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Nation-State, Empire, and Army : The Case of Meiji Japan

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Nation-State, Empire, and Army: The Case of Meiji Japan

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State and army are inseparable and interdependent. This is true not merely because an army, with its all military power, is at the heart of the state's power structure but also because, in modern nation-states in particular, the army composed of conscripts from the entire nation, as well as schools, is an essential organization to teach discipline and patriotism to the nation. I would say that the army is an apparatus to make a nation; through it, the health, body, and mind of the nation are standardized, disciplined, and controlled. By its nature it ought to be a highly rational and efficient organization. It is supposed to apply the most highly developed science and technology, pertaining not only to military fields but to areas such as communication, transportation, nutrition, and clothing. Thus the army might be said to be one of the most modern apparatuses of civilization. For these reasons, the issue of the nation-state and the army is a paramount subject of comparative civilization studies, but it has not yet been fully explored. This article, focusing on the nation-state and the national army in Meiji Japan, is intended as a contribution to the field.

1. STATE AND ARMY IN MODERN EUROPE

An ideal army of the nation-state might be characterized as follows: in a society in which military service is considered a right as well as a duty, like paying taxes and voting, soldiers are recruited from the general able-bodied population through a conscription system [KEEGAN 1993].¹⁾ The army of a nation-state is fundamentally an army of the nation, and it first appeared in the French Republic after the

1) The argument of this section is a summary of John Keegan's recent distinguished book on military history, *A History of Warfare* (1993), especially pp. 219-234, 319-385.

Revolution of 1789. Initially the attitude of the revolutionary government was antimilitary, but it was forced to change under the military threat from antirevolutionary forces; it then began the process of building up a new army. On the eve of the Revolution the regular army in France amounted to about 150,000 officers and men, composed of volunteers from the bourgeois class who owned a stipulated amount of private property. In August 1793 a general mobilization order (*levée en masse*) was declared: until the moment "when enemies have been driven from the Republic's territory, all Frenchmen are permanently requisitioned for the service of armies." After only a year, the army of the Republic swelled to include 1,169,000 men.

The initial objective of the French national army was to defend and then to export the Revolution. Needless to say, maintaining a huge army imposes an enormous financial burden on a state. In the case of the French Revolutionary army, which was soon to become Napoleon Bonaparte's army, soldiers paid themselves by looting. This meant that the army could exist as long as there were enemies to be looted. Thus, an orientation toward territorial expansion has been inherent from the very beginning of a national army based on the conscription system.

Modern war tactics in Europe established in the early eighteenth century were little modified until the mid-nineteenth century. They were made possible by technological improvements in firearms. A modern army comprised three sections: an infantry armed with muskets fitted with bayonets, an artillery with field cannons, and a cavalry. Volley fire by well-trained musketeers proved to be the deadliest tactic. The infantry could be threatened by field artillery, whose accuracy, mobility, and firepower were steadily improving, and by cavalry assaults. Infantry drill became crucial, and its methods and know-how became institutionalized. Prior to this period, battlefields were places where flamboyant warriors could display their prowess. Those days were over, and modern wargaming came to be characterized not by any individual but by organization.

The eighteenth-century victories by Europeans against the two powerful non-European empires—that is, the Ottoman and Mogul forces—could largely be attributed to these military innovations. The core of the Ottoman army consisted of janissaries, members of an elite infantry corps who were recruited by force from the Balkan Christians. They besieged Vienna in 1683 and were seen as a tremendous threat to Europe. But only a quarter century later, they were driven out from most of the Balkans. The Mogul empire had employed a number of Turkish mercenaries since the sixteenth century. They were highly skilled artillerymen and engineers, but their skills were outdated by the eighteenth century. Britain started to recruit and train Hindus during the mid-eighteenth century; and at the Battle of Plassey in 1757, British forces 3,200 strong, of whom 2,100 were Hindus, won a decisive victory against the Mogul infantry and cavalry of 50,000 men. The victory paved the way for the British rule of India.

Infantry drill is, in principle, universal, making it possible for anyone to

become a soldier through training. This method was used in building up "national" armies as well as colonial armies in overseas territories of European empires, like the companies of Hindus in India. A question worth asking, then, is who in reality was recruited into the army.

Since medieval times European military organizations had transnational characteristics. The army of a state was not necessarily composed of its own nationals, but contained many foreigners. Byzantine emperors employed Varangian guards who originally migrated from north Europe; similarly, various European dynasties had Swiss guards. It is also known that French kings had Scottish archers, and Frederick II had Arab guards. Magyar light cavalymen, sharpshooters from central Europe, and Christian refugees from the Ottoman Balkans were widely used. These features persisted into modern times (and to the present day). The army of Napoleon, allegedly the first national army, also contained various units from outside the nation, such as Swiss regiments and Polish lancers. Within the Imperial Guard was a squadron of Lithuanian Tartars, descendants of the Golden Horde. Indeed, the soldiers who fought on both sides during the Napoleonic Wars were quite a mixture: bodyguards, regulars, feudatories, mercenaries, colonist conscripts, serf militias, and remnants of warrior tribes from the steppe. During the nineteenth century the list extended even further to include "exotic" units from overseas such as North African Zouaves, Punjabi Sikhs, and Nepalese Gurkhas.

Although the army of each European state had a premodern tradition, as it became a national army it grew larger and more specialized. The Napoleonic Wars marked the beginning of the process, which reached a climax a century later during World War I. As a result each state faced two problems. One was the financial burden of maintaining a large army; the other was how to cultivate and sustain soldiers' loyalty to the state. A force composed of mercenaries and militias was, as their numbers were relatively small, more economical than a national army. It was also not so difficult to keep mercenaries loyal through rewards and payment. Since militias were made up of those who were privileged to be armed because they were citizens of the state who were among a relatively small number of taxpayers meeting certain property requirements, their identification with the state was hardly questioned. But a national army was a different story altogether, and there was definitely a need to create a new way to cultivate and sustain loyalty.

Without doubt, emerging nationalism played a key role in solving this problem. It helped to create a patriotic feeling among conscripted soldiers that they were defending their motherland and her people. Also, as the range of "citizens" expanded, a notion developed that to be engaged in military service was a duty of citizens as well as a right. In this regard, the expansion of the conscription system went hand in hand with the increase of taxpayers and the spread of universal suffrage.

It was not easy, however, to maintain the loyalty of a national army, especially during long and severe wars. World War I, a "total war" in the truest sense, is a

good example. During the first three years, the spirit of soldiers in each state was high and they remained loyal. But in the fourth year, the Russian army, which was the least national in nature, collapsed though it was not militarily defeated; this breakdown led to the fall of imperial rule. In Germany as well, a revolution broke out in 1918, which was triggered by a naval mutiny. Even in the French army a large mutiny broke out in the spring of 1917.

I have provided this overview of the development of modern European armies because I believe it very relevant to considering the relations among state, army, and nation during Meiji Japan. In the following sections I shall concentrate on that theme.

2. FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE ARMY IN MEIJI JAPAN

During the Tokugawa era, peace prevailed in general and the samurai transformed from members of the warrior class, each of whom was allocated a fief by his lord, to bureaucratic civil servants with paid salaries. When they confronted the modern armies of the West at the end of that era, they realized that their own military system was outdated and was no match for that of the West. Whatever their overall attitude toward the West was, the samurai keenly felt an urgent need to build up a new modern army, so that Japan would not be militarily defeated and be colonized. This task was inherited by the Meiji government. As the national slogan *fukoku kyōhei* (wealthy state, strong army) indicates, industrialization and building up an army were the twin engines of modernization. The modern army in Japan was a completely new invention, not based on the premodern military system. This could be seen as an advantage, for there were few elements of the ancien régime that might hamper the buildup of a national army made up of conscripted soldiers. There were virtually no armed groups besides samurai; mercenaries did not exist and militia (*gōshi*) was insignificant. The majority of samurai gave up their privilege to be armed quite willingly, although some of them rebelled against the government during its first decade in power. Therefore we can argue that in building up a national army for a nation-state, Meiji Japan was in a better position than were the European states.²⁾

2) The absence of mercenaries before the Meiji era could also be seen as disadvantageous. According to Ōe Shinobu, military logistics developed in European armies because mercenaries, who formed the core of armies in pre-French Revolution Europe, had to be well paid and fed so that their loyalty could be guaranteed. In contrast, in Japan, where there was no history of mercenaries, the jump from armies of samurai to the modern national army led to inattention to logistics. This chronic weakness of the Japanese army continued until its collapse in 1945 [Ōe 1985: 56]. His argument may require some qualification. It was only in a later period of the Japanese army, when extreme spiritualism became prevalent, that logistics was neglected. In Japan's wars with China and Russia, logistics was considered essential: in order to wage and win a war, leaders were naturally rational and realistic. It is also implausible to attribute the neglect of logistics solely to the absence of mercenaries.

The Tokugawa Shogunate and some domains such as Satsuma, Chōshū, Saga, Nagaoka, Mito, and Kishū had already started to modernize their armies before the Meiji Restoration. In the Boshin War (1868–1869) fought between the *kinnō* (loyalists to the emperor) and *sabaku* (supporters of the shogunate) factions, each had partially modernized forces. The Meiji government, which was founded after the *kinnō* forces won the war, was a coalition of domains; it had no army to call its own, except for a small number of militiamen (*gōshi*) like those of Totsugawa, who pledged loyalty directly to the emperor. A quick buildup of the army was imperative for the new government whose initial power basis was not solid.

In October 1870 the government proclaimed that the army would be formed in the French style and the navy in British style. In February of the following year, the *goshinhei* (royal guards, later to be called *konoehi*) were organized, and three domains—Satsuma, Chōshū, and Tosa—contributed some forces. For the first time in its history, the Meiji government had its own army directly under its command. That army comprised six infantry battalions, six artillery companies, and one cavalry platoon, for a total of 11,600 officers and men [HORIUCHI and HIRAYAMA 1967: 125; SHINOHARA 1983: 312; KATŌ 1996]. In April 1871 the two *chindai* (regional army headquarters) were set up, and two more were added in August; they were at Tokyo, Osaka, Kumamoto, and Sendai. The Tokyo *chindai* had nine infantry battalions as a standing army, while its subregional branches at Niigata, Ueda (Nagano), and Nagoya had respectively one infantry battalion, two platoons, and one battalion [HORIUCHI and HIRAYAMA 1967: 129]. In 1872 the Ministry of Military Affairs (Hyōbushō), which had been formed in 1869, dissolved; it was replaced by the new Ministries of the Army and the Navy. In January 1873 two more *chindai* were set up at Nagoya and Hiroshima, thus completing the six-*chindai* system,³⁾ and the conscription law was proclaimed. In this way the modern Japanese army was established; it successfully pacified a series of rebellions by the dissident *shizoku* (former samurai), from the Saga rebellion (1874) to the last and largest Seinan War (1877).

The institutional buildup of the army continued. The *sanbō honbu* (general staff), an organ that was in charge of *gunrei* (military planning and mobilization) and was directly under the emperor, became independent from the Ministry of the Army. This structure—the Ministry of Army being responsible for *gunsei* (military administration) and the *sanbō honbu* for *gunrei*—was based on the dual military system of the German empire. The army officers' college (Rikugun Shikan Gakkō) was opened in 1875, and the army institute (Rikugun Daigakkō), a higher educational institution for training staff officers, was established in 1883 under the *sanbō honbu*. In January 1882 the *gunjin chokuyu* was proclaimed by the emperor (see below), and in August martial law and the commandeering law were proclaimed as a step to consolidate wartime legislation. The process of

3) The entire army was supposed to total 31,680 men in peacetime and 46,350 in wartime. It took three years to fulfill the expansion plan [ŌHAMA 1978: 10]

consolidation was finally completed in 1893, just before the Sino-Japanese War, when the wartime general headquarters law and the staff headquarters law were enacted. In 1888 the six *chindai* were transformed into six divisions (*shidan*), and two years later a royal guard division was established. A division consisted of two infantry brigades, one cavalry battalion, one field artillery regiment, one engineer battalion, and one transport battalion. The wartime size of a division was about 10,000 officers and men [ŌE 1985]. The Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895) was fought under this system. The size of the army expanded to thirteen divisions on the eve of the Russo-Japanese War, during which six more divisions were added.

In conjunction with the establishment of the army, military industry also developed. The first domestic rifles were manufactured in 1880 at the Tokyo Hōhei Kōshō, an army factory that originally succeeded the gun factory of the shogunate. By 1887 it employed 2,300 workers and was producing 20,000 to 30,000 rifles a year. Military industry made rapid progress during the Sino-Japanese War and again with the Russo-Japanese War [SATŌ 1989: 69].⁴⁾

Within thirty years, the army of Meiji state developed into a modern huge force strong enough to go on an overseas expedition and wage a successful war against China. Within forty years, it could match the Russian army, then one of the largest and most powerful armies in the world.

3. CONSCRIPTION SYSTEM: THE ARMY OF THE NATION-STATE

The idea of an army consisting of soldiers recruited not only from *shizoku* (former samurai) but from all of the classes was originally advocated by Ōmura Masujirō. When he was assassinated by conservatives in 1869, the task was taken up by Yamagata Aritomo (1838–1922). An army made of volunteers, including those who were not samurai, had already been realized in 1864 by the Kiheitai (of which Yamagata was a commander) of the Chōshū domain. In the beginning of the Meiji era the Kishū domain adopted the conscription system, although it did not work very long, as the domain was soon abolished by the *haihan chiken*. Irrespective of these precedents, it was not easy for the Meiji government to implement conscription. Even in the government itself, those who were against it, led by powerful politicians such as Ōkubo Toshimichi, had a small majority. The conservatives claimed that the army should comprise soldiers of various domains (*hanpei*); they believed that the *shizoku* should be the core of the army. The setting up of the *goshinhei* (royal guards) in 1871 was done along this line. Moreover, there was yet another idea in the government. Itagaki Taisuke, who hailed from Tosa and thus was familiar with *gōshi* (militia), is said to have thought that a militia system like that of Switzerland was desirable [SHINOHARA 1983; KATŌ 1996].

4) Tokyo Hōhei Kōshō, one of the first modern industrial factories in Japan, became in 1902 one of the first sites of an organized workers' strike.

After many turns and twists, the controversial conscription law (*chōhei rei*) was proclaimed in 1873. The ideology behind the conscription system was clearly stated in the *chōhei kokuyu*, decreed by the government in the previous year. Interestingly, it accuses the *shizoku* of arrogance, presupposes the equality of the “emperor’s subjects” in general, and says that the state’s security is the individual’s security and that military service is a “blood tax”: that is, the citizens’ duty to repay the country with their blood.

The conscription system was not readily accepted by the people, and not implemented as thoroughly as planned. Between 1873 and 1874 a number of peasant riots broke out in western Japan. An immediate cause is said to have been that the phrase “blood tax” in the *chōhei kokuyu* was misunderstood: some believed that it entailed extracting the real blood of peasants. The fact of the matter was that peasants displayed a widespread resentment of and disagreement with the Meiji government [SHINOHARA 1983]. Nor were peasants alone in trying to escape conscription. As the law originally had contained many exemptions from this obligation, people took advantage of them. Those who evaded their duty during the Meiji era included many distinguished men of culture, including Natsume Sōseki and Takamura Kōun [ŌHAMA 1978: 14–16].

In principle the conscript system aimed at a national army composed of all the able-bodied men of the nation. According to the 1873 law, all men between the ages of seventeen and forty were to be registered in the national army and every year those who reached twenty years of age were to undergo an examination for conscription; men chosen from those who passed were to be newly recruited to the army for three-year enlistments. In reality, however, especially in the beginning, only a small portion of the target population was recruited. Moreover, the law was not applied to those who lived in Hokkaidō until 1882, and to those in Okinawa until 1896. During the first five years, every year fewer than 10,000—less than five percent of those called for the conscription examination—actually entered the army. It was only after 1898 that the rate of new recruits rose above ten percent. Compared with 1861 Prussia, where almost 60,000 were newly recruited, the number is remarkably low. To start with, the rules of exemption applied to many—almost eighty percent of twenty-year-olds in 1876. Apart from the physically disabled, the exempt included government employees, students at schools run by the central government and by local governments, household heads, only sons, adapted sons, and so on. Those who could afford to pay 270 yen as substitution fee could also avoid service. Therefore, the army during this initial period was far from being a national army in the true sense of the word, not only because so few served in it but also because of its weak financial foundation and, presumably, the absence of a need to enlist a great number of soldiers [KATŌ 1996: 20–23, 51–52, 65–67].

The conscription law itself became the subject of repeated revisions in 1875, 1879, 1883, and 1889, and the grounds for exemption were gradually narrowed. The substitution payment was also abolished in 1883. Thus the system developed

step by step to achieve the ideal: to make "every man a soldier," to construct a national army from all the able-bodied men of the nation.

Unlike in Europe, where "citizens" had the right to be armed as well as the duty to defend their countries and where national armies formed by conscription developed as the range of citizens expanded, in Japan for the majority of people military service was a completely new thing. The government, therefore, had to create a moral basis to ensure the loyalty of the soldiers. Otherwise, the government leadership was quite aware that the guns in the hands of soldiers would be pointed at the state.

It was in 1878 that the *gunjin kunkai*, "admonition to soldiers," was declared by Yamagata, who was then the minister of the army. It was designed as a basic guide to nurture the military spirit desirable for the state. Many believe that the *kunkai* was originally written by Nishi Amane. Two months before it was issued, a group of royal guards revolted in Tokyo (Takebashi Jiken). Also at this time the *jiyū minken* (freedom and civil rights) movement was emerging, so the immediate purpose of the *kunkai* was to protect soldiers from these harmful influences.

The three basic virtues emphasized in the *gunjin kunkai* are loyalty, courage, and obedience, described as a part of the old tradition of samurai that is to be inherited by soldiers. It declares, "The military soldiers of today are indeed samurai, although their status is not inherited." While as far as official duties are concerned there is to be equality in the army among the *kazoku* (aristocrats), *shizoku*, and *heimin* (commoners), the document stresses the holiness of the emperor, the need for absolute obedience to one's superior officer, and the ban on political commitments. The issues of the constitution and civil rights are particularly singled out as not to be discussed [YAMAGATA 1967; SHINOHARA 1983: 405-406]. Here are revived the ethics of samurai, who were criticized earlier in the *chōhei kokuyū* (1872) and formally abolished by the *haitō rei* (the sword abolition decree of 1876).

The spirit of *gunjin kunkai* was accomplished in 1882 by the *gunjin chokuyū*, given by the emperor to the soldiers. The contents of the five articles are basically the same as those of the *gunjin kunkai*: the virtues urged on soldiers are loyalty (*chūsetsu*), courtesy (*reigi*), prowess (*buyū*), and frugality (*shisso*). The first article also emphasizes that soldiers should not be misled by public opinion and should be detached from politics. The *chokuyū* differs from the *kunkai* in that in its preface the absolute power of the emperor as the commander-in-chief, above the government administration, is clearly stated and given historical legitimacy. At the time it was issued, the influence among soldiers of the *jiyū minken* movement was even stronger than before, and the army leadership felt an urgent need to strengthen the morale of officers and men. Later it became a rule that every soldier should memorize the *gunjin chokuyū* by heart; together with the Imperial Constitution (1899) and *kyōiku chokugo* (Imperial Decree on Education, 1890), it served as one of the major sources of state ideology until 1945.

The structure and principle of armies of modern nation-states is similar, and

almost universal. But the army of the Meiji government was more an army of state, created from above, than that of a nation [ŌHAMA 1978: 8]. Yet even though it was imposed from above and though there was, on the part of the people, considerable resistance to it in the beginning, the army was accepted by the nation, especially after its victories against China and Russia. Indeed, beyond mere acceptance, the very existence of the army, in both its institutional and ideological aspects, was internalized by the nation, whose plan was again designed and implemented by the state, as discussed below.

4. THE "GARRISON STATE": MILITARIZING THE NATION

In Meiji Japan, nation building and army building went hand in hand. An army was an essential means to create a nation. In a sense, a nation could be built through "militarization." What emerged as a result was a sort of "garrison state,"⁵⁾ based on "garrison nationalism," where strict discipline, obedience, and allegiance are the norms. Here, "militarization" refers not so much to military hardware as to military attitudes: how military behavior, ideology, and ethics, originally created and nurtured in the barracks, spread to the nation at large and was internalized. I believe that the notions of the militarizing nation and the garrison state are crucial to understanding the Meiji state.

For conscripts, most of whom were peasants from rural areas, life in the army was a completely new experience. Before joining the army, many of them had never worn Western clothes and put on shoes. The meals provided in the army barracks were also new to them. They had to learn a different way of walking and a different language. What was most significant was that the training of conscripts was aimed at standardizing behavior and teaching discipline. Since these two elements are prerequisites to creating a modern nation, I would argue that the conscription system and army itself are essential in nation building.⁶⁾ It is in this light that we can understand common sayings of the era: "Without being in the military service, he cannot be a man," and "Good soldiers are good subjects" [ŌTANI 1978: 30–31, 45–48; ŌHAMA 1978: 63].

The military way of discipline was not confined to the army barracks. It was copied in schools; in teachers' training colleges (*shihan gakkō*) especially, military education was considered important. In 1885 the Ministry of Education gave an

5) I borrow the term from Ōhama [1978: 18, 63]. I am also inspired by "garrison socialism," a term coined by John Markakis to describe the ideology of the Ethiopian socialist regime (*National and Class Conflict in the Horn of Africa*, Zed Books, London and New Jersey, Chaps 8, 9).

6) See, for instance, the argument by Fujitani. "The institution and practice of the conscription system, together with the army of which the system was a part, constituted the core of the modern polity in Japan. In many ways, during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, they changed daily lives and beliefs of ordinary people, and what was more, they often worked through bodies" [FUJITANI 1994a: 164].

order to the colleges to introduce military gymnastics (*heishiki taisō*) as a subject. This was not merely physical education but in fact a sort of military drill. Teachers were expected to become like soldiers, an ideology advocated by Mori Arinori, who was appointed minister of education in December 1885. The senior teachers' training college (*kōtō shihan gakkō*) in Tokyo carried this program to such an extreme that when the Colonel Yamakawa Hiroshi, a former samurai of the Aizu domain, was the principal, the students' life in the dormitories was regulated exactly like that of conscripts.⁷⁾ After the revision of the conscription law in 1889, graduates of the colleges, who had previously been exempt, were obliged to serve in the military for six weeks [FUKUCHI 1959: 212–219; KATŌ 1996: 84]. Primary school education in the Meiji period was also in the hands of these militarized teachers. It was believed that in a sense, the education of the nation was to be completed in the army; primary education was to be the first step toward that final goal [FUKUCHI 1959: 212].

As Yoshimi Shun'ya has argued, *undōkai* (sports day) at schools, which was invented and became popular during the late 1880s, played a major role in militarizing pupils. This event, advocated by Mori Arinori, was aimed at disciplining and training the bodies of pupils so that they would be physically and spiritually strong enough to constitute a desirable modern nation. Although it did have sports elements, *undōkai* was modeled on military drills and maneuvers [YOSHIMI 1994: 137–148].⁸⁾

Military morals became the backbone of education. They were taught in particular in two subjects: *shōka* (singing, songs) and *kokugo* (national language). Ancient and medieval warriors and nobles who were loyal to the emperor and brave were favorably featured. After the wars with China and Russia, war episodes and heroes were added to the curriculum [FUKUCHI 1959: 143–161, 235–244].⁹⁾ Textbooks were strictly controlled by the state.¹⁰⁾ In 1886 the government proclaimed that all textbooks used in primary schools must first be screened by the Ministry of Education. In 1904 the first textbooks written by the ministry (*kokutei kyōkasho*) began to be used. Military songs (*gunka*), songs of and about the army,

7) This treatment of dormitories like military barracks ended in 1895 [FUKUCHI 1959: 216–217].

8) There was more to *undōkai* than its military cast. During the later period of Meiji, it increasingly took on the features of a ceremonial celebration of the local community, which was in conflict with the original intention of the state [YOSHIMI 1994: 153–158].

9) When the ministry-made textbooks of *shōka* were introduced toward the end of the Meiji period, out of eighty songs taught in the primary grades three to six, twenty-eight were of a nationalistic-militaristic character [KARASAWA 1956: 326; FUKUCHI 1959: 153].

10) In the beginning of Meiji, the contents of textbooks were very modern, as most were translations from European texts. After 1880 Confucian ethics were revived; and when the ministry began screening the books, nationalist ideology gradually appeared. After the Russo-Japanese War, imperialist replaced nationalist ideology [KARASAWA 1984: 280–281].

became very popular during the Sino-Japanese War. They were widely sung not only by soldiers and ex-soldiers, but also by primary school pupils, older students, and people in general. They were also instrumental in the process of militarizing the nation [FUKUCHI 1959: 162–180].

During the Russo-Japanese War the army came to realize the importance of reservists in carrying out a total war. The Imperial Reservists Association (Teikoku Zaigō Gunjinkai), with a prince as its president, was organized in 1910 by the then minister of the army, Terauchi Masakata. The de facto planner of the association was said to be Colonel Tanaka Giichi, a rising figure in the army bureaucracy in the period after the Russo-Japanese War. The aim of the association was to create the “best link connecting the army and nation” [ŌTANI 1978: 30–31, 45–48]. An informal reservists association had already existed, and their members reached 4,300 in 1905 and 11,000 in 1906 [FUKUCHI 1959: 96]. The same idea appears to be behind the “one-year volunteer system” for the graduates of secondary and more advanced schools, which was created as a result of the 1889 revision of the conscription law. Its double aims were to create a new group of reservists’ officers as well as to maintain a link, through them, between the army and local communities [ŌHAMA 1978: 17; YOSHIDA 1989: 474–475]. The Imperial Reservists Association was also intended to protect reservists in particular, and the nation in general, from the emerging influences of liberalism and socialism. In 1914 there were 1.3 million members of the association, and its journal, *Sen’yū*, had a circulation of about 80,000. The huge organization was well suited for this purpose [FUKUCHI 1959: 98–105].

The establishment and spread of the image of the Meiji emperor as the “great field marshal” (*daigensui*), supreme commander-in-chief of both the imperial army and the imperial navy, was highly instrumental in the process of militarizing the nation. Prior to the Meiji Restoration, emperors had had nothing to do with military affairs for hundreds of years. The Meiji emperor himself studied humanities and arts when young, but was given no training in military studies and martial arts. In 1871 there was a reform in the imperial court, stage-managed by Iwakura Tomomi and Ōkubo Toshimichi: the female courtiers surrounding the emperor were replaced by male chamberlains who were samurais. Horse riding became part of the emperor’s daily routine, and he sometimes practiced sumo wrestling with one of the chamberlains [FUKUCHI 1959: 4–7]. Predominantly feminine and Japanese features of the emperor were being replaced with masculine and Western ones. The military uniform for the emperor, officially designed in 1872, was revised one year later. It was in March of that year that he had his hair cut and grew a mustache and beard. A photograph of him in military uniform taken in September was widely circulated and helped to construct his public image as emperor among the people. In April he himself had led army forces to Narashino in Chiba, encamped there, and commanded the great maneuvers. The emperor’s body on horseback in the military uniform of the great field marshal was also exposed to the people en route [FUKUCHI 1959: 8–9, 12; SASAKI 1994: 99].

Thus was invented a European style of emperor-field marshal, completely detached from the royal traditions of the pre-Meiji era.

It is commonly assumed that in the beginning of the Meiji era, the people had a rather vague image of the emperor; most had little sense of his legitimacy as the ruler of Japan. In this respect the *junkō* (imperial tour) played a very important role in creating and spreading images of the emperor. There were six major *junkō* between 1872 and 1885, and even such remote regions as Kyūshū, Tōhoku, and Hokkaidō were toured. On these occasions many people could actually see and feel the presence of the emperor [FUKUCHI 1959; SASAKI 1994; FUJITANI 1994b]. Except for the first *junkō*, when he wore civilian Western clothes [SASAKI 1994: 115], he was always in military uniform, surrounded by generals and officers; such staging was important in establishing the image of a military state with the emperor at the top. Another notable public means of image making was the military review by the emperor; these were held in Tokyo annually as well as periodically to commemorate important state occasions such as the promulgation of the Imperial Constitution (1889), the silver wedding anniversary of the emperor (1894), and the celebration of the victory in the Russo-Japanese War (1906). Those reviews were extremely impressive spectacles, with the power of state visually expressed in the form of an army. They were occasions on which the power was seen by the emperor, even as the emperor was seen by the participants and spectators. And both were seen by diplomats and foreign journalists. As the mass media were developing, the message of these state ceremonies with the emperor as the central figure was received by the nation at large [FUJITANI 1994b: 146–154].

5. NATION-STATE, EMPIRE, AND ARMY

While the Japanese army was in the process of being established as a national army, it had already started to become an imperial army that aimed at waging wars overseas. Significantly, this development was parallel with the process of state building that resulted in modern Japan; while the Japanese were trying to build a nation-state, they began to construct an empire. After the Seinan War (1877), the possibility of a major internal rebellion or uprising by armed groups diminished. Therefore, if the army was needed simply to defend and maintain domestic security, it should have been much smaller. Indeed a group of generals and senior officers, including Tani Takeki, favored this idea of a small army strictly for defense. They were, however, pushed to the side by those, led by Yamagata, who favored a big army that could undertake overseas expeditions. This split overlapped with that between those who preferred the French model and those who preferred the German model of armed forces [ŌE 1985: 43–53, 1987: 38–43; SHINOHARA 1983: 401–416].

Yamagata Aritomo was the driving force in changing the nature of the army to one suited for overseas expeditions. The two rebellions in Korea of 1882 and 1884 had led to a confrontation between Japan and China, and China was perceived as

the major threat to Japanese sovereignty. Yamagata's military views were clearly expressed in his famous *Gaikō seiryakuron* (Notes on diplomatic policies) of 1890. He argued that there were two fundamental "spheres" marking the independence of a state. They are the sphere of sovereignty and that of interest; the former designates the essential territories and the latter a sort of buffer zone to protect the former. The point at the time was that Korea was seen as within the sphere of interest, and thus a military intervention in Korea by Japan was alleged to be legitimate [YOSHIDA 1989: 457-461]. Yamagata's theory became a guiding strategic principle for imperialist expansion. As spheres demarcated by those lines expanded, so did the territories of the empire [PEATTIE 1996: 26-27, 80-81].

It is important to note that while the Japanese army was increasingly assuming the characteristics of an imperial army, it continued to exist as a national army, as is clearly shown by the geographical domains to which the conscription law was and was not applied. On Hokkaido, the law was first applied in 1889, but only to urban residents. It took nine more years for the law to take force on Hokkaidō as a whole. Many argue, however, that this gap was caused by the delay in establishing the necessary administrative apparatus, not by some perceived unworthiness in the people of Hokkaidō. It is worth noting that there was never any question about applying the conscription law to the Ainu [OGAWA 1993: 37]. This may suggest that the Ainu were considered more a part of the Japanese nation than were the Okinawans, Taiwanese, and Koreans. Okinawa had been formally an independent kingdom until 1872, though in reality it was under the Satsuma domain's rule; the conscription law was applied there not when it became a prefecture of Japan in 1879 but only in 1896. To Taiwan and Korea, which were annexed to the Japanese empire in 1895 and 1910 respectively, the conscription law was never applied until the very last stage of the Asia Pacific War. Soldiers were first recruited as volunteers; and from 1939 to 1945, a large number of Taiwanese and Koreans were forced into service by the National Commandeering Act of 1939. Thus, although they were subjects of the Japanese empire, they were not officially recognized by the state as sharing the same rights and duties as other Japanese. This sort of double standard in the application of laws is not limited only to conscription but holds in other areas as well, as Yamamuro Shin'ichi argues in this volume.

Therefore, although the Japanese army was essential for imperial rule and the expansion of territories, it did not develop as an imperial army but remained an army of the nation-state. In this regard, we find an interesting contrast between Japan and European nations. The British and French empires recruited native soldiers in overseas territories, and their forces were widely used throughout the empires. Of course, Britain and France, like Japan, did not treat the subjects in overseas territories, the colonized, as the equals of citizens at home, and the recruited natives could never be promoted to higher ranks. But the British and French had a more universalist attitude toward the army in particular and toward the subjects of empire in general. We might call the attitude economically rational, for it is clearly much cheaper to organize native forces than to deploy only soldiers

from home to every overseas territory. Nevertheless, I would argue that since universalism is one of the features of an empire and particularism that of a nation-state, the characteristics of the Japanese imperial army were closer to those of a nation-state's army; the comparison with European powers highlights this difference.

In this exploratory essay I have tried to show that to analyze the Japanese army is to analyze the Japanese nation-state and empire. Meiji Japan constructed a particular form of nation-state by militarizing the nation. That empire building started as soon as nation building took a definite shape is plainly reflected in the constitution of the army.

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