

Japanese imperialism and militarism

Business



Japan's road to militarism commenced immediately after the deposition of the Tokugawa Shogunate, and the Meiji Restoration during 1868, as well as the Meiji oligarchs embracing of a policy of Fukoku Kyohei. Even though, the Meiji oligarchs confirmed restraint in on-look expressions of militarism and imperialism in the early period of the Meiji era from 1868 to 1890, this did not show they disapproved the goals of the foreign growth, and military development. They initially paid attention to modernization and financial development to get along with the Western industrial powers before they advanced towards taking vital measures to expand Japan's impact in foreign matters. The oligarch's take on Saigo' Takamori's advice to attack Korea in 1873 depicts this philosophy. Even though, the Meiji oligarch did not oppose principally with Saigo's suggestion, they carefully decided against the attack because of its extreme expense. They also considered the need to major on economic modernization, and the anticipated negative response from the Western Powers.

The Meiji's initial inclination toward militarism and imperialism is despicable by the Conscription Law of 1878, which necessitated male to active roles in the military for at least three years, and reserve role for extra four years, and on various territorial possessions, for instance the Ryukyu Islands, and the Kurile Islands (Serfati, 2003). Early Meiji authority regarded Japan as intimidated by the Western imperialism, and among the major motivations for the Fukoku Kyohei ruling was to enhance Japan's financial and industrial bases, so that powerful military could be put up to guard Japan against the outside threats. Domestic concerns within premature Meiji Japan also necessitated for a powerful military. The premature Meiji authority was

exposed to internal uprising, for instance the Saga Rebellion, Satsuma Rebellion, and various upcountry peasant revolts. Japanese militarism and imperialism gradually advanced for five main reasons.

Even though, all five reasons were present from the initial stages of the Meiji era to the start of the war in China in 1937, the corresponding significance of these reasons varied owing the time (Serfati, 2003). The top two reasons, Japan's aspiration to be a Western-style imperialist authority, and Japan's worry for its security and protection, took on the important duties in development of militarism until the end of the Russo-Japanese conflict in 1905. The subsequent two reasons, Japan's string faith in its leadership position for Asia and Japan's recurrent provocations by Western powers, resulted in a growth of militarism and imperialism from 1905 up to 1930s. The last reason, Japan's wish to safeguard its economic interests, enhanced in significance as Japan encountered the decade of the 1930s (Serfati, n. d.).

Western imperialism played an important role in the essential part of the Japanese hostility towards foreign nations. In some instances, Japan pursued the examples of the Western imperialist countries, and in other instances, Japan required frustrating or protection against the activities of the Western authorities. The inflexible and provocative acts of the imperialist Western countries toward Japan offered a good environment for Japan's proceed toward militarism and imperialism, which eventually led to the World War II (Serfati, n. d.). Aspiration for Imperialism The Meiji authorities wanted to make Japan a first-rate country, which encompassed the prestige and power linked with foreign defensive possessions.

In the 19th century, the Western authorities of Britain, Germany, the USA, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Russia, as well as Italy were involved in various actions for getting new territories, occasionally, through military ways. Having knowledge of the long history of the Western imperialism, which commenced during the 16th century, the Meiji oligarchs yearned to join the Western authorities in claims for rights and civil liberties in other Asian nations. On the other hand, the oligarchs recognized that the nation ought to modernize and reinforce its military before it tried to assert its quest to the Western authorities (Kelly, n. d.). Although Japan had been reinforcing its military for many years, in 1895, Japanese authorities recognized that the nation still had not attained the same rank as the Western imperialist authorities.

Even though, Japan triumphed in the Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895), and consequently got hold of Formosa, and obligated China to settle a huge indemnity, Japan could not face other Western authorities; when Russia, Germany, and France obligated Japan in the Triple Intervention to surrender the Liaotung Peninsula acquired in the conflict. This exposed Japan to a sharp increase in military spending between 1895 and 1904. Economic Interests Owing to Japan's overreliance on the external trade, the global depression that commenced in 1929 led to great economic difficulties for the Japanese citizens. This great global depression emerged on soon after the devastating Kanto Earthquake in 1923, and financial stagnation in the 1920s, which targeted and affected the farmers and the laborers in small shops. During the 1930s, financial purposes for Japanese imperialism got strong in order to guarantee continued external trade (Kelly, n.

d.). Financial growth necessitated high value export markets for Japanese textiles, and various commodities. Various Asian nations, specifically China, offered the most excellent market opportunities for Japanese export commodities; therefore, the Japanese authority required to make sure that this trade interfered by their acquisition of commercial and transportation rights in China. Japan's financial system also needed import of raw materials for its manufacturing factories. Manchuria's vast land area and enough natural resources, for instance, iron and coal, offered a solution to Japan's overpopulation concerns, and its desire for raw materials to supply its huge industries, which specialized on military equipment manufacture.

Japan captured Manchuria in 1931 in its search for raw materials. Japan then advanced into various territories in South Asia to guarantee enough raw materials to sustain its self-sufficiency. For instance, Japan required oil from Dutch East Indies to sustain its industry and military supplies. Japan's road to imperialism was inevitable. Japanese recognized they would attain an advantageous level to renegotiate the trade agreements, and be less probable to face impositions, if they take on western ways. This is, for instance, imperialism, industrialization, militarization, as well as modernization.

Japan underwent various changes to cope with the Western powers. In the Meiji restoration, Shogun was obligated to surrender power, and was officially handed to the Emperor Mutsuhito. His time in power was later called " Meiji." After Japan was westernized, it quickly started to work on creating a constitution. It also started government reforms, whereby Japan's

bicameral legislature came in place in 1890 and continued until the end of the World War II.

Economic reforms took place to abolish feudalism, and currency was adopted in 1872. Support for external trade was stimulated. Extension and support for industrialization led to development of the factories. There were also some land reforms. Military reforms: Prior to the Meiji era, Armies were operated by local daimyo, and, therefore, submissive to a central authority. During the Meiji era, sophisticated army, as well as navy was put in place, which was trustworthy to the Japanese authority.

It used Prussia as the major model. Japan had a strong belief that if it was to be regarded seriously by Western authorities, and was to keep them away from China's fate, Japan would have to contend militarily. Conscription of 1873 required all men to take military roles for three years after reaching twenty-one years (Japanese militarism, n. d.).

In social reforms, universal obligatory elementary education came in place. Universities were built, and many laws were westernized. Social changes led to the adoption of architecture, fashions, music, as well as literary styles. Variation of intellectual and political ideas was encouraged. In addition, there was enhancement of independence and empowerment of women. All this reforms led to Japanese imperialism.

Imperialism of Japan emerged because of lack of the fertile land for its agricultural activities. It has also had to establish markets for finished commodities. Japan required raw materials for its vast industries. Population

explosion, as well as response to Western imperialism led Japan to embrace its own imperialism. Japan felt that it was an icon of the Asian countries too.