

Week 7 – Japan in WWII

Japan controls Korea and Taiwan as colonies

Japan became the hegemonic power in East Asia after the Sino-Japanese War in 1894 and the Russo-Japanese War in 1904.

Japan is now considered among the great Nations and an imperial power. After witnessing the Opium War and seeing the fall of China, Japan opened the country to Europe and developed rapidly.

Westernization vs Modernization:

Westernization would consider more on the idea, culture, and even language. Also, Western philosophy changes people's thinking.

Modernization relies on industrial and military techniques.

At the WWI:

Japan joined the war on the side of the Entente. It did not play a large role but mostly exported war materials to its Western allies and intended to expand further into China when it presented the Twenty-One Demands in 1915. After the Paris Peace Conference, Japan received the German territory (Qingdao, Shandong in China) as a reward.

Taisho Democracy (short-living period)

The Navy had a strong connection with Americans and Europeans. The old military is losing power and falling out of influence. American pop culture comes into Japan, and more European Philo gets into Japan.

Emerging political parties started to expand and diversify ushering in a small era of democracy for Japan in the 1920s.

Seiyukai vs Minseito vs growing number of parties.

Ultimately a radical shift from its imperial days.

See success in the early to mid-part of the decade, but economic troubles soon hit around the later part of the decade.

However, in the 1920s came the Great Depression. And Japan faces a great debate: To continue going with the West or to stick to imperialism which has worked well until now. Conflicts between foreign ideologies and Japanese ideologies.

Army ration Rises:

Towards the end of the Taisho period in the late 1920s, the recession plagued Japan. Democracy is ultimately seen as a failure. Seen as an opportunity, Japan's military fraction uses this chance to win favor in politics as an alternative solution. Many of the pro-democratic supporters are silenced either through intimidation or assassinations. As the army fraction continues to rise in power, alternative dissenters get driven out of influence.

Japan's recession

Japan's colonization of Korea and Taiwan, as well as its heavy investment in Manchuria, became a heavy burden for Japan.

After acquiring Manchuria territory and railway from the Russians after the Russo-Japan War, Japan began to invest in acquiring resources as well as a railway industry. During the 1930s and 1940s, Manchuria becomes a prime location for Japan expanded empire in which Japanese settlers make their way.