

The sources in this chapter focus on each of these three developments—the struggle with Western influence, the growth of nationalism, and China's revolutionary turmoil—that affected the peoples of these regions so deeply in the period between World Wars I and II. In the process, the sources will also provide insights into some of this period's social, cultural, and military developments. This sets the stage for the end of colonial rule and the realignments of power that would occur throughout the world in the years following 1945.

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## PRIMARY SOURCES

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### Japanese Nationalism and Expansionism

*Hashimoto Kingoro*

*Japan emerged from its self-imposed exile in the 1850s to being one of the most militarily powerful nations in the world by the 1930s. In the course of this transformation, Japan defeated China and, more importantly, Russia in 1905, and acquired an Asian empire in its quest for equality with the colonial powers of the world. During the 1920s and 1930s, nationalist groups gained influence in Japan and elements of the military became increasingly involved in politics. Overseas, Japan followed a policy of growing adventurism and expansion.*

*Whatever non-Japanese thought of Japan's territorial expansion, the vast majority of Japanese agreed with it. First, there was the attempt to be equal with the major military and economic powers (Britain, the United States, and France); one of the ways to accomplish that goal was to have colonies as they did. Second, there was the feeling that Japanese civilization was superior, and the rest of Asia should appreciate the exporting of it.*

*These sentiments are reflected in the following selection by Hashimoto Kingoro, an ultranationalist. Here he justifies Japan's foreign policy of colonial acquisition.*

**Consider:** *The appeal of this argument; Hashimoto's attitudes toward the West; why, according to Hashimoto, policies based on nationalism and expansion are justified for Japan.*

We have already said that there are only three ways left to Japan to escape from the pressure of surplus population. We are like a great crowd of people packed into a small and narrow room, and there are only three doors through which we might escape, namely emigration, advance into world markets, and expansion of territory. The first

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SOURCE: Ryusaku Tsuneda et al., eds., *Sources of Japanese Tradition* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1961), pp. 796–98.

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door, emigration, has been barred to us by the anti-Japanese immigration policies of other countries. The second door, advance into world markets, is being pushed shut by tariff barriers and the abrogation of commercial treaties. What should Japan do when two of the three doors have been closed against her?

It is quite natural that Japan should rush upon the last remaining door.

It may sound dangerous when we speak of territorial expansion, but the territorial expansion of which we speak does not in any sense of the word involve the occupation of the possessions of other countries, the planting of the Japanese flag thereon, and the declaration of their annexation to Japan. It is just that since the Powers have suppressed the circulation of Japanese materials and merchandise abroad, we are looking for some place overseas where Japanese capital, Japanese skills and Japanese labor can have free play, free from the oppression of the white race.

We would be satisfied with just this much. What moral right do the world powers who have themselves closed to us the two doors of emigration and advance into world markets have to criticize Japan's attempt to rush out of the third and last door?

If they do not approve of this, they should open the doors which they have closed against us and permit the free movement overseas of Japanese emigrants and merchandise. . . .

At the time of the Manchurian incident, the entire world joined in criticism of Japan. They said that Japan was an untrustworthy nation. They said that she had recklessly brought cannon and machine guns into Manchuria, which was the territory of another country, flown airplanes over it, and finally occupied it. But the military action taken by Japan was not in the least a selfish one. Moreover, we do not recall ever having taken so much as an inch of territory belonging to another nation. The result of this incident was the establishment of the splendid new nation of Manchuria. The Powers are still discussing whether or not to recognize this new nation, but regardless of whether or not other nations recognize her, the Manchurian empire has already been established, and now, seven years after its creation, the empire is further consolidating its foundations with the aid of its friend, Japan.

And if it is still protested that our actions in Manchuria were excessively violent, we may wish to ask the white race just which country it was that sent warships and troops to India, South Africa, and Australia and slaughtered innocent natives, bound their hands and feet with iron chains, lashed their backs with iron whips, proclaimed these territories as their own, and still continues to hold them to this very day?

They will invariably reply, these were all lands inhabited by untamed savages. These people did not know how to develop the abundant resources of their land for the benefit of mankind. Therefore it was the wish of God, who created heaven and earth for mankind, for us to develop these undeveloped lands and to promote the happiness of mankind in their stead. God wills it.

This is quite a convenient argument for them. Let us take it at face value. Then there is another question that we must ask them.

Suppose that there is still on this earth land endowed with abundant natural resources that have not been developed at all by the white race. Would it not then be God's will and the will of Providence that Japan go there and develop those resources for the benefit of mankind?

And there still remain many such lands on this earth.

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