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Moritz Munderloh

The Imperial Japanese Army
as a Factor in Spreading
Militarism and Fascism in Prewar Japan

Magisterarbeit an der LMU München, 2012

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For Carl and Wanda Wehner, in memoriam.

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Introduction

A prominent aspect of the discussion in regards to whether Japan can be labeled fascist during the 1930's until its defeat in 1945 is the lack of a fascist mass movement concentrated in a fascist political party. Maruyama Masao (丸山眞男) notes that Japan, until 1936, lacked a fascist mass movement and that the fascist terrorists did not wish to create such a movement.¹ He divides Japanese fascism into 'fascism from below' and 'fascism from above' and explains that the military itself, as a result of the fascist terrorism actually gained more political power, and became an important force in advancing 'fascism from above.'² Was it just the military's position of power that enabled it to spread militarism and fascism? Was it not the mass base of *militarized* and willing followers within the populace, who had been indoctrinated for decades, who came to cheer the fascist terrorism and eventually helped carry the fascization 'from above' that was promoted by the military?

The Imperial Japanese Army (大日本帝国陸軍 *dainippon teikoku rikugun*) was an important actor in the political scene from Meiji to Shōwa partly because the restorationists – the Meiji Oligarchs – came from the samurai class, which had been the military *force* in Japan for centuries. The army's unique position in the Meiji Constitution (明治憲法 *meiji kenpō*³) and the emperor's position as *de jure* head of state and supreme commander of the armed forces, but *de facto* not being in control, greatly contributed to the army's independence and its being a powerful political player. This, however, as this thesis will demonstrate, was only one significant aspect for the army in being an important factor in spreading militarism and fascism in prewar Japan. The army would have hardly been able to stimulate the support it – for the most part – had within the population merely through military propaganda, aided by the fascist terrorism of the first half of the 1930's, if the massive indoctrination of virtually the entire populace had not taken place.

Compulsory education and universal conscription, but most of all, the Imperial Military Reserve Association (帝国在郷軍人会 *teikoku zaigō gunjinkai*, hereafter: *zaigō gunjinkai*) and its subsidiary organizations accomplished comprehensive indoctrination.

¹ Masao Maruyama, "The Ideology and Dynamics of Japanese Fascism," in *Thought and Behaviour in Modern Japanese Politics*, ed. Ivan Morris, trans. Andrew Fraser (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), 52.

² *Ibid.*, 26-27, 33, 66-67.

³ The Meiji Constitution is officially called Constitution of the Empire of Japan (大日本帝国憲法 *dainippon teikoku kenpō*).

The *zaigō gunjinkai* and its subsidiary organizations not only reached the soldiers on active duty and the reserves, but almost all of the Japanese males, and through permeating the educational system, also a large part of the female population was reached. Fascist and militarist ideology, for example, that of Uesugi Shinkichi (上杉慎吉) and Kakehi Katsuhiko (覚克彦), was thus spread throughout the population.

The main argument of this thesis is that the army became a decisive factor in spreading militarism and fascism in prewar Japan because it created a mass base of willing followers. A party-centered mass movement which Japanese fascism lacked, was thus not necessary to promote militarism and fascism.

The focus of this thesis will be on the army in prewar Japan and not on the military including the Imperial Japanese Navy (大日本帝国海軍 *dai nippon teikoku kaigun*) as a whole because the navy, as Krebs notes, never became as influential of a political actor as the army did.⁴ The time at which Japan entered the state of being at war is determined by multiple factors. When speaking, for example, of the 15 Year War (十五年戦争 *jūgonen sensō*), the Manchurian Incident (満州事変 *manshū jihen*) is seen as the beginning of the war. For this thesis, however, roughly 1937 marks the end of prewar Japan. This is based on several facts: after the February 26 Incident (二・二六事件 *ni-ni-roku jiken*) in 1936, the army gained power and measures were taken to eliminate remaining liberal tendencies, the *kokutai no hongī* (国体の本義 Fundamentals of our National Polity) was published in 1937, and military budgets reached the levels they had during previous wars. Finally, with Konoe Fumimaro (近衛文麿) as Prime Minister, the army found a willing ally in promoting their aims, and as a result of the China Incident (支那事変 *shina jihen*), also in 1937, which within one month was escalated to a full-blown war, the National Mobilization Law (国家総動員法 *kokka sōdō inhō*) was enacted in 1938.

The first chapter examines the Japanese context from the late Meiji period until the early Shōwa period focusing on important developments in regards to the Imperial Japanese Army. The three wars that Japan was involved in during that time, the first Sino-Japanese War, the Russo-Japanese War, and World War I, as well as liberal tendencies during the Taishō era, all of which influenced the army's relationship to and

⁴ Gerhard Krebs, *Japan im Pazifischen Krieg: Herrschaftssystem, Politische Willensbildung und Friedenssuche* (München, Iudicium-Verlag, 2010), 41. Due to the scope of this paper, the navy will not be further discussed. Some aspects of this thesis, for example, the law that enabled only active duty officers of the rank of general/admiral to serve as Army/Navy Ministers, however, also apply to the navy.

backing in the populace, will be discussed in order to establish a historic perspective, on which the following chapters will build.

The second chapter provides an overview of the specifics of Japanese fascism. The focus then proceeds on to the period of fascist terrorism, which can be seen as the result of the deteriorating socioeconomic situation discussed in Chapter 1. Two significant incidents, the Manchurian Incident and the February 26 Incident that greatly promoted the spreading of fascism in Japan will be analyzed. This advancement, as will be shown, benefited from the differing levels of support of most army officers and the populace. Another result of the fascist terrorism, the continuing inner army factionalism, will be addressed.

Yamagata Aritomo (山県有朋), the architect of the Imperial Japanese Army and the conscription system, will be introduced in Chapter 3. Yamagata, as will be demonstrated, did not only form the army but also was involved in major aspects of the creation of the Meiji political system. Chapter 3 will conclude with the assessment that Yamagata's death in 1922, made faults in the system he was decisive in shaping evident. His death created a power vacuum that led to instability, in which radical forces could advance their aims more freely than they could have while Yamagata as an eminent authority in the background was alive.

Chapter 4 examines the various aspects of the Imperial Japanese Army. The introduction of universal conscription, which was one of the main pillars of the indoctrination effort, will be evaluated before turning to the role of the emperor and the armed forces in the Meiji system as shaped by the Meiji Constitution. The role of the emperor as *de jure* supreme commander and the institutions that made up the foundation of the army's independence will be analyzed as they were decisive for the emergence of the Imperial Japanese Army as a dominant political actor. The focus then shifts to the army's educational institutions and the indoctrination within these and the army. This indoctrination is significant because it was the nucleus from which the militarist and fascist ideology of, for example, Uesugi and Kakehi, was spread among the populace – not directly, since universal conscription did not reach the majority of the population, but by means of the *zaigō gunjinkai* and its subsidiary organizations.

Another important person in the military as well as the civilian sphere, Tanaka Giichi (田中義一), will be introduced in Chapter 5. Tanaka, like his mentor Yamagata, created an important military institution: The *zaigō gunjinkai*. He also, as will be

discussed, had a major role in shaping military policies that had significant effects on the Japanese government's policies.

Chapter 6 will focus on the *zaigō gunjinkai*. Before going into detail, however, it is necessary to evaluate the indoctrination that the entire populace underwent independent of the the *zaigō gunjinkai* and its subsidiary organizations: the indoctrination in compulsory education, which was based on the Imperial Rescript on Education (教育ニ関スル勅語 *kyōiku ni kansuru chokugo*, hereafter: *kyōiku chokugo*) and forms a minor pillar of the indoctrination effort. Attention will then turn to analyzing the reasons that convinced Tanaka of the necessity of what became another main pillar of the army's indoctrination effort: the *zaigō gunjinkai* and its subsidiary organizations. The structure of the *zaigō gunjinkai* will be discussed subsequently, before shifting to the Greater Japan Youth Association (大日本青年団 *dainippon seinendan*, hereafter: *seinendan*), the Youth Training Centers (青年訓練所 *seinen kunrenjo*, hereafter: *kunrenjo*), and the Greater Japan National Defense Women's Association (大日本国防婦人会 *dainippon kokubō fujinkai*, hereafter: *fujinkai*), that gave the army access to the juvenile as well as the female population. The chapter will conclude by analyzing the activities that were carried out by these organizations, evaluating the success of the indoctrination effort, and by inspecting the source of funding, will assess the integration of the organizations into the local hamlet structure.

Chapter 7 will take up aspects discussed in Chapter 1, mainly the backing of the army within the population, and proceeds to discuss the army as a force outside of the military sphere. Aspects of the army's ties to the bureaucracy will be depicted before focusing on the army's cooperation with the *zaibatsu* (財閥 business conglomerate). The final part of Chapter 7 will evaluate the army's increasing role as a political player.

Chapter 8, as an epilogue, will depict Japan's path towards complete 'national mobilization' and 'total war'. The Peace Preservation Law (治安維持法 *chian ijihō*) of 1925, which included the provision that harming the *kokutai* (国体 national polity) was an illegal act, will be analyzed before turning to the *kokutai no hongī*. Subsequently, the China Incident, and the National Mobilization Law, as an example of legislation that followed the China Incident and increased the state's authority, will be discussed before finally turning the focus to the 'total war' effort which was borne by the willing populace as a result of the indoctrination efforts.

Unless otherwise indicated, the English translations are my own. Citations are according to the standards of the Chicago Manual of Style with the exception of

Japanese names, which throughout the thesis, and also in the Japanese sources, will be given in the Japanese format. Japanese terms are in italics but not capitalized, while names are capitalized but not in italics. A list of significant Japanese terms used in this paper is located in Appendix I.

1. The Japanese Context & the Army: Late Meiji until prewar Shōwa

1.1 The First Sino-Japanese War and the Russo-Japanese War

The Sino-Japanese War and the Russo-Japanese War are important events regarding the Imperial Japanese Army. The Sino-Japanese War marked a temporary end of the anti-militaristic sentiment within the population. Both wars created a sense of a nation for the first time in modern Japan and in the long run gained admiration for and backing of the Imperial Japanese Army within the Japanese population as will be shown in this chapter.

1.1.1 The First Sino-Japanese War (1894 – 1895)

In 1894 the Japanese ruling elite finally saw their chance to wage war on China. A plan had been developed by the General Staff Office (参謀本部 *sanbō honbu*) as early as 1887. A decisive factor for this external aggression was public unrest within Japan that stemmed from the fact that the Japanese government seemed incapable of revising the *unequal treaties* which in turn spurred radical nationalism.⁵ It should not be overlooked, however, that “Japan's slide into imperialism was a logical response to Japanese perceptions of world trends.”⁶ The Sino-Japanese War was popular among the Japanese population from the beginning on⁷ and contributed to the growing nationalism⁸ with the

⁵ Rudolf Hartmann, *Geschichte des Modernen Japan: Von Meiji bis Heisei* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1996), 80-81.

⁶ Marius B. Jansen, “Japanese Imperialism: Late Meiji Perspectives,” in *The Japanese Colonial Empire: 1895 – 1945*, ed. Ramon Hawley Myers et al. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 70.

⁷ Akira Iriye, “Japan's Drive to Great-Power Status,” in *The Nineteenth Century*, Vol. 5 of *The Cambridge History of Japan*, ed. Marius B. Jansen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 765; Gerhard Krebs, “Das Kaiserliche Militär – Aufstieg und Ende,” in *Militärmacht Japan?: Sicherheitspolitik und Streitkräfte*, ed. Heinz Eberhard Maul (München: Iudicium-Verlag, 1991), 33.

⁸ Krebs, “Kaiserliche Militär,” 33.

public rejoicing over the triumphant victory.⁹ It also marked the point of making the anti-militaristic sentiment within the population a notion of the past. The “[m]ilitary victory [...] roused for the first time a sense of nation. The war, contemporaries observed, had changed the spirit of loyalty and patriotism from empty theory into concrete 'national consciousness.’”¹⁰ The Sino-Japanese War benefited the military as it emerged from the conflict more powerful, and the Japanese population viewed its policies with increasing favor. This gain in power can be recognized by the fact that during the 20 years from 1898 to 1918, military officers served as Prime Ministers for an amount of time totaling 15 years. This continuing militarization brought with it a suppression of democratic movements. The socialist and labor movements, which were emerging in Japan around the turn of the century when the postwar economic boom turned into a crisis in 1900, are an example of this.¹¹

With the fact that political parties were emerging as noticeable political actors for the first time after the Sino-Japanese War, and the bourgeoisie slowly gaining political influence toward the end of the 19th century, the *hanbatsu seiji* (藩閥政治 politics of oligarchy) which built on the base of the ruling elite made up of nobles, the military, and bureaucrats, was marginally threatened for the first time. The bourgeoisie, however, at that time was not powerful and independent enough to pose a serious threat to the ruling elites.¹² From 1900 on the basic framework of Japanese foreign affairs was dominated by imperialism; however, peaceful economic expansion and Pan Asianism were also publicly discussed and had an influence on official policy.¹³

1.1.2 The Russo-Japanese War (1904 – 1905)

Preparations for a military conflict with Russia were intensified with the establishment of the first Katsura Tarō (桂太郎) government (1901-05).¹⁴ The cabinet's decision to wage war on Russia can only be grasped if the following two aspects of Japan's domestic context are taken into consideration. (1) The press played a crucial part in sensationalizing the Russian presence in Manchuria and portraying Russia as unwilling to agree to compromise as long as Japan did not prove itself determined to use its

⁹ Frederick R. Dickinson, *War and National Reinvention: Japan in the Great War, 1914-1919* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 25; Krebs, “Kaiserliche Militär,” 33.

¹⁰ Dickinson, *War*, 25.

¹¹ Hartmann, *Geschichte*, 83-86.

¹² *Ibid.*, 87-88.

¹³ Iriye, “Great-Power Status,” 773.

¹⁴ Hartmann, *Geschichte*, 88.

military to demonstrate power. (2) A pro-war movement was organized by intellectuals, publicists and political parties which besieged the government using the reasoning that since Japan *could* not be the one to step down, and one party had to back down in order to end the power struggle in Korea, the focus had to lie on forcing Russia to do so by threatening them with military aggression.¹⁵ While “[p]atriotism, militarism, and imperialism were accepted as necessary conditions for the existence of the nation,”¹⁶ with the greater portion of the Japanese population seemingly pressing for war, the only organized anti-war movement was small and consisted of a few socialists.¹⁷

The war against Russia again had a nationalizing and unifying effect.¹⁸ The Army's reputation, however, temporarily declined somewhat because of the immense number of casualties on the Japanese side. Almost 90,000 Japanese soldiers were killed in the war.¹⁹ The meager gains resulting from the war also led to public unrest.²⁰ In the long run, however, the army gained prestige during the Russo-Japanese War (According to Humphreys the “prestige was never higher.”²¹) that led some army leaders to overestimate the army's capabilities and convinced them that Japan had become invincible.²² The army leadership also considered that Russia might seek revenge and, therefore, strongly pushed for military expansion.²³ These views brought Japan a large step closer to World War II (WWII).²⁴ As a result of the widespread feeling that Japan had been cheated out of its rightful gains after having been victorious in the Russo-Japanese War, it also became a common demand that the Japanese spirit had to be *steeled* in order to be prepared for an “inevitable decisive conflict.”²⁵

Due to the newly acquired market and the access to raw materials in Manchuria, the Japanese economy along with the defense industry grew further. Japan, however, in spite of the economic growth, entered a state of financial crisis in 1907, partly due to the

¹⁵ Iriye, “Great-Power Status,” 775.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 776.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 776.

¹⁸ Dickinson, *War*, 26.

¹⁹ Krebs, “Kaiserliche Militär,” 35. According to Saaler up to 120,000 in comparison 10,000 in the first Sino-Japanese war. Sven Saaler, *Zwischen Demokratie und Militarismus: Die Kaiserlich-Japanische Armee in der Politik der Taishō-Zeit: (1912 – 1926)* (Bonn: Bier, 2000), 58.

²⁰ Ikuhiko Hata, “Continental Expansion: 1905–1941,” in *The Twentieth Century*, Vol. 6 of *The Cambridge History of Japan*, ed. Peter Duus (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 274; Iriye, “Great-Power Status,” 777; Krebs, “Kaiserliche Militär,” 36.

²¹ Leonard A. Humphreys, *The Way of the Heavenly Sword: The Japanese Army in the 1920's* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 12.

²² Krebs, “Kaiserliche Militär,” 36-37.

²³ *Ibid.*, 36-37; Saaler, *Demokratie*, 63-65.

²⁴ Krebs, “Kaiserliche Militär,” 36-37.

²⁵ Peter B. High, *The Imperial Screen: Japanese Film Culture in the Fifteen Years' War, 1931-1945* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003), 8.

fact that it did not receive reparation payments from Russia but had to repay its creditors nonetheless.²⁶ Japan's resources, including the newly accessible raw materials in Manchuria, still did not suffice for Japan to be independent from the imports of raw materials. Therefore, until the end of the Meiji era, light industry remained the major industry in Japan. Japan with its main sources of national income being agriculture, forestry and fishery still hadn't become a modern, industrialized nation.²⁷

The years after the Russo-Japanese War were characterized by an imperialistic foreign policy, securing Korea as a Japanese protectorate and the Japanese domination of southern Manchuria. This led to a conflict of interests with the USA, which for the time being could be balanced, for example, through treaties with England, but eventually would have a part in leading towards WWII.²⁸

1.2 World War I, Temporary Economic Prosperity, Depression, and Military Buildup

World War I (WWI) created economic prosperity in Japan and generated high tax revenues which were used to substantially increase military funding. However, with the economy stagnating and workers being laid off, the years following WWI were characterized by public opinion, which had turned against excessive military spending, expansion, and the military itself.²⁹ This public opinion was cemented by the utilization of soldiers to suppress labor uprisings.³⁰ However, after the Kantō Earthquake (1 September 1923), which destroyed large parts of Tokyo and Yokohama, the army was able to regain part of its favor within the populace by being the major provider of relief.³¹

The economic boom that Japan experienced during WWI was made possible in part by Europe's and the U.S.'s preoccupation with the war. This left the Asian and African markets open to Japan, which dramatically increased Japan's exports. For example, machinery and steel as well as chemicals that were formerly imported began

²⁶ Hartmann, *Geschichte*, 104-06.

²⁷ Ibid., 106. Even in 1926, Japan's industrialization was significantly inferior to that of capitalist European nations. Maruyama, "Ideology," 78.

²⁸ Hartmann, *Geschichte*, 114. Korea was officially annexed into the Japanese Empire in 1910. William Fitch Morton, *Tanaka Giichi and Japan's China Policy* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1980), 17-18.

²⁹ Edward J. Drea, *Japan's Imperial Army: Its Rise and Fall, 1853 – 1945* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2009), 140-41, 161; Humphreys, *Heavenly Sword*, 45-49.

³⁰ Fujiwara Akira [藤原彰], *Gunjishi* [軍事史] (Tokyo: Tōyō keizai shinpōsha, 1961), 140; Humphreys, *Heavenly Sword*, 50.

³¹ Humphreys, *Heavenly Sword*, 52-53.

to be produced in Japan. At the same time, Japan experienced massive inflation, and as a concomitant encountered social unrest in the form of the rice riots (1918) and the peasant and labor movements.³²

Once WWI ended and competition began to rise in the export markets, the boom vanished and Japan entered a prolonged state of deflation and depression which, due to various factors – for example, a decline of exports due to the Kantō Earthquake in 1923, and the Great Depression – lasted until 1931.³³ At the same time, Japan experienced growth in key industries, for example in mechanical engineering and ship building.³⁴ This expansion of key industries in the decade following WWI can be seen as the “material basis for the policies of military expansionism that led to the Pacific War.”³⁵ As the industries continued increasing their production and securing foreign technology, Japan for the first time became self-sufficient in those areas³⁶ while still relying on the import of raw materials.

Farmers suffered greatly due to the cheap rice imports from Korea and Taiwan. Their situation worsened starting in 1925, because of a “worldwide surplus of agricultural commodities and the fall in prices.” This led to an increase in silk production, and consequently decreased the value of silk, which led to further desperation in the agricultural sector. At the same time, larger factories (mainly within the secondary sector that had boomed during WWI) laid off workers in order to avoid bankruptcy; small factories opened and people from the countryside migrated to the cities and accepted jobs with very low pay and harsh working conditions in order to survive, thus stimulating urbanization.³⁷

The situation of the farmers who had suffered throughout the 1920's became worse in the early 1930's,³⁸ with the price of raw silk never recovering, the farmers indefinitely lost their important second source of income,³⁹ which had a devastating

³² Takafusa Nakamura, “Depression, Recovery and War, 1920-1945,” in *The Twentieth Century*, Vol. 6 of *The Cambridge History of Japan*, ed. Peter Duus (Cambridge :Cambridge University Press, 1988), 451. Another important cause for the peasant movement was the trend toward absentee landlords. Landlords migrated to the cities, damaging the traditional connection between the tenant and the landlord in his role as a paternalistic leader by becoming increasingly capitalistic and disconnected from the tenants' situation. Richard J. Smethurst, *A Social Basis for Prewar Japanese Militarism: The Army and the Rural Community* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1974), 182.

³³ Nakamura, “Depression,” 451.

³⁴ Andrew Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan: From Tokugawa Times to the Present* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 140.

³⁵ Nakamura, “Depression,” 453.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 462.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 454-58.

³⁸ William M. Fletcher, *The Search for a New Order: Intellectuals and Fascism in Prewar Japan* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), 41-42.

³⁹ Mikiso Hane, *Modern Japan: A Historical Survey* 3rd Edition (Boulder: Westview Press, 2001), 289.

influence on the manufacturing industry because the agricultural sector comprised of 47 percent of Japan's total work force.⁴⁰ Two factors, however, led to Japan's economy recovering faster from the Great Depression than most other countries' economies did. Japan finally devalued the yen enabling exports to eventually exceed imports again, and arms production was increased substantially,⁴¹ with the metal manufacturing sector expanding from 8.5 percent in 1930 to 18.9 percent in 1936.⁴² This new intrusion of Japanese goods into foreign markets led Western powers to establish quotas and increase tariffs which spurred resentment in Japan and bolstered the militarists' demands for establishing a completely self-sufficient Japanese empire.⁴³

1.3 Democracy During the Taishō Years

As previously noted, the Russo-Japanese War, aside from its unifying effect, also spurred resentment within the Japanese population because of the high Japanese casualties and meager gains (few territorial and none monetarily) which led to violent uprisings. This movement in 1905, was the first popular movement that, on the one hand, criticized the government's weakness in foreign policies while, on the other hand, demanded more constitutionalism and democracy at home.⁴⁴ In doing so, the public during the Taishō Democracy (大正デモクラシー *taishō demokurashii*⁴⁵) adopted a position of external expansionism, which during the Meiji era had been voiced by the opposition within the political establishment. To this call for external expansionism, the public added a democratic dimension, thus calling for “‘constitutionalism at home and imperialism externally’ (*uchi wa rikken-shugi, soto wa teikoku-shugi* [内は立憲主義、外は帝国主義]).”⁴⁶ These indications of liberalism, also in the form of the decline of the *genrō* (元老 elder statesmen), in terms of influence as well as in actual numbers, and steps toward universal male suffrage during and after Hara Takashi's (原敬, also referred to as Hara Kei) tenure as Prime Minister, which “coincided with a policy of cooperation with the Anglo-American sea powers” were, however, accompanied by authoritarian

⁴⁰ Fletcher, *New Order*, 41-42.

⁴¹ Hane, *Modern Japan*, 289.

⁴² Fletcher, *New Order*, 44.

⁴³ Hane, *Modern Japan*, 289.

⁴⁴ Saaler, *Demokratie*, 59-61.

⁴⁵ One must note the difference between the Taishō era (1912-1926) and what historians termed the Taishō Democracy. In general it is assumed that the Taishō Democracy began with the popular riots in 1905. The end is either set at 1925, or after the last pre-WWII party cabinet in 1932. Gordon, *Modern History*, 161; Saaler, *Demokratie*, 57.

⁴⁶ Saaler, *Demokratie*, 61.

policies. Legal dissent was limited and collectivist values advocated within the educational system by editing textbooks towards more emphasis on values such as loyalty to the emperor and patriotism.⁴⁷ Apart from the vote, political parties had no connection to the Japanese population. There was no substantial grass roots movement that connected the people with the parties. Trade unions that possibly could have worked as a link between the population and the political parties, although growing in quantity between 1911 and 1936, never had more than 500,000 members. This lack of connection to the people, in addition to the inner-party factionalism and the weak institutional setting within the system of the Meiji Constitution, left the political parties extremely weak.⁴⁸ Political parties thus were essentially without the power to provide any opposition to the military establishment in times of crisis.

While the Manchurian Incident and the 1929 financial crisis were often seen as two main factors for the national opinion that was hostile to cooperation with the Western powers, capitalism – mainly the *zaibatsu* – and party politics, the seeds of this sentiment were in place “before economic disaster and military expansionism dominated the newspaper headlines.”⁴⁹ The *zaigō gunjinkai* was founded and began indoctrinating its growing membership in 1910. Legislation limiting the spreading of political opposition was also established prior to the Manchurian Incident.⁵⁰ A broad and powerful political grass roots movement did not emerge during the 1920's. Instead, the 1920's prepared the Japanese population to accept what the army had envisioned and had been preparing to create: a completely militarized state.⁵¹

1.3.1 Pluralization of Japan

During the Meiji period there was no significant opposition to Japan's imperialist policies within society, and therefore Meiji-Imperialism was not challenged. However, “[a]fter World War I and the advent of Taishō democracy [...] the international *jisei* [時勢 (current of the) times] changed, and with it Japanese liberal consciousness as well.”⁵²

⁴⁷ Fletcher, *New Order*, 10.

⁴⁸ Shūichi Kato, “Taishō Democracy as the Pre-Stage for Japanese Militarism,” in *Japan in Crisis: Essays on Taishō Democracy*, ed. Bernard S. Silberman et al. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), 229-30.

⁴⁹ Fletcher, *New Order*, 28.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 28.

⁵¹ Kato, “Taishō Democracy,” 232.

⁵² Jansen, “Japanese Imperialism,” 75.

Two important aspects of the urban mass society developed during the Taishō years: (1) the populace became significantly more exposed to politics and foreign influences through the media. Males were also able to participate in politics for the first time although only through the right to vote, as membership of the political parties remained extremely low. (2) As a result of the accessible media, the populace was more easily influenced and manipulated by the ruling (eventually military) elite.⁵³ For example, the Mainichi Newspaper (毎日新聞 *mainichi shinbun*) expanded its circulation from 260.000 in 1912 to 1.500.000 in 1930, and the Asahi Newspaper (朝日新聞 *asahi shinbun*) had an estimated readership of 3 million readers in the 1930's.⁵⁴

2. Militarism and Fascism in Japan

The question as to whether Japan was fascist before and during WWII remains to this day controversial in scholarship. It is, therefore, necessary to establish a common ground of what is being referred to as fascism throughout this thesis. Maruyama Masao established a concept for Japanese fascism in 1947 that is still generally accepted among Japanese scholars and will provide the basis for the definition of fascism in this paper.

A common criticism that is addressed when arguing the question of fascism, is that Japan was not fascist because it lacked some of the significant characteristics that were featured in German or Italian fascism: for example, a fascist mass movement that was concentrated in a fascist political party.⁵⁵ This criticism should be reconsidered as it

⁵³ Kato, "Taishō Democracy," 229. The press roughly from the Manchurian Incident onwards lessened its critical tones and increasingly became conformed with Japan's leadership's aims until it became merely a propaganda outlet of the ruling elite and controlled by the military authorities. After the China Incident, the newspapers' independence was further restricted as they had to adhere to stringent instructions of what they were allowed to publish. Olavi K. Fält, *Fascism, Militarism or Japanism? The Interpretation of the Crisis Years of 1930 - 1941 in the Japanese English-Language Press* (Rovaniemi: Pohjois-Suomen Historiallinen Yhdistys, 1985), 13-14. Another reason for the press to become increasingly favorable of the military's expansionism is that territorial expansion meant a possible increase in readership. Louise Young, *Japan's Total Empire: Manchuria and the Culture of Wartime Imperialism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 56.

⁵⁴ Fletcher, *New Order*, 71; Marius B. Jansen, *The Making of Modern Japan* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2000), 570. Definite numbers are difficult to obtain. Therefore, they vary. Young, for example, states that both leading newspapers had a circulation of 1 million each in 1927. Young, *Total Empire*, 59-60.

⁵⁵ This criticism can be found for example in Peter Dues and Daniel I. Okimoto, "Fascism and the History of Pre-War Japan: The Failure of a Concept," *The Journal of Asian Studies* Vol. 39, No. 1 (Nov., 1979): 66-67. Martin also criticizes the application of the term of fascism on Japan because of grave dissimilarities with Germany and Italy. He further states that the Italian and German state structures were also too different from each other to both be labeled fascist. Bernd Martin, "Zur Tauglichkeit eines Übergreifenden Faschismus-Begriffs: Ein Vergleich Zwischen Japan, Italien und Deutschland," in *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 29. Jahrgang, 1. (Jan., 1981): 72-73. Another example that is mentioned in many discussions of Japanese fascism is the question of whether Japan

stems from a Eurocentric view and does not acknowledge that the ideology of fascism was promoted because of varying reasons and in differing ways.⁵⁶ Accordingly, fascist ideology differs from state to state, based on their varying cultural and historical backgrounds.⁵⁷ While Western historians in general don't consider Japan as being fascist in the 1930's and during WWII,⁵⁸ Japanese historians in general declare the opposite.⁵⁹

According to Skya, a broad variety of terms are used when referring to “the ideology of extreme nationalism that [...] inspired the elite and mobilized the masses to wage war in East Asia and the Pacific.” Amongst them is Japanese fascism, which will be used in in this thesis.⁶⁰

2.1 An Overview of Japanese Fascism

The ideological background of Japanese fascism, as Skya notes, centers on the “Shintô creation story of the Japanese islands by Izanami and Izanagi, the divine origins of the imperial line, the divinity of the emperor, the ethnic divinity and superiority of the Japanese people, the belief in a divine world mission for the Japanese state, [and] global imperial rule under the emperor.”⁶¹ It can be seen as a radicalization of the pre-existing

was ruled by a dictatorial regime or not. See for example Alexander Bürkner, “Probleme der Japanischen Wehrverfassung von der Meiji-Zeit bis in die Gegenwart” (PhD diss., Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn, 1975), 133; Maruyama, “Ideology,” 74; Seizaburō Shinobu, “From Party Politics to Military Dictatorship,” *The Developing Economies* Vol. 5, No. 4 (December 1967): 680-82. For a brief summary of Western research that argues against applying the concept of fascism to Japan, see Hans Martin Krämer, “Faschismus in Japan: Anmerkungen zu einem für den Internationalen Vergleich Tauglichem Faschismusbegriff,” *Sozial-Geschichte* Heft 2 (June, 2005), 13-16.

⁵⁶ Dirk Böttcher, “Faschismus: Begriffe und Historische Entwicklung,” in *Staat und Gesellschaft*, Vol. 2 of *Japan im Schatten des Siegers*, ed. Ullrich Menzel (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1989), 77.

⁵⁷ Kwang-Duk Kong, “Tennō-Faschismus: Zur Entstehung, Struktur, Ideologie und Funktion des Herrschaftsystems in Japan, 1868 – 1945” (PhD diss., Philipps-Universität Marburg, 1982), 122. Gordon, for example, notes that while there are differences in the fascist states, the similarities Japan shared with Germany and Italy are more important. Gordon, *Modern History*, 202.

⁵⁸ Böttcher, “Faschismus,” 77.

⁵⁹ Krämer, “Faschismus,” 7, 18. Kato, for example, refers to Germany and Japan as “two different types of fascism.” Kato, “Taishō Democracy,” 225.

⁶⁰ Skya mentions and uses the following terms: “State Shintô,” “Japanese fascism,” “Shintô ultranationalism,” “emperor ideology,” “emperor system fascism,” “Japanism,” “Shintôism,” “militarism,” in the introductory chapter of his work, but throughout the study mainly uses “radical Shintô ultranationalism” to refer to this ideology. It is noteworthy that the terms “nationalism” in “ultranationalism” and “extreme nationalism” do not refer to “nationalism” as in the building of a nation-state or in liberal nationalism. Walter Skya, *Japan's Holy War: The Ideology of Radical Shintô Ultrnationalism*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), 18-19. Bix for example uses “Emperor-system-fascism.” Herbert P. Bix, “Rethinking 'Emperor-System Fascism': Ruptures and Continuities in Modern Japanese History,” *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* Vol. 14, No. 2 (April-June, 1982): 2.

⁶¹ Skya, *Holy War*, 18-19.

Emperor-system.⁶² Japanese fascism, like its European counterparts, was characterized by (1) notably offensive foreign policies rooted in anti-communist and racist elements, (2) aggression as a means of creating domestic unity and political suppression, and (3) a magnification of given militarist, imperialist and racist tendencies.⁶³ In other words, European and Japanese fascism, have, for example, the rejection of individualistic liberalism, the pursuit of expansionist foreign politics, the glorification of military and war, and the notion of racial superiority in common.⁶⁴ The concept of *kokutai* played an important role in the ideological aspect of Japanese fascism as it, “captured in a single verbal compound the entire range of ideological virtues that defined what it meant to be Japanese, as opposed to the 'other.’”⁶⁵ A peculiarity of Japanese fascism is the military's leading role in advancing it.⁶⁶

Maruyama sees three aspects as distinctive for Japanese fascism. The first distinctive point is the tendency toward a family system.⁶⁷ The second is the prominent position of the idea of agrarianism (農本主義 *nōhonshugi*).⁶⁸ The 1929 world depression and the hardship it created in Japanese agriculture are to Maruyama the primary social cause that accelerated the fascist movement in 1930–1. It had an immediate effect on the army and mostly on the young officers (青年将校 *seinen shōkō*) of whom a large part came from rural areas and were sons of “lesser landowners or small independent cultivators.”⁶⁹ The third distinctive aspect is the Greater Asia Principle.⁷⁰

⁶² Kong, “Tennō-Faschismus,” 136.

⁶³ Bix, “Rethinking,” 4.

⁶⁴ Maruyama, “Ideology,” 35.

⁶⁵ Tetsuo Najita and H. D. Harootunian, “Japanese Revolt Against the West: Political and Cultural Criticism in the Twentieth Century,” in *The Twentieth Century*, Vol. 6 of *The Cambridge History of Japan*, ed. Peter Duus (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 714. The *kokutai* and its emperor cult, according to Krebs, had been the aim of as well as the premise for the modernization during and after the Meiji Restoration. He also states that the term *kokutai*, that demonstrated the emperor's family's unbroken line of descent from the gods, was intentionally romanticized and served as a means to control the populace and encourage it to serve the emperor and the Japanese nation with utmost loyalty and obedience. Krebs, *Japan im Pazifischen Krieg*, 17.

⁶⁶ Abe Hirozumi [博純安部], *Nihon fashizumu kenkyū josetsu* [日本ファシズム研究序説] (Tokyo: Miraisha, 1975), 173.

⁶⁷ Maruyama, “Ideology,” 36-37.

⁶⁸ Agrarianism, in contrast to the “tendency immanent in fascism towards the strengthening of State authority and the exercise of a powerful control over all aspects of industry, culture, and thought by means of a centralized State authority [...] demanded autonomy for all villages in an attempt to put a stop to the expansion of the industrial productive power in the cities.” Maruyama, “Ideology,” 37-38. For a brief discussion of agrarianism, see Ann Waswo, “The Transformation of Rural Society: 1900–1950,” in *The Twentieth Century*, Vol. 6 of *The Cambridge History of Japan*, ed. Peter Duus (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 589-605.

⁶⁹ Maruyama, “Ideology,” 44-45. Agrarianism, according to Skya's analysis, had lost most of its importance by the mid 1930's and its concept of autonomous agrarian communities loosely linked to the emperor within a decentralized state was to a large part replaced by the consensus that favored “the emperor on top of a highly centralized and industrialized state.” Skya, *Holy War*, 249-50.

⁷⁰ This Greater Asia Principle had its origin during the Meiji era and originally meant emancipating Asia

Maruyama further categorized Japanese fascism in 'fascism from below' and 'fascism from above,' and divides the era of Japanese fascism into three periods.⁷¹ He refuses, however, to clearly determine the beginning of the fascist period as “[t]he totalitarian system gradually came to completion within the framework of the State structure determined by the Meiji Constitution.”⁷² Maruyama labels the first period that was defined by “right-wing movements among civilians” which lasted roughly from 1919 until the Manchurian Incident in 1931 as the 'preparatory period.' The second period, the 'period of maturity,' in which civilian right-wing groups merged with military extremists and parts of the military became the driving factor of fascism, is defined by right wing terrorism and lasted until the February 26 Incident. The February 26 Incident also marked the end of 'fascism from below.' During the third period, the 'consummation period,' which begins with the military's advance to dominate Japan after the February 26 Incident and ended with Japan's defeat in 1945, the military openly advocated 'fascism from above' and teamed up “with the semi-feudal power of the bureaucracy and the Senior Retainers on the one hand, and with monopoly capital and the political parties on the other.”⁷³

2.1.1 The Background of Japanese Fascism

One of the driving forces of fascism in Japan was the military. It was backed by what Maruyama calls the “pseudo- or sub-intellectuals” within the middle class: “small factory owners, building contractors, proprietors of retail shops, master carpenters, small landowners, independent farmers, school teachers (especially in primary schools), employees of village offices, low-grade officials, Buddhist and Shinto priests.”⁷⁴ Members of this group, through the predominance of the patriarchal structure in Japan, had significant influence on their subordinates. In accordance to their position in the Japanese social hierarchy, they “also served as executives of town and village councils,

from European colonialism. Over time, however, the emphasis shifted to Japan establishing hegemony over Asia instead of European powers and finally this notion was used as a legitimation for an imperialist war. Maruyama, “Ideology,” 51.

⁷¹ Maruyama, “Ideology,” 26-27, 33.

⁷² Ibid., 80. Militarist tendencies became visible in Japan when the *kyōiku chokugo* was promulgated in 1890 and militarist ideology permeated the educational system. Kazuko Tsurumi, *Social Change and the Individual: Japan Before and After Defeat in World War II* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), 102.

⁷³ Maruyama, “Ideology,” 26-27, 30.

⁷⁴ Another driving force that Maruyama notes is the bureaucracy. Ibid., 57-58. The bureaucracy will be briefly discussed in Chapter 7.

agricultural, religious, educational, youth and reservist associations,”⁷⁵ and transmitted the ideological indoctrination from the ruling class to the broad populace. “It is precisely these pseudo-intellectuals who directly controlled the thought and the sentiment of the ‘masses’.”⁷⁶ “The participants in radical fascist uprisings and the leading members of right-wing groups”⁷⁷ also largely came from this “pseudo-intellectual” part of the middle class. The “pseudo-intellectuals” due to their social position – pressure from above, for example, the *zaibatsu* and influence on their subordinates – could best identify with Japan's situation in world politics, being somewhat backward in relation to the West, but being the most advanced in East Asia. They perceived Asian resistance to Japanese domination in the same way as the insubordination of rebellious employees and “became the most ardent supporters of the China Incident and the Pacific War.”⁷⁸

The authoritarian and elitist customs in Japanese society were another reason why it was possible to instill the populace with fascist ideology without encountering massive opposition. Confucianism, the core ideology during the Tokugawa era, as well as authoritarianism and elitism, featured anti-individualistic tendencies, and were in general socially conservative and illiberal. They cannot be equated with fascism, but they formed a base on which it could develop.⁷⁹ During the Meiji period and until the defeat in WWII, Japan was characterized by elitism. The Japanese ruling class consisted of several groups of elite, for example, the military, the bureaucracy, and the *genrō*, that were not controlled by the cabinet.⁸⁰ The political parties, as demonstrated above, generally lacked backing in the populace⁸¹ and furthermore, seemed unwilling to decisively oppose fascism.⁸²

The Japanese fascist ideology was never absolutely uniform and was altered as times made it necessary. The emperor-centered militarist and fascist ideology, taught by Uesugi Shinkichi and Kakehi Katsuhiko at the military's schools, permeated the thinking of the Japanese populace, and replaced Hozumi Yatsuka's traditional absolutist

⁷⁵ Maruyama, “Ideology,” 60.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 60.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 64.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 64-65.

⁷⁹ Christopher W. A. Szpilman, “Fascist and Quasi-Fascist Ideas in Interwar Japan, 1918-1941,” in *Japan in the Fascist Era*, ed. E. Bruce Reynolds (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 99-100.

⁸⁰ Edwin O. Reischauer and Albert M. Craig, *Japan: Tradition & Transformation* (Boston: Mifflin, 1989), 224-25.

⁸¹ Kato, “Taishō Democracy,” 229-30.

⁸² Maruyama, “Ideology,” 80-81.

form of emperor ideology with a mass-based emperor ideology within an egalitarian state structure.⁸³ All totalitarian movements have in common the aim of forming individuals into a collective body. Japanese fascism was very successful in doing so.⁸⁴ The manifestation of fascism as the official Japanese state ideology was secured and demonstrated by the *kokutai no hongī*.⁸⁵ Indoctrination was not successful in terms of turning the entire Japanese populace into fascists, but this form of Japanese fascism, as defined above, did become the dominating ideology. The framework of fascist rhetoric was used by staunch fascists as well as non-fascists of the ruling elites in order to mobilize the Japanese nation and to justify their actions. It would also be a massive exaggeration to contend that all fascists were terrorists. The majority of terrorist actors in the 1930's can, nonetheless, be labeled as fascist.⁸⁶

2.2 Fascist Terrorism

As this thesis focuses on the army's role in spreading and advancing militarism and fascism in prewar Japan, the direction of this analysis of Japanese fascism is mainly limited to the 'period of maturity' that was characterized by fascist terrorist incidents.⁸⁷

The radicalization of young officers during the first decade of the Shōwa period was a result of the deteriorating socioeconomic situation as depicted in Chapter 1. Additionally, they were subjected to a 10 percent pay cut. The muting of their protest and their financial difficulties in turn evolved into empathy for the masses, who were also affected by the perceived greed of the ones in power. It also led to hatred toward those whom the young officers deemed responsible for the unequal distribution of wealth: the politicians and financial elite.⁸⁸ These young officers had been indoctrinated in military ideology from early childhood on in the *rikugun yōnen gakkō* (陸軍幼年学校

⁸³ Skya, *Holy War*, 324-26. For details to the emphasized position of the armed forces in Kakehi's ideology, see *ibid.*, 204-05.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 292-93.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 261.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 247-48.

⁸⁷ Domestic terrorism had already influenced Japanese policies during the Meiji era. Right-wing extremist groups like the *genyōsha* (玄洋社) founded in 1881 and the *kokuryūkai* (黒龍会) founded in 1901 had, through their activities, for example, the assassination of Empress Myongsong of Korea by members of the *genyōsha* in 1895, guided Japan towards military expansionism with focus on Korea and Manchuria. Their ultranationalist ideology provided a basis for fascist terrorism from roughly 1931 to 1936. *Ibid.*, 233-34. A brief overview of terrorist plots between 1931 and 1935 can be found in Marion Laurinat, *Kita Ikki (1883 - 1937) und der Februarputsch 1936: Eine Historische Untersuchung Japanischer Quellen des Militärgerichtsverfahrens* (Münster: Lit Verlag, 2006), 123-31.

⁸⁸ Humphreys, *Heavenly Sword*, 37, 125.

army preparatory schools), then proceeded into the military's advancing schools and actually came into contact with the 'real world' for the first time after graduating. Military reduction went hand in hand with the emergence of the newly rich in the post WWI setting, and stood in direct contradiction to the world view that had been instilled in them. The young officers' focus was primarily on altering the domestic situation, but they also supported overseas expansionist goals.⁸⁹ Their ideology was based on “the highly irrational premises of Japanese nationalism and the emperor-centered Shinto faith,” and they responded, if necessary, to the perceived threat by advocating social revolution by means of rebellion and terrorism.⁹⁰

The terrorist attacks in the 1930's all had in common a lack of realism. Their plans, if there were any, generally ended with the plotters dying in battle. No concrete plans were made as to what had to be done once the state was overthrown, and absolutely none materialized.⁹¹ The conspirators that took part in the terrorist plots between 1930 and 1936, never numbered more than 250, and many of them participated in many of the plots. Although they were few in number, they were able to influence Japan's history greatly because they enjoyed the backing not only of most army officers, if not because of their goals at least for their patriotic motive,⁹² but also of the general populace. This was partly due to the fact that their killings were selective and usually did not harm innocent bystanders. Furthermore, parts of the populace shared the opinion that the politicians who were assassinated deserved to have been. In addition, the terrorist acts were successfully portrayed as selfless acts committed for the better of the emperor and the Japanese nation.⁹³ While the 10-year sentence of a military police

⁸⁹ Humphreys, *Heavenly Sword*, 117.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 37.

⁹¹ Maruyama, “Ideology,” 53-56. The *sakurakai* (桜会) is one example of a domestic terrorist group that stood for national reform, that is, abolition of political-party government, military expansion in Asia and bringing about a Shōwa Restoration (昭和維新 *shōwa ishin*). It was founded by Hashimoto Kingoro (橋本欣五郎) in 1930 and consisted of about 100 members of whom most were mid-ranking army officers either in the Army Ministry or the *sanbō honbu*. The *sakurakai* together with civilian ultranationalists were responsible for the planning of the March Incident (1931), a coup d'état aimed at replacing the existing government with one under military leadership headed by General Ugaki Kazushige who, however, backed out and the plan failed. The *sakurakai* was also responsible for planning of the October Incident (十月事件 *jūgatsu jiken*) in 1931, which was to take place only shortly after the Manchurian Incident but also failed. Richard L. Sims, *Japanese Political History since the Meiji Renovation: 1868 – 2000* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 155-57; Skya, *Holy War*, 235-36. The basic aim of the Shōwa Restoration was to establish imperial rule in Asia under the Japanese emperor, and to enable the replacement of the constitutional government through direct reign of the emperor. Skya, *Holy War*, 235-36. Some of the plotters involved in the 1931 uprising that sought to install Ugaki Kazushige as Prime Minister were relocated to Manchuria as part of the Kwantung Army, and would take part in the Manchurian incident a few months later. Krebs, “Kaiserliche Militär,” 45-46.

⁹² Humphreys, *Heavenly Sword*, 124-25.

⁹³ Skya, *Holy War*, 251.

officer for murdering an anarchist and a feminist in 1923 “caused considerable critical press and public comment,”⁹⁴ the May 15 Incident (五・一五事件 *go-ichigo jiken*) in 1932 and the following trial proved that a *radicalization* in the populace had taken place. The murder of the Prime Minister was excused because of its political, patriotic motive and was thus deemed *better for the nation*.⁹⁵ Fascist terrorism, and the May 15 Incident in particular, greatly contributed to the end of party cabinets in 1932.⁹⁶

Japanese fascism lacked a mass grass roots based movement. The fascist terrorism executed by a few radicals, however, had significant influence on Japanese history as it stimulated the advance of 'fascism from above.' A fascist restructuring of the state within the existing state structure was expedited by the military, the bureaucracy, and the political parties.⁹⁷ Two incidents, the Manchurian Incident and the February 26 Incident, which were of decisive importance for spreading fascism in Japan – each in their own way – will now be discussed in greater detail.

2.2.1 The Manchurian Incident

Sustaining Japan's position in Manchuria had been an essential part of the army's strategic planning since the Russo-Japanese War. As the doctrine of 'total warfare'⁹⁸ spread and became widely accepted among army officers, unlimited access to raw materials became necessary in order to build the basis for a wartime economy and further 'national mobilization' (国家総動員 *kokka sōdōin*⁹⁹). Manchuria seemed to be the perfect place, only loosely connected to China, with the Japanese army firmly in place since 1905, and rich in the desired raw materials, such as coal and iron ore. The

⁹⁴ Humphreys, *Heavenly Sword*, 58. The police officer, Amakasu Masahiko (甘粕正彦), a convicted criminal, later served as a police official in Manchuria. *Ibid.*, 59.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 58; Maruyama, “Ideology,” 67.

⁹⁶ Maruyama, “Ideology,” 65.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 65.

⁹⁸ The phrase 'total war' is usually associated with Erich Ludendorff's *Der Totale Krieg*, published in 1935, which widely spread the concept. Ludendorff characterized a 'total war' by its not only affecting the combatants, that is, the military but the entire nation. It required military strength, the support and sacrifice of the entire populace, as well as economic strength: a total mobilization of the entire state's resources. Erich Ludendorff cited in Abe [博純], *Nihon fashizumu*, 177-78. Ludendorff, however, did not invent the concept, as will be shown in Chapter 6. Tanaka Giichi, who did not live to see the publication of *Der Totale Krieg*, also advocated for the preparation for 'total war.'

⁹⁹ Nagata Tetsuzan in 1927 stated that “national mobilization is the task of marshaling the entire society of the state in times of need, moving from a peacetime to a wartime footing. The state must then organize, unify, and utilize all available resources, material and human, producing a maximum national strength as military power.” Nagata Tetsuzan cited in Gordon M. Berger, “Politics and Mobilization in Japan, 1931-1945,” in *The Twentieth Century*, Vol. 6 of *The Cambridge History of Japan*, ed. Peter Duus (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 112 [trans. by Berger].

domination of Manchuria, as army officers perceived, evolved to being a matter of life and death to the Japanese nation. During ongoing inner-army power struggles, middle-rank officers around Ishiwara Kanji (石原莞爾) were able to realize their own vision of the Japanese future, and in 1931, launched what came to be known as the Manchurian Incident.¹⁰⁰ This marked the starting point of the army's takeover of Manchuria.¹⁰¹

On September 18, 1931, disguised Japanese soldiers of the Kwantung Army (関東軍 *kantōgun*) detonated a bomb on the tracks of the South Manchurian Railway (南滿州鉄道 *minami manshū tetsudō*, in short and hereafter: *mantetsu*) near Mukden and assigned blame to Chinese warlords. Under this pretext, the Kwantung Army occupied Mukden and other areas within close proximity.¹⁰² With the support of military forces, sent by the commander of the Japanese Army in Korea, Hayashi Senjūrō (林銑十郎), the Kwantung Army was able to seize Manchuria almost entirely by February 1932, leaving the Japanese government no option but to approve of the operation as a *fait accompli*.¹⁰³ The puppet state of Manchukuo (滿州国 *manshūkoku*) was established on March 1, 1932, with the former Chinese emperor Pu Yi as *de jure* head of state, although *de facto* he was only a figurehead.¹⁰⁴

The Kwantung Army under the influence of Ishiwara became a hotbed for Japanese militarism and the army's expansionist policies on the Asian mainland.¹⁰⁵ Apart

¹⁰⁰ Humphreys, *Heavenly Sword*, 128; Krebs, “Kaiserliche Militär,” 47-48; James L. McClain, *Japan: A Modern History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2002), 408-09. Japan's army was present in Manchuria since the Russo-Japanese War as a result of which Japan, in addition to meager territorial gains, had gained a concession for the South Manchurian Railway. Hata, “Continental Expansion,” 274; Humphreys, *Heavenly Sword*, 12. Ishiwara is sometimes mentioned in one breath with the so-called young officers. This, however, is a faulty interpretation. Lieutenant Colonel Ishiwara, during the Manchurian Incident, was already relatively high in rank and on the direct route to more important postings and cannot be equated with the young officers. Saaler, *Demokratie*, 494. For example, the young officers who were directly involved in the February 26 Incident did not exceed the rank of captain. Krebs, “Kaiserliche Militär,” 52.

¹⁰¹ Skya, *Holy War*, 236.

¹⁰² Reinhard Zöllner, *Geschichte Japans: Von 1800 bis zur Gegenwart* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2006), 355. The plans for the Manchurian Incident had been known to the army's leadership in Tokyo. Although Ishiwara and his associates' plans seemed too daring to most members of the Army Ministry and the *sanbō honbu*, they were able to secure unofficial support from many important persons. When news of the planned seizure of Manchuria reached the emperor, however, the army leadership was forced to act. The attempt to stop the plotters from carrying out their plan, however, was in vain as the special emissary sent to prevent them, Tatekawa Yoshitsugu (建川美次), was a secret supporter of Ishiwara. Itō Takashi [伊藤隆], *Jūgonen sensō* [十五年戦争], Vol. 30 of *Nihon no rekishi* [日本の歴史] (Tokyo: Shōgakkan, 1983), 22-23; Sims, *Political History*, 156.

¹⁰³ Hartmann, *Geschichte*, 176-77. Ishiwara had been able to persuade the commander of the Kwantung Army, Honjō Shigeru (本庄繁), who had not been involved in the plans, of their necessity. As a result Honjō requested three additional divisions to be sent from Japan. Itō [伊藤], *Jūgonen sensō*, 23-24. The Japanese government did not approve of the army's actions and did not recognize Manchukuo as a state until September 1932 – after the May 15 Incident, the murder of Prime Minister Inukai Tsuyoshi (犬養毅). Hartmann, *Geschichte*, 177.

¹⁰⁴ McClain, *Japan*, 412; Zöllner, *Geschichte*, 356.

¹⁰⁵ Saaler, *Demokratie*, 494-95.

from being a source of raw materials, Manchukuo, basically ruled by the Kwantung Army, was also used to gain experience for a wartime economy, free of civilian instruments of control.¹⁰⁶

The success of the Manchurian Incident made a substantial impression on the Japanese population. The plotters, who had acted without the consent of the government and most of their superiors, were seen as national heroes. This euphoria that had been ignited in Japan gave the Kwantung Army the necessary civilian backing to operate independently in Manchuria.¹⁰⁷ In the aftermath, societies that advocated, for example, the Shōwa Restoration, experienced growing popularity.¹⁰⁸ To quote Maruyama, “the Manchurian Incident acted as a definite stimulus to Japanese fascism.”¹⁰⁹

The continuing power struggles within the army after the Manchurian incident led to the creation of two opposing groups: the Imperial Way Faction (皇道派 *kōdōha*) and the Control Faction (統制派 *tōseiha*). The Imperial Way Faction temporarily dominated army policy. It formed around Army Minister General Araki Sadao (荒木貞夫) and was determined to end the domination of the Chōshū clique (including Ugaki Kazushige (宇垣一成), who was not from Chōshū but affiliated with them) and its policies, for example, a planned economy. The Imperial Way Faction also showed sympathy for the struggling rural population, which earned it the support of many anti-capitalist young officers coming from rural Japan. They believed in the imperial way (皇道 *kōdō*; a form of emperor cult). Part of their conviction was that Japan could win wars based on its *fighting spirit*, which had been part of what were considered to be traditional Japanese characteristics for hundreds of years, and which would make up for the lack of technology. Their counterparts around Ugaki and Nagata Tetsuzan (永田鉄山), who were convinced that *fighting spirit* could not replace technology, became to be known as the Control Faction. Both factions, however, had little differences concerning the policy in Manchuria.¹¹⁰ Araki, as Army Minister, was able to place many of his followers in the most influential positions within the army.¹¹¹ This rigorous placement of

¹⁰⁶ Krebs, “Kaiserliche Militär,” 49. The seizure of Manchuria also had the affect of stimulating Japan's economy as exports to Manchukuo expanded by almost 12 percent between 1931 and 1936. Bix, “Rethinking,” 12.

¹⁰⁷ Krebs, “Kaiserliche Militär,” 48; Krebs, *Japan im Pazifischen Krieg*, 30; McClain, *Japan*, 410; Young, *Total Empire*, 4. The populace's backing was furthered by the military exploiting the anti-*zaibatsu* sentiment within the populace by declaring it would keep the old *zaibatsu* out of Manchuria. Bix, “Rethinking,” 12.

¹⁰⁸ Krebs, “Kaiserliche Militär,” 48.

¹⁰⁹ Maruyama, “Ideology,” 30.

¹¹⁰ Krebs, “Kaiserliche Militär,” 49.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 50; Saaler, *Demokratie*, 495.

followers in important posts earned him many opponents. Araki was replaced as Army Minister in 1934, and the Imperial Way Faction lost influence.¹¹² After the February 26 Incident, which was planned and executed by officers connected to the Imperial Way Faction, many of the responsible and influential officers were forced to retire or were transferred from posts at the army's headquarters to regional offices where their influence would be limited. As a result, the Imperial Way Faction continued to lose influence while the Control Faction gained power within the army.¹¹³ This does not connote that Kakehi's ideology, which had greatly influenced the thought of the Imperial Way Faction, lost importance within the army. Instead, Kakehi's ideology was incorporated into the Control Faction.¹¹⁴

2.2.2 The February 26 Incident

In 1935, Aizawa Saburō (相沢三郎), an Imperial Way Faction associate, assassinated Nagata Tetsuzan. In order to prevent the Imperial Way Faction from using the trial to attack the army leadership as well as the government and create public turmoil, the Control Faction that dominated the *sanbō honbu* planned to relocate the army's first division, the mainstay of young officers who were linked to the Imperial Way Faction, to Manchuria before the Aizawa trial ended. This was perceived as a serious threat by the young officers, who decided to act before it was too late.¹¹⁵ Not only were the plotters able to secure support, approval, and financial backing from high ranking military officers and influential civilians, but members of the imperial family contributed as well.¹¹⁶

On February 26, the plotters took action and mobilized roughly 1,600 of their subordinate soldiers. They assassinated leading military personnel and politicians and were able to gain control of important strategic locations in Tokyo. Their plan of overthrowing the government and replacing it with one under the leadership of either Mazaki Jinzaburō (真崎甚三郎) or Araki did not end successfully. Neither Araki nor

¹¹² Krebs, "Kaiserliche Militär," 50-52.

¹¹³ Janis Mimura, *Planning for Empire: Reform Bureaucrats and the Japanese Wartime State* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011), 44. Araki, however, did not lose his political influence. This is exemplified by the fact that he was appointed Education Minister in 1938 as part of the Konoe cabinet. Saaler, *Demokratie*, 496.

¹¹⁴ Skya, *Holy War*, 191.

¹¹⁵ Ben-Ami Shillony, "The February 26 Affair: Politics of a Military Insurrection," in *Crisis politics in Prewar Japan: Institutional and Ideological Problems of the 1930s*, ed. George M. Wilson et al. (Tokyo: Sophia University, 1970), 26-29.

¹¹⁶ Shillony, "February 26 Affair," 29-32, 33-37.

Mazaki acted and the plotters were eventually forced to surrender on February 29, as the emperor, in whose name the plotters had claimed to be acting, advised the army's high command to suppress the uprising.¹¹⁷ Kita Ikki (北一輝) and Nishida Mitsugi (西田税), who were seen as having provided the ideological background for the uprising, along with the plotters, were sentenced to death in a hurried and secret trial. The high ranking Imperial Way Faction officers who supported the uprising, were temporarily relieved of their duties, until the majority of them would move to important positions again under the first Konoe cabinet.¹¹⁸

The February 26 Incident was the largest and the last fascist terrorist plot to overturn the existing state structure. It also proved to be a turning point for the inner-army power struggle between, loosely defined, the Imperial Way Faction and the Control Faction. The Control Faction was able to use the February 26 Incident to oust the Imperial Way Faction from power and enhance its and the army's political influence by “using the menace of radical fascism as a decoy for outsiders.”¹¹⁹ The military was able to portray itself as the only capable force of restoring normality.¹²⁰ 'Fascism from below' was suppressed while 'fascism from above' was promoted. General Terauchi, inaugurated Army Minister after the February 26 Incident, saw to eliminating liberalist tendencies and proposed weakening the Diet's power by ending the legislature's control over the executive.¹²¹ Fascism was “rationalized” in the political progress after the February 26 Incident, and was advanced “by legal means from within the governmental apparatus.”¹²² This led to the strengthening of bonds between the military, the bureaucracy and the *zaibatsu*, and the increase of military spending, thus completing the Japanese fascist structure.¹²³

The February 26 Incident also overshadowed the smashing victory of the Constitutional Democratic Party (立憲民政党 *rikken minseitō*) and the success of the emerging Social Mass Party (社会大衆党 *shakai taishūtō*), in the 1936 election,

¹¹⁷ William G. Beasley, *The Rise of Modern Japan* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 180; Krebs, “Kaiserliche Militär,” 52-53.

¹¹⁸ Beasley, *Modern Japan*, 180-81; Krebs, “Kaiserliche Militär,” 52-53. Shillony, “February 26 Affair,” 49. The custom that only soldiers of the rank of general on active duty could become Army Minister was reenacted after the February 26 Incident to keep the generals, who due to their support of the plotters were removed from active duty, from direct influence. Beasley, *Modern Japan*, 180-81.

¹¹⁹ Maruyama, “Ideology,” 66.

¹²⁰ Krebs, “Kaiserliche Militär,” 53.

¹²¹ Maruyama, “Ideology,” 66-67. Japan's Imperial Diet (帝國議會 *teikoku gikai*) consisted of a House of Representatives (衆議院 *shūgiin*, also *lower house*) and a House of Peers (貴族院 *kizokuin*, also *upper house*).

¹²² Maruyama, “Ideology,” 70.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 71.

delivering a severe blow to the remaining public support of the political parties.¹²⁴ The military's increased self-confidence led to a clash between the military and the Diet as the military demanded a large increase in expenditures, less portfolios for party members and “radical reforms of the central bureaucracy to increase administrative efficiency for the sake of national defense.”¹²⁵ The army, albeit, had not reached absolute power yet, which can be seen in the fact that the cabinet headed by General Hayashi Senjūrō (林銑十郎, Prime Minister in 1937) collapsed because it was not able to overcome the parliament's opposition to certain policies.¹²⁶

Japanese fascism until the February 26 Incident is characterized by the lack of a mass organization. It consisted of a small number of activists. It then evolved and was expanded within the existing state apparatus. The civilian right-wing extremists were only able to significantly influence Japanese politics when they merged with the military extremists in the period of fascist terrorism.¹²⁷ Nonetheless, the fascist movement, promoted 'from below,' never became more than a few right-wing extremists with no concrete plans that were to be followed once they had successfully overthrown the existing state structure.¹²⁸ This lack of realistic plans is best demonstrated by the outcome of the February 26 Incident: approximately 1600 soldiers were only able to kill “a few elderly men.”¹²⁹

Although *coup d' états* such as the February 26 Incident were failures, a fascist alteration of the state took place. The reason for this lies in the fact that it wasn't only the young officers who advocated the “military-fascist-motion” that centered on the remodeling of the state. This notion was also present in the military's core.¹³⁰ Although a Shōwa Restoration, that Skya determined as one of the “fundamental purpose[s] of life”¹³¹ for a Japanese fascist terrorist, never materialized, the fascist terrorism had significant influence. The Manchurian Incident gave the army a boost in terms of support within the populace. The party cabinets ended after the May 15 Incident in 1932, and the military gained new heights in terms of influence over Japanese politics

¹²⁴ Fletcher, *New Order*, 79. The success of the Social Mass Party, however, cannot be seen as a demonstration of anti-militaristic sentiment within the populace. The Social Mass Party was dominated by pro-government and pro-military forces that were somewhat in favor of the fascist current – at least more so than the major conservative parties were. Bix, “Rethinking,” 18.

¹²⁵ Fletcher, *New Order*, 79.

¹²⁶ Krebs, “Kaiserliche Militär,” 53.

¹²⁷ Maruyama, “Ideology,” 51-52.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 57.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 56.

¹³⁰ Abe [博純], *Nihon fashizumu*, 175.

¹³¹ Skya, *Holy War*, 242.

after the February 26 Incident and began spreading 'fascism from above.' Fascism gained widespread support, arguably, even amongst members of the imperial family.

We will now turn to Yamagata Aritomo, who played an important role in creating the Imperial Japanese Army and the Meiji institutions, which became an important base for militarism and fascism to form in Japan.

3. Yamagata Aritomo (山県有朋, 1838 – 1923)

Yamagata Aritomo came from lowly samurai heritage. He would become one of the most, arguably *the* most, influential Japanese oligarchs who dominated Japan in its period of modernization and imperialism. In 1907 he was awarded the honor of being raised to the rank of prince.¹³² Yamagata is considered to be “a key figure in the creation of Japan's modern army and civil governmental system,”¹³³ and became “by far the most politically powerful man in the army.”¹³⁴ He died merely a decade before Japan would turn towards fascism. A part of his legacy, as we will see, are institutions that, without his leading authority in the background, facilitated the militarist and fascist takeover in the 1930's.

3.1 Military and Political Career

Yamagata Aritomo was born in the Domain of Chōshū (長州藩 *chōshū han*, today Yamaguchi Prefecture 山口県 *yamaguchi ken*) on June 16, 1838.¹³⁵ He received most of his education at home on a somewhat irregular basis, as was common in lowly samurai families. Concurrently with his schooling, from the age of thirteen onwards, Yamagata worked small jobs, in which he showed reliability and talent and was able to slowly advance to more prestigious, however, still minor positions in the local *han* (藩 feudal domain) administration.¹³⁶ The first record of Yamagata coming into contact with anti-Tokugawa forces, which sought to reestablish imperial rule, was during an intelligence gathering mission. In 1858, he and five other young samurai, among them Itō Hirobumi

¹³² Roger F. Hackett, *Yamagata Aritomo in the Rise of Modern Japan: 1838-1922* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), 1-2, 232.

¹³³ Richard J. Smethurst, “The Creation of the Imperial Military Reserve Association in Japan,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* Vol. 30, No. 4 (Aug., 1971): 815.

¹³⁴ Humphreys, *Heavenly Sword*, 2.

¹³⁵ Fujimura Michio [藤村道生], *Yamagata Aritomo* [山県有朋] (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1961), 1.

¹³⁶ Hackett, *Yamagata Aritomo*, 5-6.

(伊藤博文) were sent to Kyoto by the *han's* authorities to investigate the changing situation in the Tokugawa *bakufu* (徳川幕府). Upon his return to Chōshū, Yamagata was accepted as a student and influenced by Yoshida Shōin (吉田松陰), a prominent advocate of the *sonnō jōi* (尊王攘夷 “honor the emperor, expel the barbarians”) movement.¹³⁷ Yoshida's teachings included the idea that “[t]he lord-vassal relationship is man's first principle, and preserving independence from the barbarians is the nation's main task,”¹³⁸ and focused on the importance of the value of loyalty “to family, the han, to the emperor, and to the divine nation.”¹³⁸ These ideas were of significant importance for Yamagata's intention to create a conscript army, and later Tanaka Giichi's aim of creating 'national villagers'¹³⁹ after the Russo-Japanese War.

As a result of the *han's* army being defeated by foreign troops that the *sonnō jōi* advocates sought to expel, the *han's* army was restructured in 1863 to include peasants as well as samurai. Yamagata became an officer in the so-called *kiheитай* (奇兵隊, irregular militia). The *kiheитай* and other mixed militia units (諸隊 *shotai*) trained in Western style fighting and tactics, and combined Japanese and Western weapons.¹⁴⁰ Yamagata was able to gain more experience as a military leader of the *kiheитай* during battles with foreigners, during an inner-Chōshū power struggle which the *sonnō jōi* advocates won, and the ensuing war between the Tokugawa *bakufu* and Chōshū, from which Chōshū emerged victorious.¹⁴¹ On his second intelligence gathering mission in Kyoto nine years after the first one, Yamagata met like-minded, anti-*bakufu* samurai from Satsuma, such as Saigō Takamori (西郷隆盛) and Ōkubo Toshimichi (大久保利通) for the first time.¹⁴² During the Meiji Restoration, Yamagata, as commander of the *kiheитай*, gained further experience with peasants as soldiers and his skills as a military leader came to be more widely known.¹⁴³

Yamagata's conviction that universal military service would considerably enhance the security of a nation was deepened during his first trip to Europe and the U.S. from August 1869 to September 1870. This trip also became an important step in

¹³⁷ Hackett, *Yamagata Aritomo*, 11-13. Europeans and Americans were referred to as 'barbarians.'

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹³⁹ Smethurst defines a 'national villager' as follows: “A national villager was a person who supported military and national goals because of an identification with his hamlet and a commitment to its values. He was also one who developed a new positive identification with the emperor and the army, the symbols of Japan's unity.” Richard J. Smethurst, introduction to *A Social Basis for Prewar Japanese Militarism: The Army and the Rural Community*, by Richard J. Smethurst (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1974), xvi.

¹⁴⁰ Hackett, *Yamagata Aritomo*, 22-25.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 31, 34-37, 42.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 44.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 48-49.

his career as he, upon returning to Japan, was the first person without rank and title to be permitted an audience with the emperor, during which he reported his observations from overseas.¹⁴⁴ Shortly after returning from this inspection tour of Europe and the U.S., Yamagata was appointed Assistant Vice Minister of the Military Ministry and immediately began planning a national conscript army.¹⁴⁵ He was convinced that a strong army was of utmost importance in order for Japan to prosper.¹⁴⁶ Universal conscription, to Yamagata, was a means to strengthen and unify the nation, as well as an important educational factor. Additionally, it would lead to all men becoming soldiers and loyal subjects to the emperor.¹⁴⁷

After separate Army and Navy Ministries were established on 27 February 1872, Yamagata was appointed Vice Army Minister, and from 18 April 1873 to 24 December 1878, Army Minister.¹⁴⁸ In addition, he was appointed Councilor of State in August 1874. When Saigō resigned from his post within the army, Yamagata became the “leading military figure in the government.”¹⁴⁹ In order to become the first chief of the newly established *sanbō honbu*, he stepped down as Army Minister. His new position made him more powerful than ever before.¹⁵⁰ “[A]s state councilor and supreme military adviser to the emperor, Yamagata enjoyed the highest position of military authority in the nation.”¹⁵¹ The *gunjin chokuyu* (軍人勅諭 Rescript to Soldiers and Sailors¹⁵²), arguably one of the most important documents in the Meiji period, was promulgated in 1882 as a result of Yamagata's influence on the emperor.¹⁵³

In 1882, Yamagata also assumed his first civilian post in the Meiji political system, while maintaining his position of leadership within the army. He became acting president of the Legislative Board, a preparatory body that advised the government on issues concerning the writing of the constitution.¹⁵⁴ Yamagata was inaugurated Home

¹⁴⁴ Hackett, *Yamagata Aritomo*, 50-54.

¹⁴⁵ Drea, *Japan's Imperial Army*, 21. Hackett, *Yamagata Aritomo*, 54. Roger F. Hackett, “The Meiji Leaders and Modernization: The Case of Yamagata Aritomo,” in *Changing Japanese Attitudes Toward Modernization*, ed. Marius B. Jansen (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), 251.

¹⁴⁶ Conrad Totman, *A History of Japan* (Malden: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 2000), 369.

¹⁴⁷ Hackett, “Meiji Leaders,” 256, 258.

¹⁴⁸ Bürkner, “Probleme,” 43.

¹⁴⁹ Hackett, *Yamagata Aritomo*, 72.

¹⁵⁰ Krebs, “Kaiserliche Militär,” 29.

¹⁵¹ Hackett, *Yamagata Aritomo*, 82.

¹⁵² An excerpt of the *gunjin chokuyu* is featured in Rekishigaku Kenkyūkai [歴史学研究会], eds., *Kindai* [近代], Vol 4 of *Nihonshi shiryō* [日本史史料] (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1997), 191-93. An English excerpt can be found in the appendix to Hillis Lory, *Japan's Military Masters: The Army in Japanese Life* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1973), 239-45. The *gunjin chokuyu* is also referred to as the Imperial Precepts to Soldiers and Sailors. Morton, *Tanaka Giichi*, 19.

¹⁵³ Hackett, *Yamagata Aritomo*, 86.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 91.

Minister in 1883. In this position he greatly contributed to the restructuring of the system of local government.¹⁵⁵ Local self-government, similar to universal conscription in Yamagata's view, was an important pillar that would provide a solid foundation on which the state would prosper. Both universal conscription and local self-government, in Yamagata's opinion, connected the populace to the central government and would encourage unity and contribute to stability.¹⁵⁶ Yamagata was convinced “that in return for a modicum of local responsibility loyal support of the government's goals would be given.”¹⁵⁷

The next major step in Yamagata's career was becoming Prime Minister in December 1889, a post he held concurrently with that of Home Minister.¹⁵⁸ During his term in office, he strongly supported the promulgation of the *kyōiku chokugo*.¹⁵⁹ In his inaugural speech in front of the first Diet on December 6, 1890, Yamagata laid out an important aspect of Japanese policy that would influence the nation's policy, in the external as well as in the domestic sphere for decades to come. Yamagata spoke of 'lines of sovereignty' and 'lines of interest.' He defined the 'lines of sovereignty' as the territories under Japanese control and the 'lines of interest' as those in the immediate proximity of Japan. Securing both lines, he claimed, was necessary to maintain Japanese independence. From this he concluded the necessity of significant military expansion.¹⁶⁰ The 'lines of interest,' which Yamagata did not define in his speech, referred to Korea. He had previously clarified this in a written statement, which he circulated amongst the cabinet ministers.¹⁶¹

Yamagata ascended the next step in his civilian career in 1893 when he became President of the Privy Council (枢密院 *sūmitsuin*), which brought him even closer to the emperor.¹⁶² During the second cabinet that Yamagata headed (1898–1900),¹⁶³ he instigated legislation that limited active duty generals and admirals to becoming Army

¹⁵⁵ Hackett, *Yamagata Aritomo*, 101-02.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 111; Hackett, “Meiji Leaders,” 263.

¹⁵⁷ Hackett, “Meiji Leaders,” 265.

¹⁵⁸ Hackett, *Yamagata Aritomo*, 125-26.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 128-34.

¹⁶⁰ Yamagata Aritomo [山県有朋] cited in Fujimura [藤村], *Yamagata Aritomo*, 138-39. An English translation of this speech is featured in Alfred Stead, ed., *Japan by the Japanese* (London: William Heinemann, 1904), 83-85.

¹⁶¹ Fujimura [藤村], *Yamagata Aritomo*, 139.

¹⁶² Hackett, *Yamagata Aritomo*, 89, 154-56. In 1900, through Yamagata's encouragement, the Privy Council was elevated from an advisory to a supervisory instance, that for example had to approve legislation that concerned the educational system. *Ibid.*, 202. He held this post in 1893 (March to December), 1905 (December) to 1909 (June), and 1909 (October) to 1922 (February). *Ibid.*, 232.

¹⁶³ Hartmann, *Geschichte*, 87.

and Navy Minister in order to keep party politicians from interfering in military bureaucracy.¹⁶⁴

After and in between the official posts which Yamagata was to assume until his death, he, as *genrō*, maintained a strong influence within the military as well as in the political sphere. He had insured his influence through a clique of loyal followers, clansmen from Chōshū, some of whom eventually moved from important posts in the army to high offices within the civil bureaucracy, in the same way he had. Others who had been his subordinates during his post as Home Minister, continued to ascend in the civilian bureaucracy,¹⁶⁵ thus securing Chōshū influence in many areas of the Japanese state. After Itō Hirobumi's death in 1909, Yamagata became by far the most influential *genrō*.¹⁶⁶

3.2 Yamagata's Death and the Ensuing Power Vacuum

The dominance that Yamagata had established in the army and within the political sphere, as well as the army's independence from government control, proved to be a significant problem after his death in 1922.

As long as Yamagata was alive, he controlled the army, and it followed his orders.¹⁶⁷ After Yamagata's death, the Chōshū clique's influence in the army and political arena slowly declined.¹⁶⁸ Yamagata as “principal military adviser to the emperor” had ensured that the Army Minister and the chief of the *sanbō honbu* cooperated. After his death, threatening rivalries between the Army Ministry (陸軍省 *rikugunshō*) and the *sanbō honbu* ensued. Serious flaws in the system of the dual command structure became visible.¹⁶⁹ Once his presence as an authority in the background vanished, it became clear that the structure of the military was not optimal and that the system had only functioned properly as long as Yamagata had held the strings. In this way, the military system resembles the civilian governmental system. Once its founders were gone, it lacked stability and was easily influenced by extremists.

¹⁶⁴ Hackett, *Yamagata Aritomo*, 202-03; Hackett, “Meiji Leaders,” 260-61; Humphreys, *Heavenly Sword*, 8.

¹⁶⁵ Hackett, *Yamagata Aritomo*, 89, 144-46, 212-13, 225, 300-01, 316, 343-44.

¹⁶⁶ Bürkner, “Probleme,” 123; Hackett, *Yamagata Aritomo*, 243-44, 248.

¹⁶⁷ Hyman Kublin, “The 'Modern' Army of Early Meiji Japan,” *The Far Eastern Quarterly* Vol. 9, No. 1 (Nov., 1949): 28; Marc J. Ramseyer and Frances M. Rosenbluth, *The Politics of Oligarchy: Institutional Choice in Imperial Japan* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 90.

¹⁶⁸ Krebs, “Kaiserliche Militär,” 42.

¹⁶⁹ Humphreys, *Heavenly Sword*, 8.

Yamagata had established and mainly used the unique status of the army to maintain its independence from civilian control, while the officers in control during the 1930's used the army's unique status to actively influence the nation's policies and future.¹⁷⁰ Neither the Meiji Constitution, nor the greater part of the institutional structure of the state and the bureaucracy dominated by the oligarchs, was altered in prewar years. The difference from the 1920's, which were to a certain extent dominated by liberal trends, and the 1930's, was the change of “the influential groups within the regime,” and as a concomitant, the change of policies.¹⁷¹ Pluralism in thought and politics coupled with the succession of the Meiji-Leaders by a group that was not united by the Meiji-Struggle and, therefore, less collegial, in addition to economic difficulties, made way for instability to take hold of Japan.¹⁷² As Ramseyer and Rosenbluth conclude, “[o]nce the oligarchs had died [...] most of the substantive checks on military power disappeared.”¹⁷³ In opposition to some scholars who see the 1930's and 1940's as a dark valley, an aberration in Japan's proper path, this paper argues that instead, the Taishō Democracy was somewhat of an irregularity in Japan's path. From the fact that party politics were not included in the Meiji Constitution, one can conclude that the Meiji oligarchs, at least initially, did not desire them. The situation in the 1930's and 1940's is in part a result of the expansion policies since the Meiji Restoration, and from a democratic viewpoint, flaws in the Meiji constitutional system, for example, as demonstrated above, the need of authorities in the background in order to preserve stability in this unstable environment. An environment in which, as Böttcher notes “the only nominally absolute powers of the emperor led to the competition for influence of the institutions of state and the powerful groups. Under the pretense of loyalty to the emperor, every sufficiently powerful actor was able to pursue his own interests.”¹⁷⁴ Following Kato's analysis, the state structure did not change in the late Taishō to early Shōwa period. It was still in accordance with the Meiji Constitution; it was the function that changed.¹⁷⁵ The independence of the army, one of the actors with sufficient power whose striving for influence benefited from the change of function, is one aspect that will be discussed in the next chapter.

¹⁷⁰ Saaler, *Demokratie*, 490.

¹⁷¹ Kato, “Taishō Democracy,” 217.

¹⁷² Jansen, *Modern Japan*, 574-75.

¹⁷³ Ramseyer and Rosenbluth, *Politics*, 94.

¹⁷⁴ Böttcher, “Faschismus,” 83-84.

¹⁷⁵ Kato, “Taishō Democracy,” 218, 236.

4. The Dainippon Teikoku Rikugun

This chapter will examine the creation of the Imperial Japanese Army. It was an army that was meant to establish unity within Japan, secure Japan's independence, and guard Japan on its ascendance to big power status. On the basis of its special place in the Meiji Constitution and the skillful conduct of Yamagata Aritomo, the army, however, also became an independent political actor in prewar Japan, an actor that eventually became the primary carrier of the fascist restructuring of the Japanese state.

4.1 Creating and Structuring the Dainippon Teikoku Rikugun

The Imperial Guard (御親兵 *goshinpei*, or 親兵 *shinpei*), established as suggested by Yamagata, was the first army in Japan that was not an army comprised of soldiers from just one *han*, but was rather made up of soldiers from three different *han* (Satsuma, Chōshū and Tosa), united and organized as the emperor's army.¹⁷⁶ It “mark[ed] the beginning of modern Japan's military institution,”¹⁷⁷ replacing an army made up of troops from independent domains that were rooted on a quota-based conscription system.¹⁷⁸ The Imperial Guard provided an important backbone for the successful restructuring of Japan, the abolishment of the *han* and the creation of prefectures in 1871 (廃藩置県 *haihan chiken*).¹⁷⁹ In addition to its *shizoku* (士族 former samurai) volunteers under the *sōhei* (壯兵) system,¹⁸⁰ by the summer of 1871, the army with a “quota-based [...] garrison system” had drafted its first 1500 conscripts of whom a quarter proved to be physically unfit.¹⁸¹ This new conscript army, however, lacked all basic requirements to function: “weapons, money, authority, and personnel recruiting.”¹⁸² In addition, the *sōhei* system was very costly and was seen as a hindrance to securing the Meiji-Reforms. It thus posed a threat to the new government, because the *sōhei* in general had stronger bonds of loyalty to their former leaders within the abolished clans than to the new government.¹⁸³

¹⁷⁶ Shingo Fukushima, “The Building of a National Army,” *The Developing Economies* Vol. 3, No. 4 (December, 1965): 522; Kublin, “Modern' Army,” 30.

¹⁷⁷ Drea, *Japan's Imperial Army*, 23.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 22-23.

¹⁷⁹ Fukushima, “National Army,” 522. Simultaneously to the abolishment of the feudal domains the regional private armies were also abolished. Drea, *Japan's Imperial Army*, 24.

¹⁸⁰ Fukushima, “National Army,” 523.

¹⁸¹ Drea, *Japan's Imperial Army*, 24.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 25.

¹⁸³ Fukushima, “National Army,” 523, 529.

In 1873, finally, through the Conscription Ordinance (徴兵令 *chōheirei*) the basic groundwork of the modern Imperial Japanese Army was laid. By the end of 1873 it consisted of about 17,900 men and would expand to about 33,000 in 1875.¹⁸⁴ From 1878 on, with the successive transition from the French to the German army system, an important change took place within the army command structure. The army chain of command was divided into two separate institutions: the administrative and the operational command.¹⁸⁵

A mutiny among the Imperial Guard, known as the “Takebashi disturbance” (竹橋事件 *takebashi jiken*) in 1878, and the advent of political thought advocating popular rights within the military became a matter of strong concern to the military leadership, spurred reforms to the military system, and underlined the importance of a strict prohibition of soldiers being involved in politics.¹⁸⁶ Among the reforms were the Admonitions to the Armed Forces (軍人訓戒 *gunjin kunkai*) issued in 1878, the *gunjin chokuyu* promulgated in 1882, a military police system created in 1881,¹⁸⁷ and prior to the Meiji Constitution, by means of a memorandum presented to the emperor in 1881 by his councilors (参議 *sangi*), the emperor was termed commander-in-chief and the duties of a soldier were outlined to be patriotic and apolitical.¹⁸⁸

In the years after the Meiji Restoration, the army's primary objective was that of functioning as a police force keeping the peasants and the *shizoku* clans that had opposed the Meiji Restoration under control, and therefore enabling the new government to introduce reforms.¹⁸⁹ During the late 1870's to early 1880's, the role of the military changed from primarily being responsible for safeguarding the domestic status quo to forwarding external objectives, that is, expansionist policies.¹⁹⁰ The primary objective of official army policy – defense of the homeland within Japanese borders – however, was in place until at least the end of the fiscal year 1904 and was not officially changed until the Imperial National Defense Plan (帝国国防方針 *teikoku kokubō kōshin*) was enacted in 1907. National defense from then on was to be officially secured through a doctrine of offensive advance (攻勢主義 *kōsei shugi*).¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁴ Drea, *Japan's Imperial Army*, 29.

¹⁸⁵ Fukushima, “National Army,” 530; Humphreys, *Heavenly Sword*, 7-8.

¹⁸⁶ This, however, was not intended to keep the military leadership from interfering in the political arena and holding political office.

¹⁸⁷ The Admonitions to the Armed Forces and the *gunjin chokuyu* were both drafted by Nishi Amane amongst others. Fukushima, “National Army,” 538; Hackett, *Yamagata Aritomo*, 84.

¹⁸⁸ Fukushima, “National Army,” 537.

¹⁸⁹ Kublin, “Modern' Army,” 22.

¹⁹⁰ Hartmann, *Geschichte*, 80; Krebs, “Kaiserliche Militär,” 29.

¹⁹¹ Yoshida Yutaka [吉田裕], “Nihon no guntai” [日本の軍隊], in *Kindai 2* [近代2], Vol. 17 of *Iwanami kōza*

4.2 Conscript Army

Apart from the fact that an army based primarily on *shizoku*, like the *sōhei* system, would have posed a threat to the new government,¹⁹² a conscript army, as Drea states, seemed promising for many reasons:

“Conscription would [...] break down the old order's feudal customs, promote the restoration's goals, and create a future pool of trained soldiers available in times of foreign crisis and able to protect their homes in times of internal disorder. Furthermore, army indoctrination could translate the conscripts' regional loyalties into national allegiance and send them home as veterans to proselytize army virtues, modernization, and proto-nationalism to their communities.”¹⁹³

Conscripts through this indoctrination would eventually live the slogan and become the embodiment of 'good soldier = good citizen' (良兵即良民 *ryōhei soku ryōmin*) the 'national villagers' Tanaka Giichi envisioned the entire populace of becoming.

Yamagata had been impressed by the conscripts' ability during the Meiji Restoration.¹⁹⁴ This, as well as Yamagata's aim to use conscription as a means of civilian education,¹⁹⁵ and the reasons mentioned above, led Yamagata to strongly favor conscription over any other army model. He based the Japanese conscription system on the French one. Common soldiers would serve three years on active duty and four years in the reserves.¹⁹⁶

Conscription was presented to the Japanese population as having been part of ancient Japanese customs and as an egalitarian measure because it would eliminate inequality by opening the military profession to commoners as well as for example nobles and former samurai.¹⁹⁷ However, during the first years after its introduction, conscription was rejected by the population.¹⁹⁸ This was partly due to the term 'blood

Nihon tsushi [岩波講座日本通史], ed. Ōe Shinobu [大江志乃夫] (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1994), 154. The plan was drafted by Tanaka Giichi and revised by Yamagata Aritomo. Hackett, *Yamagata Aritomo*, 234.

¹⁹² Fukushima, “National Army,” 523, 529.

¹⁹³ Drea, *Japan's Imperial Army*, 29.

¹⁹⁴ Gordon, *Modern History*, 66.

¹⁹⁵ Smethurst, *Social Basis*, 7; Tsurumi, *Social Change*, 84.

¹⁹⁶ Drea, *Japan's Imperial Army*, 29. The duration of military service as a conscript was reduced over time (to 2, 1.5, 1 year varying from source to source) during the Taishō era. Drea, *Japan's Imperial Army*, 154; Krebs, “Kaiserliche Militär,” 45; Saaler, *Demokratie*, 132.

¹⁹⁷ Drea, *Japan's Imperial Army*, 29; Fukushima, “National Army,” 525. The principle of conscription existed, at least as an imperial myth, during the Nara period but was not widely enforced. Kublin, “Modern' Army,” 23.

¹⁹⁸ Fukushima, “National Army,” 526.

tax' (血税 *ketsuzei*) that was used in the conscription law, which caused the mostly illiterate peasants to understand its literal meaning.¹⁹⁹ The implementation of conscription spurred uprisings, and eligibles sought to circumvent being conscripted using all means possible.²⁰⁰ More riots, during which registration centers were attacked, followed in 1874.²⁰¹ Desertions were frequent in the first years of conscription.²⁰² These circumstances show, that the extreme loyalty that the Japanese soldiers demonstrated until the end of WWII was not a traditional value belonging to Japan's "national character." It took decades of indoctrinating and training to consolidate this patriotic spirit, an essential part of modern nationalism – and militarism, and fascism – that led to the creation of a populace that willingly partook in military service.²⁰³

The conscription system, that would be included in Article 20 of the Meiji Constitution,²⁰⁴ in its form as introduced in 1872 and enacted in 1873, had serious flaws. In theory every male of the age of 20 was to serve in the military. However, many ways to evade conscription existed. Apart from exemptions common to conscription, such as being a convicted criminal or physically unfit, less obvious exemptions also existed. It was possible to evade being drafted by paying a fee of 270 Yen (an enormous sum at that time), and students as well as the first born (the household heir) were also exempt from the draft, which led to adoptions of second and third born sons into families without a male heir. About 4% of eligibles were drafted in 1876 and as late as 1889 it was not more than about 5%.²⁰⁵ Until the conscription reform in 1889, the rate of conscripted eligibles never exceeded 6%.²⁰⁶

According to Katsura Tarō (桂太郎), a Yamagata protégé, the army was missing out on the most promising recruits because the rich, influential, and educated were able to evade conscription. This gave the army a negative image, and peasants also tried to dodge being drafted. This, in addition to the fact that comprehensive civilian education could not be secured since only a small percentage of young men were being

¹⁹⁹ Kublin, "Modern' Army," 33.

²⁰⁰ Drea, *Japan's Imperial Army*, 30-31; Fukushima, "National Army," 526. The uprisings in the first year after the implementation of conscription, however, were mainly aimed at forcing the government to lower the price for rice, which was rising due to inflation, abolishing the newly introduced Western calendar and compulsory primary school education, only adding the rejection of conscription as a secondary theme to their protests. Drea, *Japan's Imperial Army*, 31.

²⁰¹ Gordon, *Modern History*, 67.

²⁰² Fukushima, "National Army," 538.

²⁰³ Gordon, *Modern History*, 66-67.

²⁰⁴ The Meiji Constitution was promulgated on February 21, 1889. It established Japan as a constitutional monarchy (as opposed to an autocratic state as it was before). Matsushita Yoshio [松下芳男], *Nihon rekishi shinsho: Meiji no guntai* [日本歴史新書—明治の軍隊] (Tokyo: Shibundō, 1963), 92-93.

²⁰⁵ Drea, *Japan's Imperial Army*, 29-31; Tsurumi, *Social Change*, 82-83.

²⁰⁶ Drea, *Japan's Imperial Army*, 29-30.

conscripted, led Yamagata and Katsura to conclude that reforms were necessary to achieve their goals.²⁰⁷

The conscription system underwent reforms of varying significance between 1878 and 1889.²⁰⁸ Many loopholes were closed, and one-year long officers' training for middle and high school graduates was introduced. The aim of this voluntary officers' training for the elite was to associate the army elite (officers) with the village elite (landowning class) with the goal to enhance the military's status and backing in the populace while simultaneously securing order at the military and village levels.²⁰⁹ These reforms and indoctrination bore its fruits, and from the mid 1890's onward, serving as a conscript in the Imperial Japanese Army was seen as a patriotic duty by the majority of the Japanese populace.²¹⁰

The number of conscripts rose from about 20,689 (5.7% of eligibles) in 1891 to 151,141 (18.2% of eligibles) in 1936 with the actual number of eligibles continuously rising. The percentage of eligibles drafted in that period of time (1891 to 1936), however, reached its peak during the military expansion after the Russo-Japanese War, only falling one step short of the WWII levels, while the amount of draftees per year declined due to the budget cuts of the Taishō era only to be increased again after the Manchurian Incident until Japan's defeat in 1945.²¹¹ In 1873, Yamagata had envisioned building an army of 400,000 soldiers.²¹² However, in 1883, according to Yamagata, even after a restructuring of the army now 200,000 soldiers strong, it still fell far short of his original goal because of budget restraints. In 1896, after the Sino-Japanese War, the army finally reached the strength that Yamagata had aimed for in 1873.²¹³ While the quantity of recruits rose, the quality, at least from the viewpoint of the army leadership, differed. Conscripts before the 1910's were likely to come from a rural setting and were more influenced by the *traditional* values present in the countryside and preferred by the military. Due to demographic changes and urbanization from the 1910's on, the likelihood of a conscript coming from an urban background and therefore having been subjected to extended education and being politically more knowledgeable and critical was substantially higher. The post Russo-Japanese War recruits were more

²⁰⁷ Smethurst, *Social Basis*, 7.

²⁰⁸ Matsushita [松下], *Meiji no guntai*, 94-95; Tsurumi, *Social Change*, 84.

²⁰⁹ Smethurst, *Social Basis*, 7.

²¹⁰ Fukushima, "National Army," 528; Gordon, *Modern History*, 67.

²¹¹ Yoshida [吉田], "Nihon no guntai," 162.

²¹² Aritomo Yamagata, "The Japanese Army," in *Japan by the Japanese*, ed. Alfred Stead (London: William Heinemann, 1904), 105.

²¹³ Yamagata, "Japanese Army," 106.

individualistic and required stronger guidance.²¹⁴ The increase of conscripts during the years after the Russo-Japanese War, which put a higher burden on the populace, again spurred a notion of trying to evade being drafted on the grass roots level.²¹⁵ Mass desertions, due to abuse by officers as well as non-commissioned officers that were made public in the media, were a common phenomena in the years after the Russo-Japanese War.²¹⁶ At the same time, the increased number of conscripts brought the army and the populace closer together. Military thought spread more extensively among the populace.²¹⁷ The conscription system not only proved to be successful in bringing the army and populace closer together, it also led to an effective Imperial Japanese Army and proved it skeptics wrong, as its first big test, the Satsuma Rebellion (西南戦争 *seinan sensō*) of 1877 showed.²¹⁸ Yamagata, who had believed in the capabilities of a conscript army from the outset, was impressed by the conscripts' ability of being victorious over an army of professionally trained *shizoku*.²¹⁹

Dickinson argues that the Imperial Japanese Army based on the conscription system was established primarily to create and preserve national unity and to achieve great power status and not because of a probable menace to Japanese independence,²²⁰ while Harries and Harries see the main objective of its creation in defending Japan's independence of threats by imperialist powers.²²¹ Regardless of where the primary objective is seen to be, the Imperial Japanese Army did both. As depicted above, the Imperial Japanese Army secured Japan's inner peace from early on. From the 1880's on with the transformation of Japan into a modern constitutional monarchy until the turn of the century and the Russo-Japanese War with Japan's attempt to become an Empire, it enabled Japan to count itself among the great powers.²²² The universal conscription system affected Japan as a nation-state as well as the Japanese people. The surpassing influence it had on the lives of the people is comparable in magnitude to the influence of the replacement of the Tokugawa class-based educational system by the system of universal education.²²³

²¹⁴ Drea, *Japan's Imperial Army*, 135; Humphreys, *Heavenly Sword*, 14.

²¹⁵ Yoshida [吉田], "Nihon no guntai," 162-63.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 165.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 162-63.

²¹⁸ Gordon, *Modern History*, 67; Yamagata, "Japanese Army," 107. *Seinan sensō*, literally translates to Southwestern War.

²¹⁹ Yamagata, "Japanese Army," 107.

²²⁰ Dickinson, *War*, 14, 17.

²²¹ Meirion Harries and Susie Harries, *Soldiers of the Sun: The Rise and Fall of the Imperial Japanese Army* (New York: Random House, 1991), 493.

²²² Dickinson, *War*, 14-15.

²²³ Hackett, *Yamagata Aritomo*, 129.

4.3 The Emperor and the Independence of the Dainippon Teikoku Rikugun

Five institutions were of vast importance in enabling the Imperial Japanese Army to become as powerful, influential and independent as it did: (1) The emperor's prerogative of supreme command; (2) direct access to the throne by the Army Minister; (3) the Army Minister had to be a general on active duty; (4) the dual command structure; and (5) the introduction of the *gunrei* (軍令 military decree²²⁴).

Initially through the *gunjin chokuyu*, and further secured legally through Article 11 of the Meiji Constitution, the emperor was promulgated supreme commander of the Japanese armed forces.²²⁵ This proved to be an important obstacle to Japanese constitutionalism²²⁶ since the emperor in reality was not in a position to wield control over the military, and the government did not have the legal means to do so.²²⁷

The Army Minister's direct access to the emperor (帷幄上奏 *iaku jōsō*) was established legally by Article 7 of the Cabinet-Government Regulations (内閣官制第七條 *naikaku kansei daishijijō*) in 1889.²²⁸ From then on the Army Minister could access the throne directly under the pretext that the matter in concern was a military secret. The Prime Minister would be informed after the throne had been consulted. The vague definition of what was to be considered a military secret led to the Army Minister generally excluding the Prime Minister from the decision-making process and informing him only of the results.²²⁹ With the Army Minister having direct access to the emperor, the military was out of the reach of cabinet controls.²³⁰ The Army Ministry became a military lobby group within the civilian government instead of being a control mechanism of the government.²³¹ The military, albeit, did not immediately come to dominate Japanese policies.²³²

²²⁴ *Gunrei* is the same word and is spelled with the same *kanji* as military command (軍令 *gunrei*) vs. military administration (軍政 *gunsei*) but has the meaning of military decree.

²²⁵ Bürkner, "Probleme," 52; Matsushita [松下], *Meiji no guntai*, 93.

²²⁶ Fukushima, "National Army," 534.

²²⁷ Bürkner, "Probleme," 197.

²²⁸ Inoue Kiyoshi [井上清], "Taishōki no seiji to gunbu" [大正期の政治と軍部], in *Taishōki no seiji to shakai* [大正期の政治と社会], ed. Inoue Kyoshi [井上清] (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1969), 355; Yoshida [吉田], "Nihon no guntai," 152.

²²⁹ Inoue [井上], "Seiji to gunbu," 355.

²³⁰ Humphreys, *Heavenly Sword*, 8; Krebs, "Kaiserliche Militär," 30.

²³¹ Bürkner, "Probleme," 197; Krebs, "Kaiserliche Militär," 30; Krebs, *Japan im Pazifischen Krieg*, 39.

²³² The first time the military was able to show its force and wield power over the government came with Japan's increasingly ambitious imperialism during the Boxer rebellion in 1900. Inoue [井上], "Seiji to gunbu," 356.

In 1900, through a revision of a law, the Army Minister had to be an officer on active duty (軍部大臣現役武官制 *gunbu daijin geneki bukansei*).²³³ This measure enhanced the military's already existing political power (resulting from, for example, its role in the Meiji Restoration)²³⁴ and clearly sought to limit the influence of the political parties on the military.²³⁵ It enabled the army to directly influence policies by threatening to withdraw its minister, bringing the government to a collapse or not naming an Army Minister in the first place, preventing a cabinet from forming.²³⁶ This law was temporarily repealed from 1913 to 1936; however, *de facto*, nothing changed. Army Ministers continued to be generals on active duty.²³⁷

The dual command structure was created with the establishment of the *sanbō honbu* in 1878, which was independent of the government. With the *sanbō honbu* in charge of the army's command (軍令 *gunrei*), the Army Ministry was left only in charge of administration (軍政 *gunsei*). The *sanbō honbu* reported directly to the emperor, and so its chief of staff enjoyed direct access to the emperor.²³⁸ The cabinet could not legally control the *sanbō honbu* and *de facto*, neither could the emperor.²³⁹

In addition to the institutions mentioned above, one last decisive factor guaranteed the possibility of the military making decisions independently from the cabinet. This was the establishment of the so-called *gunrei* in 1907. These *gunrei* that concerned the command of the army²⁴⁰ were exempt from the legal proceedings that

²³³ Inoue [井上], "Seiji to gunbu," 355; Yoshida [吉田], "Nihon no guntai," 152. The officers had to be of the rank of major general or higher to qualify. Bürkner, "Probleme," 113. The same applied to the Navy Minister.

²³⁴ Harries and Harries, *Soldiers of the Sun*, 66.

²³⁵ It had not been necessary to establish this active duty rule before 1900 because there were hardly any officers of the rank of general in the reserves until then. The threat of a retired general becoming Army Minister was that he could have been influenced by the political parties to adopt positions that harmed the army's influence without the army being able to put pressure on him because he was outside of the military command structure. Bürkner, "Probleme," 111-12.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, 112-13; Kato, "Taishō Democracy," 225; Krebs, *Japan im Pazifischen Krieg*, 40-41.

²³⁷ Bürkner, "Probleme," 112-13; Krebs, *Japan im Pazifischen Krieg*, 40; Yoshida Yutaka [吉田裕], *Nihon no guntai: Heishi tachi no kindaiishi* [日本の軍隊—兵士たちの近代史] (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2002), 168-69.

²³⁸ The independence of the *sanbō honbu* was legally confirmed for the first time by the civilian government in 1885 and became part of the Meiji constitutional system although only indirectly established through Article 11 and 12. Bürkner, "Probleme," 54, 66-67; Krebs, "Kaiserliche Militär," 29; Gerhard Krebs, *Das Moderne Japan 1868 – 1952: Von der Meiji-Restauration bis zum Friedensvertrag von San Francisco* (München: Oldenbourg, 2009), 11; Matsushita [松下], *Meiji no guntai*, 93. The chief of the *sanbō honbu* from its creation until 1889 was more powerful than the Army Minister because he already enjoyed direct access to the emperor. From 1908 on until Japan's defeat in WWII the *sanbō honbu* was by law more powerful than the Army Ministry. Bürkner, "Probleme," 66, 85. The *sanbō honbu* was basically independent of the Army Ministry. Krebs, *Japan im Pazifischen Krieg*, 40.

²³⁹ Krebs, "Kaiserliche Militär," 29.

²⁴⁰ *Gunrei* concerned the command of the Imperial Japanese Army in terms of the *sanbō honbu* but also the Army Ministry.

involved all *chokurei* (勅令 imperial command) having to be countersigned by the Prime Minister. This system had significant influence on the independence of the *sanbō honbu* and the Army Ministry. This, notwithstanding, did not mean that the Army Ministry was excluded from Japanese politics. In fact, the Army Ministry now had a better position to influence policies because through the *gunrei* it could, for example, exclude the Finance Ministry from financial decisions concerning the military.²⁴¹

With these institutions firmly in place, securing the army's independence and the army's connections to, for example, the bureaucracy, the army was in the best position to dominate the state in the late 1930's.²⁴² The civilian government instead of controlling the military was forced to defend itself against military domination,²⁴³ and the military's goals almost always were definite.²⁴⁴

4.4 Indoctrination within the Dainippon Teikoku Rikugun

4.4.1 The Gunjin Chokuyu

The *gunjin chokuyu*, promulgated in 1882 by Yamagata, defined the core values of a Japanese soldier and was the basis of military education and indoctrination. As Jansen analyzes, it was “[d]esigned to serve as moral guidance for the modern armed forces, [and] it reminded soldiers and sailors that it was not impetuous bravery that counted, but prudence, self-control, and disciplined loyalty.”²⁴⁵ The rescript rephrased values, for example simplicity, valor, loyalty to and respect for superiors, which had been part of the samurai *bushidō* (武士道), for the commoner conscript.²⁴⁶ Within the Japanese armed forces it “became [...] the core for the ideology of unity, the *gunjin (nippon) seishin* [軍人(日本)精神 (Japanese) soldiers' spirit]”²⁴⁷ and “explicitly told the military to stay out of

²⁴¹ Bürkner, “Probleme,” 81-84.

²⁴² Ibid., 197; Kato, “Taishō Democracy,” 225-26.

²⁴³ Fukushima, “National Army,” 534.

²⁴⁴ Abe [博純], *Nihon fashizumu*, 174. Other institutions concerning military policies also existed. Noteworthy are the Supreme Military Council (元帥府 *gensuifu*) and the Imperial General Headquarters (大本營 *daihonei*). These, however, did not significantly – if at all – contribute to the militarization of Japan. For the Supreme Military council see: Bürkner, “Probleme,” 115-16; Inoue [井上], “Seiji to gunbu,” 363; and Krebs, *Japan im Pazifischen Krieg*, 42. For the Imperial General Headquarters see: Bürkner, “Probleme,” 116-25, 130-32; Krebs, “Kaiserliche Militär,” 33; and Krebs, *Japan im Pazifischen Krieg*, 46-47.

²⁴⁵ Jansen, *Modern Japan*, 398.

²⁴⁶ Drea, *Japan's Imperial Army*, 52; Jansen, *Modern Japan*, 398-99; Hackett, *Yamagata Aritomo*, 86. Those values would also be applied to the entire Japanese population, for example through the *kyōiku chokugo*.

²⁴⁷ Smethurst, “Creation,” 821.

politics.²⁴⁸ It was studied everyday by the conscripts, who were expected to be able to recite an abbreviated version,²⁴⁹ until 1934, when they were expected to know the entire rescript.²⁵⁰

4.4.2 Education, Indoctrination and Ideology

The necessity of spiritual mobilization became apparent during the Satsuma rebellion in 1878.²⁵¹ Consequently, one part of the education within the army focused on indoctrinating the soldiers with values of patriotism, spiritual superiority, and loyalty to the superiors, but most importantly to the emperor. The intensity of this indoctrination deepened over time and reached its climax in the period from 1941 until Japan's defeat in 1945. In addition to and before the *zaigō gunjinkai*'s establishment, the army indoctrinated its officers through various schools, who were then to spread their mindset amongst the conscripts.

The Army Academy (陸軍士官学校 *rikugun shikan gakkō*), compulsory for all officer cadets, was established in 1874.²⁵² The Army College (陸軍大学校 *rikugun daigakkō*) was established in 1882.²⁵³ It was the entrance to important positions within the army and only the most promising officers, roughly 10 percent of the Army Academy graduates, attended.²⁵⁴ Additionally, in 1896 *rikugun yōnen gakkō* were established. Sons of military personnel could enroll for three years as early as at the age of 12 to 13 years old in order to prepare to follow in their father's footsteps.²⁵⁵

It is noteworthy that two leading theorists of what Skya terms “radical Shinto ultranationalism” were lecturers at military schools. Kakehi Katsuhiko²⁵⁶ taught in the Law Department of the Naval Academy. He had “a direct link with the Japanese military,”²⁵⁷ since his teachings were also part of the Imperial Japanese Army schools'

²⁴⁸ Humphreys, *Heavenly Sword*, 7.

²⁴⁹ Edward J. Drea, “In the Army Barracks of Imperial Japan,” *Armed Forces & Society* 15 (1989): 336.

²⁵⁰ Yoshida [吉田], *Nihon no guntai*, 190.

²⁵¹ Hackett, “Meiji Leaders,” 258.

²⁵² Krebs, “Kaiserliche Militär,” 27; Saaler, *Demokratie*, 139.

²⁵³ Krebs, “Kaiserliche Militär,” 27; Krebs, *Moderne Japan*, 11. According to Saaler the Army College was established in 1883. Saaler, *Demokratie*, 139.

²⁵⁴ Krebs, “Kaiserliche Militär,” 27.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 27. Saaler, *Demokratie*, 139. As a part of a policy of saving money to invest into the modernization of army equipment 4 divisions were dismantled in 1927. The discharged officers were sent to middle and high schools to prepare the students and through them the nation for 'total war.' With this the *rikugun yōnen gakkō* became unnecessary and were abolished. Krebs, “Kaiserliche Militär,” 45.

²⁵⁶ Skya labels him a “controlled' radical Shintō ultranationalist.” Skya, *Holy War*, 187.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 188.

curriculum.²⁵⁸ His “ideas [...] served as the pillar of the ideology of a clique of army officers identified with the Imperial Way Faction.”²⁵⁹ The influence of Uesugi's ideology is “particularly noteworthy”²⁶⁰ as he had direct influence on the Imperial Japanese Army officers.²⁶¹ His teachings were part of the military schools' curriculum.²⁶² At Yamagata's request, Uesugi began teaching at the Army College as head of the constitutional law department in 1913, and from 1918 on also taught ideology at the Army Academy.²⁶³ Although few officers were ever members of radical groups such as, for example, the Imperial Way Faction, most were fundamentally influenced by the ideology,²⁶⁴ and “it was with Uesugi [...] that the senior military barons made common cause in the ultranationalist movement of the 1920s”.²⁶⁵

Leading positions in the Army Ministry and the *sanbō honbu*, as well as the post of Army Minister in the period after the Russo-Japanese War, were usually held by graduates of the military academies and colleges, that is, highly trained military bureaucrats.²⁶⁶ Since officers who had served in the army for an extended period of time before entering the Army College, and having been influenced by Kakehi's and Uesugi's ideologies, were, after graduating, very likely to move to important offices quickly, they were in excellent positions to spread those radical ideas directly among their subordinates and through them indirectly among the Japanese populace.

The Russo-Japanese War served to reestablish the importance of *seishin* (精神 spirit as in soldiers' spirit) within the Imperial Japanese Army – morale and spirit in combat were seen as the decisive factor in Japan's victory.²⁶⁷ In 1908, a completely revised *guntai naimusho* (軍隊内務書, Army Handbook of Interior Administration) was issued placing “heavy emphasis on spiritual training and the inculcation of the military

²⁵⁸ Florian Neumann, *Politisches Denken im Japan des Frühen 20. Jahrhunderts: Das Beispiel Uesugi Shinkichi (1878–1929)* (München: Iudicium Verlag, 2011), 93. Whether or not Kakehi personally taught at the Imperial Japanese Army schools', however, remains unclear.

²⁵⁹ Skya, *Holy War*, 191. As noted above, when the Imperial Way Faction lost ground due to the February 26 Incident, Kakehi's ideologies became increasingly popular within the Control Faction. *Ibid.*, 191.

²⁶⁰ Saaler, *Demokratie*, 100; Skya, *Holy War*, 239. Uesugi Shinkichi had become famous as an opponent of the prominent legal scholar Minobe Tatsukichi (美濃部達吉). Uesugi stood in direct contact to Yamagata Aritomo from 1913 on and 'consulted' him about legal matters. Neumann, *Politisches Denken*, 91.

²⁶¹ Saaler, *Demokratie*, 100; Frank O. Miller, *Minobe Tatsukichi: Interpreter of Constitutionalism in Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965), 211.

²⁶² Miller, *Minobe Tatsukichi*, 211.

²⁶³ Neumann, *Politisches Denken*, 92.

²⁶⁴ Skya, *Holy War*, 257.

²⁶⁵ Miller, *Minobe Tatsukichi*, 211.

²⁶⁶ The period after the Russo-Japanese War, according to Yoshida, therefore marks the beginning of the bureaucratically organized military. Yoshida [吉田], “Nihon no guntai,” 155.

²⁶⁷ Humphreys, *Heavenly Sword*, 12-13.

virtues.”²⁶⁸ The direct link to the emperor, the “ultimate source of authority,” was used to indoctrinate the conscripts with notions of racial superiority over the enemy and moral superiority over their fellow civilian countrymen.²⁶⁹ The revised *guntai naimusho* also introduced the system of *the army as a family*²⁷⁰ which originated from the intention of furthering the army's popularity (which had temporarily declined after the Russo-Japanese War), while focusing in particular on conscripts from rural areas. The slogan “the company commander is the father, the squad leader is the mother” (中隊長はお父さん、班長はお母さん *chūtaichō ha otōsan, hanchō ha okāsan*) originated during that time. Although some resemblances to prison life survived the transformation, noticeable changes took place in the army barracks. To very poor farmers, life in the military could seem to be an improvement over the strenuous manual farm labor and meager diet on which the poorest of farmers had to survive. This strengthened the army's role in the rural areas, but also weakened its base in urban areas. To further the control on the rural population, a system of observation was established. The company commander, for example, would be provided with a detailed report on the conscript's rank in society and in return would send a report on the recruit's performance within the army back to the town hall.²⁷¹ The revised *guntai naimusho*, however, unintentionally to a certain degree, isolated the army “from the people by restricting soldiers' time off base and strictly censoring their reading materials.”²⁷² With the establishment of the *zaigō gunjinkai* two years later, the army gained better access to the lives of the populace and was able to communicate its values²⁷³ and further army-mobilization. As Fuji notes, the final step towards completing the observation system had begun.²⁷⁴

From 1909 on, as Drea analyzed, spreading and deepening “élan and morale [among conscripts] became an [army] obsession. According to the conventional army wisdom, iron discipline exemplified by unquestioning obedience to orders was the sole means to enhance spiritual power and inculcate confidence in victory.”²⁷⁵ The Infantry Field Manual (歩兵操典 *hohei sōten*²⁷⁶) was revised accordingly in 1909, stressing the

²⁶⁸ Humphreys, *Heavenly Sword*, 14.

²⁶⁹ Drea, *Japan's Imperial Army*, 134.

²⁷⁰ Humphreys, *Heavenly Sword*, 14.

²⁷¹ Fuji Tadatoshi [藤井忠俊], *Zaigō gunjinkai: Ryōhei ryōmin kara akagami · gyokusai he* [在郷軍人会一良兵良民から赤紙・玉砕へ] (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2009), 9-10.

²⁷² Humphreys, *Heavenly Sword*, 14.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, 15.

²⁷⁴ Fuji [藤井], *Zaigō gunjinkai*, 9.

²⁷⁵ Drea, *Japan's Imperial Army*, 133-34.

²⁷⁶ Tanaka Giichi was one of the officers in charge of revising the Infantry Field Manual. Humphreys, *Heavenly Sword*, 16.

importance of *seishin* and insisting on the infantry's decisive role in winning battles by attacking with small weapons and bayonets²⁷⁷ and therefore negating the importance of modern technology and weaponry. “The manual also intimated that proper attention to military discipline would develop an irresistible attack spirit that would inevitably result in victory.”²⁷⁸

With many army manuals edited and rewritten in the years between 1908 to 1913, genuine Japanese ideas found their way into the manuals for the first time replacing many of the existing ideas that had been copied from French and German military manuals. These ideas that would later characterize the Japanese army, consisted of an absolute lack of scientific rationality, extreme spiritual idealism, and the belief in sole infantry advance – an almighty infantry attacking with unsheathed swords. The revised manuals established the *emperor ideology* as a part of army thought and began spreading it within the army through various measures. Since the Army Codes of Conduct (陸軍礼式 *rikugun reishiki*) were revised in 1910, even more emphasis was put on the deification of the emperor, who from then on was saluted in a special manner otherwise reserved for gods.²⁷⁹

As a response to the spreading of what political leaders considered *dangerous thought*, for example communism within the Imperial Japanese Army in the aftermath of WWI, the army undertook various countermeasures.²⁸⁰ One of them was the revision of the *guntai naimusho* in 1921.

“The manual first used the term *kokutai* (national polity) to accentuate the army's unique relationship with the throne along with a grassroots appeal to nationalism wrapped in contempt for other Asians. Stressing that *kokutai* and the unbroken imperial line conferred a sacred uniqueness on the army, authorities reaffirmed the army's intangible attitudes of self-sacrifice, loyal service to the emperor, unselfishness, and courage to cultivate a distinctive ethos that distinguished the institution from the civilian culture.”²⁸¹

²⁷⁷ This was obviously absolutely irrational in times of machine guns and other weapons using up to date technology.

²⁷⁸ Humphreys, *Heavenly Sword*, 15. These views were proposed for example in 1909 by Major General Nagaoka Gaishi (長岡外史), chief of the Military Affairs Bureau, who “claimed that Japan's unique history and culture (*kokutai*), combined with national characteristics and geographical setting, determined the nature of the army. Army regulations and training would incorporate these tangibles (spiritual power, or *seishin*) to enhance technical proficiency gained from military training.” Drea, *Japan's Imperial Army*, 133.

²⁷⁹ Yoshida [吉田], “Nihon no guntai,” 156-57.

²⁸⁰ Drea, *Japan's Imperial Army*, 161; Humphreys, *Heavenly Sword*, 33.

²⁸¹ Drea, *Japan's Imperial Army*, 161.

The emphasis on extreme spiritual idealism and the belief in an almighty infantry attacking with unsheathed swords came under reconsideration due to experience gathered in WWI. Finally in the Battle-Outline Draft (戦闘綱要草案 *sentō kōyō sōan*) in 1926, the necessity of science was to a certain degree acknowledged.²⁸² This, however, did not signify a turn towards realism. The Infantry Manual of 1928 still included many of the *crazed* notions of infantry advance instead of combined arms warfare. It also featured the first appearance in any manual of the concept of “belief in certain victory” that commanders had to instill in the soldiers.²⁸³ In 1934, furthermore, the Army Ministry published a pamphlet entitled *The True Meaning of National Defense and the Proposal to Strengthen it* (国防の本義と其強化の提唱 *kokubō no hongī to sono kyōka no teishō*) which underlined the “importance of a total national defense state” and stated that war was “the father of creation and the mother of culture.”²⁸⁴ Ideological education (精神教育 *seishin kyōiku*) was an important part of the military training during the military service from the outset of conscription on, and it gained more and more importance during the Taishō years.²⁸⁵ Through the education and indoctrination of the conscripts, the military's values were spread among the population as the conscripts upon returning home shared their experience with their families.²⁸⁶

In the next chapter we turn to Tanaka Giichi, who was next to Yamagata, the important person in terms of spreading military values among the populace, as he played a decisive role in enlarging the indoctrination apparatus beyond the limits of conscription with his work in establishing the *zaigō gunjinkai*.

5. Tanaka Giichi (田中義一, 1864 – 1929)

Tanaka Giichi, the father of the *zaigō gunjinkai* and the last of Yamagata Aritomo's protégés, is considered to have been an “outstanding staff officer and imaginative military planner,”²⁸⁷ and “a man of towering ambition,”²⁸⁸ as well as being “personable.” He had access to the Chōshū clique's most inner circles and was an influential officer throughout his career. He regularly ignored the limitations of his rank and position, and

²⁸² Yoshida [吉田], “Nihon no guntai,”

²⁸³ Drea, *Japan's Imperial Army*, 158.

²⁸⁴ Jansen, *Modern Japan*, 596-97. According to Martin the sentence that war was “the father of creation and the mother of culture” originated from Carl von Clausewitz. Martin, “Tauglichkeit,” 63.

²⁸⁵ Saaler, *Demokratie*, 134.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 134-35.

²⁸⁷ Humphreys, *Heavenly Sword*, 10.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 180.

took to influencing military policies and changing military institutions.²⁸⁹ The drafting of a memorandum on the necessity of military expansion, which impressed the military leadership and led to Tanaka being assigned to draft a national defense plan,²⁹⁰ and the establishment of the *zaigō gunjinkai* and the *seinendan*, are good examples for his successful attempts to go beyond the boundaries of his rank and position.

5.1 Early Life

Tanaka Giichi, like his mentor Yamagata Aritomo, came from a lowly samurai family in Chōshū. Born in 1863, his youth was defined by poverty and anti-government rebellion. At the age of thirteen, in 1876, Tanaka partook in an unsuccessful anti-government uprising, but because of his young age, he was pardoned. After this experience Tanaka became an avid student, and before enrolling in the Army Academy, for a short period of time worked as a school teacher. In 1886, he graduated as an infantry lieutenant. Because of his aptitude, he was accepted at the Army College from which he graduated in 1898. Because of his Chōshū background, his graduating from the Army College, and his political and military views, which had much in common with Yamagata Aritomo's, Tanaka was on the most direct path of acquiring important posts within the army. He would become one of Yamagata's few protégés.²⁹¹

5.2 Military Career

Shortly after graduating from the Army College, Tanaka, as part of his assignment to the intelligence section of the *sanbō honbu*, was sent to Russia to study the language and investigate the strength and capabilities of Russia's armed forces. In 1902, upon his return to Japan, Tanaka became head of the *sanbō honbu* Russian section. His view that the Russian army's major weakness was the nonexistence of communication between the officers of noble blood and common soldiers from a peasant background, had an influence on the Japanese plans for war with Russia. His determination to wage war on Russia was exemplified by his joining the *kogetsukai* (湖月会) in 1903, an organization whose members were all government officials, who advocated war with Russia within legal means. After the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War, Tanaka was transferred to a

²⁸⁹ Ibid., 19-20.

²⁹⁰ Saaler, *Demokratie*, 64-65.

²⁹¹ Smethurst, *Social Basis*, 12.

post in the Manchurian Army's staff where he rose to the rank of infantry lieutenant-colonel. He returned to Japan before the war was won in order to aid Yamagata in ending the war before Japanese resources were exhausted.²⁹² This shows that Tanaka, in contrast to officers who would later be affiliated with the Imperial Way Faction, had a realistic estimate of how capable Japan was in terms of its military capacity. A capacity he sought to heighten throughout his career, as will be demonstrated when discussing his involvement in establishing the *zaigō gunjinkai* and the *seinendan*.

Between 1905 and 1910, Tanaka rose to the rank of major general and played a key role in developing Japanese army strategy and creating the aforementioned *zaigō gunjinkai*.²⁹³ In 1906, Tanaka drafted the national defense plan, which Yamagata altered slightly. The plan, which became official policy in 1907, was a commitment to the maintenance and expansion of Japanese rights, in particular, in Manchuria, and on the Asian mainland in general. The plan also sought to improve army-navy relations in order to become the dominating force in the Sea of Japan and the Tsushima Straits.²⁹⁴ The national defense plan, of which revisions were enacted in 1918, 1923, and 1936, not only defined national defense through a doctrine of offensive advance, but also became a key instrument in the army's striving towards political influence. It further secured the high command's (統帥部 *tōsuibu*) independence while limiting the governments influence on decision making in regards to military matters. At the same time, it heightened the military's influence on foreign policy. Additionally, it also served to legitimize the military's intervention in the spheres of finance and the national economy, and therefore put the system used to degenerate civilian control firmly in place.²⁹⁵ By establishing the “‘protection of the nation's existence' (kokka sonritsu [国家存立])” as the basis of foreign policy, which was interpreted as a means to justifiably undertake “preventive expansion policy,”²⁹⁶ the National Defense Plan indirectly reinforced Yamagata's idea that the maintenance and defense of 'lines of sovereignty' and 'lines of interest' were necessary for the well-being of Japan.

Tanaka became Section Chief of the Military Affairs Bureau in the Army Ministry (陸軍省軍務局軍事課長 *rikugunshō gunmukyoku gunji kachō*) in 1909. This post, again, was a 'gateway to success' (登竜門 *tōryūmon*) to achieve higher positions, for

²⁹² Morton, *Tanaka Giichi*, 11-15; Smethurst, *Social Basis*, 13.

²⁹³ Morton, *Tanaka Giichi*, 16; Smethurst, *Social Basis*, 13.

²⁹⁴ Jansen, “Japanese Imperialism,” 68; Morton, *Tanaka Giichi*, 16; Smethurst, *Social Basis*, 13.

²⁹⁵ Saaler, *Demokratie*, 65; Yoshida [吉田], “Nihon no guntai,” 154-55.

²⁹⁶ Saaler, *Demokratie*, 67.

example, (Vice) Army Minister,²⁹⁷ and “gave him direct (and frequent) access to Yamagata.”²⁹⁸ He was promoted to major general in 1911 and became head of the Military Affairs Bureau in the same year. This was a post he held for roughly 15 months before being issued the command of the army first division's second brigade, which he held until 1914.²⁹⁹

During his time as section chief of the Military Affairs Bureau, Tanaka worked on many administrative reforms to stop the abuse of office, for example, regulations for promotions to the rank of general. The planning and creation of the *zaigō gunjinkai*, however, was Tanaka's most important accomplishment.³⁰⁰ Although, in terms of jurisdiction, the Military Affairs Bureau was not responsible for the creation of the *zaigō gunjinkai* (the Infantry Bureau would have been), it cannot be denied that Tanaka played the key role in its creation and after its creation as well.³⁰¹ Tanaka, as an advocate of the 'good soldier = good citizen' doctrine,³⁰² was convinced that military training led by reservists would instill obedience, loyalty, and patriotism in the populace, and as a concomitant, would enhance the military's prestige.³⁰³

Upon returning from a trip to Europe and the U.S. in August 1914, Tanaka was transferred to the *sanbō honbu*. He was not assigned a particular post until October 1915, when he was inaugurated as Vice Chief of the *sanbō honbu*. He used the meantime to tackle the organization of the *seinendan* based on the impressions he had collected while overseas.³⁰⁴

While Tanaka was Vice Chief of Staff, he favored of an intervention in Siberia. He also supervised the extensive planning for this mission that sought to counter the Bolshevik Revolution.³⁰⁵ After becoming Army Minister in 1918, Tanaka changed his view concerning the Siberian intervention whose goal he came to deem as unachievable. Against the opposition of the *sanbō honbu*, he worked on reducing troops in Siberia.³⁰⁶

²⁹⁷ Kōketsu Atsushi [額綱厚], *Kindai nihon no seigun kankei: Gunjin seijika Tanaka Giichi no kiseki* [近代日本の政軍関係—軍人政治家田中義一の軌跡] (Tokyo: Daigaku kyōikusho, 1987), 43.

²⁹⁸ Humphreys, *Heavenly Sword*, 11.

²⁹⁹ Kōketsu [額綱], *Seigun kankei*, 44-45, 48.

³⁰⁰ Tazaki Suematsu [田崎末松], *Hyōden Tanaka Giichi: Jūgōnen sensō no genten* [評伝田中義一—十五年戦争の原点], Vol 1 (Tokyo: Heiwa senryaku kenkyūkai, 1981), 261-62.

³⁰¹ Tazaki [田崎], *Tanaka Giichi*, 262, 264.

³⁰² Kisaka Junichirō [木坂順一郎], “Gunbu to demokurashii: Nihon ni okeru kokka sōryoku sensō junbi to gunbu hihan wo megutte” [軍部とデモクラシー—日本における国家総力戦争準備と軍部批判をめぐって], in *Heiwa to sensō no kenkyū II* [平和と戦争の研究II], ed. Kokusai Seiji Gakkai [国際政治学会] (Tokyo: Yamakawa shuppansha, 1969), 6.

³⁰³ Totman, *Japan*, 369.

³⁰⁴ Kisaka [木坂], “Gunbu,” 6; Tazaki [田崎], *Tanaka Giichi*, 439.

³⁰⁵ Humphreys, *Heavenly Sword*, 26.

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 27.

Tanaka was again involved in forming national defense policy as the National Defense Plan was being revised in 1917. It had become apparent to Tanaka that future wars would not be short-lived, but rather drawn out and required a nation that was prepared to all extents. Tanaka's aim was to create a self-sufficient and independent nation capable of defending itself. This, on the one hand, meant that the peacetime economy had to be structured for a rapid conversion to industrial mobilization during wartime, and that the populace had to be prepared accordingly. On the other hand, resource-poor Japan needed to gain unlimited access to resources elsewhere, namely in China. China was therefore deemed vital to Japan's national interest, and the simultaneous north and southward expansion of Japanese borders was anticipated. The army's focus on China went hand in hand with the threat of a Russian war of revenge diminishing, as Russia was occupied domestically with its revolution.³⁰⁷

In 1921, Tanaka, as a result of a heart attack, resigned from his post as Army Minister. Before his retirement, however, in accordance with the Hara government's foreign policy, he continued to work towards a withdrawal of Japanese troops from Siberia and the Shandong Peninsula.³⁰⁸ After having recovered his health, Tanaka was persuaded to serve as Army Minister again in the Yamamoto cabinet (September 1923 – January 1924).³⁰⁹

5.3 Party Politician

During his time as Army Minister in the Hara cabinet, Tanaka came to accept the fact that cooperating with political parties had become necessary in order to advance further in the nation's political sphere, and therefore made his first close ties with politicians from the Friends of Constitutional Government Party (立憲政友会 *rikken seiyūkai*).³¹⁰ He maintained these ties to the *rikken seiyūkai*, and in 1925, during a leadership crisis within the *rikken seiyūkai*, retired from active duty in the army, joined the *rikken seiyūkai*, and was elected its president.³¹¹ Tanaka became the only Prime Minister (1927

³⁰⁷ Drea, *Japan's Imperial Army*, 138-40.

³⁰⁸ Humphreys, *Heavenly Sword*, 28-29.

³⁰⁹ Morton, *Tanaka Giichi*, 47-49.

³¹⁰ As early as 1910, Tanaka had first advocated to Yamagata the view that the oligarchy had to make use of the political parties in order to stay in power. Yamagata did not share this view and condemned the involvement of military personnel in party politics but quietly accepted Tanaka's endeavors as Tanaka became an important mediator between Yamagata and the political parties. Saaler, *Demokratie*, 483-84.

³¹¹ Morton, *Tanaka Giichi*, 26; Saaler, *Demokratie*, 484.

– 1929) with a military background to head a party cabinet.³¹² The course of action of the *rikken seiyūkai* cabinet headed by Tanaka, according to Maruyama, “almost appear[ed] to be that of a fascist government.” Freedom of speech and left-wing movements were further suppressed through the revision of the Peace Preservation Law by an emergency decree.³¹³ The main theme of the Tanaka cabinet's policy, however, was the settling of the “China problem.”³¹⁴

Tanaka's China policy as Prime Minister was based on the impressions he had gathered while meeting important warlords and political leaders during a tour of China in 1917. His 'positive China policy' was characterized by a close cooperation between the Tanaka government and the army's leadership, as Tanaka had formulated the army's China policy for years prior to his inauguration as Prime Minister. It treated China and Manchuria as two separate states and sought to avoid war with China over Manchuria. Tanaka, nonetheless, was determined to secure Japan's position in Manchuria – if diplomacy failed, then by military force.³¹⁵ When Tanaka's policy of diplomacy was seen as failing, demands to secure Manchuria by force became strong within the army, primarily among Kwantung Army staff officers. Eventually, Tanaka lost the army's support.³¹⁶

Tanaka resigned in 1929 after he had failed to prosecute the murderers of the Chinese warlord Chang Tso-lin: Kwantung army officers. The murder can be seen as an attempt to force the Tanaka government into a more aggressive policy towards China. Tanaka, on the one hand, had been pressured by the emperor and the political opposition to prosecute the responsible officers, and on the other hand, had been pressured by the army not to do so. After being unsuccessful in covering the issue up, Tanaka resigned under pressure from the emperor. He died shortly afterwards.³¹⁷

³¹² Humphreys, *Heavenly Sword*, 179. Krebs, “Kaiserliche Militär,” 44-45.

³¹³ Maruyama, “Ideology,” 81.

³¹⁴ Saaler, *Demokratie*, 486.

³¹⁵ Humphreys, *Heavenly Sword*, 27, 137-42.

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 142-44. The core of this group within the Kwantung Army were Kōmoto Daisaku (河本大作), Saitō Hisashi (齋藤恒), as well as, Ishiwara Kanji and Itagaki Seishirō (板垣征四郎). They enjoyed the support of the Kwantung Army's commanding officers and because of their ideals were supported by staff officers in Tokyo, and increasingly so when ultranationalist groups (双葉会 *futabakai* and 一夕会 *issekikai*) circling around mid-ranking staff officers (not the young officers as in the terrorist plotters) gained importance from 1928 onwards. *Ibid.*, 111, 146. Members of these ultranationalist groups were to take part in the inter-Army struggle between the Imperial Way Faction and the Control Faction and would come to make up an important part of the army's leadership during the China Incident and the Pacific War. *Ibid.*, 175.

³¹⁷ Krebs, *Japan im Pazifischen Krieg*, 29; Saaler, *Demokratie*, 487. Shortly before Tanaka's death in September 1929, a pamphlet, which came to be known as the 'Tanaka Memorial,' appeared. It appeared in Chinese and English and contained a plan to establish domination over Manchuria and Mongolia in order to conquer China. No significant proof has been brought forward, however, to

6. The Teikoku Zaigō Gunjinkai

While this chapter focuses on the Tanaka-designed *zaigō gunjinkai* and its subsidiary organizations, it is necessary to briefly discuss the compulsory educational system and the *kyōiku chokugo* to establish an overview of the indoctrination that the entire populace underwent.

6.1 Indoctrination in the Field of Education

Compulsory elementary education was introduced by the Education Order (学制 *gakusei*) in 1872.³¹⁸ It was not until 1900, however, that more than 80% of eligibles attended.³¹⁹ A notable change took place in elementary school education when the ethics textbook was edited in 1910. The contents of the edition published in 1903, which had been influenced by Western ideas, were replaced by increasingly conservative nationalistic ideas.³²⁰ This change was made necessary by the sacrifices the Japanese population had to endure during the Russo-Japanese War which required the reactivation of a *lived patriotism*. Emphasis was now put on “[i]mperial and national themes, on conservative morality, and on what some scholars call the 'family state' or 'family nation' (*kazoku kokka* [家族国家]) ideology.”³²¹ The *kokutai* was also featured in the revised textbook.³²² Filial piety at home, but also in terms of including the emperor, the head of the “national family,” was stressed as well. Loyalty to the emperor and filial piety were brought together to form the sole principle of *chūkō no taigi* (忠孝の大義 “great loyalty-filial piety principle”). The same was true for patriotism and emperor-

demonstrate that Tanaka authored it or endorsed it in any possible way. Decisive errors in style and facts led to the conclusion that the 'Tanaka Memorial,' dated 1927, was a forgery. A Japanese original or documents that indicate the probability of the existence of a Japanese original have yet to be produced. It is possible that the memorial originated from the political opposition to denounce Tanaka. For a detailed discussion of the authenticity of the memorial, see Morton, *Tanaka Giichi*, 205-14.

³¹⁸ Tokiomi Kaigo, *Japanese Education: Its Past and Present* (Tokyo, Kokusai Bunka Shinkokai, 1965), 65; Krebs, *Moderne Japan*, 17.

³¹⁹ In 1875 only 35.2%, in 1895 61.3%, in 1905 95.6%, in 1910 98.1%, from 1920 until 1945 more than 99% of eligibles attended. Kaigo, *Japanese Education*, 65-66.

³²⁰ Karasawa Tomitarō [唐沢富太郎] cited in Wilbur M. Fridell, “Government Ethics Textbooks in Late Meiji Japan,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* Vol. 29, No. 4 (Aug., 1970): 827 [trans. by Fridell]. All elementary schoolbooks were issued directly by the Education Ministry from 1903 onwards, enabling the government to firmly control the socialization of the Japanese youth. Tsurumi, *Social Change*, 109.

³²¹ Paul Brooker, *The Faces of Fraternalism: Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and Imperial Japan* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 250.

³²² Karasawa [唐沢] cited in Fridell, “Ethics Textbooks,” 827 [trans. by Fridell].

loyalty. It became the principle of *chūkun aikoku* (忠君愛国 “patriotic emperor-loyalty”).³²³

Since the conscription system had been revised in the 1880's, elementary school teachers, after completing their educational training, had to serve in the army for a period of six months thus ensuring the army's influence in the elementary school system.³²⁴ In 1917, Tanaka dispatched active duty officers and non-commissioned officers to middle schools and teachers' colleges and stressed the importance of enforcing military education (軍事教育 *gunji kyōiku*) and military drill (軍事教練 *gunji kyōren*).³²⁵ Military ideology and influence would further permeate the educational system when Ugaki (Army Minister 1924-27, 1929-31), due to budget restraints, had to pare costs and reduced the strength of the standing army as well as the duration of conscription in order to modernize the army's equipment in spite of the aforementioned budget restraints.³²⁶ The excess officers were allocated to public schools to further military drill and education and strengthen patriotism in order to prepare the populace for 'total war'.³²⁷ To compensate for the shortened duration of the conscript's active duty, military training became mandatory at Japanese elementary schools in 1926.³²⁸ Tanaka had demanded that schools should increasingly be used to indoctrinate and educate the

³²³ Karasawa [唐沢] cited in Fridell, “Ethics Textbooks,” 830 [trans. by Fridell]. The history textbook as well as the ethics textbook also featured Shintō indoctrination. Editions of the history textbook from 1910 onwards were only slightly altered putting more emphasis on loyalty and filial piety. Militaristic and ultranationalist content to a disputable extent was introduced to the language readers published after 1933 as well. The 1934 edition introduced an outline of what, according to Brooker, was meant to be understood as *kokutai* “the unbroken line of directly descended Emperors, the instruction by Amaterasu to her grandson and his descendants to rule Japan, the benevolence of the Emperors, the loyalty of heroic subjects, and the parent-child-like relationship between the Emperors and their subjects.” Brooker, *Fraternalism*, 252-53.

³²⁴ Tsurumi, *Social Change*, 85. Aspiring teachers were further indoctrinated with militaristic values when the training programs for elementary school teachers were revised in 1886. The curriculum at the normal schools from then on included military drill, and dormitories were designed to resemble military barracks. This made aspiring teachers increasingly subject to military drill, thus completing the “continuity between elementary school education and army socialization.” Tsurumi, *Social Change*, 109.

³²⁵ Kisaka [木坂], “Gunbu,” 6. The Imperial Japanese Army's interest in influencing formal education had been furthered when after the Russo-Japanese War officers noticed that the conscripts brought with them changes in attitude due to coming from what the army deemed “morally suspect urban areas” and better access to education. Most conscripts after the Russo-Japanese War had enjoyed more formal education before being drafted than the prewar rural conscripts had received. Until 1945 six generals (on active duty as well as retired) served as Education Minister. Humphreys, *Heavenly Sword*, 14.

³²⁶ Fujiwara [藤原], *Gunjishi*, 142; Krebs, “Kaiserliche Militär,” 45; Saaler, *Demokratie*, 132. The reforms did not only focus on modernizing the Imperial Japanese Army's technical equipment but also sought to reform the Imperial Japanese Army's structure, for example to limit the influence of the Chōshū clique. Fujiwara [藤原], *Gunjishi*, 144.

³²⁷ Drea, *Japan's Imperial Army*, 154; Kinbara Samon [金原左門], *Shōwa he no taidō* [昭和への胎動], Vol. 1 of *Shōwa no rekishi* [昭和の歴史] (Tokyo: Shōgakkan, 1983), 292-93; Krebs, “Kaiserliche Militär,” 45.

³²⁸ Saaler, *Demokratie*, 138.

populace in military values as early as 1911 stating “national education must inject military ideology [into the populace].”³²⁹

6.1.1 The *Kyōiku Chokugo*

Before Tanaka had risen in rank and become an influential staff officer in the army, eventually Army Minister, and finally Prime Minister, the *kyōiku chokugo*³³⁰ was published in October 1890, and laid the basis for extensive indoctrination of the Japanese populace.

The *kyōiku chokugo*, at least temporarily, put an end to the discussion concerning the contents of compulsory education and established the basis for its “Japanization.” It defined the ethical maxim of education to incorporate values like loyalty to and obedience of superiors and the emperor, an extended form of the Confucian concept of filial piety.³³¹ It “made working for the good of the state in the name of the emperor the cornerstone of the compulsory educational system.”³³² Shortly after its promulgation, the *kyōiku chokugo* was idolized as a “national scripture” and its reading, for example, on national holidays, took place “with all the solemnity of a sacred ritual.”³³³ Students were expected to memorize the *kyōiku chokugo*, which was written in language that was not part of everyday conversation. The process of learning and reciting it in this sacred manner led the students and populace that had undergone this indoctrination to be programmed to accept statements that were voiced in the same manner, containing its uncommon catchwords, as valid beyond doubt.³³⁴ Saaler sees the proclamation of the *kyōiku chokugo* in 1890, as the beginning of the *gleichschaltung* of military and civilian education.³³⁵ Indeed, the indoctrination that was spread henceforth through the educational system would form one of the main pillars that the extreme nationalism and expansionism of the following decades would stand on.³³⁶

³²⁹ Tanaka Giichi (田中義一) cited in Kōketsu [綱縵], *Seigun kankei*, 47.

³³⁰ The *kyōiku chokugo* can be found in, for example, Motoyama Sachihiko [本山幸彦], *Meiji kokka no kyōiku shisō* [明治国家の教育思想] (Tokyo: Shibunkaku, 1998), 258-59. An English translation can be found in Hackett, *Yamagata Aritomo*, 132-33; as well as in Kaigo, *Japanese Education*, 56-57.

³³¹ Krebs, *Moderne Japan*, 19.

³³² Smethurst, “Creation,” 821.

³³³ Brooker, *Fraternalism*, 249-50.

³³⁴ *Ibid.*, 250.

³³⁵ Saaler, *Demokratie*, 133.

³³⁶ Krebs, *Moderne Japan*, 19.

The *kyōiku chokugo* can be seen as a means of extending the values of the *gunjin chokuyu* to the entire population,³³⁷ as it gave the education in Japanese schools a very nationalistic touch.³³⁸ The nationalistic touch that the *kyōiku chokugo* provided, however, was not sufficient for the army. The army demanded that more militaristic ideology be taught in the schools. Japanese, history, sports, and music lessons were to focus on militaristic topics (such as military history, military songs, military drill). This was also intended to partially compensate for the reduction of the duration of service for the conscripts. The *zaigō gunjinkai* was the leading institution in securing the militaristic intrusion into the educational sector.³³⁹

6.2 The Idea of and Reason for the Teikoku Zaigō Gunjinkai

At the latest in 1903, Tanaka had voiced the opinion that it was necessary for Japan to maintain a military reserve that could quickly be reactivated in times of necessity, for example, when the standing army alone was unable to fight victoriously against a more powerful opponent. His conviction was confirmed during the Russo-Japanese War when Japan's army fought to its absolute maximum of capacity.³⁴⁰ Additionally, Tanaka was convinced that future wars would be “*nation total wars* [my italics]” (国家総力戦 *kokka sōryokusen*) in which not only the military's ability decided over victory or defeat, but in which the nation itself needed to be properly prepared to be capable of contributing to the cause, making the *zaigō gunjinkai* and *seinendan* necessary.³⁴¹ The reservists would be an especially decisive factor, and their ability would have considerable influence on the outcome of a war.³⁴²

Tanaka wanted to control and mobilize the populace under the leadership of the army through the system of (1) compulsory education, (2) *seinendan*, (3) military service and (4) *zaigō gunjinkai*.³⁴³ He believed that training loyal soldiers would

³³⁷ Saaler, *Demokratie*, 128.

³³⁸ Hackett, *Yamagata Aritomo*, 128-29.

³³⁹ Saaler, *Demokratie*, 137.

³⁴⁰ Kōketsu [頼綱], *Seigun kankei*, 44. According to Tazaki, Tanaka had already informed his superiors of his plan to establish a reservist association in 1898. Tazaki [田崎], *Tanaka Giichi*, 264. Morton also notes that Tanaka voiced his conviction that a centrally controlled reservist association was necessary, prior to his departure to Russia in 1898. Morton, *Tanaka Giichi*, 19.

³⁴¹ Tanaka Giichi (田中義一) cited in Kisaka [木坂], “Gunbu,” 6.

³⁴² Tanaka Giichi (田中義一) cited in Tazaki [田崎], *Tanaka Giichi*, 265. The pamphlet in which Tanaka explained these expectations, which he had of the reservists, is entitled *Sōteisetsu* (壯丁説). An excerpt of it, under the title of *Zaigōgunjin no yakuwari* (在郷軍人の役割), can also be found in Rekishigaku Kenkyūkai [歴史学研究会], *Kindai*, 289.

³⁴³ Kisaka [木坂], “Gunbu,” 6.

automatically lead to the creation of loyal citizens.³⁴⁴ The backing of the army within the population was to be achieved through the concurrent combination of education and military training.³⁴⁵ He was convinced of the necessity of creating a populace built of 'national villagers' who because of its identification with the values present in the rural hamlet structure, would support the military and national goals, and would worship the emperor.³⁴⁶ This conviction was also supported by the experience gained during the Russo-Japanese War. Japan had, as leading Imperial Japanese Army officers perceived, been able to win against a country as powerful as Russia only because the Japanese military had been backed by the population and the Russian military had not.³⁴⁷ In order to be prepared for future wars, as far as Imperial Japanese Army officers were concerned, it was necessary to remodel society into a body as disciplined and well ordered as the Imperial Japanese Army.³⁴⁸ The reservists, in Tanaka's opinion, would "in times of war control the fate of the country and in times of peace have the duty to guide the development of the nation."³⁴⁹

6.2.1 Establishing the Teikoku Zaigō Gunjinkai

The first reservist associations were founded around 1900. They were independent, but their founding had been encouraged by the army. The aim of those reservist associations was to enhance the military's prestige within the population and to act as role models in terms of morale and public decency. They also participated, for example, in the voluntary fire brigades, cooperated with the police, substituted police duties and supported families with members on active duty.³⁵⁰

³⁴⁴ Tanaka (田中) cited in Tazaki [田崎], *Tanaka Giichi*, 266.

³⁴⁵ Kōketsu [纈纈], *Seigun kankei*, 46-47; Tanaka (田中), cited in Tazaki [田崎], *Tanaka Giichi*, 266.

³⁴⁶ Smethurst, introduction, xvi.

³⁴⁷ Smethurst, "Creation," 822-23; Smethurst, *Social Basis*, 14.

³⁴⁸ Smethurst, "Creation," 817.

³⁴⁹ Tanaka (田中) cited in Tazaki [田崎], *Tanaka Giichi*, 265.

³⁵⁰ Smethurst, *Social Basis*, 8.

The founding of the *zaigō gunjinkai* in 1910 originated from Tanaka's impulse.³⁵¹ The army's structure was transplanted into the hamlet branch chapters (分会 *bunkai*) of the *zaigō gunjinkai* through a “top-to-bottom” procedure,³⁵² absorbing the aforementioned independent reservist associations.³⁵³ The *zaigō gunjinkai* was delegated to the jurisdiction of the Army Minister.³⁵⁴

Consistent with Tanaka's aims, the *zaigō gunjinkai* was created to further the military preparedness of the male population,³⁵⁵ to “educate the general public in military values [and] to build a mass civilian base of support for [the military's] national goals and to create a unified Japan in which 'all citizens are soldiers' under the emperor's 'leadership'.”³⁵⁶ Furthermore, the *zaigō gunjinkai* would provide a powerful military reserve to support Japan's expansionist ambitions and would work against the “deterioration of popular ideas” (国民思想の悪化 *kokumin shisō no akka*) in the form of increasing tenant uprisings and a growing labor movement, and prevent this political awakening from spreading within the army.³⁵⁷ As within the independent reservist associations that the *zaigō gunjinkai* had incorporated, the reservists, as Tanaka was certain, would be role models in terms of morale and public decency and would support the community in various aspects.³⁵⁸ Above all, the *zaigō gunjinkai* and its subsidiary organizations were used to consolidate the *traditional* community awareness, to encourage the populace to work hard, and, in accordance with the extended form of filial piety as established in the *kyōiku chokugo*, to obey superiors and worship the emperor.³⁵⁹ The *zaigō gunjinkai* and its subsidiary organizations also enabled the

³⁵¹ Saaler, *Demokratie*, 135. The planning of the *zaigō gunjinkai* had begun in 1906. It was originally intended to be a joint venture of the army and navy. Due to various circumstances the founding was delayed and in the end the navy backed out. A reservist organization was, in reality, not as important to the navy. Due to its structure only a significantly small number of sailors retired from active duty. Inoue [井上], “Seiji to gunbu,” 376. The navy eventually participated in the *zaigō gunjinkai* from 1914 onwards. Inoue Kiyoshi [井上清], *Ugaki Kazushige* [宇垣一成] (Tokyo: Asahi shinbunsha, 1975), 176; Kisaka [木坂], “Gunbu,” 6. Apart from Tanaka five other officers from Chōshū, General Terauchi Masatake (寺内正毅, Army Minister); Major General Nagaoka Gaishi (Chief of the Military Affairs Bureau of the Army Ministry from 1908 to 1910); Colonel Sugano Shōichi (菅野尚一, Military Affairs Bureau); Commander Yoshikawa Yasuhira (吉川安平, Navy Ministry); Field Marshal Yamagata Aritomo; and 3 officers who were affiliated with the Chōshū clique although they were not from Chōshū, Major General Oka Ichinosuke (岡市之助), Colonel Kawai Misao (河合操), and Lieutenant Colonel Kojima Sōjirō (児島惣次郎, all three Military Affairs Bureau); worked on the planning of the *zaigō gunjinkai*. Smethurst, “Creation,” 816.

³⁵² Inoue [井上], “Seiji to gunbu,” 377.

³⁵³ Kōketsu [瀨瀨], *Seigun kankei*, 44; Smethurst, *Social Basis*, 9.

³⁵⁴ Kōketsu [瀨瀨], *Seigun kankei*, 44.

³⁵⁵ Gordon, *Modern History*, 136.

³⁵⁶ Smethurst, “Creation,” 815.

³⁵⁷ Inoue [井上], “Seiji to gunbu,” 376.

³⁵⁸ Tanaka (田中) cited in Tazaki [田崎], *Tanaka Giichi*, 266.

³⁵⁹ Sims, *Political History*, 111-12.

Imperial Japanese Army to spread its militaristic values among the large part of the populace that was not affected by conscription.³⁶⁰

Membership in the *zaigō gunjinkai* was *de jure* voluntary, but *de facto* group pressure by one's peers and pressure from the hamlet coerced most eligibles into joining in the rural areas.³⁶¹ As a result, in the 1920's, as many as 80% of the eligibles in rural areas were members in contrast to only 40% in the urban areas.³⁶² In 1936, the *zaigō gunjinkai* had 14,000 branches totaling 2.9 million members.³⁶³ In order to guarantee the acceptance of the *zaigō gunjinkai* in the populace, leaders of the local branches were elected by the members themselves and not by the Imperial Japanese Army authorities. Generally, those elected leaders came from the influential elite of the hamlet, the wealthy and the educated,³⁶⁴ which established the *zaigō gunjinkai* as a perfect likeness of the social order of the hamlets and of the entire society as well.³⁶⁵

6.3 The Dainihon Seinendan and Seinen Kunrenjo

In 1914, Tanaka undertook an inspection tour of Europe and America. He focused his interest on the education of juvenile males. During his visit to Germany, he also inspected youth groups that stood under the authoritarian rule of the military. After returning to Japan, Tanaka sought to create a Japanese equivalent by restructuring the existing youth groups into one centrally controlled organization. His aim was to influence Japanese juvenile males from the time they graduated from compulsory elementary school until they reached the conscription age of 20 years. They were to

³⁶⁰ Saaler, *Demokratie*, 133.

³⁶¹ A record of eligibles was kept in the municipality because of the conscription system and eligibles were “matter of factly forced” to join the *zaigō gunjinkai*. Inoue [井上], *Ugaki Kazushige*, 176; also Smethurst, *Social Basis*, 83. Peer pressure was not as strong in the urban setting because unlike in the rural areas citizens had not lived together in the same hamlet for decades or centuries, social networks for mutual help during harvest did not exist and the urban residents did not necessarily work in the same place making them much more individual. Smethurst, *Social Basis*, 68. Membership in the *zaigō gunjinkai* became mandatory from 1937 on and almost comprehensive membership was reached in the rural areas. *Ibid.*, 17, 83.

³⁶² Since the hamlet structure did not exist in the rural areas, urban members mostly joined the *zaigō gunjinkai* voluntarily because of political conviction and were substantially more active in the political movement of the *zaigō gunjinkai* in the 1930's. *Ibid.*, 17-18. After Tanaka traveled to Germany in 1914 and was impressed by the German reserves being organized in factories as well he sought to change the *zaigō gunjinkai*'s statutes accordingly. In 1917 the *zaigō gunjinkai*'s statutes were altered and first factory and mine branch chapters were established. Given the success of the factory branch chapters in suppressing strikes during the 1918 rice riots, Tanaka ordered branch chapters to be established in every large factory. Inoue [井上], “Seiji to gunbu,” 376-77.

³⁶³ Smethurst, *Social Basis*, 20. According to Inoue membership totaled 3 million in 1928. Inoue [井上], *Ugaki Kazushige*, 176.

³⁶⁴ Smethurst, *Social Basis*, 89-91.

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 81.

undergo physical training as well as spiritual training, with the focus laying on physical strength. The *seinendan* were directly connected to the *zaigō gunjinkai* and would ensure that the youth would be ideologically conformed.³⁶⁶ The *seinendan* essentially performed the same task as the *zaigō gunjinkai* already did, but focused on the juvenile male population. It spread military values, established military order in the rural society,³⁶⁷ physically prepared the youth for their military service,³⁶⁸ and therefore provided a “basis for an ideologically stable army.”³⁶⁹

6.3.1 Establishing the Dainihon Seinendan

The *seinendan* was created in 1915 under the directive of the the Education Ministry (文部省 *monbushō*) and the Home Ministry (内務省 *naimushō*), which had been pressured into effect by the army, namely by Tanaka.³⁷⁰ Tanaka played a decisive role in creating the *seinendan*,³⁷¹ and until the outbreak of the war with China, the China-Incident in 1937, he was the only active duty soldier who officially held office within the *seinendan*.³⁷² As in the case of the *zaigō gunjinkai*, existing youth groups were centralized, thus creating a militaristic organization to control and educate the youth.³⁷³ Military drill, physical training, and classes focusing on patriotism and ethics, under the leadership of the *zaigō gunjinkai*, were added to the activities of the existing youth

³⁶⁶ Inoue [井上], “Seiji to gunbu,” 377; Kōketsu [纈纈], *Seigun kankei*, 49. Tazaki [田崎], *Tanaka Giichi*, 437, 440-42. Tanaka, in a pamphlet entitled *Shakaiteki kokumin kyōiku* (社会的国民教育), explained his aims and what he expected from the *seinendan*. An excerpt of this pamphlet is featured in Tazaki [田崎], *Tanaka Giichi*, 441-42. The pamphlet had 153 pages and circulation apparently reached 700,000 copies. Each elementary school and reservist branch chapter featured one. Smethurst, *Social Basis*, 35; Morton, *Tanaka Giichi*, 21.

³⁶⁷ Kōketsu [纈纈], *Seigun kankei*, 48, 50.

³⁶⁸ Tazaki [田崎], *Tanaka Giichi*, 440-42.

³⁶⁹ Saaler, *Demokratie*, 137.

³⁷⁰ Kōketsu [纈纈], *Seigun kankei*, 49; Smethurst, *Social Basis*, 26-27; Tazaki [田崎], *Tanaka Giichi*, 442. The Army Ministry did not create the *seinendan* under its own name in order to avoid criticism for furthering the militarization. Inoue [井上], “Seiji to gunbu,” 376-77. Ultimately the directives to the *seinendan* came from Tanaka and his staff and merely were presented as the Education and Home Ministries'. Kōketsu [纈纈], *Seigun kankei*, 50.

³⁷¹ Inoue [井上], “Seiji to gunbu,” 377. Tazaki [田崎], *Tanaka Giichi*, 440.

³⁷² Smethurst, *Social Basis*, 34. Tanaka became a member of the executive board of directors from the formation of the *seinendan* on and therefore had significant influence on the organization. Kōketsu [纈纈], *Seigun kankei*, 50.

³⁷³ Inoue [井上], “Seiji to gunbu,” 376-77; Smethurst, *Social Basis*, 27-28; Tazaki [田崎], *Tanaka Giichi*, 443. The existing youth groups had, through a directive of the Home and Education ministries been formed into an organization called *seinenkai* (青年会), supervised by local authorities, and used increasingly during the military expansion after the Russo-Japanese War to counter draft-evasion. Kōketsu [纈纈], *Seigun kankei*, 49. For the history and restructuring of the independent youth groups see also Waswo, “Transformation,” 573-74.

groups.³⁷⁴ The *seinendan* closed the gap in the indoctrination system. Up to that time, young males were out of the reach of indoctrination during the period after graduating from compulsory elementary school, until they entered the army as a conscript or joined the *zaigō gunjinkai*.³⁷⁵ From its formation, male juveniles would be indoctrinated in elementary schools, after graduation would enter the *seinendan*, and at the age of 20 would enter the *zaigō gunjinkai* or join the Imperial Japanese Army as a conscript.³⁷⁶ Although neither the *zaigō gunjinkai* nor the Imperial Japanese Army itself was the official authority over the *seinendan*, they both had significant influence over it because the *zaigō gunjinkai* and *seinendan* cooperated in many activities.³⁷⁷

6.3.2 The Seinen Kunrenjo

An important part of the Ugaki disarmament was the military's penetration of other ministries' jurisdictions (that is, education) and the establishment of institutions whose funding did not appear in the Army Ministry's budget. One of these were the *kunrenjo* that were established in 1926. They, in addition to the *seinendan*, were intended to fill the indoctrination gap of juvenile men, from age 16 to 20, who after graduating from elementary school, did not continue their formal education.³⁷⁸ The curriculum during the four years of participation in the *kunrenjo* comprised of 100 hours on the subject of ethics and civics (修身公民科 *shūshin kōminka*), 400 hours of military drill, 200 hours of general education (普通学科 *futsū gakka*), and 100 hours of business lectures (職業科 *shokugyōka*).³⁷⁹

³⁷⁴ Smethurst, *Social Basis*, 28.

³⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 26.

³⁷⁶ Inoue [井上], "Seiji to gunbu," 377; Kōketsu [纈纈], *Seigun kankei*, 49.

³⁷⁷ Smethurst, *Social Basis*, 32-33.

³⁷⁸ Inoue [井上], *Ugaki Kazushige*, 175; Yoshida [吉田], *Nihon no guntai*, 142-43. The majority of participants were artisans, shopkeepers and farmers with only elementary education. Lory, *Military Masters*, 209. The *kunrenjo*, like the *seinendan* stood under the jurisdiction of the Education Ministry. The *zaigō gunjinkai* and through it the Imperial Japanese Army, nonetheless, had significant influence on the *kunrenjo* since the 400 hours of military drill were supervised by reservists who made up 40,000 of the 110,000 *kunrenjo* teachers. Additionally the army's regimental commanders annually inspected the *kunrenjo*. Tanaka played a decisive role in creating the *kunrenjo*. By 1925 he was the leader of the opposition party *rikken seiyūkai* and pressured the cabinet to endorse Army Minister Ugaki's proposal. Smethurst, *Social Basis*, 38-39.

³⁷⁹ Inoue [井上], *Ugaki Kazushige*, 175-76; Lory, *Military Masters*, 209. Graduates from the *kunrenjo* program served one year on active duty as conscripts, the same length that university and technical school graduates did. Inoue [井上], *Ugaki Kazushige*, 175-76. A reserve officer system was also established following the Ugaki reforms. Graduates from middle school, who had successfully completed their schools' military training program could apply for a reserve officer's training. During peacetime about 4,000 reserve officers graduated from the officer cadet schools per year. Drea, *Japan's Imperial Army*, 159-60.

The same law that established the *kunrenjo* in 1926 (青年訓練所法 *seinen kunrenjo hō*) made military drill after finishing compulsory education obligatory by law. Upon completing compulsory education, juvenile males became members of the local *seinendan* and underwent military training instructed by *zaigō gunjinkai* members.³⁸⁰ The army now used both organizations to indoctrinate the young male population. While the *kunrenjo* focused on military drill and patriotic training, the *seinendan* focused on securing ties between the army and the communities by delivering a broader range of training in patriotic and military subjects, as well as physical training, and therefore acted as a recruiting mechanism for the *kunrenjo*.³⁸¹

By 1934, roughly 40% of the eligibles had enrolled in the 15,000 *kunrenjo*, totaling about 915,000 students. Similar to the *zaigō gunjinkai*, participation in rural areas was significantly higher than in urban areas. This is due to the same reason: peer pressure was more likely to be felt in rural Japan's hamlet structure. In 1935, in order to reach more eligibles, the *kunrenjo* and the supplementary technical schools (実業補習学校 *jitsugyō hoshū gakkō*) merged. This merger increased the enrollment to a total of almost two million students; well over half of the eligibles participated. For the first time, young females were also allowed to join, constituting roughly 25 percent of the participants. They, however, did not participate in military drill. Attendance became compulsory for both male and female youths by law in 1939. By 1943 almost 80% – 3 million juvenile males and females – partook in the *kunrenjo*. The majority of the remaining 20% were on active military duty.³⁸²

6.4 The Dainippon Kokubō Fujinkai

Women had not been directly targeted by the military's indoctrination apparatus until juvenile females were admitted to the *kunrenjo*. As Japan proceeded on its path toward complete 'national mobilization,' women, to a certain extent, also moved into the focus of the military authorities.

Women had participated in some of the reservists' activities, for example, seeing off and welcoming soldiers home. Their scope of involvement, however, was intensified when the *fujinkai* was founded by mostly military wives in Osaka in 1932.³⁸³

³⁸⁰ Tazaki [田崎], *Tanaka Giichi*, 443.

³⁸¹ Smethurst, *Social Basis*, 39-40.

³⁸² *Ibid.*, 41-43.

³⁸³ *Ibid.*, 44. A women's association called *Patriotic Women's Society* (愛国婦人会 *aikoku fujinkai*) had existed prior to the founding of the *dainippon kokubō fujinkai*. It had consisted of roughly 3 million

At its prime, the *fujinkai* consisted of up to 8 million working class women. Apart from the supportive activities, the *fujinkai* women participated in military drill, instruction in the handling of firearms under reservist instructors, partook in nationwide military exercises, and collected money for national defense projects. The *fujinkai*, from 1937 onwards, to a significantly higher degree than the *seinendan* and *kunrenjo*, stood under direct military control. The membership, as in the previously discussed organizations, was due to peer pressure.³⁸⁴ The *fujinkai*, however, differed from the *zaigō gunjinkai*, *seinendan* and *kunrenjo* in that it was an organization directly linked to the war.³⁸⁵

6.5 Duties and Activities of the Teikoku Zaigō Gunjinkai and its Subsidiary Organizations

As stated earlier, Tanaka envisioned the reservists supporting their communities in various ways. They were to help the elderly, support families with war dead, discourage the youth from doing wrong, demonstrate simplicity and fortitude, promote hygiene, boast trade, strive to further rural wealth, encourage community awareness, and to support public projects. Additionally, they were to guide the youth, Japan's future soldiers, in physical training and developing their *seishin*. They were also intended to encourage the populace to show respect for the army.³⁸⁶ Accordingly, all of these activities and duties were incorporated into the *zaigō gunjinkai* bylaws.³⁸⁷

The activities and duties of the *zaigō gunjinkai* and its subsidiary organizations can be roughly divided into 3 groups: community service duties, military activities, and patriotic activities.

Hamlet 'age groups' that had provided services for the community had existed in Japan long before the independent reservist associations, and later, the *zaigō gunjinkai* was established. These services comprised of supporting the elderly and the poor, police duties to provide safety within the hamlet, construction work, and emergency relief.³⁸⁸ According to the bylaws of the *zaigō gunjinkai*, the reservists appropriated these

women from the aristocracy and upper class. Due to the membership of the *dainippon kokubō fujinkai* soon exceeding it, the *aikoku fujinkai*, however, lost its importance. Ibid., 46-48.

³⁸⁴ Lory, *Military Masters*, 205-06; Smethurst, *Social Basis*, 45-47.

³⁸⁵ Smethurst, *Social Basis*, 79.

³⁸⁶ Tanaka (田中) cited in Tazaki [田崎], *Tanaka Giichi*, 266.

³⁸⁷ An excerpt of the bylaws can be found in Tazaki [田崎], *Tanaka Giichi*, 262-3. An English translation is featured in Smethurst, "Creation," 818-19.

³⁸⁸ Smethurst, *Social Basis*, 145.

activities. This benefited the *zaigō gunjinkai* in two ways. First of all, through supporting the hamlet, for example, through construction work or providing relief after the Kantō Earthquake (1923), the *zaigō gunjinkai*, and in the long run the Imperial Japanese Army, gained the respect and benevolence of the populace.³⁸⁹ Secondly, since these activities were part of everyday life long before the *zaigō gunjinkai* existed, participants, that is, reservists, did not necessarily see themselves as soldiers obeying orders, but as civilians contributing to the welfare of the hamlet.³⁹⁰

Military activities, like community service duties, had also been part of hamlet life before the *zaigō gunjinkai* had been established. Among these activities were supporting men on active duty, bidding farewell to conscripts, welcoming back soldiers returning from the barracks, and burying the war dead. Women also participated in these activities. Activities that only women participated in were the stitching of the *sennin bari* (千人針³⁹¹), and preparing and sending comfort bags (慰問袋 *imon bukuro*) filled with small gifts, for example, cigarettes, to soldiers on active duty. Activities that had not existed before the establishment of the *zaigō gunjinkai*, that were now introduced into hamlet life, were military drill, martial arts training, and the medical and physical examination of the Japanese juvenile males prior to being conscripted.³⁹²

The third group, the patriotic activities, were, at least in part, strongly intertwined with the military activities. Their goal, in particular, was to further the populace's willingness to serve the hamlet and the emperor, and in general, to enhance patriotism among the rural populace. The *zaigō gunjinkai*, as well as the *seinendan*, published journals. These journals were used by the branch chapter leadership on the local level as guidebooks for patriotic and civilian as well as military education and indoctrination. Movies and plays with patriotic motives were shown at gatherings.³⁹³ Hosting patriotic festivities on national holidays, for example, for the coronation of the emperor³⁹⁴ and lectures on loyalty, courage and sacrifice for students, were also among

³⁸⁹ Smethurst, *Social Basis*, 151. The *zaigō gunjinkai* in cooperation with police and army was used to suppress strikes during the 1918 rice riots and depending on the region played an important role in their suppression. Inoue [井上], "Seiji to gunbu," 377. The violence the Imperial Japanese Army demonstrated in the suppression of the riots, temporarily undermined the army's support in the populace. Humphreys, *Heavenly Sword*, 43.

³⁹⁰ Smethurst, *Social Basis*, 145.

³⁹¹ *Sennin bari* literally translates to 1,000 stitches. 1,000 women each stitched one stitch to create a charm that soldiers wore in battle, the *sennin bari*.

³⁹² Smethurst, *Social Basis*, 152-54.

³⁹³ *Ibid.*, 163-67. The journal of the *zaigō gunjinkai* was entitled *Comrades in Arms* (戦友 *senyū*). The journal of the *seinendan* was called *Imperial Youth* (帝国青年 *teikoku seinen*) and in 1923 renamed to *Youth* (青年 *seinen*).

³⁹⁴ Smethurst, *Social Basis*, 174.

these activities.³⁹⁵ The *fujinkai* women, in particular, had the duty to promote frugality. They supported the military in campaigns to save money encouraging others to share the life of a soldier and refrain from eating luxuriously, smoking expensive tobacco, and enjoying other unnecessary leisure activities.³⁹⁶

The activities of the latter two groups, for example, military drill lessons at the *kunrenjo* under instruction of local reservists, the physical examination of young males for conscription, roll calls (点呼 *tenko*), and preparatory training for conscripts, were according to the motto of 'good soldier = good citizen,' and were in particular aimed at promoting the soldiers' spirit (軍人精神 *gunjin seishin*).³⁹⁷ The activities of the *zaigō gunjinkai* took a decisive turn when the bylaws were changed in 1925. Under the direction of Tanaka, the *zaigō gunjinkai* from then on also incorporated the duty to prevent so-called dangerous thought from spreading, and in doing so, the *zaigō gunjinkai* irretrievably became a counter-revolutionary military institution of the state.³⁹⁸

6.6 Indoctrination by Means of the Teikoku Zaigō Gunjinkai and its Subsidiary Organizations

The indoctrination within the *zaigō gunjinkai* focused on an emperor-centered loyalty, stressing the spiritual superiority of the Japanese nation, for example, because of the consecutive reign of emperors from the same blood for 2500 years over a homogenous Japanese nation. Unlike members of the Imperial Way Faction who believed that this spiritual superiority would compensate for lacking technologically advanced weaponry, the important figures in the *zaigō gunjinkai*, Tanaka and later Ugaki, both important promoters of the indoctrination effort, among others, did not believe this. Tanaka and Ugaki instead saw this emperor-centered ideology as a focus of loyalty to be used to motivate and create a coherent and obedient populace.³⁹⁹

The *zaigō gunjinkai*, because of its setup, involved not only reservists but also school children, civil servants, teachers and school principals in its activities.⁴⁰⁰ It had a crucial part in spreading military values among the populace⁴⁰¹ and was also used to

³⁹⁵ Lory, *Military Masters*, 204.

³⁹⁶ Ibid., 205-06; Smethurst, *Social Basis*, 47.

³⁹⁷ Inoue [井上], *Ugaki Kazushige*, 176.

³⁹⁸ Ōe Shinobu [大江志乃夫], *Tennō no guntai* [天皇の軍隊] (Tokyo, Shōgakkan, 1982), 76-77.

³⁹⁹ Smethurst, "Creation," 820.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid., 818.

⁴⁰¹ Saaler, *Demokratie*, 135.

mobilize the population to oppose party-politics.⁴⁰² The *zaigō gunjinkai* became increasingly important to the military establishment and was used as a bulwark against the strengthening of socialism and the labor movement during the 1920's Taishō Democracy, to maintain order within society.⁴⁰³

The *zaigō gunjinkai* and its subsidiary organizations were successful in creating a populace consisting of 'national villagers.'⁴⁰⁴ The male population, and partially the female population, underwent a thorough indoctrination in values the military determined, from elementary school until old age. This militarization of the populace was secured through the various organizations. They and the army's intrusions into, for example, the educational system, enabled the army to at least ideologically control the Japanese males for the better part of their lives. In terms of socialization, the army was the sole entity that had significant influence on Japanese males.⁴⁰⁵ The *zaigō gunjinkai*, as Tanaka had anticipated, played an important role in spreading militarism among the populace and establishing military order in rural society.⁴⁰⁶ This indoctrination, however, was not conclusive as the example of wearing military attire while not on active duty demonstrates.⁴⁰⁷ Furthermore, the *seinendan*, as well as the *zaigō gunjinkai*, temporarily escaped from the direct control of the army.⁴⁰⁸ Nonetheless, through securing that all members of society were reached, regardless of their level of education, the basis for

⁴⁰² Berger, "Politics," 116.

⁴⁰³ Kōketsu [纈纈], *Seigun kankei*, 47-48.

⁴⁰⁴ Smethurst, *Social Basis*, 49.

⁴⁰⁵ Saaler, *Demokratie*, 138; Tsurumi, *Social Change*, 88-89. According to Saaler, the indoctrination of women with militaristic values was hardly successful. Saaler, *Demokratie*, 138.

⁴⁰⁶ Kōketsu [纈纈], *Seigun kankei*, 47-48.

⁴⁰⁷ Although the *zaigō gunjinkai* encouraged the veterans to wear their formal military attire, and the percentage of veterans that followed this order rose during the Taishō period, even in 1931 most veterans still preferred other clothing styles and wore mostly the Japanese style *kimono*. However, with the beginning of the Shōwa era the wearing of Western style clothes also spread. Most veterans merely did not want to wear clothes that reminded them of the harsh times and strictly enforced obedience during their active duty. Fuji [藤井], *Zaigō gunjinkai*, 3-4.

⁴⁰⁸ Through reforms the Education and Home Ministries lost influence over the *seinendan* which to the vexation and dismay of the army became increasingly independent. From the mid 1920's on, however, the army was able to regain its temporary lost influence over the *seinendan* and become the single authority over it. Kōketsu [纈纈], *Seigun kankei*, 52. The *zaigō gunjinkai* had become the most influential patriotic pressure group in the 1930's and at times exceeded the Imperial Japanese Army's intentions. Two radical groups, for example, emerged in the *zaigō gunjinkai*, the *meirinkai* (明倫会) and the *san-roku kurabu* (三六クラブ) that, from the viewpoint of the *zaigō gunjinkai* leadership, advocated rebellious thought. Smethurst, *Social Basis*, 176; Richard J. Smethurst, "The Imperial Military Reserve Association and the Minobe Crisis in 1935," in *Crisis politics in Prewar Japan: Institutional and Ideological Problems of the 1930s*, ed. George M. Wilson et al. (Tokyo: Sophia University, 1970), 2-4. According to Maruyama, the reservists were the main factor in turning Minobe's state theory into a crisis within the Japanese society. The theory, as Maruyama states, had been accepted as common sense by civil and judicial officials and the intelligentsia, as well as parts of the military authorities for many years. The populace, however, perceived it as utterly improper. Maruyama, "Ideology," 61-62.

successful indoctrination was secured.⁴⁰⁹ The army was able to use the *zaigō gunjinkai* and *seinendan* as a public relations organ for national defense and succeeded in encouraging militarization and ultimately significantly influenced public opinion. In this perspective, Tanaka's aims can be seen as the beginning of the foundation of the “national mobilization system” (国家総動員体制 *kokka sōdōin taisei*).⁴¹⁰ Tazaki goes as far as stating that Tanaka's institution of 'good soldier = good citizen' was the “highest and strongest fortress in defending and advancing the emperor system.”⁴¹¹ The militarization of the populace was secured during the Taishō Democracy as the army was able to enhance its ideological influence over the population. The dissemination of Western ideologies was undermined while militarist ideology was spread.⁴¹² The *zaigō gunjinkai* and the *seinendan* proved to be the implementation of Tanaka's theory 'good citizen = good soldier' (良民即良兵 *ryōmin soku ryōhei*) in real life.⁴¹³

6.7 The Funding of the Indoctrination Apparatus

The *zaigō gunjinkai* and its subsidiary organizations had been successfully integrated, not only into the everyday lives of the populace, but also into the hamlet structure as their funding demonstrated. The local governments had no legal obligation to contribute to the funding of the *zaigō gunjinkai*, the *seinendan* or the *fujinkai*. The scope of funding they received, therefore, illustrates that the organizations were accepted as part of the hamlet structure since the majority of the funds came from the local governments.⁴¹⁴ Revenue from land that local branch chapters owned, and interest from investments, made up the second largest part of the funding. Donations and membership dues were the third largest source of income.⁴¹⁵ Only the *kunrenjo* were officially financed by the Japanese government. This, however, did not affect the military financially because the centers were part of the educational system and were therefore funded by the Education Ministry.⁴¹⁶ In this aspect, the *zaigō gunjinkai* and its subsidiary organizations were a financial coup for the military. It was able to save money because public relations were not necessary and at the same time was able to

⁴⁰⁹ Humphreys, *Heavenly Sword*, 178-79.

⁴¹⁰ Kōketsu [瀨瀨], *Seigun kankei*, 52-53.

⁴¹¹ Tazaki [田崎], *Tanaka Giichi*, 444.

⁴¹² Saaler, *Demokratie*, 133.

⁴¹³ Kōketsu [瀨瀨], *Seigun kankei*, 51.

⁴¹⁴ Smethurst, *Social Basis*, 127.

⁴¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 134-38.

⁴¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 127, 138-39.

indoctrinate the populace much more thoroughly than public relations efforts would have ever made possible.⁴¹⁷

7. The Army's Various Connections in pre-World War II Japan

Generally speaking, the years after WWI were not favorable for the army. Internationally, imperialism was becoming obsolete and democracy was taking over. Imperialistic Japan became more and more isolated.⁴¹⁸ The victorious nations had little interest in allowing the Japanese military partake in their research and developments. Japan once again turned to Germany for the exchange of military innovations. Within Japan, the first party politician Hara Takashi, a liberal reformer, became Prime Minister (1918 – 1921). Military budgets were reduced.⁴¹⁹ Through the aforementioned institutions that secured the army to act relatively independently of the government, and the indoctrination effort by means of the utilization of the *zaigō gunjinkai*, however, the army was able to influence the state and the populace nonetheless – even if its popularity temporarily suffered and the army itself was seemingly in retreat.

As Inoue concluded, the military, while seemingly taking one step backward was merely preparing to take two steps forwards.⁴²⁰ The percentual decline of military budgets⁴²¹ relating to Japan's overall budgets from 1919 to 1929 reflects the general anti-military sentiment. Accepting those budget cuts and reductions in terms of manpower, advanced by moderate forces within the army, can be interpreted as a means of working against openly anti-military sentiment. The decline of budgets and manpower, however, was countered with a growing intrusion of the army in the field of education (see 6.1). Ugaki, like his mentor Tanaka had, cooperated with the political parties. Giving in to budget cuts on the one hand, but with Tanaka's aid as party politician, furthered the army's influence in the educational system, on the other hand. In concordance to renewed pro-military sentiment after the Manchurian Incident, the military's budgets also rose again in terms of percentage and in actual value as the

⁴¹⁷ Smethurst, *Social Basis*, 138-40.

⁴¹⁸ Kisaka [木坂], "Gunbu," 1; Krebs, "Kaiserliche Militär," 42-43.

⁴¹⁹ Hara, because he did not come from the ruling elite, was considered to be a commoner although he was of samurai origin. Krebs, "Kaiserliche Militär," 42-43.

⁴²⁰ Inoue [井上], "Seiji to gunbu," 397.

⁴²¹ For a table of military budgets see Fujiwara [藤原], *Gunjishi*, 271-72.

national budgets rose as well until 1936. In 1937, the military's budget again reached war level.

The anti-military sentiment lasted until the party politicians in whom the populace had vested their trust and hopes came to disappoint them in the early Shōwa years. The popular sentiment slowly but surely turned against the political parties and parliamentarianism.⁴²² The populace viewed the Manchurian Incident favorably and supported the army with a nationalistic euphoria,⁴²³ which was stimulated by the mass media and army propaganda.⁴²⁴ As noted above, the ensuing right wing terrorism, was generally viewed positively by the populace. It also posed an opportunity for the army to position itself as the only source capable of reestablishing and maintaining national order. Finally, the army had successfully permeated the educational system and the private sphere of Japan's citizens through the *zaigō gunjinkai* and its subsidiary organizations.

The army was also able to hide the internal power struggles and disharmony,⁴²⁵ which could – if publicized – have led to the perception within the populace that the army's leadership, like the politicians and big business, was merely acting for its own benefit and not for the well-being of the nation.

7.1 The Army's Relationship with the Bureaucracy

As demonstrated above, Yamagata Aritomo was able to place his followers in important positions within the army and within the civilian bureaucracy and to keep these ties alive. He was thus able to influence policies through his followers until his death in 1922. Without a doubt, his last protégé, Tanaka Giichi, was able to use these channels for bureaucracy-army relations after Yamagata's death, as he had before during the establishment of the *zaigō gunjinkai* and the *seinendan*. With the slow demise of the Chōshū clique after Yamagata's death and Tanaka's shift to becoming a party politician,

⁴²² Bürkner, "Probleme," 127.

⁴²³ Krebs, *Japan im Pazifischen Krieg*, 30. Krebs, "Kaiserliche Militär," 48. There, nonetheless, were opponents to the army's policies in the 1930's. A prominent critic was Yanaihara Tadao (矢内原忠雄), an intellectual, who, for example in 1937, openly criticized the Japanese aggression on the Chinese mainland. Yanaihara, however, represented but a minority of the Japanese population and was soon forced to retire from his professorship at Tokyo Imperial University. Fletcher, *New Order*, 106. Not all intellectuals were liberals. As Fletcher demonstrates, fascist ideology was also present among the intellectual circles. He gives the example of Rōyama Masamichi (蠟山政道), Ryū Shintarō (笠信太郎), and Miki Kiyoshi (三木清). All of whom were members of Konoe's Shōwa Research Association (昭和研究会 *shōwa kenkyūkai*) and also wrote for the mass media. Fletcher, *New Order*, 4, 39, 46.

⁴²⁴ Young, *Total Empire*, 56, 114, 130.

⁴²⁵ Humphreys, *Heavenly Sword*, 181.

in addition to the national anti-military current, these channels, however, temporarily suffered as well.

The relationship between the bureaucracy – represented by the 'new bureaucrats' (新官僚 *shinkanryō*), the military, and business elite, was revived and improved in the early 1930's when right wing groups, made up of members of the bureaucracy, military, and business elite, were formed.⁴²⁶ Although 'army technocrats,' officers associated with the Control Faction were not always seen as favorable by the bureaucracy, the politicians, and big business, the technocrats' advocacy of the necessity of self-sufficiency and their vision of 'total war' were supported.⁴²⁷

The military-bureaucracy ties also expanded with the emergence of “military-bureaucratic cabinets” in the wake of the party cabinet era as close intra-ministry ties became necessary to handle the financial crisis as well as domestic terrorism. These 'new bureaucrats' or 'reform bureaucrats' (革新官僚 *kakushin kanryō*) who emerged and became important during that time, similar to their military counterparts, the army technocrats, formed a relatively cohesive group. Most of them had studied law at Tokyo Imperial University, had undergone similar professional training, and shared experiences in research groups. They easily cooperated with the military planners in Japan and Manchuria because of their technocratic orientation. The successful cooperation of army technocrats and 'reform bureaucrats' in forming policies in Manchuria, from 1932 onwards, led to the demand for a more active state to further the cause of 'total war' planning.⁴²⁸ By the late 1930's, 'reform bureaucrats' tended to favor a fascist form of state over liberalism and Marxism.⁴²⁹

Not only 'reform bureaucrats' partook in the aforementioned research groups. The National Policy Research Association, founded in 1933 by Yatsugi Kazuo (矢次一夫), brought together scholars, civil servants, politicians, and military officers to discuss a broad range of policy issues. This group, because of Yatsugi's close ties to the Military Affairs Bureau, for example, also contributed to the drafting of the aforementioned 1934 army pamphlet entitled *The True Meaning of National Defense and the Proposal to Strengthen it*.⁴³⁰

Another area in which the bureaucracy and military cooperated were superagencies that were established in the mid 1930's. The Cabinet Research Bureau (内

⁴²⁶ Maruyama, “Ideology,” 32.

⁴²⁷ Mimura, *Planning*, 21.

⁴²⁸ *Ibid.*, 32-33.

⁴²⁹ *Ibid.*, 35.

⁴³⁰ Fletcher, *New Order*, 89-90; Mimura, *Planning*, 44, 68.

閣調査局 *naikaku chōsakyoku*), established in 1935, is a prime example of one of these superagencies that crossed ministerial jurisdictions, promoted the cooperation of the specialist elites, and enhanced the military's intrusion into civilian administration. These superagencies also for the most part absorbed the political parties' last *raison d'être*: the mediation of the various elites' goals into a coherent national policy.⁴³¹

Military-bureaucracy ties grew during the early 1930's and matured once fascism was actively promoted 'from above' by the state in the third period of Japanese fascism from 1936 onwards.

7.2 The Army's Cooperation with the Zaibatsu

According to Hane, the cooperation between the military and the *zaibatsu* began around March 1936 (from the Hirota Kōki 廣田弘毅 cabinet onwards). She argues that this originated from the fact that the “army radicals” were against big business and, for example, sought to keep the *zaibatsu* out of Manchuria. Building an economic base in Manchukuo, however, was not possible without capital from Japan. The *mantetsu* was one channel for injecting Japanese capital in Manchuria.⁴³² Another source of capital were business conglomerates that had been founded by “technologically minded entrepreneurs,” and had expanded during WWI focusing on heavy industry and chemical goods, and emerged as the 'new *zaibatsu*' (新興財閥 *shinkō zaibatsu*).⁴³³ Kato also endorses the view that the established *zaibatsu* did not participate in the Manchurian adventure from the beginning on. He bases his argument on the premise that the established *zaibatsu*, in contrast to the 'new *zaibatsu*,' initially did not support the army's expansionist policies and concludes that the established *zaibatsu* eventually partook in the undertaking because of the immense profits that were being made.⁴³⁴ Bix is of an opposing view and states that the established *zaibatsu* were aware that the army sought to exclude them from Manchukuo primarily for domestic reasons – that is, the anti-big business current. The established *zaibatsu* willingly waited until the

⁴³¹ Berger, “Politics,” 113-14.

⁴³² Hane, *Modern Japan*, 288. The *mantetsu*, whose concession Japan had gained as a reparation after the Russo-Japanese War, became the important economic and, to a certain degree independent political actor in Manchukuo. It provided a platform for the intra-agency planning of the Japanese empire's future. For example Ishiwaru Kanji, at that time head of the Operations Section of the *sanbō honbu*, and Miyazaki Masayoshi (宮崎正義), a *mantetsu* economist, in 1935, and in 1936, worked together on plans for the Japanese empire's industrial development. Fletcher, *New Order*, 117; Krebs, “Kaiserliche Militär,” 36; Sims, *Political History*, 202.

⁴³³ Mimura, *Planning*, 22-24, 27.

⁴³⁴ Kato, “Taishō Democracy,” 235.

government and the *mantetsu* had completed infrastructure in Manchuria, while at the same time (1931 – 1936) pursuing the advancement of coal and iron development in Manchukuo and profiting from industrial activities that the *mantetsu* undertook, which had a quasi monopoly on the heavy industrialization of Manchuria.⁴³⁵

It remains certain, however, that big business, either in the form of the 'new *zaibatsu*' or in form of the established *zaibatsu*, possibly both, cooperated with the army in Manchukuo from the early 1930's onwards. This successful cooperation was extended to the Japanese mainland in the 'consummation period' of Japanese fascism.

7.3 The Army in the Political Arena

An anti-political party sentiment had existed within the military leadership since political parties began to emerge in the late 1880's. As soon as party politics became an issue, high ranking military personnel, in spite of the policy that soldiers were not to be involved in politics on any level, interfered in the political arena in order to counter the perceived threat.⁴³⁶ The army, according to Nish, began actively trying to influence politics from 1905 onwards.⁴³⁷ Before 1905, however, the army had already extended its influence into the political arena by making sure that active duty officers were not restricted to heading the Army Ministry but also on a relatively frequent basis headed other ministries.

Approximately half of the Japanese Prime Ministers until 1945 had either the rank of admiral or general, and a large number of members of the cabinets were also military personnel.⁴³⁸ Ramseyer and Rosenbluth conclude from analyzing the percentage of military officials that were replaced due to the forming of new cabinets from 1924 to 1931, which was minimal, that politicians did not maintain control over the military.⁴³⁹ This conclusion seems rather bold. It is nonetheless demonstrated that the military, also during the era of party cabinets, acted independently at least in terms of human

⁴³⁵ Bix also recounts that the *zaibatsu* as well as the military from 1931 to 1936 used the expansion of Japanese influence in Asia as a means of countering the world financial crisis. Bix, "Rethinking," 12-13.

⁴³⁶ Fukushima, "National Army," 538-39.

⁴³⁷ Ian Nish, "Japan's Tug-of-War After the Russo-Japanese War," in *War and Militarism in Modern Japan: Issues of History and Identity*, ed. Guy Podoler (Folkestone: Global Oriental, 2009), 9.

⁴³⁸ Krebs, "Kaiserliche Militär," 26. Of the 44 cabinets between 1885 and 1945, 20 were headed by Prime Ministers from the armed forces. Five of 14 during the Meiji era, five of 10 during the Taishō era and 10 of 20 during the early Shōwa era. Bürkner, "Probleme," 96. For a detailed analysis of the civilian ministries headed by members of the armed forces see *ibid.*, 91-96.

⁴³⁹ Ramseyer and Rosenbluth, *Politics*, 95.

resources. The military's intrusion into civilian ministries, during this era of party cabinets was significantly lower than during the Meiji era. With the loss of the political parties' political influence in the 1930's, the military's placement of its officers in civilian ministries again reached Meiji levels. Although the military was less successful in placing its personnel in civilian ministries in the Taishō era it has been, nonetheless, clearly proven, that the military between 1885 and 1945 infiltrated large parts of the cabinets.

Through the special powers of the Army and Navy Ministers, the military was usually able to force the cabinet to approve its budget demands. Within the Imperial Diet this proved to be more difficult because hardly any military personnel was ever part of it.⁴⁴⁰ This theoretically posed a problem to the military because according to Article 64 of the Meiji Constitution, the Imperial Diet had to approve of Japan's yearly budget. The Diet's authority in this matter, however, was significantly weakened through Articles 67 and 71. According to Article 67, the government had to approve of a budget reduction, and according to Article 71, if a budget was not decided upon – that is, an agreement was not established – the budget would resemble the previous year's. Since the Army Minister had the power to bring down the government, or use this as a threat, the army could at least secure the previous year's budget. Additionally, the armed forces could claim the support of the emperor, in whose name they maintained they were acting, in order to add weight to their requests.

As Japanese imperialism matured during and after the victory in the Russo-Japanese War, so did the military as an institution. It was able to secure the governance of Japan's colonies for itself, creating a military rule structure (軍事支配体制 *gunji jihai taisei*), that is, a military domination, instead of a civilian structure.⁴⁴¹ Korea became a Japanese protectorate during the Russo-Japanese War. This, in addition to other areas which Japan included into its sphere of influence, led to Southern Manchuria becoming a semi-colony.⁴⁴² Tanaka's visit to China in 1917 not only formed the basis for his China policy as Prime Minister, but was also a good example for the army to see itself as a natural actor in actively forming foreign policy. During its presence on the Asian mainland, the army had established an impressive information network in China. Troops

⁴⁴⁰ Bürkner, "Probleme," 98.

⁴⁴¹ Inoue [井上], "Seiji to gunbu," 358. Yoshida [吉田], "Nihon no guntai," 155-56.

⁴⁴² Inoue [井上], "Seiji to gunbu," 358. Korea was formally annexed into the Japanese Empire in 1910. The Hara government in 1919 abolished the practice that Taiwan and Korea were ruled by military men on active duty. From 1919 until 1945 only renowned retired generals and generals of the reserve held the post of Governor-General (総督 *sōtoku*) in Korea and from 1919 until 1936 only civilians held this post in Taiwan. Bürkner, "Probleme," 127.

were stationed in China, Korea and Manchuria. The army acted as a police force securing the *mantetsu*, provided the military attachés in Beijing, and maintained military advisers and “resident military officers in major cities.” Army officers were also increasingly trained as China experts who would eventually play an important role within the army.⁴⁴³ In terms of continental affairs, the army acted independently and sometimes deliberately against government policy, on considerable occasions with growing intensity and frequency in the years from 1915 to 1925.⁴⁴⁴

In the late 1920's, the army was to a certain degree still controlled by the government. It was not for example able to fend off the reduction of four divisions (most of the money saved was used for modernizing the military) and was not able to enforce an intervention in North China over the opposition of the government in 1928. The signing of the Naval Disarmament in London in 1930 was a further blow to the military. Shortly after that *humiliation*, reactionist societies were formed by so-called young officers who joined with right wing civilians. Although the various coup d'états by secret societies all failed, these attempts did play into the hands of the army because they could be used by the army leadership to demonstrate that a more liberal attempt on the side of the government would not provide a solution to Japan's problems and, therefore, put additional pressure on the government. The army, thus, gained momentum in the 1930's and acted relatively independently from government control in China and Manchuria, greatly expanding its troops in Manchuria from 10,000 in 1931 to 164,000 in 1935. The government was relatively helpless and had to accept various actions of the army in China and Manchuria as *faits accomplis*, which in turn further strengthened the army's position. The army used the Meiji institutions that were not altered in the Taishō period to tighten its grip and became an important source of power in the 1930's. What greatly supported the army in gaining power was that the leaders of the *zaibatsu* and the party politicians agreed to the army's policy of protecting the Japanese Empire by securing access to China's resources, and neither of the two (1) objected to the policy that the well-being of Japan's economy in the future would rely on China and (2) could ignore the support of the emperor in whose name the army claimed to be acting.⁴⁴⁵ The declaration of Mastuoka Yōsuke (松岡洋右), a *rikken seiyūkai* politician, in 1931, before the Manchurian Incident took place, that 'Manchuria is Japan's lifeline,' a declaration

⁴⁴³ Humphreys, *Heavenly Sword*, 24-25.

⁴⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 129-31.

⁴⁴⁵ Kato, “Taishō Democracy,” 233-35.

that acquired “widespread popular appeal,”⁴⁴⁶ exemplifies that the political parties, in order to survive and retain at least part of their influence, sought the military as an ally.

Japan grew increasingly isolated after it withdrew from the League of Nations in 1933. This increasing isolation demanded a new approach in foreign policy. The focus was again shifted to “autonomous strength.” The military's renewed and intensified intrusion into civilian government administration was justified by the theory that military supervision was necessary to gear the entire nation toward 'total war.' Expansion of the heavy industry as well as the military, was justified on the grounds that Japanese diplomacy was to be based on a strong military backing in order to neutralize the perceived threats that likely enemies – the U.S., Russia, and the Chinese Nationalist government – posed to Japan's territorial interests.⁴⁴⁷ Yamagata Aritomo's theory of the necessity of defending Japan's 'lines of sovereignty' and 'lines of interests' and Tanaka's aim to become a self-sufficient nation, were again clearly mirrored in Japanese foreign policy.

Until the military became a dominating political power in the late 1930's, the dualism of military and political leadership led to instability because neither the government nor the army could dictate its views completely. The political party governments placed a challenge on the army in the years after WWI, but were never able to seriously threaten the army's position.

8. Epilogue: Towards Total War

One aspect that aided in preparing the nation for complete 'national mobilization' and eventually 'total war' was the enactment of the Peace Preservation Law. The Peace Preservation Law, limiting the citizens rights, was enacted in 1925, the same year that general male suffrage was also enacted and gave the Taishō Democracy a whole new perspective: one that significantly increased the number of eligible voters.

The authors of the Peace Preservation Law supposedly did not aim at creating a repressive state. It was merely meant to preserve order in times of a growing threat posed by the radical left – as anarchism, communism, and individualism were perceived as threats. The inclusion of the term *kokutai* into Article 1 of the law, however, formed the basis for its being easily abused by the right wing. The right wing could justify any

⁴⁴⁶ Drea, *Japan's Imperial Army*, 168.

⁴⁴⁷ Berger, “Politics,” 112.

action by stating its intention to defend the *kokutai*.⁴⁴⁸ The inclusion of the provision that endangering the *kokutai* was an illegal act, however, not only benefited the right wing. Since no official definition existed of what the term *kokutai* specifically meant, this gave the authorities the means to prosecute anyone who spread “dangerous thought.”⁴⁴⁹ In 1928 the Peace Preservation Law was revised by an emergency imperial edict. It enhanced, for example, the judicial, the police's, and the state's powers, and enacted mechanisms to further restrict pro democracy forces, thus furthering the progress of Japan's fascization.⁴⁵⁰ In the 1930's, the Peace Preservation Law was increasingly used by the special police (特別高等警察 *tokubetsu kōtō keisatsu*) to arrest “thought criminals,” that is, objectionable radicals. They were coerced to renounce their beliefs, and after their successful conversion, reintegrated into their communities,⁴⁵¹ a practice known as *tenkō* (転向).

Before examining the China Incident and briefly focusing on the National Mobilization Law of 1938 as an example for legislation that was brought forward as a response to the China Incident, and to further prepare the nation for 'total war,' the focus will now be on the *kokutai no hongī*.

8.1 The Kokutai no Hongi

While 'fascism from above' was spread by the technocratic leaders of the state, the irrational fascist ideology entered a new level with the publication of the *kokutai no hongī* in 1937.

The idea of the *kokutai* had been extended to an ideology that defined Japan as a nation of “absolute unity” and “unrivaled superiority” in the late 1920's to the mid-1930's.⁴⁵² This view was widely spread through the publication of the *kokutai no hongī* in March 1937. The *kokutai no hongī* used Japan's superiority as a means to justify the Japanese domination of Asia and based this justification on ancient Japanese history. The continuity that formed an important base for this ideology was stressed and

⁴⁴⁸ Richard H. Mitchell, “Japan's Peace Preservation Law of 1925: Its Origins and Significance,” *Monumenta Nipponica* Vol. 28, No. 3 (Autumn, 1973): 343-45.

⁴⁴⁹ Fletcher, *New Order*, 10. In 1925, for example, students and professors of leading Japanese universities who openly protested against military training in schools were prosecuted on the basis of the Peace Preservation Law. Kinbara [金原], *Shōwa*, 295.

⁴⁵⁰ Bix, “Rethinking,” 16.

⁴⁵¹ Fletcher, *New Order*, 51-52.

⁴⁵² Klaus Antoni, *Shintō und die Konzeption des Japanischen Nationalwesens (Kokutai): der Religiöse Traditionalismus in Neuzeit und Moderne Japans* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 265.

emphasized in the same way in various passages: examples taken from the *kojiki* (古事記) and the *nihongi* (日本紀) were usually paired with examples from the Meiji era thus skillfully closing the gap of several hundred years and creating “the illusion of a continuous tradition.”⁴⁵³ The importance of absolute obedience of soldiers was also stressed as the “the emperor was the commander-in-chief and the sole purpose of the armed forces was to carry out the will of the emperor.”⁴⁵⁴ The publication of the *kokutai no hongei* can be seen as the result of the combined effort of the Education Ministry and the Imperial Japanese Army to include the clarification of the *kokutai* (国体明徴 *kokutai meichō*) in the educational curriculum,⁴⁵⁵ as well as a result of the movement to clarify the *kokutai* (国体明徴運動 *kokutai meichō undō*),⁴⁵⁶ in which the *zaigō gunjinkai* had a decisive role.⁴⁵⁷ The *kokutai no hongei* was, on the one hand, intended to be read by teachers on all levels, elementary to university, and by students of higher schools and, on the other hand, by the general public. Approximately 2 million copies circulated within Japan and references to it were consistently made in public speeches and ceremonies during national holidays.⁴⁵⁸ Important aspects of Uesugi Shinkichi's and Kakehi Katsuhiko's theories were included in the *kokutai no hongei*, thus further dominating Japanese indoctrination.⁴⁵⁹ Fascism was finally manifested as the official Japanese state ideology through the *kokutai no hongei*.⁴⁶⁰

8.2 The China Incident and the National Mobilization Law

The so-called China Incident, which eventually turned into a full-fledged war with China began on 7 July 1937, with shots fired at the Marco Polo Bridge near Beijing. The China Incident was not planned by the army as the Manchurian Incident had been, but was a result of skirmishes that had taken place for years on the Sino-Japanese border. The incident could have ended on July 11, as a cease fire had been locally agreed upon. The Konoe government, nonetheless, sent reinforcements, and the conflict,

⁴⁵³ Ibid., 266-67.

⁴⁵⁴ Skya, *Holy War*, 265.

⁴⁵⁵ Krebs, *Japan im Pazifischen Krieg*, 22.

⁴⁵⁶ Skya, *Holy War*, 264. The result of this movement, for example, the banning of three of Minobe's books, and his forced retirement from his seat in the Diet, is sometimes labeled a “bloodless coup d'etat ([無血クーデター] *muketsu kudeta*)” successful in achieving some of the radical right wing's goals: removing those from power who opposed their radical goals. Ibid., 256.

⁴⁵⁷ Smethurst, “Minobe Crisis,” 9-14.

⁴⁵⁸ Robert King Hall, introduction to *Kokutai no Hongei*, ed. Robert King Hall, trans. John Owen Gauntlett (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949), 10-11.

⁴⁵⁹ Neumann, *Politisches Denken*, 271-72; Skya, *Holy War*, 265.

⁴⁶⁰ Skya, *Holy War*, 263-64.

following more skirmishes, escalated into a full-blown war by the end of July with Japan occupying Beijing and Tianjin. The majority of the army leadership were certain that victory would be achieved within a few months. They were supported by the Foreign Ministry and the navy, as well as a number of politicians who demanded them to fight until a complete victory was reached, in order to teach China a lesson. The conflict was extended southwards by the army and the navy, the army occupying Shanghai and Nanjing by mid-December 1937. The navy grasped the opportunity and extended the battles as far south as the Netherlands Indies thus preparing for a southward expansion of the Japanese Empire. By January 1938, Konoe announced a new goal for the ongoing conflict: the eradication of Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist regime.⁴⁶¹

From the China Incident on, more measures were undertaken to silence the remaining proponents of the labor and tenant movements and restrictive laws were enacted. The state moved closer towards “outright fascism.”⁴⁶² The army teamed with Prime Minister Konoe whom the army's leadership saw as a willing companion in implementing the plans for a planned economy. The 'new bureaucrats' and some party politicians followed suit and a broad range of new legislation was enacted in spite of the opposition of the industry and a large part of the Diet. Both groups did not have the means to stop legislation, which was being enacted as a necessity, due to the war and for the sake of the well-being of the Japanese nation.⁴⁶³ According to Krebs, one can summarize that the Diet from the Meiji era until the prewar-Shōwa years, generally speaking, never combined and used all its power to interfere with the military's policies. In times of declared national or military emergencies (real or imagined) the Diet gave way to the military's demands. Politicians, rather than opposing the military, acted as *patriots*, and by supporting expansionist policies, sought to enhance their own prestige.⁴⁶⁴ The *core* of the restrictive laws that were succeedingly passed was the National Mobilization Law of 1938. It essentially gave the ones in power unrestricted authority to promote the mobilization of the nation and the populace for war in the

⁴⁶¹ Gordon, *Modern History*, 204; Krebs, “Kaiserliche Militär,” 54; Sims, *Political History*, 206. Böttcher sees the initial escalation caused by the Konoe government as an attempt to lure attention away from domestic problems. Böttcher, “Faschismus,” 91. The second Sino-Japanese war was not called war but 'China Incident' because a war with China would have violated the terms of the Kellogg-Briand Pact. A violation of the pact could have led other countries to intervene. Krebs, *Japan im Pazifischen Krieg*, 46.

⁴⁶² Maruyama, “Ideology,” 72.

⁴⁶³ Krebs, “Kaiserliche Militär,” 54-55.

⁴⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 31-32.

private sphere as well as all sectors of the economy. Freedom of speech was further restricted, strikes were outlawed, and freedom of movement was limited through forced labor allocation. The government now enjoyed widespread control over the economy and the remaining power of the political parties and the Diet was virtually eradicated.⁴⁶⁵

8.3 Total War

Until 1937, as Bix notes, the Japanese state's fascization progressed as the Diet's and the political parties' power declined. The parties kept the image of pluralism intact as long as possible while the power centered among the members of the *zaibatsu* and the Imperial Japanese Army officers of the Control Faction, who were coinstantaneously members of the bureaucracy and had access to the emperor.⁴⁶⁶ The situation after the China Incident changed, as demonstrated above, in as far as, the political parties, which eventually dissolved themselves. In addition, the Diet increasingly lost power and thus influence.

Hane sees the formation of the first Konoe cabinet as forming concurrently with the beginning of direct preparations for 'total war' and along with the China Incident, providing an additional base for the eradication of the remaining liberal and democratic tendencies through the "triumph of militarism and ultranationalism."⁴⁶⁷ Tipton, however, suggests that conservatives and party politicians were able to initially fend off the "reformists'" aims to create a "national defence state." Only after the outbreak of the China Incident did newly erupting notions of patriotism lead the Diet to support legislation for the restructuring of the state, for example, and most importantly, the creation of the previously discussed National Mobilization Law. However, she argues that this legislation was not as far-reaching as the reformists demanded, and the power struggles continued. She also states that the military was not in place to solely dominate the state after the February 26 Incident, and although having significantly gained influence by 1940, was still not the sole political power during the Tōjō cabinet.⁴⁶⁸ Whether the military had become the sole political power, or not, following Sims's argument, it did have a significant influence.⁴⁶⁹ Tipton acknowledges that although

⁴⁶⁵ Böttcher, "Faschismus," 92; Bürkner, "Probleme," 90; Hartmann, *Geschichte*, 190; Krebs, "Kaiserliche Militär," 54-55; Mimura, *Planning*, 19-20; Kong, "Tennō-Faschismus," 218-21; Tipton, *Modern Japan*, 130.

⁴⁶⁶ Bix, "Rethinking," 18.

⁴⁶⁷ Hane, *Modern Japan*, 288.

⁴⁶⁸ Tipton, *Modern Japan*, 129-31.

⁴⁶⁹ Sims, *Political History*, 203.

establishing the Imperial Rule Assistance Association (大政翼賛会 *taisei yokusankai*) as a “mass organization for political integration” failed, institutions that were attached to it, for example the *seinendan* and the *fujinkai*, which as demonstrated in Chapter 6 were greatly influenced and increasingly dominated by the Imperial Japanese Army, had great influence on the populace and involved it in the war effort.⁴⁷⁰ The first general mobilization plan had been developed under Tanaka Giichi's supervision between 1915 and 1917.⁴⁷¹ There is disagreement about whether or not Japan became dominated by the army or at what point they became preoccupied by the war effort. Nonetheless, 'national mobilization' was maximized and 'total war' reached the Japanese mainland, at the latest when Pearl Harbor was attacked, dominating the Japanese populace's lives until Japan's defeat in 1945.⁴⁷²

Conclusion

Yamagata Aritomo's conviction that universal conscription would be an important educational factor, and that it would aid the unification of the nation and create loyal citizens, prompted him to establish the Imperial Japanese Army as an army based on conscripts. His emphasis on the necessity of loyalty was reflected in the *gunjin chokuyū* as well as in the *kyōiku chokugo*. The institutions he aided in establishing, for example, the *sanbō honbu*, and the army's position in the Meiji Constitution as well as his authority, made the army a powerful and very independent actor, not only in the military sphere but in the political sphere as well. Tanaka Giichi, who shared many views with his mentor, sought to further the army's ties within the population, on the one hand, while simultaneously instilling military values in the entire populace on the other hand. He was convinced that future wars would be '*nation total wars*.' These wars, as Tanaka perceived, would require more than a strong military: the mobilization of the entire populace. Tanaka established the *zaigō gunjinkai* and the *seinendan* on the basis of these convictions. The indoctrination that began with compulsory education was thus extended through the *seinendan*. Upon reaching the age to qualify for conscription, the

⁴⁷⁰ Tipton, *Modern Japan*, 131-33. The *seinendan* and the *fujinkai* can be termed as being associated with the Imperial Rule Assistance Association since both were technically supervised by the Home Ministry, as was the Imperial Rule Assistance Association.

⁴⁷¹ Kisaka [木坂], “Gunbu,” 6.

⁴⁷² Tipton, *Modern Japan*, 138-39.

majority of Japanese males either joined the military or the *zaigō gunjinkai* where their indoctrination continued.

Yamagata and Tanaka created more than a populace consisting of 'national villagers' – loyal subjects to the Emperor. To a large part, Yamagata, within the Meiji-System, created a powerful military institution – the Imperial Japanese Army – independent of the government, which after Yamagata's and Tanaka's death proved to be more or less uncontrollable. Neither Yamagata nor Tanaka can be attributed with being fascist. However, Yamagata was to a high degree involved in establishing a framework for militarism to develop in Japan. Tanaka extended the scope of indoctrination, which was influenced by the militarist and fascist thought of, for example Kakehi Katsuhiko and Uesugi Shinkichi, to spread widely into the lives of the Japanese populace and therefore exposing the masses to this ideology.

In Japan, militarism and fascism lacked mass base support concentrated in a fascist political party. The high ranking officers' toleration of the secret societies and the terrorist attacks, in which so-called young officers and civilian extremists were involved, which benefited the army during its struggle for power, as well as the deteriorating socioeconomic situation that stimulated the terrorist plotters' dissatisfaction with the status quo, were a decisive factor, but not the sole basis for the spreading of fascism in prewar Japan. Further, the instability that evolved after the Meiji oligarchs had died also benefited the extremist forces within Japan because the elite competing for power either chose not to intervene in the radicalization or due to their lack of power could not. However, the willing mass base that cheered the fascist terrorists, supported the expansionist policies, and carried the burden of complete 'national mobilization' in the 'total war' effort, was created by the pillars of the indoctrination effort: initially through (1) compulsory education shaped by the *kyōiku chokugo*, but especially through (2) universal conscription and (3) the *zaigō gunjinkai* and its subsidiary organizations. The Imperial Japanese Army, therefore, can be seen as already having been a decisive factor in spreading militarism and fascism in prewar Japan even before actively promoting 'fascism from above' in the third period – the wartime period – of Japanese fascism.

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Appendix I: Select Glossary of Japanese Terms

• <i>Chian ijihō</i>	治安維持法	Peace Preservation Law
• <i>Chōheirei</i>	徴兵令	Conscription Ordinance of 1873
• <i>Chokurei</i>	勅令	Imperial command
• <i>Dainippon kokubō fujinkai</i>	大日本国防婦人会	Greater Japan National Defense Women's Association
• <i>Dainippon seinendan</i>	大日本青年団	Greater Japan Youth Association
• <i>Dainippon teikoku kenpō</i>	大日本帝国憲法	Constitution of the Empire of Japan
• <i>Dainippon teikoku rikugun</i>	大日本帝国陸軍	Imperial Japanese Army
• <i>Fujinkai</i>	婦人会	See: <i>Dainippon kokubō fujinkai</i>
• <i>Gakusei</i>	学制	Education Order of 1872
• <i>Genrō</i>	元老	Elder statesman
• <i>Gunbu daijin geneki bukansei</i>	軍部大臣現役武官制	Regulation that the Army Minister had to be an officer on active duty
• <i>Gunjin chokuyū</i>	軍人勅諭	Rescript to Soldiers and Sailors
• <i>Gunji kyōiku</i>	軍事教育	Military education
• <i>Gunji kyōren</i>	軍事教練	Military drill
• <i>Gunjin kunkai</i>	軍人訓戒	Admonitions to the Armed Forces
• <i>Gunjin seishin</i>	軍人精神	Soldiers' spirit
• <i>Gunrei</i>	軍令	Military decree
• <i>Gunrei</i>	軍令	Imperial Japanese Army's command
• <i>Gunsei</i>	軍政	Imperial Japanese Army's administration
• <i>Guntai naimusho</i>	軍隊内務書	Handbook of Interior Administration
• <i>Han</i>	藩	Feudal domains
• <i>Iaku jōsō</i>	帷幄上奏	Army Minister's direct access to the emperor
• <i>Jūgonen sensō</i>	十五年戦争	15 Year War
• <i>Kakushin kanryō</i>	革新官僚	Reform bureaucrats
• <i>Kantōgun</i>	関東軍	Japanese Kwantung Army
• <i>Kiheitai</i>	奇兵隊	Irregular militia
• <i>Kōdōha</i>	皇道派	Imperial Way Faction

• <i>Kokka sōdōin</i>	国家総動員	National mobilization
• <i>Kokutai</i>	国体	National polity
• <i>Kokutai no hongī</i>	国体の本義	Fundamentals of our National Polity
• <i>Kyōiku chokugo</i>	教育勅語	See: <i>Kyōiku ni kansuru chokugo</i>
• <i>Kyōiku ni kansuru chokugo</i>	教育ニ関スル勅語	Imperial Rescript on Education
• <i>Kunrenjo</i>	訓練所	See: <i>Seinen kunrenjo</i>
• <i>Mantetsu</i>	満鉄	See: <i>Minami manshū tetsudō</i>
• <i>Manshūkoku</i>	満州国	Manchukuo
• <i>Manshū jihen</i>	満州事変	Manchurian Incident
• <i>Meiji kenpō</i>	明治憲法	See: <i>Dainippon teikoku kenpō</i>
• <i>Minami manshū tetsudō</i>	南満州鉄道	South Manchurian Railway
• <i>Monbushō</i>	文部省	Education Ministry
• <i>Naimushō</i>	内務省	Home Ministry
• <i>Ni-niroku jiken</i>	二・二六事件	February 26 Incident
• <i>Rikugunshō</i>	陸軍省	Army Ministry
• <i>Rikugun yōnen gakkō</i>	陸軍幼年学校	Army preparatory schools
• <i>Rikugun daigakkō</i>	陸軍大学校	Army College
• <i>Rikugun shikan gakkō</i>	陸軍士官学校	Army Academy
• <i>Ryōhei soku ryōmin</i>	良兵即良民	Good soldier = good citizen
• <i>Sanbō honbu</i>	参謀本部	General Staff Office
• <i>Seinendan</i>	青年団	See: <i>Dainippon seinendan</i>
• <i>Seinen kunrenjo</i>	青年訓練所	Youth Training Centers
• <i>Seinen shōkō</i>	青年将校	Young officers
• <i>Seishin kyōiku</i>	精神教育	Ideological education
• <i>Shina jihen</i>	支那事変	China Incident
• <i>Shinkanryō</i>	新官僚	New bureaucrats
• <i>Shinkō zaibatsu</i>	新興財閥	New <i>zaibatsu</i>
• <i>Shizoku</i>	士族	Former samurai
• <i>Shotai</i>	諸隊	Mixed militia unit
• <i>Shōwa ishin</i>	昭和維新	Shōwa Restoration
• <i>Sōhei</i>	壯兵	Army based on volunteers, primarily <i>shizoku</i>
• <i>Taishō demokurashii</i>	大正デモクラシー	Taishō Democracy

• <i>Teikoku kokubō kōshin</i>	帝国国防方針	Imperial National Defense Plan
• <i>Teikoku zaigō gunjinkai</i>	帝国在郷軍人会	Imperial Military Reserve Association
• <i>Tōseiha</i>	統制派	Control Faction
• <i>Zaibatsu</i>	財閥	Business conglomerate
• <i>Zaigō gunjinkai</i>	在郷軍人会	See: <i>Teikoku zaigō gunjinkai</i>

Appendix II: Translation

Kōketsu Atsushi [瀨瀨厚]. *Kindai nihon no seigun kankei: Gunjin seijika Tanaka Giichi no kiseki* [近代日本の政軍関係—軍人政治家田中義一の軌跡]

Modern Japan's Government-Army Relations: The Locus of the Soldier-Politician Tanaka Giichi

Chapter 2: Army Reforms and the Formation of the the Army's Popular Base

Section 2: The Formation of the the Army's Popular Base

1. The Establishment of the Imperial Military Reserve Association

Tanaka,¹ at that time commander of the infantry's third regiment, who had partaken in the revision of various command regulations, was inaugurated Section Chief of the Military Affairs Bureau in the Army Ministry on 28 June 1909 (Meiji 11). At that time Terauchi Masatake² was Army Minister. The [position] of Military Affairs Section Chief, as a gateway to success to future [posts], such as Military Affairs Bureau Director, Vice Army Minister, and furthermore Army Minister, was an important post. Terauchi selected Tanaka as Military Affairs Section Chief, who following his predecessor Ōi Shigemoto³, was from Yamaguchi, but also achieved outstanding results in practical business affairs. Through this, together with Military Affairs Bureau Director Nagaoka Gaishi⁴ also from Yamaguchi, Terauchi was about to mold the 'Terauchi – Nagaoka – Tanaka' line, so to speak, the Chōshū Clique's Army Ministry's mainstay line. Terauchi strengthened the structure that concretely implemented the “Army Handbook of Interior Administration,”⁵ which had been revised by this staff.

The establishment of the Imperial Military Reserve Association⁶ was the greatest project that Tanaka conducted during the time of his position as Military Affairs Section Chief (January 1909 – February 1910). According to the Biography of Tanaka Giichi, it

1 田中義一, 1864 – 1929. For details on Tanaka Giichi, see Chapter 5 of this thesis.

2 寺内正毅, 1852 – 1919. Imperial Japanese Army officer. Army Minister (1902 – 1910), Governor-General of Korea (1910 – 1916), Prime Minister (1916 – 1918).

3 大井成元, 1863 – 1951. Imperial Japanese Army officer. Section Chief of the Military Affairs Bureau (1906 – 1909), President of the the Army College (1912 – 1914).

4 長岡外史, 1858 – 1933. Imperial Japanese Army officer. Member of the House of Representatives (1924 – 1928).

5 軍隊内務書 *guntai naimusho*.

6 For the Imperial Military Reserve Association (帝国在郷軍人会 *teikoku zaigō gunjinkai*) see Chapter 6 of this thesis.

is assumed that Tanaka first advocated the establishment of the Imperial Military Reserve Association in June 1903 (Meiji 36). At that time Tanaka received a command for deployment to Russia. It is noted that he made the following statement on the occasion of his farewell party.

In the case that a country as small as Japan wages war, it will be from the situation that the opponent is a large country, as it was with the Sino-Japanese War, and will be the same hereafter. Because there is also a great difference in the number of the people, in case the war is long [and] drawn out, it will be necessary to draft the reservists⁷ and rapidly send the soldiers of the second reserve to the war front. Moreover, the guidance of the soldiers after their honorable discharge is of utmost importance. Also, it is of utmost importance to let the result of military education be amply demonstrated in the hometowns and to become the backbone of the hometown's population. <Annotation 20⁸>

The mentioned “reservists” are militarist organizations and reservist organizations that had already been individually established all over the country in various places before the establishment of the Imperial Military Reserve Association. It is noted that the actual number counted in the phase of 1906 (Meiji 39) was 4,367 groups, and in 1910 (Meiji 43), at the time when the Imperial Military Reserve Association was established there were already 11,364 groups <Annotation 21>.

Tanaka hypothesized a war against Russia, which, in the inevitable-outbreak-of-war atmosphere during that time, had become a likelihood, and considered that the number of standing divisions (13 divisions before the outbreak of war) was not sufficient to oppose the Russian army that at that time was said to be the strongest. Accordingly, to prepare for the exhaustion of the military power and the numerical superiority of the Russian army, he thought of the “reservists” as a source of military force that would supplement the standing divisions in time of war. The Russo-Japanese War was practically in accordance with what Tanaka expected: the standing divisions were all committed to the war front and, moreover, it came as far as the mobilization of the second reserve soldiers. Because of that, the Japanese army ended up acquiring the bitter experience of being forced to mobilize its military power to the battlefield to the very limits of possible mobilization.

7 在郷の兵隊 (*zaigō no heitai*) literally translates to 'soldier(s) from the rural district(s).'

8 Annotations are not translated.

Against this background, on 3 November 1910 (Meiji 43), the existing militarist organizations and reservist organizations from various places all over the country were consolidated into the Imperial Military Reserve Association with Army Minister General Terauchi Masatake as chairman and Imperial Prince Fushiminomiya Sadanaru⁹ as president. Through this it was arranged that the reservist association groups that were dispersed nation-wide and whose roles themselves varied, were incorporated and consolidated into the jurisdiction of the Army Minister. And the unification of every organization and the integrity and unification of the role expectations came to be demanded. Tanaka was promoted to Major General and transferred from [the post of] Military Affairs Section Chief to [the post of] commander of the army first division's second brigade in the year following the establishment of the Imperial Military Reserve Association. There he held a speech that was entitled “Concerning the Relationship of the Army and the Provinces”¹⁰ and stated the following in regards to the Imperial Military Reserve Association role.

In Japan's future wars it will be necessary to power by all means a large army. Even though [it is necessary] to mobilize a large army in times of war, the possession of a large army in peacetime is indeed not permitted by the circumstances of our country's financial affairs. Accordingly, in the future the Japanese army will be small in times of peace, but when it comes to times of war it has to become large. When one speaks of by what means it will be enlarged in times of war, that is the enlargement by the means of all reservists. <Annotation 22>

In order to implement the post Russo-Japanese War principle of twofold mobilization in times of war, the estimate of the enlargement of the mobilization of military force in future wars, which was based on the experience from the Russo-Japanese War, into reality, to guarantee the potential source of military force, already in peacetime, became an indispensable requirement. The Imperial Military Reserve Association was established as the organization that secured this source of potential military force in peacetime.

Furthermore, Tanaka, in the same speech, stated “not of the ones on active duty, but of the reservists, one must think of as leaders of Japan's fighting strength in the future” <Annotation 23>. In future wars, the reservists were the very thing that was

9 伏見宮貞愛, 1858 – 1923. Imperial Japanese Army officer. Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal (1912 – 1915).

10 地方ト軍隊トノ關係ニ就テ *chihō to guntai no kankei ni tsuite*.

located as the core of the source of mobilization of military force during wartime. Although this locating did not necessarily match the army's mobilization plan of that time, which to the end considered the active duty soldiers of the standing divisions as the core of the wartime mobilization. Hereafter, especially the General Staff Office,¹¹ the body in charge of [military] strategy and operations, consequently came to demand the expansion of the standing army's divisions and at least did not possess the attitude of agreeing to Tanaka's plan.

But, as a result of the reduction of military strength that was enforced secondarily by the so called Yamanashi Disarmament¹² in the years of 1922 (Taishō 11) and 1923 (Taishō 12), and enforced even more by the Ugaki Disarmament¹³ in the year 1925 (Taishō 14), in the sense of making up for the reduction of the scope of mobilization of military force during wartime, the quasi military utilization of the Imperial Military Reserve Association organization was considered. However, the heightening of the role expectations in both of the reservist association's fields, the quasi military and the non-military (national defense propaganda etc.), had to wait until the necessity of the establishment of the national mobilization system¹⁴ was pointed out in the all-out war phase and became the military's largest challenge <Annotation 24>.

At any rate, in regards to Tanaka, he was certain that the establishment of the Imperial Military Reserve Association was the great aim in the establishment of the system of large quantity military-force-mobilization, from peacetime to wartime. This can be understood by the following statement, which is also from the aforementioned speech.

The Japanese population is numerous but because the finances are not opulent, the support of a large army in peacetime is not permitted by the country's capacity. We perform to the utmost effort; however, there are limits to things. It is nearly impossible to perceive one human being as being equivalent to 20 other persons. Therefore in the meanwhile, because there are limits, I think that in wars from now on, it will become the Japanese army's most important requirement to accelerate the replenishment; that is: the quick replacement [of exhausted troops] with fresh troops. <Annotation 25>

11 参謀本部 *sanbō honbu*.

12 山梨軍縮 *yamanashi gunshuku*.

13 宇垣軍縮 *ugaki gunshuku*.

14 国家総動員体制 *kokka sōdōin taisei*.

And, moreover, Tanaka, through the linkage and combination of national education and military education, as stated in the preceding paragraph, expected from the Imperial Military Reserve Association the promotion of the integration of the people as well as the formation of the army's popular base. In the same “Concerning the Relationship of the Army and the Provinces” Tanaka stated as follows.

You have to be the ones who set an example of this thrift and exertion in your hometown. Also, when you return to your hometown you must receive the respect of the people because you are trained on the basis of the doctrine of being very sincere towards people, very diligent in business affairs, and industrious in your own occupation. Your behavior as reservists will generate respect in and create trust from the people in villages or towns. Because of you, order in the villages or towns will be properly maintained and manners will improve. Because you are diligent in an honest business, the productivity of towns and villages will improve. <Annotation 26>

In other words, he [Tanaka] expected the reservists to behave as models of exemplary citizens in the regional communities. Thereby, by being the people's backbone that contributed to the establishment of provincial order, hindering the disorder of morals and manners that arose among the people was expected. Moreover, by the dedication towards everyday production projects, the performance of the role of vanguard of the regional communities' material development was expected. Actually, the reservists thereafter gradually came to be expected to be a provincial organization for the unification of the people and came to accomplish the important role of spreading militarism within the military order of provincial society.

This plan of Tanaka is concisely summarized in the following concluding section. This is the following passage: “I think that national education must inject military ideology. Accordingly, it is necessary to consistently glue the army and the provincial supporters together, to inject military ideology into all provincial youths and also, as much as possible, to choose the process of allowing military education and national education to coincide.” <Annotation 27> Here, the necessity of the Imperial Military Reserve Association, which in one of Tanaka's plans was the physical means of combining and linking military education and national education, to become a medium, was precisely located <Annotation 28>.

Also, in June 1911 (Meiji 44), during his time as commander of the second brigade, in a lecture entitled “The People and the Reservists” that Tanaka held, he

insisted on the necessity of letting the Imperial Military Reserve Association as a people's group become established within society. He stated, namely, “I believe that, when speaking of this subject matter, this association is truly a people's group, the soldiers become the backbone of it, the people in general will become supporters and will become advocates of it, and all together will jointly cooperate, and face this large primary goal and advance courageously” <Annotation 29>. By name, it was the Imperial Military Reserve Association but in reality, he located it as the “people's group.” Furthermore, “the time in which one thought in terms of an army society as another society, which is independent of the people, is already a thing of the past. Today's army endeavors [to do this], based on the belief that it can only completely reach the goal for the first time when it has the sympathy and support of the people <Annotation 30>.

Here the role that Tanaka expected of the Imperial Military Reserve Association is summarized. The realization of the slogans “militarization of the people”¹⁵ or “nationalization of the army”¹⁶ that are summarized here, and use the Imperial Military Reserve Association as a medium, became much more urgent subjects for the army in the decade of the 1920's, when the Taishō Democracy Movement, socialism, and the labor movement were promoted. Even though the Imperial Military Reserve Association, in correspondence to these new tendencies, was forced to reorganize and reinforce [itself], it came to the result of generally being pushed forward as a breakwater to maintain rule and order.

For example, corresponding to the large strike at Hachiman Ironworks on 5 February 1920 (Taishō 9), and Japan's first May Day meeting on 2 May of the same year, which symbolized the increase in activity of the labor movement, the Imperial Military Reserve Association bulletin “Comrades in Arms”¹⁷ in four consecutive issues, from June to September of the same year, published an article entitled “Pros and Cons of the Ideology Question”¹⁸ and indicated a sensitive reaction to those tendencies. This turns out to be the writing of “Comrades in Arms” chief editor Lieutenant General Yamanashi Hanzō.¹⁹ [He] conducted an appeal to the reservists to use plenty of caution

15 国民の軍隊化 *kokumin no guntai*.

16 軍隊の国民化 *guntai no kokuminka*.

17 戦友 *senyū*.

18 思想問題是非 *shisō mondai zehi*.

19 山梨半造, 1864 – 1944. Imperial Japanese Army officer. Army Minister (1921 – 1923), Governor-General of Korea (1927 – 1929).

in regards to those ideologies, and stated that these ideologies, radicals (communism),²⁰ democracy (democracy),²¹ individualism (liberalism)²² were entirely incompatible with the soldiers' spirit,²³ and concerning military education as well as national education these ideologies were dangerous <Annotation 31>.

In this manner the Imperial Military Reserve Association, being a trump card for maintaining and restoring order in the disorder of public order, which occurred in the time after the Russo-Japanese War and even more in the time after World War I, became an organization that developed a positive activity. Therefore, in making “the army and the people unite”²⁴ and forcing the “people's militarization” in the following speech that Tanaka held in a later year “if the reservists are united and given mental training and discipline is increased, it will not stop with increasing the value of only soldiers, but it will earn the respect and sympathy of the people. Due to this thorough understanding, the army and the people will unite, and it will naturally become an excellent linkage,” <Annotation 32> one can read between these lines the attempt to obstruct the tide of democracy. This plan of Tanaka was also adopted in the reorganization of the Youth Association²⁵ organization four years after the establishment of the Imperial Military Reserve Association.

2. The Reorganization of the Youth Association Organization

After the successive posts of Military Affairs Bureau Director (September 1911 – December 1912) and commander of the second brigade (December 1912 – August 1914), Tanaka was assigned to the General Staff Office and from February to August 1914 (Taishō 3), roughly the period of half a year, conducted an inspection of Europe and America. The factual investigation of the juvenile male education of the various European and American countries was the focus of this inspection. In May of the year following his homecoming, Tanaka summarized these results in a pamphlet entitled “Social National Education.”²⁶

In this Pamphlet Tanaka showed great interest in each nation's juvenile male education and addressed this as follows: “Obviously, the foremost component of a

20 過激派 *kagekiha* (共産主義 *kyōsan shugi*).

21 デモクラシー *demokurashii* (民主主義 *minshu shugi*).

22 個人主義 *kojin shugi* (自由主義 *jiyū shugi*).

23 軍人精神 *gunjin seishin*.

24 軍隊と国民とを結合 *guntai to kokumin to wo ketsugō*.

25 For details concerning the [大日本]青年団 [*dainippon*] *seinendan*.([Greater Japan] Youth Association) see Chapter 6 of this thesis.

26 社会的国民教育 *shakaiteki kokumin kyōiku*.

nation's prosperity are the people. For those who consider the long term plan for the state, the concentration of one's effort towards the education of the youth who will have to shoulder the burden of the destiny of the nation's future, has to be a matter of course from the beginning on” <Annotation 33>. From here on Tanaka began paying attention to the Youth Association organization as an aim of youth education. The Youth Association organization that Tanaka planned, was a Youth Association whose character was that of a self improvement organization and guidance organization, whose members' ages ranged from after graduation from compulsory education to the conscription examination, at the maximum 20 years of age. Thus the Youth Association was directly connected to the Imperial Military Reserve Association, and the consistent course of compulsory education completion → Youth Association enrollment → military service duty fulfillment → Imperial Military Reserve Association admission was established and the Youth Association was located within it as one part <Annotation 34>.

The Young Person's Association²⁷ that can be called the ancestor of the Youth Association, until then had steadily advanced the military structuring, from the viewpoint of military usefulness, through for example, countering draft evasion and supporting military affairs, particularly in the sequential line of military expansion after the Russo-Japanese War. This was not promoted through the army's leadership alone. Both the Education Ministry²⁸ and the Home Ministry²⁹ respectively, inserted expectations and the organization was promoted. Especially in October 1908 (Meiji 41), through the leadership encouragement of the Education Ministry and the Home Ministry, this organization was rapidly promoted by the local administrations.

In April 1910 (Meiji 43), a country-wide youth convention took place in Nagoya. “12 Guidelines of the Youth Association”³⁰ and “13 Articles of Important Activities”³¹ were presented. Against this background, the army nationalized the Home Ministry's and Education Ministry's Youth Association and made it into an administration agency. In regards to the characterization of a 'project for the common good organization'³² = 'education organization',³³ it inserted a new character and a new

27 青年会 *seinenkai*.

28 文部省 *monbushō*.

29 内務省 *naimushō*.

30 青年団規十二則 *seinen danki jūnisoku*.

31 実行要目十三箇条 *jikkō yōmoku jūsan kajō*.

32 公益事業団体 *kōeki jigyō dantai*.

33 教化団体としての性格 *kyōka dantai toshite no seikaku*.

organization policy <Annotation 35>. It is assumed that the first time the army showed interest in the military reorganization of the Youth Association organization was in 1912, when Nogi Maresuke³⁴ showed Tanaka, who at that time was Military Affairs Bureau Chief, materials concerning the youth scouts (Boy Scouts),³⁵ which he had brought from England, and ordered [Tanaka] to engage in research on youth education on the basis of this material <Annotation 36>.

The concrete development of the Youth Association restructuring began on 15 September 1915, with the nation-wide local government secretary directive “Notification Concerning the Leadership Development of the Youth Association”³⁶ with the joint signature of Home Minister Ichiki Kitokurō³⁷ and Education Minister Takata Sanae³⁸ of the second Ōkuma Shigenobu³⁹ cabinet. And in January 1916 (Taishō 5), the central unification mechanism of the nation-wide Youth Association, the Central Gratitude Organization Youth Bureau⁴⁰ was established and the bulletin “Imperial Youth”⁴¹ was launched at the same time. Tanaka, as a member of the executive board of directors, came to acquire the right to have a large say within the Youth Bureau. The nation-wide directive addressed to local government secretaries “Case Concerning the Leadership Development of the Youth Association”⁴² appeared to have been issued by the Home and Education Ministries. However, the content actually came to completely include the ideas of the military authorities, who had Tanaka at their center.

In other words, in a letter to Army Minister Terauchi Masatake, dated 1 September 1915, Tanaka touched upon this directive. He wrote that the directive was established through the interim of the Home Ministry and the Education Ministry with Tanaka as mediator. As a result of the continuous repetition of the negotiations regarding the content of the Youth Association organization, the content ultimately “in general, following my humble (annotation, Tanaka) proposal, with the joint signature of both ministers, the directive, and the secondary organizational proposal will be decided, and within two or three days it will be published.” <Annotation 37>

34 乃木希典, 1849 – 1912. Imperial Japanese Army officer.

35 少年斥候隊 *shōnen sekkōtai* (ボーイスカウト *bōisukauto*).

36 青年団体ノ指導発達ニ関スル通牒 *seinen dantai no shidō hattatsu ni kansuru tsūchō*.

37 一木喜徳郎, 1867 – 1944. Education Minister (1914 – 1915), Home Minister (1915 – 1916).

38 高田早苗, 1860 – 1938. Education Minister (1915 – 1916).

39 大隈重信, 1838 – 1923. Prime Minister (1898, 1914 – 1916).

40 中央報徳会青年部 *chūō hōtokukai seinenbu*.

41 帝国青年 *teikoku seinen*.

42 青年団体ノ指導発達ニ関スル件 *seinen dantai no shidō hattatsu ni kansuru ken*.

The aim of the reorganization of the Youth Association that Tanaka planned, was the creation of an organization with the purpose of militarily controlling the before-conscription stratum of youth, in other words, the young males who had reached adulthood. Therefore, it is obvious that the idea of the combination and linkage of national education and soldiers' education, identical with the details of the establishment of the Imperial Military Reserve Association, was at its foundation. However, in the Youth Association organization, there existed the participation of the Education and Home Ministries and there was also the connection with the Imperial Military Reserve Association. In the beginning, in the practical managing aspect, the taking of a unified route was impossible. In short, this was because the Education and the Home Ministries had the idea that the Youth Association was an enterprise-organization for the stratum of youths that had finished compulsory education, and that it was an independent organization that played the main role in genuine youth voluntary service. However, for the army, the Youth Association to the bitter end was an organization connected to the Imperial Military Reserve Association, and because it naturally treated the introduction of the military components as indispensable, the antagonism of the Home and Education Ministries toward the Army Ministry existed forthwith.