

Abstract

My paper specifically explores the rhetoric around imperialism and colonialism in Japan and the U.S. starting around 1840 and ending at the end of US occupation. What is Colonialism? What is American imperialism? What is Japanese imperialism? How does Colonialism manifest in both of these countries? It also seeks to find the intersections of both nations, as they were linked after Commodore Perry's arrival in the 1850s. My methods were primarily looking at historical texts and poems written at the time as well as several anthropological studies on colonialism and imperialism. My findings were rather interesting as they highlighted central ideas that went into nation-building, the origins of the Asian identity, and the economic motivations underlying the colonial/imperialist periods. My conclusions were that both the U.S. and Japan had their eyes set on China. Japan's status as an Asiatic nation put it at odds with both Europe and Asia. They were not white and thus could not be part of the European imperialist club. Its blatant colonial and imperialist actions put it at odds with the Asiatic nations. Europe and the U.S. did their best to keep Japan a subordinate imperialist state.

What is Colonialism and What is Imperialism?

Essential to understanding my topic is Colonialism itself. In the modern era, we tend to look at Colonialism as a thing of the past. A horrific element of a less morally inclined populace, for many they see it as the sin of their ancestors. In the conversation of colonialism there are two things that are ever-present, the need to distance oneself and the present reality from it, as well as portraying the colonial empire as a dominant monolith. Colonialism is however far more multifaceted and complex. Let's begin with the misnomer of race and racism in regard to colonialism.

Modern discussions of 18th and 19th-century colonialism cannot be had without race, however, racism is not universal in regards to colonialism. The idea that race and racism are both essential to the social construction of colonial culture and are a natural product of that encounter is false. Look no further than past empires and colonial states, prior to the European invention of race, and one finds that separations between the colonizer and colonized have not been reliant on skin color. Even in European colonization, there are nuances beyond simply racism (not to say racism is simple it is not), there the well-documented religious separations, Christians vs. non-Christians, as well as devaluation of lifestyles that did not adhere to their own social order, or movements. All of this must be taken into consideration to form an accurate account of the colonial society and its social order.

Presented in his book, *Colonialism Culture: Anthropology, Travel, and Government*, Nicholas Thomas discusses the faults in homogenizing colonists and the attempts to other ourselves from the past. Presenting the colonial culture as an indomitable force erases one the agency of those who resist, and two the deep-seated insecurities that underlie colonial culture. Thomas states,

It is misleading even to attribute uniformly to colonizers an imagining of, or a will to, total dominance: the colonial rule was frequently haunted by a sense of insecurity, terrified by the obscurity of ‘the native’ mentality and overwhelmed by indigenous societies’ apparent intractability in the face of government...¹

So what does this tell us about colonialism as a term. It means as a culture and in practice there is a level of insecurity and that at its core is a struggle. This is where the more violent and repressive elements come into play, but beyond that why is there such a need to display dominance? This goes back of course to the mission of colonialism, the “civilizing mission” and the inherent contradictions that lie there. Thomas uses the quote “Almost the same, but not

¹ Nicholas Thomas, *Colonialism's Culture*, (Princeton University Press 1994)

white”², at its core it is impossible to become part of the colonizer group. It is impossible to become white or as we will see later Japanese, even if the group is forced to adopt the colonizer’s culture and language. So Thomas concludes the civilizing mission is justification; it relies on the constant affirmation that the colonized are inferior and inadequate, that they need to be managed.³ Thomas’s example of this is a photograph of the Fijians, one that depicts them in loincloths, none of them facing the camera, carrying sticks in a jungle area. The perspective of the photo is clearly to show how backward the Fijians are, but this of course is a fabrication. Thomas mentions that at this point the majority of Fijians would have been wearing European imports and that the choice of location was not a village, or even a garden but a jungle area. The loincloth that they wear is apparently ceremonial and only worn for ceremonial purposes.⁴ But none of this matters, because the photograph itself is not about creating an accurate depiction of time or telling a story. It is meant to feed into the colonial narrative of the inferiority of the natives and their need for outside management. This is what I believe to be what colonialism is at its core, a contradiction, an ideology built on insecurity and the need “to others”, in order to justify the exploitation of people and their land in pursuit of capital gain.

The manifestation of colonialism and partner imperialism, specifically the intellectualism behind it in Imperial Japan and the Post Reconstruction United States is the aim of this paper. This of course requires elaboration on the term imperialism. Imperialism is a lot more simple to define than colonialism, it is only when it comes to defining the nature of the specific American and Japanese iteration of imperialism. For the sake of simplicity, imperialism is the process of extending a nation’s power and influence, usually through force, though as we will see there are more subtle methods of domination and influence.

² Thomas

³ Thomas

⁴ Thomas

In the process of defining American Imperialism, I look to the following quote from Marissa Solomon's "The Ghettos a Gold Mine". She states,

Underlying assertions that change is inevitable is a Western teleology of betterment in which change is not only natural, it is how we mark time. By improving infrastructure, attracting luxury shops, and sponsoring neighborhood clean-up projects, development seems to transform "degraded" and stagnant spaces into lively, growing neighborhoods. Within this framework, degradation is taken to be an obvious and homogeneous process of material transformation, and the swift and violent displacement of the working-class, poor people, and people of color appears to be "for the better." When displacement is naturalized as change, discarding objects and people appears like the self-evident outcome of "bettering" the neighborhood.⁵

While Solomon's piece is on gentrification, I believe that this statement can be applied to American imperialism as a whole. A video from Ben Shapiro's Daily Wire, emphasizes this by showing natives as savage and inept and that the arrival of Europeans brought culture and technology. The underlying principles of gentrification, I believe, get their root from the American ideals of manifest destiny. While this paper will be focused primarily on the period following the Meiji period, I would be remiss if I did not mention the preceding points in American history that led to the forceful opening of Japan. It could be argued that the imperial period of America started in 1846 with the Mexican-American War. Much like the prior group of natives who got in the way of America's so-called progress, they were swept away, and the territorial gains from the war would eventually become states. The bloody history of an unjust war is mostly forgotten. Manifest Destiny, a hallmark of U.S. imperialism, was the belief that the U.S. had a divine mission to spread across North America and spread its Anglo-Saxon values. This idea morphed and changed following the Civil War, but this is it at its basic form. Selecting what is valuable and determining the Anglo-Saxon way is forward progress and sweeping away "trash" in the form of the people who lived and resided in tough spaces. This idea is repugnant,

⁵ Marissa Solomon, "The Ghetto is a Gold Mine": The Racialized Temporality of Betterment. *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 2019, 76-77. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0147547919000024>

but fascinating, as when American forces open Japan in 1853, the Manifest Destiny and Imperialistic ideation is introduced to Japan and it morphs into its own concept.

What does it mean to be Asian?

The year is 1853, tasked by President Filmore to “open” Japan to U.S. trade, Commodore Matthew Perry and his four vessels arrive in Edo Bay.⁶ In what would later be dubbed, “gunboat diplomacy”, Commodore Perry threatened the Japanese government with naval force, before leaving and giving the Japanese eight months to determine their response to the United States’ demands. This was the end of Japan's Isolation. This event is often depicted as a footnote in American history, but this moment would forever change the course of history and influence the relationship between America and Japan, as well as influence the development of the Japanese state.

When the idea of Asia was introduced to Japan, it wasn’t originally accepted. The origin of this concept being entirely Western, there was much academic debate in regards to this concept. Prominent scholar Aizawa Yasushi would criticize the West for essentially naming and dividing up the world with the terms Asia, Europe, and Africa, basically saying such terms should be ignored as they were not approved by the emperor of Japan and they were not a sort of universal name. They were purely invented by Europe.⁷ He remarked that it was an arrogant and self-centered practice to divide the world up and assign names such as Asia, but in undertaking those actions it explained Westerner dominance. He acknowledged that only the Western powers could do so, due to their power, and was upset by it. He also warned that the term Asia was not their own, it was Western in origin, and also it was not Japanese, but rather a collective identity.⁸

⁶ Aruga, Tadashi. “Reflections on the History of U.S.-Japanese Relations.” *American Studies International* 32, no. 1 (1994): 8. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41280813>.

⁷ Saaler, S., & Szpilman, C. W. A. ((2011). *Pan-Asianism a documentary history. Volume 1, 1850-1920.* (pg.) Rowman & Littlefield.

⁸ Saaler, S., & Szpilman, C. W. A. 63

There was a certain presumption that to accept Asia as an identity would be to admit inferiority. Though there is a subtle beginning of a shift recognizing that they are in a similar position as many other places, China in particular is discussed by these scholars. Aizawa states that he believes the reason for China's fall was its productive nature, it had no reason to seek outside itself and its arrogance led it to peak early.⁹ Hirano Kuniomi states that Japan and China are the only nations not taken over by Christianity and that should either cooperate with the "barbarians" it would be dooming the other.¹⁰ So despite the rejection of the terminology, there is a rational logic building for joining together with the other Asian countries.

In the years to come, the Tokugawa shogunate would end and Japan would enter a Reconstruction period. This is of course known as the Meiji Restoration, heavily influenced by the understanding that Japan was vulnerable to Western colonization, it placed upon itself the goal to mold Japan into an imperialist state, alongside the other Western nations. This idea can be seen in a piece by Hinohara in 1884,

I hear that there are people who for some unfathomable reason have founded a Raising Asia Society (Koaki), and plan to ally with the countries of Asia to resist Europe at any cost. Why must we revive Asia and resist Europe? Whether the whole Asian continent is crushed, shattered, or falls into ruins has nothing to do with us. We have to maintain the independence of our country, Japan, and ensure the welfare of our people. Even if the Chinese Empire is taken over by France and the Indian natives enslaved by the British, as long as Japan does not share the same fate, there is nothing to be sorry about...I hope that, in opposition to the Raising Asia Society, somebody will establish a Leaving Asia Society(Datsuakai).¹¹

Leaving Asia what does that mean? To understand this one has to understand what Asia is. The concept of Asia in of itself is interesting as it originates from the West, and was never truly specific. The idea of an Asian identity is relatively new historically, and it makes sense that the encompassing areas that we include in Asia have billions of people, with a variety of different

⁹ Saaler, S., & Szpilman, C. W. A. 64

¹⁰ Saaler, S., & Szpilman, C. W. A. 64

¹¹ Saaler, S., & Szpilman, C. W. A. 70

cultural backgrounds and languages. As discussed in the previous paragraph, the Asian identity was thrust upon Japan and other nations. However, there is a recognition that there is a potential alliance to be formed in regard to their mission not to be subjugated to Western imperialism. So the idea of “Leaving Asia” is an idea of losing the baggage that is associated with Asia, inferiority, and weak. It was called to strengthen Japan so that it could stand amongst the Western powers as an equal.

Raising Asia or Join Europe

Koaki and Genyosha, two groups formed in the 1880s during this period of Reformation, as the Meiji government began to settle, this group posed diametrically opposed policies that would eventually merge in order to create the ideals of Japanese imperialism. The Koaki critiqued by Hinohara was the “Raising Asia Society”, its goal was to create an alliance between the Asiatic nations.¹² Conversely the Genyosha or the “Dark Ocean Society” was a nationalist group that believed in Japanese expansionism, and that Japan would lead Asia out of slavery. Its goals were to “liberate” China and Korea, and turn Japan into an imperialist power. They held that Japan was the land of the gods and supported main Asian independence movements, not really out of any revolutionary solidarity, but rather the purpose it served in forcing Westerners out.¹³ The goals and ideologies of these groups seem incompatible, however, they would converge and form the basis of the propaganda/justification behind Imperial Japan. This is due to the fact that both groups placed Japan at the head of their movements. The Genyosha imagined Japan not only taking Manchuria and Korea, but also parts of Indian and American territories.¹⁴ Members of the Koaki society justified expansionist actions as bolstering the frailty of Korea and

¹² Saaler, S., & Szpilman, C. W. A. 66

¹³ Saaler, S., & Szpilman, C. W. A. 76

¹⁴ Saaler, S., & Szpilman, C. W. A. 75-80

chastizing the Qing.¹⁵ These stances meant despite their methods being completely different the idea of “Leaving Asia” and becoming more Western (nyuo), and “Raising Asia” (Koa) combining into a sort of dual perspective. The need to imperialize and seeing Japan as a sort savior and liberator for Asia and raising to fight the Western enemy.

The Beginning of the U.S. Imperialism

This idea would become more realized during the 1890s, but in order to get to that, first we need to jump back to America. Earlier in this paper, I mentioned 1846, the Mexican-American War. This is because of one the mention of expansionism and the actions taken by President Polk, in goading Mexico into a war with the U.S., are classic imperialistic behavior that is absent for much of the preceding history of the United States. The Spanish-American war and territories America gains from it being an exception to this rule. So far this paper has focused on the ideas behind Japanese imperialism, barely focusing on the U.S., that is because something happened which changed the route the U.S. would take in regards to Imperial power. Territorial expansion was necessary to maintain the institution of slavery and its economy, Southerners had wanted to take Cuba and turn it into a slave state.¹⁶ This of course did not happen, in fact more and more slavery was being contained and choked off, the number of slaves in new territories began to dwindle (Missouri, Kentucky, Maryland, and Delaware). There was also the issue of soil exhaustion and the fear of a growing population of slaves in a concentrated area.¹⁷ These trends occurred during the 1840s and all the while merchants and venture capitalists in the North gained increasing influence over the economy. The addition of the railroads and trade along the Great Lakes created more east to west based axis, vs. north to

¹⁵ Saaler, S., & Szpilman, C. W. A. 71-73

¹⁶ Jones 69

¹⁷ Egnal, Marc. “The Economic Origins of the Civil War.” *OAH Magazine of History* 25, no. 2 (2011): 29-30. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23210243> (accessed on 11/27/23).

south. There was also rising popularity of the anti-slavery movement though it is noted that the Republican party itself was not for abolition more focused on containment. Abraham Lincoln himself stated in 1858,

Now irrespective of the moral aspect of this question as to whether there is a right or wrong in enslaving a negro, I am still in favor of our new Territories being in such a condition that white men may find a home . . . where they can settle upon new soil and better their condition in life.¹⁸

Territorial expansion was not necessarily disputed, but they wanted the land for whites and their economic ventures and settlements, rather than an expansion of the peculiar institution.

Following the compromise of 1850 and the subsequent Civil War, the South and slavery's need for direct territorial expansion was eliminated from the picture. Historian Gareth Steadman Jones focuses on the post-Civil War U.S. imperial goals as such, "It would both solve the problem of surplus disposal and reduce discontent at home."¹⁹ He cites William Seward, the Secretary of State as one of the proponents of this plan. Seward wanted to make America 'the master of the world', his plan revolved around commerce, he saw that the need for territorial expansion was not necessarily needed. Steadman sums up his plan like this, "The new commercial empire would no longer need territory for colonization, which in Seward's view raised the danger of a standing army; it only needed certain land bases to protect the flow of trade and investment."²⁰ This marks a transition from the previous plans to take Cuba, Seward made various moves such as purchasing Alaska, but up until the 1880s there was little interest in his plans. It was until 1878 that the Cuban Revolution allowed American investors to move in and buy up the Spanish planters' holdings. America also used tariffs as a means of forcing treaties with Latin American countries into beneficial arrangements. This method of commercial expansion came with political and religious philosophies. Josiah Strong, a protestant missionary, believed that the

¹⁸ Egnal, Marc. 31.

¹⁹ Gareth Steadman Jones, "THE SPECIFICITY OF US IMPERIALISM" *New Left Review*, (1970). 60, p. 72.

²⁰ Jones 73.

expansion of Christianity and Anglo-Saxon values would fix the problem of overproduction and that commerce followed the missionary. All of this to say that America was developing its own form of imperialism, separate from the European powers and that of Japan.

The Intersection of Goals and the Beginning of Imperialism

An intersection occurred beginning in the 1890s. Several major events occurred in this decade, the first Sino-Japanese War and the Spanish-American war. The 1890s marked an interesting transition in the intellectualism behind Japanese imperialism. In 1893 was the first time the words yellow and white are attributed to Asians and Westerners, respectively. This marks the beginning of the racialization introduced to the Japanese discourse. This comes from Tarui Tokichi's "Arguments on Behalf of the Union of the Great East", which proposes a union of China, Japan, and Korea into an Eastern nation. The paper itself is very patronizing towards the Koreans, referring to them in a similar vein to Filipinos with the white man's burden. The paper also admonishes the Manchu's treatment of minority ethnic groups. However, aside from the idea of forming a sort racial super state, the most interesting part of this paper comes from the two line at towards the end,

It is fortunate that Japan and China exist in East Asia to maintain the dignity of the Yellow race. Without them, the White race would have violated the whole of Asia and made slaves out of our yellow-skinned brethren, just as they have done with African blacks...²¹

This is particularly interesting as it mentions racial unity is new to the Pan-Asianist rhetoric.

There were acknowledgements that appearance-wise wise Japanese and Chinese had similar features in the 1860s, but racial terminology was not used. This makes sense at the time, as there was conflict over even being grouped in with the other Asian countries. However, this introduction of race was not a one-off. Konoe Atsumaro descended from nobility and politician,

²¹ Saaler, S., & Szpilman, C. W. A. 96

wrote about an upcoming race war between the white and yellow races in 1898 in a piece entitled, “A Same-Race Alliance and on the Necessity of Studying the Chinese Question”. This piece was following the Sino-Japanese War and in lieu of Japanese victory, it does have a tendency to look down upon China. However, where it is unique is that critics of those who look down on China and have no desire to provide them with aid. It mentions that it is essential for Japanese diplomats to visit China and learn its customs the same way they do with European nations. However, his piece is mainly focused on the fear of Europe partitioning China and East Asia becoming the stage for a racial “contest”.²² The same year this was published Konoe stated, “Toyo wa Toyo no Toyo nari”, which roughly translates to “East Asia is the East Asia of the East Asia”, which is understood to be a sort of East Asian Monroe Doctrine, stating that East Asia and its affairs and territories were for East Asians, not Westerners. While Konoe eventually did recant the racialized part of this and emphasized that it was more focused on East Asian-based alliances on the changes around them. This was most likely due to the Western backlash he faced that would mar his establishment of the East Asia Common Culture Association.²³ Now these developments without context of the worldwide events almost seem random. Why was race suddenly becoming contentious within Asia and why did Japanese intellectuals feel the need for a racial alliance?

For this, we zoom back out to what was going on in the 1890s. In America, the 1893 Depression was causing problems, the American government needed to expand its markets. In 1895 they were able to secure several victories, one was Japan doubling its cotton imports, second was a victory by Horace Allen, a Christian missionary, who was able to secure the Un San mines, some of the richest gold mines in East Asia, he was also able to reorganize the

²² Saaler, S., & Szpilman, C. W. A. 102-104

²³ Saaler, S., & Szpilman, C. W. A. 100-101

Korean Cabinet so that pro-Japanese factions were unable to oppose it and instituted the death penalty for Japanese merchants copying American goods in the area.²⁴ America was steadily pushing itself into the Asian markets, however, the Sino-Japanese war marked a roadblock for them. With the other major powers in China, and the railroad concessions, America faced challenges. 1895 also marked another Cuban revolution, in which America used its tariff to eliminate Cuba's special status in the sugar market, which forced plantation owners to sell. The revolution did hurt the property of a U.S. businessman who called for intervention. A note from the U.S. government to Spain sums up the U.S. reason for what would eventually become the Spanish-American War,

The extraordinary, because direct and not merely theoretical or sentimental, interest of the us· in the Cuban situation cannot be ignored Not only are our citizens largely concerned in the ownership of property and in the industrial and commercial ventures . . . but the chronic condition of trouble causes disturbance in the social and political conditions of our own peoples A continuous irritation within our borders injuriously affects the normal functions of business, and tends to delay the condition of prosperity to which this country is entitled.'

Using its economic power the U.S. up until this point was able to force other countries to comply with its demands and enrich itself. In this way the U.S. was acting as an imperialist power prior to the period that would later be defined as the United States Imperial Age. As stated in the above quote, Spain's instability in Cuba was posing a threat to the U.S. commercial gain which meant that the U.S. would have to directly intervene. This shift from a more indirect imperialism to colonialism takes place with the taking of the Philippines in 1898. When America deemed it necessary to intervene in Spanish affairs and take the territorial gains it became in the most formal sense a colonial power.²⁵ America's original plan had not been to annex the Philippines, but the native resistance "forced" the U.S. to occupy it. This however was not particularly

²⁴ Jones 75-76.

²⁵ Though it could be argued that America in it of itself has been a colonial power since its inception with the thirteen colonies and the civilizing mission for the native populace.

popular as it was closer to the European model of colonialism. President McKinley addressed Methodist Church leaders in 1899 to get them on board with direct action in the Philippines stating that when they fought Spain it was not his intention to take all of the Philippines. Now that they have them, they cannot give back the territory, nor can they give them to their commercial rivals in the “Orient” France or Germany. He states directly that he believes that the Filipino populace was unable to govern itself and that it was thus the duty of the Americans to do so. He states, “...that there was nothing left for us to do but to take them all, and to educate the Filipinos, and uplift and civilize and Christianize them, and by God’s grace do the very best we could by them...”²⁶ Christianity, as well as racial superiority, are well-known facets of European Imperialism, America too takes on this ideology, but applies a bit differently. Now the history of immigration and who was considered white often comes into play in America’s goals specifically. This would culminate in Kipling’s “The White Man’s Burden”, a poem written to argue in favor of U.S. colonial ambitions and imperial rule of the Philippines. This poem would further encourage thinking along racial lines, as well as create a philosophy around the idea that it was the duty of white Western civilizations to Christianize and “civilize” the world. At the same time that this was going on the Secretary of State in 1899 issued a demand for equal access and treatment for the U.S. in China.²⁷ (note to self-expand on spheres of influence and U.S. goals)

So the intersection of both the U.S. and Japan had their eyes set on China, the Spanish-American war has allowed the U.S. to gain the Philippines as a territory, getting closer to the Chinese market. Japan’s victory in the Sino-Japanese war has allowed it access to Korea and the beginning of access to China as well. There is also an increased racialization on the

²⁶ William McKinley, “President McKinley Puts the Philippines on the U.S. Map,” SHEC: Resources for Teachers, accessed November 25, 2023, <https://shec.ashp.cuny.edu/items/show/878> (accessed on 11/27/23).

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forefront in both countries, Pan-Asianists begin to use terminology such as white and yellow, and the White Man's Burden rather clearly upholds the ideas of white supremacy. Racial ideology in regard to these imperialist powers is becoming an intellectual precedent. The race of the Japanese populace had long been debated, Westerner's discussion in regard to the Japanese often referred to them as Mongoloids, which referred to pseudoscience around race that explained mental capacity (it did not), the goal of which was to affirm white or Teutonic superiority and explain black inferiority.²⁸ While China was firmly considered yellow and Mongoloid (interesting as China had its own ethnic groups and most Chinese would consider themselves Han, not Mongolian), Japan's status was more precarious, there was a certain uncertainty about Japan's racial status, at least up until the Sino-Japanese War. The German Kaiser William II would popularize the image of the yellow peril and the incoming destruction of Europe coming from the East, he sent reproductions to President McKinley. Due to Japan's rise on the world stage, many began to see them as the origin of the Mongoloid race.²⁹ Japan's rise was the catalyst for this racialized tension, which could be an explanation for the increased use of race in regards to intellectualism. The United States's White Man's Burden and the rising concern of the so called "Yellow Peril", could explain Atsumaro's piece on the coming showdown of yellow vs. white could have influenced the popularization of that idea, so much so that a politician felt comfortable enough to publish such a bold piece. Japan was beginning to be viewed as a major power on the world stage, and thus a threat to European dominance.

The Era of Imperialism

The Boxer Rebellion in 1900 provided Japan with another opportunity to gain a foothold in China. Siding with the European powers, Japan was granted special privileges within the

²⁸ Kowner, Rotem. "'Lighter than Yellow, but Not Enough': Western Discourse on the Japanese 'Race', 1854-1904." *The Historical Journal* 43, no. 1 (2000): 114. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3021015> (accessed on 11/27/23).

²⁹ Kowner 126.

region. However, with both Russia and Japan competing for dominance over Manchuria this escalated into what would become the Russo-Japanese war, the resulting Japanese victory meant imperial gains, but it also feed into the Yellow Peril idea. Thus Pan-Asianism once again took a shift again, the racial language took on many different perspectives. The first is the call for acknowledgment of racial equality to the ideas of a White peril. In 1912, a piece called *Asia in Danger*, written by Hatano Uho, describes the looming threat of the West, specifically interesting to this paper is the point that references the Russo-Japanese war stating,

All white European races had always treated Asian people with contempt up until the Russo-Japanese War; and Asians had believed themselves to be creatures compelled [to accept] Europe's insult's...They [Asians] lifted their heads, which had for centuries hung low, and said to the Europeans: "The foundations of civilization is ours; Asian civilization is rich; as for Europe, it is our pupil."³⁰

The sentiment of racial injustice and tension only increased during the period post the Russo-Japanese War, as the fear stoked by the Yellow Peril engulfed the West. Thus there are two main paths that can be observed, the former listed above in which the narrative was of a coming East vs. West conflict or pushes for the West to recognize racial equality, while also playing into Anti-Westerner sentiments. Focusing on the former, in 1913 a piece entitled "The White Peril" written by Nagai Ryutaro, essentially states that the Yellow Peril makes no sense in the face of the genocide, land stolen, and sheer numbers killed, it is the white race that should be feared.³¹ This was of course written toward the beginning of World War 1 and takes into account pretty much every type of race-based prejudice including segregation in the United States. This sentiment stems even before the Russo-Japanese war with So' Chaep'il's editorials, in which he detailed that the goal of the Western nations is to destroy other religions, oppress other races, and place the white race alone at the pinnacle.³² Anti-Westerner sentiments became increasingly

³⁰ Saaler, S., & Szpilman, C. W. A. 162-163

³¹ Saaler, S., & Szpilman, C. W. A. 173-175

³² Saaler, S., & Szpilman, C. W. A. 182-183

common in Pan-Asianist spaces and while the government would disavow PanAsianism publicly these sentiments were held by prominent members of Japanese society and would be cited in their justifications and ideological framing for the War.

The latter focus on racial equality stems partially from the Anti-Westerner movement, but also a desire to force the West to recognize Japan. Following the Sino-Japanese War and the Russo-Japanese War, Japan had in a way joined the “big leagues”, and put itself on the map as world power that could contend with the West. Now this posed a threat to the Eurocentric white supremacist imperial powers and this of course is not to say that Japan was a model world power, as what will soon be explored their behavior in the colonial provinces was deplorable. The Pan-Asian rhetoric they exposed placed themselves as the pinnacle and model that should lead Asia. However, it also must be recognized that racial prejudice and fears from the West towards Japan were largely responsible for its treatment on the global stage. The Kokuryukai founded in 1901 by Uchida Ryohei was an unexpected source for the promotion of racial equity. Ryohei was a former spy who had spent time in Moscow and was the nephew of the founder of the Genyosha. The society as a whole was frustrated by lack of racial equity and was most active during World War 1, in which they put out a piece on the threat of white people.³³ An offshoot of them would form under the name the League for the Equality of Races, this group conducted demonstrations against Western racism and was critical of the League of Nations. Both Kokurukai and its offshoot were against the League of Nations considering it a tool to enforce and uphold white supremacy.³⁴ Most interestingly about the League for the Equality of Races was their founding statements stating,

The League for the Equality of Races was born of war-of that war in which all races mingled their blood; their proudest calling to their help the most humble...in which all

³³ Saaler, S., & Szpilman, C. W. A. 140

³⁴ Saaler, S., & Szpilman, C. W. A. 133

the people inflicting on each other a common ruin...and learnt that a durable peace and safety of all depend on their respect for each other-on Equality.³⁵

This founding statement states that the society was formed out of warfare and the shedding of blood, referencing World War 1. It then speaks on the mingling of blood and the realization that through this conflict and great upheaval, the only path to lasting peace is equality. The society declaration and founding statement published in 1920 in the wake of the rejection by the League of Nations to accept racial equality. While this piece does make reference to all races and call for the acknowledgment of all races to be equal, the only territories referenced are Asia. For example under their objectives, they state, “To serve the moral and material unity of Asia by offering to her peoples and her races a basis of permanent agreement and common interests.”³⁶

This of course promotes a Pan-Asianist narrative around racial equality and recognizes a political interest in doing so beyond morality. This specifically mentions material unity which can be interpreted two ways, either it means resource wise, in which it references the Western exploitation of Asia through their colonies and spheres of influence, or it refers to an actual unity of the Asian nations. Though based on their piece it is most likely the former than the latter, the mentions of development and free growth seem to be economic references and they appear alongside any mention of Asia or the word asiatic.

In the U.S., Theodore Roosevelt expanded the idea of the Monroe Doctrine to Latin America. In fact in historian Gareth Steadman Jones's piece “The Specificity of U.S. Imperialism” he states,

He went on to assure each Latin American nation that it could count on the friendship of United States, if it ‘acted with reasonable efficiency and decency in social and political matters’ and ‘if it keeps its orders and pays its obligations’. If nations behaved they would enjoy prosperity, if not they would be punished by American intervention.³⁷

³⁵ Saaler, S., & Szpilman, C. W. A. 140

³⁶ Saaler, S., & Szpilman, C. W. A. 141

³⁷ Jones 79

Under Roosevelt the U.S. would continuously meddle in the affairs of Latin America, and a prime example is Panama. Many attempts to make a canal to bridge the Pacific and Atlantic oceans have been made over history. The U.S. in 1903 would make that a reality. Panama as a country did not exist at this point and was created through a rebellion sponsored by the U.S. To ensure the rebellion was successful, the U.S. sent a warship to dissuade Colombia from attacking the rebels and the U.S. formally recognized Panama. About two weeks later the charter to construct the canal was passed. The relevance of Panama and this ordeal was discussed on PBS' new hour, in which Ovidio Diaz-Espino, author of *How Wall Street Created a Nation: J.P. Morgan, Teddy Roosevelt, and the Panama Canal* states,

The US for the first time was going to be able to gain control of both oceans. That was critical in times of war. There was no air power, so the way you fought an enemy was through the sea. World power was consistent with maritime power. Americans knew they needed this to move ships from east to west quickly. If they did that, they would control power because they would control the oceans. The Canal was a geopolitical strategy to make the United States the most powerful nation on earth.³⁸

U.S. imperial goals had made headway in Latin America, but also commercially as they now controlled the Panama Canal and would hold control over it until the 1990s. This was supported by Wall Street as Panama would act as a tax haven for years to come, but also the economic potential of this could not be understated. This was prior to aircrafts and so sea-based commerce was everything and holding the link between the Pacific and Atlantic oceans was an invaluable asset. As mentioned earlier in this essay the United States was looking to expand their markets and the Panama Canal only aided in that. Further instances of U.S. intervention in Latin America is when they put down a revolt in Cuba in 1917 and in 1920 sent representatives to draw up codes of conduct for new elected officials, two of which were,

³⁸ PBS NewsHour. (2014, August 15). How the Panama Canal helped make the U.S. a world power. PBS NewsHour. <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/panama-canal-helped-make-u-s-world-power>

The first condition was stated to be ‘a thorough acquaintance with the desires of the us government’, and the sixth condition was ‘amenability to suggestions which might be made to him by the American Legation’³⁹

Based on this alone it is clear that the U.S. interest in Open Door policy and expansion of the Monroe Doctrine was heavily motivated by profit. However, the U.S. tended to play this veneer of helping global advancement, no better is this seen with President Woodrow Wilson. Historian Gareth Steadman Jones describes American imperialism as non-territorial, and invisible. He elaborates on this by stating,

The 20th-century American empire, in intention at least, has been an invisible empire. American imperialism has been characterized by the concealment of American imperial interests behind a shield of supranational or intergovernmental organizations: the League of Nations, the UN, the World Bank, the Marshall Plan, the OAS, the Alliance for Progress. Secondly, it is noticeable that the United States has attempted to evade formal political control even when client governments have nakedly relied upon American military and political power Vietnam, South Korea, Taiwan, and certain Latin American states (the classical example is Cuba after the Platt Amendment).

This separates America from traditional imperialism and contrasts sharply from European powers of the time, as well as Japan. The use of inter-governmental organizations of course takes us to 1918 following WW1, in January Woodrow Wilson delivered the iconic fourteen-point speech. Steadman describes Wilson as American Imperialism's most coherent and righteous defender.⁴⁰ In his fourteen point speech Wilson positions himself as an anti-imperialist and progressive which makes sense as anti-imperialist rhetoric popular in the wake of the worst war in history at the time. This speech served as an inspiration to many countries that were victims of imperialism. Egypt and Korea were two of the nations that resonated and had their own responses to it. However, when examining the fourteen points under the lens of US imperial goals it becomes suddenly more insidious. For example, the points that are focused on opening the seas and prohibiting territorial changes, press for historically exploited nations to

³⁹ Jones 79

⁴⁰ Jones 80

compromise with powerful nations, and of course the formation of the League of nations. Opening the seas in particular is interesting as Steadman mentions the open door policy which he marks as an essential part of US imperialism prior to Wilson. As remarked upon earlier, one of America's hallmark achievements in the twentieth century was the Panama Canal and Roosevelt and his Open Door policy and expansion of the Monroe Doctrine are largely responsible for this shift. Wilson's call for open seas, would vastly expand American markets and line capitalist pockets, as well as allow for more American influence via the League of Nations and military bases. American Imperialism is characterized by its indirect approach, and the constant and consistent decision to avoid direct rule, instead choosing to destabilize foreign governments or prop up dictatorships that act within the American interest. The period of the Spanish-American War was an outlier in this and thus afterwards we see a return in form by Wilson and the following presidents.

Woodrow Wilson's fourteen points acted two-fold to set the stage for expansion of America's presence globally and achieve imperialistic goals, and as a branding exercise. America at this period had its only colonies, in Philippines, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and Guam. Nations that America was actively denying self determination and some it continues to do so to this day.⁴¹ There was no way in 1918 America planned on giving away these colonies, but with the Russian Revolution and the conclusion of WW1 the world was changing and in order for America to be at the forefront rather than the Bolsheviks, Wilson used their own rhetoric. Consider the fact that he mentions the liberation of European territories and seceding control back to the citizens of those territories. The majority of the points are dedicated to portray the Allies of WW1 as against the Imperialist forces. Wilson goes as far as to state, "In regard to

⁴¹ There are also the countless Latin American countries the U.S. intervened in and essentially turned into puppet states.

these essential rectifications of wrong and assertions of right we feel ourselves to be intimate partners of all the governments and peoples associated together against the Imperialists.”⁴² Very few would support that this was true of the Allies at this time, they were hypocritical, forcing the losers of the war to cede their colonial powers, while continuing and amassing their own.

Historians refer to the preceding period as Imperial America. At the time this was the largest war, the casualties were immense, and the order of the world had shifted. This was a great tragedy, it was clear the status quo could not persist and no one wanted another global war. The success of the Bolshevik revolution and the rising anti-imperial sentiments meant action needed to be taken.

The speech reframes the war as a victory against imperialism, rather than imperial powers battling it out. The speech shows that the coming changes and the League of nations will curb imperialism and lead to a peaceful future under self determination. It is a branding exercise to both reassure the public that the war will not occur again and that the victories were righteous in their fight. This however was too successful as it encouraged protest and the mobilization of many to fight for their rights for self determination, believing that America was on their side.

Prelude to War

In the American section, I briefly mentioned Korea and that was for a reason. In 1910, Japan annexed Korea. Korea and Taiwan formed the colonials of Japan. Whereas the United States was reluctant to direct colonial control, Japan openly embraced this form of imperialism. In Peter Duus’ chapter of *The Japanese Colonial Empire 1895-1945*, he posits that part of the annexation of Korea outside of the Pan-Asianist rhetoric had to do with the observed trends of global commerce. The Late Meiji leaders of Japan were looking at international conflicts and

⁴² National WWI Museum and Memorial. (2019, May 31). The Fourteen Points. National WWI Museum and Memorial. <https://www.theworldwar.org/learn/peace/fourteen-points>

found the majority were about commerce.⁴³ In 1902 foreign Minister Komura Juntaro would state,

For a number of years the Western countries . . . have been zealous in expanding their rights in mining, or in railroads, or in internal waterways, and in various other directions on the Asian continent, especially in China. . . . However, when we look at the measures [taken by] our own empire, which has the most important ties of interest in the area, separated by only a thin stretch of water, there is not much to be seen yet. Both those in government and those outside it regard this as highly regrettable.⁴⁴

Economic expansion was deemed necessary in their mission to place Japan as a world power and to control the deficit. This move into Korea was supported largely by many Pan-Asianist societies as this move coincided with their rhetoric around Korea. However, for the most part after the Japanese acquisition of Korea, they did not push economic growth outside of agriculture. It was not until the 1920s and 30s that manufacturing was heavily pushed in Korea. In fact, Japanese leadership seemed to prioritize education, railroad construction, and order forms of “modernization”. However, Japan’s colonization of Korea was anything but benevolent, in fact many felt betrayed by Japan in their acquisition of Korea, as they had believed that Japan’s war with Russia was to preserve peace in East Asia and when it became clear that Japan’s regional leadership did not necessarily mean equal partnership, it felt like a betrayal. An Chung-gun was a young Korean intellectual who would go onto assassinate Prince Ito Hirobumi, the resident general of Korea, his piece “A Discourse on Peace in East Asia” highlighted some interesting proposals for a joint Pan-Asianist state that would never come to be. His piece proposed a common East Asian currency, a joint military, and a joint bank. This work was never finished as he was executed for assassinating Hirobumi. He speaks to the betrayal Koreans felt at the end of the Russo-Japanese war when they were subjugated and faced an unequal treaty and

⁴³ Peter Duus. 133. “Economic Dimensions of Meiji Imperialism: The Case of Korea, 1895-1910” in the *The Japanese Colonial Empire 1895-1945* Princeton University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv10crf6c.9> 1983.

⁴⁴ Peter 133.

that this has caused Asia to lose trust in Japan. The proposal I mentioned above is some solutions he lists for Japan to regain Asian trust and be successful in enacting Pan-Asianist rhetoric. This is particularly interesting as this is a direct contradiction between ideals and reality. For the majority of this paper, Pan-Asian rhetoric has been largely Japanese-centric and so to see a young Korean who agrees with the principles of this rhetoric actually call for decentralization of Japan from it is particularly important. As Japan did not do this, they did not follow through with the Pan-Asianist state and instead created an empire. This is an important point as Japan acts in the same way as Wilson, promising partnership and a mutual uplift of Asiatic nations, but does not follow through. It acts in its own interest. In this way, Pan-Asianism becomes a branding/marketing exercise similar to the fourteen points.

A year after Woodrow Wilson's fourteen points speech the March 1st movement in Korea occurred. On March 1, 1919, several Korean nationalist read a declaration of independence in a public park.⁴⁵ Several more nationalist would do this in other parts of the country and people would flock in support. The Japanese government was caught off guard by this and throughout March and April the protest would continue. The protestors were mostly nonviolent, but Japan responded with brutality leaving the official Japanese count as 553 killed and 12,000 jailed, the protestors state that it was 7500 with 45,000 jailed.⁴⁶ Regardless of the numbers it is clear that the Japanese response was unnecessarily brutal. The Korean populace was dissatisfied with the Japanese government and their occupation and the brutal suppression of the peaceful protest did not help Japan's image. It is important to note that many Pan-Asianist believed that Korean annexation was a necessary step in an eventual equal union, though it increasingly proved untrue. The Koryukai were critical of the Japanese colonial administration after 1910, with the March

⁴⁵ March First Movement of 1919 (Korea). (n.d.). In *The Wiley-Blackwell encyclopedia of social and political movements*. John Wiley & Sons., <https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470674871>

⁴⁶ March First Movement of 1919 (Korea). (n.d.)

1st movement they highlighted how unfair it was that Koreans had to become subjects of the emperor and not receive the same benefits. In 1921 they formed the Dokokai, while heavily critical of the Japanese colonial government, they did not support Korean independence.⁴⁷ The mission was simply for equality and not to return Korea to the Koreans, in fact their association states in *The Asian Review*, “The basic principle of the annexation of Korea on the part of Japan was to establish equality between the two nations...”⁴⁸ Now this statement sounds outrageous and most likely is. Taking land or territory, and installing one’s own form of government is the antithesis of equality, especially since the government was not Korean, rather it was Japanese. Though due to the attention this event received and internal pressure Japan would begin to loosen its reins on Korea and allow them more civic freedoms.

The 1920s was an interesting period for Japan. Following World War 1 and the failure to get the Equality of Races acknowledged by the United Nations and the forced demilitarization by Versailles treaty, there was an influx of further Anti-Western movements. However, there is a divide that comes from leftist and nationalist. No better is this seen with the Yuzonsha (Society for those who remain), founded by Okawa Shumei and Mitsukawa, they wanted to spread radical pan-Asianist messaging to university students, they also somehow managed to convince Kita Ikki to join their group. The group would fall apart in 1923 when Okawa and Kita would get into a fight that would lead to the organization's dissolution. While their society was heavily nationalist, Okawa himself would actually go onto support the Bolsheviks as they upset the status quo. He regarded marxism as a uniquely European issue. The Yuzonsha Foundation principles in particular were interesting as they stated that their lingua franca was Esperanto as they consider Japanese to be complex to learn and a barrier, the way they characterize Asia is

⁴⁷ Saaler, S., & Szpilman, C. W. A. 76-77

⁴⁸ Saaler, S., & Szpilman, C. W. A. 78

particularly interesting as their opening statement is, “The time has now come to fight a war to liberate slaves, both domestically and internationally.”⁴⁹ Which is similar to Okawa’s own work, *Fukko Ajia Shomondai*, in which he states, “Today’s Asia is Europe’s slave. What problems can a slave have? What ideals can a slave hold? A slave is nothing, but a machine made of flesh that obeys his or her master’s wishes.”⁵⁰ The idea of Japan liberating Asia existed for years, but depicting Asia as slaves or stating so directly to my knowledge is unique at this point. This furthers the idea of Pan-Asianism as a revolutionary movement, though it wasn’t at least in the way it was enacted by the Japanese government. This sentiment would only be heightened by the 1924 curtailment of Japanese immigration to the United States⁵¹ increasingly anti-western and racial sentiments were being driven to the forefront. These events culminated in a Pan-Asian conference in 1926, which was anything but unified. There were debates as to whether Korean delegates should be allowed to participate in the conference and Chinese delegates wanted Japan to revoke its 21 demands.⁵² The conference was most notable for the response that came from the West, in which it added to the fear of a rising Pan-Asian movement.⁵³

The War and Imperial Japan

The Great Depression forced America to focus more inward and many Americans themselves were weary after the involvement Wilson facilitated with the League of Nations. The invasion of Manchuria by Japan following the Mukden incident was barely addressed by the United States. The United States' only response was the Stimson Doctrine, which essentially stated they do not recognize Japan’s claims to Manchuria. For the most part in the thirties its policy was isolation. Japan's military coup had proved successful and they left the League of

⁴⁹ Saaler, S., & Szpilman, C. W. A. 73

⁵⁰ Saaler, S., & Szpilman, C. W. A. 83-84

⁵¹ Saaler, S., & Szpilman, C. W. A. 57

⁵² Saaler, S., & Szpilman, C. W. A. 110

⁵³ As far as imperialism and foreign policy the 1920s is pretty unremarkable aside from the League of Nations and Versailles-Washington treaty.

Nations following the condemnation and made steady headway into Asia. Ideologically, they faced a shift. This shift caused calls for Japan to “rejoin Asia” as it separated itself from the League of Nations and Western powers.

In 1932, a piece called *Nihon no Ketsui* was published for Japan's resolve. In which, it states the fact that white people dominate the world controlling 87% of the world's land and 69% of its territory, essentially pointing out the hypocrisy in their condemnation of Japan for the invasion of China. Anti west sentiment is not new, neither is pointing out Western hypocrisy, but what is new/unique to this piece is the direct targeting of Britain and the U.S. Most Pan-Asianist piece have used broad language like white or Western, but this directly outlines Britain and the U.S. as a threat to their mission.⁵⁴ It is particularly interesting to see the transition of the language of 1920s Japan incorporated into imperial Japan. In no way were any of these people Marxist, they were nationalistic and very much supported a fascist rule, however, the language they use is akin to Marxist. For example, the “Imperial Asia” piece from 1937 by Kanokogi Kazunobu, speaks to saving and liberating Asia by transforming Japan into Imperial Japan. Stating that China and India fell due to their respective spirits and only Japan has the necessary spirit of synthesis to save both India and China. A similarity is found in Matsui Iwane's 1933 “Greater Asianism” speech, in which he states

The thirty million people of Manchuria were relieved by means of the Empire's sympathy and good faith. They stand to gain honorable independence. But things must not stop there. Next, we must also extend to the 400 million people of China the same help and deep sympathy that we have given Manchuria and relieve them from their miserable condition of political, economic, and intellectual subjugation by various countries of the world.⁵⁵

This phrasing is hauntingly similar to McKinley's on the Philippines and the tone of it describes Japan's incursion as benevolent despite the active harm and death they were perpetuating. The

⁵⁴ Saaler, S., & Szpilman, C. W. A. 159-160

⁵⁵ Saaler, S., & Szpilman, C. W. A. 154

whole piece is very odd as it uses the tone of revolutionaries and calls for militarism and a hostile takeover of a foreign power. The weird part of this is that Pan-Asianism has always had this idea of Japan as the leader and head of the movement, but here it is so blunt and over the top that it reads like a parody. The revolutionary idea of uniting the Asia nations and organizing them to fight the West instead turned into a fascist call for Empire. It's hard to describe it, but in Japan's attempts to "return to Asia" it has instead become more of a Western power in its rhetoric.

On December 7, 1941, Japan bombed Pearl Harbor, a day that would become infamous in US history, yet Japan bombed more than Oahu, it bombed Guam and the Philippines, as well as several British territories. Yet, what is remembered are those killed in Hawaii, specifically the American troops. An article from the Guardian displays the following image,



Daniel Immerwahr. (2019). *A map of the 'Greater United States' as it was in 1941* [Image] The Guardian <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2019/feb/15/the-us-hidden-empire-overseas-territories-united-states-guam-puerto-rico-american-samoa>

This is what the United States looked like in 1941, yet many citizens only considered the interconnected portions and sometimes Hawaii. This is why when Franklin Roosevelt was composing his speech he went through several drafts, only including Hawaii, when originally

included the Philippines, and even then he emphasized that Hawaii was American despite not being a state at that point. It was an American territory, but most would prefer not to acknowledge that point. Roosevelt even goes as far to emphasize that “American military naval and military forces were lost”, as well as “American lives”. There is an underlying presumption that Americans do not care about their territories or colonies, and that would prove true as history does not remember the Philippines or the bombs and attacks on it, but rather the singularly attack on Hawaii, which claimed fewer lives. America was still an empire at this point and aside from the Philippines, the majority of the territories listed above, are still held by the U.S. today, but it wasn’t seen as one. It is interesting to note, this now as we turn to America's entrance into the war, as this will become a theme.

The Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere, coined by Matsuoka Yosuke in the year 1941 in a speech to the Japanese Imperial Diet, in which he claims the goal is to create an equal partnership between the Nanking government and Japan. He states that in the Sino-Japanese basic treaty, that two nations would respect each other’s sovereignty and that Japanese force be stationed in Inner Mongolia and North China, but otherwise leave the rest of China to China. The speech also outlined that the relationship between the Soviet Union and Japan should not be meddled with. Essentially, this speech outlines a plan for a pact between China, Manchuko, and Japan to strengthen the East.⁵⁶ This concept would be added to in 1945 as the war in the Pacific escalated, the piece entitled “The Historical Basis of Greater Asianism ” added to the identity of what it meant to be Asian. The author, Hirano Yoshitaro, emphasizes three things: the rural community, the family system and finally the concept of ethnopolitics. He proposed that the rural village communities of China were the social essence of Asia, and he emphasized the communal/communitarian values of Asia versus the individual/commercial values of the West.

⁵⁶ Saaler, S., & Szpilman, C. W. A. 225-226

He also had a very paternalistic view of Japan guiding its Asian “brothers and sisters”. His piece emphasizes the belief that China has become a pawn for America and Britain stating,

The Chiang government has ceded its own territory to the United States for us as air bases, has renounced the principle of Chinese independence, and has become a mere subject of America and Britain who are both conspiring against the nationalist movement that intends to revive the Asian homelands... In contrast to those who prostrate themselves before America, Britain, and Russia, Japan’s construction of a Greater East Asia represents a genuine emancipation of Greater East Asia by Asians, for Asians.⁵⁷

In particular the line “by Asians, for Asians”, is what stands out of the excerpt above, the idea that the Second Sino-Japanese war was a independence movement for China or creating Asia run and presided over by Asians. This piece is fascinating as it characterizes nearly a hundred years of intellectualism. Remembering the rejection of the term Asian and seeing how the Western concept was appropriate and turned into this, is fascinating. “By Asians, for Asians” is symbolic of every change and shift in Pan-Asianism from 1853 to 1945. Here the Asian identity has been cemented with Japan as its protector and head, the enemies are clear and the goal is this Greater Co-prosperity Sphere, but it doesn’t specify Chinese ruling Chinese, but rather Asians over Asians, the clear idea being Japan over China. It stands as a perfect example of how this shift has changed not only the rhetoric, but how Japan has appropriated decades of intellectualism and incorporated it into its imperial identity.

Conclusion

With the dropping of two atomic bombs and Russia’s entrance into the Pacific War the conflict comes to an end, many of the Pan-Asianist societies are broken up. Many remaining imperial territories are returned from both victors and vanquished. The Philippines is granted independence in 1946, and Japan would be occupied by the Americans with its government and nation completely restructured. With the death of Roosevelt and the tensions rising between the

⁵⁷ Saaler, S., & Szpilman, C. W. A. 276

United States and Russia, would heavily influence the U.S.' occupation of Japan and how they shaped the country. Specifically, article nine of their constitution which caused the former power to forever renounce war, the Times puts it this way,

The U.S. could use its Japanese bases to support military action elsewhere in Asia, could bring into Japan any weapons it chose, including H-bombs, could even use its forces to aid the Japanese government in putting down internal disturbances. These were bonds that left Japan precious little room for international maneuver and that chafed increasingly against dark memories of Hiroshima and the deep national pride of the Japanese people.⁵⁸ In fact, with the Korean war, the U.S. soon began to look for ways around this clause forming the “self defense forces”, essentially the U.S. would use its place in Japan to transform it into an ideal Cold War ally in Asia. Restructuring the education, police, and government, before exiting in 1952. The U.S. at the end of World War 2 was the official world power, with its only competitor being the Soviet Union. The United States would move into Europe and create industry and commercial relationships through the Marshall plan. The formation of NATO has also been cited as a tool for American imperialism and financial goals. Many cite the War on Terror as an example of this, but what is clear from 1945 to the present U.S. intervention in foreign affairs to maintain their interest have continued this cycle of indirect imperialism. Direct colonization as with the Philippines has largely fell out of place. The U.S. still maintains its territories who are not able to vote in presidential elections and are rarely recognized as part of the U.S. so much so that many regard Puerto Ricans as immigrants when they are citizens.

The final source for this paper is K.M. Pannikar's “Asia and Western Dominance”, and this piece precisely summarizes the evolution of the Asian identity, Japanese Pan-Asianism, and the imperial era. Pannikar cites Japan as an aggressor in China⁵⁹ and cites Pan-Asianism as a reaction to Western oppression. He states first that the historical basis for Asia has some merits

⁵⁸ Waxman, O. B. (2018, August 6). How the U.S. and Japan Became Allies Even After Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Time; Time. <https://time.com/5358113/hiroshima-nagasaki-history-reconciliation/>

⁵⁹ Rightfully so

within non-Islamic Asia's politics, religious approach, and art. He also state that Asia as a concept did not exist before the nineteenth century and that the nationalistic identity was formed in resistance to Europe. He states,

In any case, if it did not exist, the common experience of a hundred years has created a political background. All Asian countries have had to go through the same suffering, fight the same battles, and meet the same enemy...The racial arrogance of Europeans, their assumed attitude of intellectual and moral superiority, and even religious propaganda to which all the Asian countries were subjected gave rise to a common political outlook in Asia of the twentieth century.⁶⁰

This establishes the centralized point that in an imperialistic world dominated by European powers, and arbitrary concept of Asia being ascribed to them, it is no wonder that a movement for unity emerged. That the idea of pushing out the West and creating a unified Asia came into being. Furthermore he elaborates that Europe introduced this concept of a united front to Asians. For even when the specific European nations were at war with each other they treated Asia uniformly. He states,

Even when the Franco-German War was being fought in Europe, the pressure of the doctrine of European solidarity against Asians compelled the German minister to line up behind his French colleagues in the affairs of Tientsin. Similar was the attitude of the Powers to Japan during the period of treaty revision. Japanese efforts to sign bilateral treaties were frustrated on numerous occasions by the desire of the Western countries to stand together. From 1880 to 1914-during the period of imperialism-the Europeans were united against Asia, and this attitude, in its turn, gave birth to Asianism...⁶¹

The interesting part of this is that going back through history and this paper specifically, the Europeans have had a united identity in whiteness and racial superiority, while the matters of their specific countries have been contentious and in competition with each other, when it comes to "outsiders" they are relegated and pushed out. Japan saw the imperialistic nations of the world and attempted to mold itself in their likeness, but at every turn they were turned away and alliances formed against them. They received a token seat at the table, but eventually even that

⁶⁰ Saaler, S., & Szpilman, C. W. A. 287-288

⁶¹ Saaler, S., & Szpilman, C. W. A. 288

was taken away. This paper is simply reflecting on the moment Japan was forced open by the U.S. to its occupation and how the imperial world influenced Japan and how in turn Japan created its imperial identity. Since Commodore Perry landed in Edo Bay, the history of the Japanese nation and American society has been linked.

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