

MILITARIST JAPAN NOTES

BACKSTORY

1853–1868 – Americans arrive in 1853- Opening of Japan. **Meiji Restoration**: Japan rapidly modernises and militarises to avoid colonisation like China (e.g. Century of humiliation)→ industrialised by early 1900s.

1894–1905 – **Sino-Japanese War (1895) and Russo-Japanese War (1905)** → Victory. Gains Korea, Taiwan, (some parts) Manchuria. Rising power and shocks West. Japan- wants seen as equal

1915 – WW1 period- **21 demands** to China to extend more control. Consequence: Poor relations with China, seen as aggressive to West

1919 – **Paris Peace Conference**- Japan's racial equality clause rejected → feels insulted, resentment at Western powers.

1920s – **Taisho democracy**. But still corruption and inequality, militarism ongoing, modernisation did not reflect rural areas→ growing public discontent.

1929 – **Great Depression** begins → Worldwide economic collapse. Suffer (no natural resources)- Rely on trade+ exports (demand dropped) → Growing discontent as civilian govt could not fix, unemployment, social instability

1931 – **Manchurian Crisis**: Staged bomb of railway at Mukden. Kwantung Army invades Manchuria without approval → weak civilian govt loses control, shows growing influence of military (acted independently, no consequences)

1932 – **League of Blood Incident**: ultranationalists assassinate key business/political elites → weakens democracy, militarism rises.

1933 – **LON condemns invasion of Manchuria**. Japan leaves LON.

1936 – **26 Feb Incident**: young army officers attempt coup "Showa Restoration" (restore power to emperor) → Fails but 2 PMs assassinated, and public sympathy leads to more military influence in govt.

ASPECTS OF REGIME		
MILITARISM	PROPAGANDA/CONTROL	GENDER ROLES
- Majority of Govt under military influence- Civilian leaders lost power → Military only answer directly to the Emperor - Ultrationalism- Japan as racially and culturally superior. Hostility especially towards Chinese - Aggressive Expansion: Need territory for resources (e.g. Manchuria, SEAsia), seen as liberating Asia from colonial rule "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere) - Bushido spirit: loyalty, obedience, never surrender until the end (e.g. Kamikaze suicide bombers)	- State-controlled media - Newspapers, radio, film all used to promote state's ideology - Emperor worship- Hirohito portrayed as divine god, students bow to picture of him, sing national anthem morning - Suppression of opposition- Secret police, Kempeitai to spy on public - Indoctrination of youths: In education. In occupied territories: Nipponisation of youths, encourage them support war effort - Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere- claimed to "liberate" Asia from West, seen in much propaganda material	- Women's role: Serve the nation by raising children, be housewives (Good wife, wise mother, "ryosai kenbo". Although were asked into labour force in later years of war. Comfort Women system: Sexual slavery in occupied territories - Men's role: Soldiers, serve duty for country by joining military Additional: Brutal torture and atrocities committed in invaded territories. (e.g. Rape of Nanking- human experimentation in Unit 731)

AGGRESSIVE EXPANSION AND DECLINE

1937 – **Marco Polo Bridge Incident** (Japanese soldiers demand entry into China, gunfire exchanged) → Sino-Japanese war (WW2 in Asia).

1940 – **Enters French Indochina for invasion** (Motivation: SEAsia for resources, Greater East Asia co-prosperity sphere).

1941 – Yamamoto knew confrontation with US inevitable → **Bomb Pearl Harbour (7 Dec)** to distract them. But failed to bomb repair stations. Next day declare war on US and UK

1942 – **Military advances invade rest of Asia** for ex SEAsia for vital resources (oil, rubber, tin). **Battle of Midway (June)**: Major naval defeat for Japan. Turning point where US has upper hand

1944 – **Allies launch "island hopping" strategy**, recapturing key territories→ Japan declines further.

1945 – **Firebombing of Tokyo** in February→ devastating- massive civilian casualties and destruction.

1945 – **Atomic bombs dropped** on Hiroshima (6 Aug) and Nagasaki (9 Aug) by US. If not, would've been Operation Downfall, proposed large-scale land invasion of Japan. Aug 8- Soviets declare war with Japan. Which led to surrender is debated upon.

1945 – **Hirohito announces Japan's surrender** on Aug 15 → End of WW2 in Asia Pacific

***This is just a general overview.