Paper 1: Japan Source Pages #1, rise of Militarism/Nationalism

**Source A**

**Excerpt from the Meiji Constitution (1889), translated as part of the Hanover College Historical Texts Collections, USA, located at:** [**http://history.hanover.edu/texts/1889con.html**](http://history.hanover.edu/texts/1889con.html)

*Chapter 1. The Emperor*

*Article 1. The Empire of Japan shall be reigned over and governed by a line of Emperors unbroken for ages eternal.*

*Article 2. The Imperial Throne shall be succeeded to by Imperial male descendants, according to the provisions of the Imperial House Law.*

*Article 3. The Emperor is sacred and inviolable.*

*Article 4. The Emperor is the head of the Empire, combining in Himself the rights of sovereignty, and exercises them, according to the provisions of the present Constitution.*

*Article 5. The Emperor exercises the legislative power with the consent of the Imperial Diet.*

*Article 6. The Emperor gives sanctions to laws, and orders them to be promulgated and executed.*

*Article 7. The Emperor convokes the Imperial Diet, opens, closes, and prorogues it, and dissolves the House of Representatives.*

**Source B**

**“Don’t twist in my hands! I want to see how your skin tears on my teeth!” Russian postcard from just before the Russo-Japanese War depicting a Russian Cossack (warrior) eating a Japanese soldier for breakfast, about 1904.**

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**Source C**

**Excerpt from a *Letter from US President Theodore Roosevelt to Senator Knox*, 1909, Papers of Theodore Roosevelt, Library of Congress, Washington, DC, USA. Roosevelt negotiated the Treaty of Portsmouth that resolved the Russo-Japanese War in 1905. Senator Knox becamse US secretate of state (minister of foreign affairs) in 1909 for US President Taft.**

*But with Japan the case is different. She is a most formidable military power. Her people have peculiar fighting capacity. They are very proud, very warlike, very sensitive, and are influenced by two contradictory feelings; namely, a great self-confidence, both ferocious and conceited, due to their victory over the mighty empire of Russia; and a great touchiness because they would like to be considered as on a full equality with, as one of the brotherhood of, Occidental (European states and the US) nations, and have been bitterly humiliated to find that even their allies, the English, and their friends, the Americans, won’t admit them to association and citizenship, as they admit the least advanced or most decadent European peoples. Moreover, Japan’s population is increasing rapidly and demands an outlet, and the Japense laborers, small farmers, and petty traders would, if permitted, flock by the hundred thousand into the United States, Canada, and Australia.*

**Source D**

**Excerpt from *The Autobiography of Ozaki Yukio: The Struggle for Constitutional Government in Japan*** **by Ozaki Yukio, published by Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, USA, 2001, pp.341-2. Ozaki was a member of Japan’s House of Representatives from 1889 to 1953. The following passage concerns the treaties signed by the Japanese at the Washington Naval Conference 1921-2.**

*Accordingly, Japan suspended the…fleet [construction] program and was thus able to save the nation an annual naval shipbuilding cost of $500 million yen…*

*The most ironic part of it all was that both the government and the people, rather than rejoicing that the naval agreement had enabled us to save an annual national expenditure of 500 million yen, shouted ‘national crisis!’ and ‘national shame!’ because we were limited to a ratio of three against the British and United States shares of five. They called me by such abrasive names as ‘traitor’ and ‘hireling of America’…*

*…With the country crying ‘national crisis!’ I published a booklet titled ‘Good Fortune has Befallen our Nation,’ in which I explained that arms limitations was the way to save Japan – that far from being a national crisis this was a most felicitous turn of events.*

**Source E**

**Excerpt from *Japanese Diplomacy in a Dilemma: New Light on Japan’s China Policy, 1924-1929*** **by Nobuya Bamba, published by the University of British Columbia Press, Vancouver, Canada, 1972, pp. 61-2. Bamba specializes in diplomatic and intellectual history of Japan and is a professor at Tsuda College, Tokyo, Japan.**

*The effects of the depression were observed in villages as well as in cities. This period is often called the period of ‘agrarian panic.’ Peasants suffered from the steady decline in farm prices. The price of rice, for example, taking the average for three years from 1911 to 1913 as 100, was 114 in 1925, but dropped to 98 in the next year and to 87 in 1928. The general index of farm prices declined from 118 in 1925 to 93 in 1928. In terms of actual income, the average price of one sack of rice cost only about 6-7 yen in 1928. This meant that about 40 percent of the agrarian population earned less than 60 yen from the rice crop after having paid rent to the landlord. This was worse than even the lowest income group of urban workers.*

**Source F**

**Excerpt from *The Imperial Rescript on Education*, signed by Emperor Meiji 1890. located at *Children and Youth in History*,** [**https://chnm.gmu.edu/cyh/primary-sources/136**](https://chnm.gmu.edu/cyh/primary-sources/136)**.**

*Know ye [you], Our subjects:*

*Our Imperial Ancestors have founded Our [the Meiji Emperor’s] Empire on a basis broad and everlasting, and have deeply and firmly implanted virtue; Our subjects ever united in loyalty and filial piety [respect for elders and those in authority] have from generation to generation illustrated the beauty thereof. This is the glory of the fundamental character of Our Empire, and herein also lies the source of Our education. Ye, Our subjects, be filial to your parents, affectionate to your brothers and sisters; as husbands and wives be harmonious, as friends true; bear yourselves in modesty and moderation; extend your benevolence to all; pursue learning and cultivate arts, and thereby develop intellectual faculties and perfect moral powers; furthermore, advance public good and promote common interests; always respect the Constitution and observe the laws; should emergency arise, offer yourselves courageously to the State; and thus guard and maintain the prosperity of Our Imperial state; and thus guard and maintain the prosperity of Our Imperial Throne coeval with heaven and earth [for as long as heaven and earth exist]. So shall ye not only be Our good and faithful subjects, but render illustrious the best traditions of your forefathers.*

*The way here set forth is indeed the teaching bequeathed by Our Imperial Ancestors, to be observed alike by Their Descendants and the subjects, infallible, for all ages and true in all places. It is Our wish to lay it to heart in all reverence in common with you, Our subjects, that we may all attain to the same virtue.*

*October 30, 1890*

**Source G**

**Excerpt from *Fifty Years of Light and Dark: The Hirohito Era*** **by the staff of the *Mainichi Daily News*, The Mainichi Newspapers, Tokyo, Japan, 1975, p. 11. *Mainichi Shimbun,* or *Daily News,* has been published since 1872 and is one of the largest media companies in contemporary Japan.**

*Hirohito was now the ‘God Emperor’ of the almost 2,600-year-old nation, being the 124th in line from the Heaven-descended ancestor called [Emperor] Jimmu. Although scholars found the early part of the Imperial lineage dubious, not a single one of the ‘beloved subjects’ was expected to question the ‘established’ godliness of the new Ruler of Japan.*

**Source H**

**Excerpt from *Emperor Hirohito and His Chief Aide-de-Camp: The Honjō Diary, 1933* by Honjō Shigeru, translation and introduction by Mikiso Hane, published by the University of Tokyo Press, Tokyo, Japan, 1982, p. 25. Honjō was head of the Kwantung Army of Japan from 1931 to 1932 and later served as the military’s liason with Japan’s Emperor until 1936. Mikiso Hane was an internationally renowned historian on Japanese history and a professor at Knox College in the USA from 1961 to 1992.**

*[Ultranationalist ideologist] Ōkawa Shūmei placed the emperor system at the core of his thinking, regarding it as the source of morality and religion. He emphasized the ‘way of the Japanese’ and the ‘Japanese spirit,’ which embodies ‘statism, idealism, the principle of combat and spirituality.’ ‘The Japanese spirit,’ in Ōkawa’s opinion was incompatible with the ‘Anglo-American democratic spirit which is the product of individualism, utilitarianism, hedonism, and materialism.’ A second Restoration was needed, Ōkawa asserted, to free the people from the oppression of materialism and unite the people and the Emperor. The uniqueness of Japan entitled it to become the leader of Asia…*

**Source I**

**Excerpt from *The Age of Hirohito: In Search of Modern Japan* by Daikichi Irokawa, published by The Free Press, New York City, USA, 1995, p. 13. The author is a professor at Tokyo Keizai University and has published books on Japanese history and culture in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.**

*By cleverly making use of right-wing [Kōdōha] power in the military and political arenas but keeping a safe distance from the extreme rightists, a group of pragmatic military officers known as Tōseiha and government bureaucrats linked with new and old zaibatsu then seeking to make the Asian continent their base of operations. This faction set out to free Japan from economic depression by pursuing a course of aggression.*

*To further their objectives, they assassinated Zhang Zuolin, and in the same year imprisoned several thousand communists and labor leaders.*