 28 Japanese in total were tried for war crimes, among them the Generals Tōjō Hideki, former Prime Minister, and Matsui Iwane, former supreme commander of the Japanese Army in China. Hirota Kōki, the only civilian among the war criminals, was held – at least partly – responsible for the Nanjing massacre, which occurred during his tenure as Foreign Minister.

Despite strong protests from the Soviet and Australian prosecutors, Emperor Hirohito was spared on the basis of the explicit wishes of the Americans. The Tennō still felt himself secure in his lofty, godlike position and did not even consider resignation. Under American pressure, he finally renounced his divine status. The Emperor had been the best-informed person at the top of the Japanese government, even about war crimes and atrocities. Nevertheless, Hirohito's real political power and influence on the military are still a much debated and highly controversial issue.

Never calling to account most of the Japanese white-collar criminals, especially the doctors, remains the worst failure of the American occupation forces in Japan. Instead, Ishii was expressly granted impunity in exchange for the scientific data of his Unit 731. Like most Japanese military units, Special Unit 731, too, received its memorial. The pride of having done one's best remained unbroken no matter what atrocities had been committed. Ishii himself lived to enjoy a peaceful later life, and, after converting to Roman Catholicism in 1959, died at the age of 69 (Bärnighausen 1997/2002: 180; Harris 1994: 149).

The Japanese use of gas and bacteriological warfare was never punished, either by the Tokyo War Tribunal or by the following tribunals in Guomindang China, allegedly because of insufficient evidence; in reality, however, this was so as not to compromise the Americans for post-war cooperation with Ishii and others. When, in 1949, the Russians in Chabarovsk instituted proceedings against a few members of Unit 731 and exposed details of the experiments on human beings, Washington and Tokyo unanimously repudiated any such charge as a standard Cold War manoeuvre. Only many years after the war was the secret of Japanese medical experiments and other atrocities in China first uncovered. To this day, however, some source material concerning those crimes has been held classified by American intelligence services. Japanese historians have also been reluctant to completely disclose the details.

The final question remains: why during World War II did the Japanese and German militaries engage in genocidal activities which in the Japanese case did not even require explicit orders and in Germany only require the tiniest hint from above? Social structure and the socialization of male adolescents in their homes, at school and during military service were certainly unique in Imperial Japan. Based on atavistic feudal norms, a rigid behavioural code consecrated by the divine Emperor's rule developed in the primitive village environment. Collective identity, which in National Socialist Germany had to be created on purpose by such party institutions as the 'Hitler Youth Movement' (*Hitlerjugend*) or the 'German Workers' Front' (*Deutsche Arbeitsfront*), was self-evident in Japan, where it had developed for centuries and only needed readjusting to the conditions of war. Badly humiliated in many ways, the sons of impoverished Japanese farmers must have felt chosen to thoroughly reshape the East Asian world

according to their deeply rooted belief in the Tennō and in the ethnic singularity of the Japanese. The narrow-mindedness of the village and the ethnocentric outlook of Japan as an island nation combined to arouse primordial fears of all things foreign. Any form of change was resented as a threat to be warded off at any cost. And at the same time, in the cases of both Germany and Japan, anything alien, be it of 'Jewish-Bolshevik' or Chinese origin, only helped to knit together more closely the 'folk community'. The stronger the feeling of defensive collective identity, the easier the justification of genocide and of medical experiments on allegedly subhuman beings (*Untermenschen*) or blocks of wood (*maruta*) as the Japanese officially named their victims at Pingfang.¹⁵

Notes

- 1 The term was coined by Christopher Browning in 1993.
- 2 Nitobe's work on *bushidō* was translated into German for the first time in 1937.
- 3 The following thoughts are deeply influenced by Uta Gerhardt 1998.
- 4 It should be kept in mind though, that Japan had incorporated Taiwan in 1895 and annexed Korea in 1910. Thereafter, Koreans as well as Taiwanese were to some extent counted as Japanese. They were forced to learn and speak Japanese, often had to change their names and many were conscripted into the Imperial Army during the wars of the 1930s and 1940s (the editors).
- 5 See S. Saaler's contribution in this book for further details (the editors).
- 6 For an account of Haushofer's reception in Japan, see C.W. Spang's article in this volume (the editors).
- 7 'Über die Verwendung von Krankheitskeimen im Krieg', BA-MA, RH 12-9, r27.
- 8 For a different opinion, see Bärnighausen 1997/2002: 32-4.
- 9 On his return to Germany, Muntsch gave a paper at the German Society for Military Sciences and Policy (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Wehrpolitik und Wehrkunde) on 12 May 1939 (Muntsch 1939).
- 10 Archives of the Gaimushō, Tokyo. Documents concerning the Japanese-German cultural and medical agreements (German written documents, copies with the author).
- 11 One hint regarding the effect of the pact can be found in *Contemporary Japan*, 10-3 (March 1941): 279. In the 'March of Events' section the following was announced under the 'Cultural Exchanges with Germany and Italy' heading: 'More academic in nature, however, [...] was the recent decision by the Japan Medical Institute to dispatch Dr Ryoji Ito (35), assistant professor at Kyūshū University, Toshio Takai (39), assistant professor and Kaichirō Kano (39) of Nagoya Medical University [...] to Germany early April this year. The Institute last year sent a medical mission to Germany, according to the German-Japanese medical agreement, and as a further result of the visit of the mission, it was decided to exchange medical students. Japan has selected a group to be dispatched to Germany first' (the editors).
- 12 Complete text in German of Hōjō's paper, see BA-MA, RH 12-23 (H 20-25/1).
- 13 Some source material about the 'cancer research institute' can be found in the archives of the Adam-Mickiewicz-University in Poznań (successor to the Reichsuniversität Posen). The buildings of the laboratories, standard barracks of the *Wehrmacht* with a double-storeyed cellar, have been well preserved in the compound of the convent. The Polish nuns were forced to stay in a wing of

the building in order to serve the Germans. There are some records written by nuns on the time of German occupation. This material is kept in the mother-house of the 'Ursulines' in Cracow. After the war, a Polish investigation came to the conclusion that no Polish citizens had been victims of medical experiments. Therefore, no trial was ever held in Poland. When the Red Army conquered Poznan in January 1945, they found all the laboratory buildings empty.

- 14 Gerhard Rose had spent several years in China in the 1930s, where he studied tropical diseases. As chief of the medical services of the *Luftwaffe*, he was held responsible after the war for human experiments with spotted fever in Buchenwald concentration camp and sentenced to life imprisonment at the Nuremberg doctors' trial after World War II.
- 15 The conclusion is based on discussions in the graduate school seminar (*Sonderforschungsbereich*) 'Identity and Alterity in Theory and Methodology' at Freiburg University in February 1999.
- 16 According to the author, the quotations in this article are based on the 1997 manuscript of the book, which means that the page numbers given here might not correspond with those in the 2002 version. We apologize for the inconvenience (the editors).

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