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Words and Pictures of Victory:

Japanese representations of the First Sino–Japanese War 1894-1895

Master's Thesis

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Tiivistelmä – Abstract <p>Ensimmäinen Kiinan-Japanin sota 1894-1895 oli Japanin ja Kiinan välinen kamppailu ennen kaikkea vaikutusvallasta Korean niemimaalla. Ymmärrettävästi sodasta keskusteltiin runsaasti sanomalehdissä, ja kumpikin osapuoli tuotti runsaasti kuvamateriaalia sotatapahtumista. Erittäin suosittu aihe sota oli japanilaisessa puupiirrostaiteessa, ja laajalle levinneet kuvat vaikuttivat japanilaisten näkemyksiin sodasta.</p> <p>Pro gradu-tutkielmassani perehdyn siihen, millaisia viestejä japanilaiset sanomalehtikirjoittajat ja puupiirrostaiteilijat halusivat välittää sellaisella sanastolla ja visuaalisella kielellä, jota lännessä kutsuttiin nationalismiksi. Tähän liittyy olennaisesti toiseuden käsite eli se, miten "toiset" (kiinalaiset, korealaiset ja eurooppalaiset) kuvattiin suhteessa "meihin" (japanilaisiin). Analysoin ja vertailen keskenään tekstejä ja kuvia jolloin selvitän, millaista symboliikkaa niissä esiintyi ja kuinka kuvat veivät pidemmälle kirjallisessa muodossa ilmaistut ajatukset.</p> <p>Sodan alkaessa Japani oli käynyt läpi Meiji-restauraatioksi kutsutun radikaalin modernisaatioprosessin, ja sotamenestystä käytettiin niin sanomalehdissä kuin puupiirroksissa välittämään viestiä nykyaikaisesta, sivistyneestä ja vahvasta Japanista. Yleinen narratiivi Japanissa oli, että Japani nousisi sodan myötä maailman suurvaltojen joukkoon ja ottaisi vastuulleen vähemmän onnekkaiden naapureidensa modernisoimisen. Japaniin verrattuna Kiina ja Korea kuvattiin barbaarisina ja kaoottisina, länsimaat taas ovelina ja itsekkäinä mutta samaan aikaan sivistyneinä ja voimakkaina, minkä vuoksi Japani halusi osoittaa olevansa niiden kanssa vähintään tasaveroinen.</p> <p>Puupiirrookset eivät tyypillisesti pyrkineet varta vasten esittämään sodan vastapuolta "pahana", mutta kuvien asetelmissa syntyi selkeä vertailu järjestäytyneiden, menestyvien ja nykyaikaisesti varustautuneiden japanilaisten ja kaoottisten, heikosti varusteltujen ja häviävien kiinalaisten välille. Sanomalehdissä esiintyi huomattavasti kärjistetympää ja aggressiivisempaa kielenkäyttöä kiinalaisista ja korealaisista puhuttaessa.</p>	
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1.1. Introduction

“Know ye, Our subjects: Our Imperial Ancestors have founded Our Empire on a basis broad and everlasting and have deeply and firmly implanted virtue; Our subjects ever united in loyalty and filial piety have from generation to generation illustrated the beauty thereof. – – always respect the Constitution and observe the laws; should emergency arise, offer yourselves courageously to the State; and thus guard and maintain the prosperity of Our Imperial Throne coeval with heaven and earth. So shall ye not only be Our good and faithful subjects, but render illustrious the best traditions of your forefathers. – –“

– A shortened version of the English translation of the Imperial Rescript on Education (1890), translated by Japan Ministry of Education.

Japanese nationalism is a very relevant topic today as the nations in East-Asia deal with their inflamed relations and strive to redefine themselves. Japan has experienced loss in the Second World War and enjoyed peace for over seventy years, but many key elements of its national identity remain similar to what they were in the late 19th century and nationalism seems to be on the rise for the government's part, just like elsewhere at the turn of the 2020s.

One visible sign of this is the Imperial Rescript on Education. It was given in 1890¹ and school children were expected to recite it until it was forbidden in official use in 1948. It has been allowed to be taught at schools again, a decision that has sparked discussion for and against.² This is rather interesting considering that the contents of the rescript are not highly militaristic themselves. According to it a Japanese person is required to willingly offer himself or herself to the state in case of emergency – ultimately war – but this is presented in the positive light of helping your fellow Japanese during troubled times. Sacrifices might be required but it is all for the common good. To be able to make that sacrifice and be a good citizen a person should educate and cultivate himself or herself as is dictated in the rescript, and treat their family and fellow citizens well. The goal is a harmonious society where people feel a sense of belonging together and work towards a common goal. The basis for this is in the past and the ancestors who founded the Japanese Empire, and the citizens should aspire to be like them. Regardless of its specific contents, the fact that the rescript does stir strong emotions today is a sign of the important role it played in the past in educating the

¹ Goto-Jones, 2008. 31.

² Mainichi Japan, 2017; O'Dwyer, 2017. Japan Times.

Japanese about what was expected of them as loyal citizens. But in what kind of conditions was the rescript originally created and tested in?

The First Sino-Japanese War 1894-1895 was a war fought between China and Japan over the control of Korea. The loss of China allowed rapidly modernized Japan to emerge as the new leading military and economic power in East Asia, and revealed China's weakness to the rest of the world.³ Japan had recently gone through a series of radical societal changes called Meiji restoration, named such because of the emperor Meiji who had been symbolically restored to power during the revolution in 1867-1868.⁴ As I will explain in more detail in chapter 2.2., during the Meiji era (1868–1912) society was thoroughly modernized: constitution, government, education land organization and more were all parts of it. Japanese nationalism was also actively constructed, and the war accelerated the process as the media and artists aspired to evoke nationalistic feelings of unity among the people.

In my master's thesis I study Japanese nationalism through expressions and discourses of the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895) using newspapers and woodblock prints published during the wartime. I study what kinds of forms Japanese nationalism took during this era and what was unique to it compared to European nationalism: "nationalism" itself is a very European concept so it should be noted that the Japanese did not necessarily understand and use it the same way as the Europeans saw it.

Thus, the main questions in this thesis are:

1. What messages did the Japanese writers and artists wish to convey with vocabulary and imagery that in the West was called nationalism?
2. How the "others" (the Chinese, the Koreans or the Europeans) were depicted in comparison to "us" (the Japanese)?
3. What kind of symbolism is present in the texts and pictures, and how the images take further the ideas expressed in texts?

Other interesting questions include the following: what was said to the Japanese and how was it explained to outsiders, and what are the differences regarding the key concepts in Japanese text and in English text? How was the war handled in different newspapers? What kinds of emotions did the commissioners of text and art want to awaken in the audience? It is crucial to make a difference between the intentions and motives of these people who created nationalistic productions. Intentions

³ Wright, 2001. 111.

⁴ Gordon, 2003. 61-62.

were likely bigger goals such as constructing a nation or a feeling of unity among the subjects of the emperor. Motives were more concrete, personal needs such as the very basic need to eat: for many artists it was their livelihood. That is why their creations were most likely affected by financial thinking: what kinds of pieces sold the best?

Nationalism has been researched from various points of views and there are multiple theories related to it. In their book *Nationalismit* (2004) Pakkasvirta and Saukkonen define nationalism as a way of thinking and talking as well as an ideology and guideline for political community, which divides humanity into peoples and Earth into nations and makes nationality a defining factor for a person's identity and actions.⁵ Out of the many theories on nationalism I have drawn most inspiration from those of Anthony D. Smith and Benedict Anderson.

In Eastern Europe and Asia, language and national culture are important in nationalism. In Japan there are no major cultural minorities, which is why it has been easier for Japan to turn its imperial identity into national.⁶ Smith states that Tokugawa-era Japan (17th to 19th centuries) is an excellent example of a pre-modern nation because it was a country closed to outsiders, where the middle class participated in culture, where a myth of a chosen people existed and where there were goals of reviving past memories and culture.⁷ As for the Japanese nation in the 19th century, the rescript on education, which was presented right at the beginning of this thesis, includes clear idea of a nation that has a foundation myth, long history and a sense of solidarity that includes being good to your fellow citizens and working towards a common goal of an ideal society: a nation that is worth a citizens life, should such sacrifice be required in a crisis.

According to Smith, modern national identities are based on older ethnic identities. Nations and national identities have existed already in pre-modern times, but nation was not the dominant form of human community until modernity. Smith calls his approach ethno-symbolism. It focuses on the subjective side of ethnic communities, nations and nationalism: how people themselves view these ideas, communities and their own membership in ethnic or national communities. Instead of just focusing on the elite an ethno-symbolist studies the mentalities of all the groups of society and how they interact with the elite. Furthermore, an ethno-symbolist aims to find out people's collective cultural identities by looking at their whole history.⁸

⁵ Pakkasvirta & Saukkonen, 2004. 14-15.

⁶ Pakkasvirta ja Saukkonen, 2004. 65-66.

⁷ Pakkasvirta ja Saukkonen, 2004. 59-60.

⁸ Smith, 1999. 8-14; Pakkasvirta & Saukkonen, 2004. 54-55.

Smith states that an ethnic community is a named human society that is linked to a specific home country and has a myth of a common origin, common memories, one or several common cultural traits and mutual solidarity at least within the elite of the group. The most important factors are the myths that link people together, especially the myths of origin and history. The connection to a geographical area does not need to be physical: for example majority of Armenians and Jews live outside their mythic homeland. What is important is that the group believes people belonging to it have a common origin and history regardless of whether that is true or not. Mutual solidarity means that the group is willing to defend itself against threats coming from the outside. War awakens ethnic emotions and nationalistic awareness and provides myths and memories for future generations.⁹

As conceptual pairs “nation” and “ethnic society”, and “national identity” and “ethnic identity” are very close to each other, but essentially have different meanings. Definitions of national are not as broad as definitions of ethnic. Essential for national identity are historical homeland, shared myths and historical memories, shared culture, economy and equal rights and responsibilities for the members of the group. While in a nation its citizens must be equal with each other, in an ethnic society there may be significant differences between societal groups. While an ethnic group's connection to its homeland may exist in myths only, a nation must control its area.¹⁰

Smith sees nationalism as an ideological movement which aims to achieve and preserve the autonomy, unity and identity of a group of people that sees itself as an actual or potential nation. Just like Anderson and Gellner, Smith considers the rise of nationalism to be connected to the decline of the power held by major religions. However Smith presses that mythical thinking continues today: nationalism resembles a secular version of earlier religious myths of being chosen. Therefore, according to Smith nationalism could be viewed not only as a political ideology, but also as a form of culture and even religion. Traditional religion has survived the best in the countries where it has allied with nationalism. Religion plays a spiritual and societal role: holy texts, ceremonies and festivals separate the group from other groups.¹¹

Pakkasvirta and Saukkonen remind that Smith's claim of nationalism as a religion is based on Émile Durkheim's narrow and functional view on religion as a phenomena that holds a society of people together. Pakkasvirta and Saukkonen note that deep personal feeling of encountering another reality and yearning for immortality are also essential parts of religion. This makes the immortality offered

⁹ Smith, 1999. 12-16, 83-84, 153-154; Pakkasvirta & Saukkonen, 2004. 55-56.

¹⁰ Smith, 1999. 126-128; Pakkasvirta ja Saukkonen, 2004. 58-59.

¹¹ Smith, 1999. 18-19, 61-62; Pakkasvirta ja Saukkonen, 2004. 57, 60-62.

by nationalism (immortality as a part of a continuity of people of a nation) somewhat hollow in comparison to what people feel they gain from traditional religion.¹² In any case, religion and nationalism have a lot to do with each other, even in seemingly very secularist nations.¹³

Anderson's key theme is the idea of imagined communities. A community is imagined because even the members (citizens) of the smallest nations cannot know majority of the nation's residents and will never meet them or hear of them, yet in every citizen's mind an idea of their shared connection exists. A nation is defined by limits, imagined sovereignty and that the nation is imagined as a community. A nation is limited because even the largest nation has borders. Those borders may be flexible but they always exist: a nation never consists of the whole of humanity. Borders separate a nation from other nations.¹⁴

Nation is also limited in the sense that it differs from the traditions that define “real human communities”, the communities where members meet each other face to face and know each other. Nationality therefore is not a natural part of a person's familiar surroundings (such as home village) but instead somehow produced, made up or imagined. Finally, a nation is imagined as a community where majority of its members recognizes the responsibilities of their own and those of the others. In most extreme situations this is brotherhood, sisterhood and nationality which makes a person sacrifice even his or her life for the sake of the nation and its values.¹⁵

Anderson uses an expression “community in anonymity” which helps to understand what is meant by saying that a community is imagined. When a nation's abstract is imagined – which means that a sense of unity and belonging together is born and strengthened among people even if they don't know each other personally – the imagined can become “real”, concrete, leading to the birth of a nation or nation state.¹⁶ This kind of community was on the rise because of the 19th century print-capitalism and changes in education system that created a suitable environment for nationalism. The temporal elements regarding communities have remained relatively unchanged for the last 200 years. Our view of the world is based on quickly expanding media.¹⁷ So Anderson sees nationalism as the construction of world and world view as a part of modernization process. Nation is an imagined community. Nationalism, born in the era of mass media, is essentially a “discourse package” of new ways of

¹² Pakkasvirta ja Saukkonen, 2004. 62.

¹³ Ihalainen, 2006. 175-176.

¹⁴ Anderson, 2006. 5-7; Pakkasvirta ja Saukkonen, 2004. 76-77.

¹⁵ Anderson, 2006. 5-7; Pakkasvirta ja Saukkonen, 2004. 76-77.

¹⁶ Anderson, 2006. 7; Pakkasvirta ja Saukkonen, 2004. 78-79

¹⁷ Anderson, 2006. 40-46; Pakkasvirta ja Saukkonen, 2004. 79-82.

speech or the “recipe” of political community.¹⁸

In this work, I approach nationalism as a phenomenon of the 19th century which I attempt to understand by reconstructing how this phenomenon was visible in Japanese context. The contemporary concept of the Japanese nation is reconstructed on the basis of the primary sources. As Shillony notes, in Meiji Japan the concept of *kokutai*, national polity, was adopted as the central ideology for the state. *Kokutai* viewed Japan as a family nation with the emperor as its head. The goal of the Meiji leaders was to achieve national integrity by propagating state Shintoism and emperor veneration.¹⁹ A major part of the idea was also *Bushidō*. It was originally a feudal value emphasising loyalty and self-sacrifice. In Meiji era it was transformed into national psyche through education and exhortation.²⁰ Something that had been exclusive to the ruling warrior class was therefore turned into an idea uniting all the Japanese. I will explain *kokutai* in more detail in chapter 2.1. (page 24).

In this thesis “West” and “Western” are used as a synonym for Europe and European (including Russia), or less often for The United States and American, meaning the area of Western cultural influence in contrast to the East Asian culture that Japan was part of. So when it is stated that something is of “Western influence” that means that it was adopted to Japan from Europe or The United States and not for example from China, with whom Japan had had a lot of cultural exchange over the course of time.

In general nationalism refers to a set of beliefs about a nation.²¹ Therefore it answers the question ”how do this nation's people view their nation?” It should be noted that in any nation there can be differing and competing beliefs about the nation's character, which manifests in political differences.²² For some their nation stands for liberty while the others are willing to give up liberties in exchange for security.²³ As we will soon see such political differences were visible in Japan during its Meiji Restoration and the events preceding it as many wanted a revolution while some would have liked to stick with old systems they considered safe and good.

As Lincicome points out, research on nationalism ascribes a pivotal role to schools in creating the “imagined community” through the formation and dissemination of a common national identity and

¹⁸ Pakkasvirta ja Saukkonen, 2004. 74.

¹⁹ Shillony, 2008. 5.

²⁰ Shillony, 2008. 4.

²¹ Grosby, 2005. 5.

²² Grosby, 2005. 5.

²³ Grosby, 2005. 5.

a shared national consciousness where none existed before. Japan is usually given as an excellent example of the described process. In his work Lincicome emphasizes that the problem with a lot of research of Japanese nationalism is that it seems to follow a pattern where concepts such as national identity or state are treated as permanent and non-changing. In reality such ideas are constantly evolving and competing understandings of a concept exist.²⁴ So while I study the state-approved Meiji-era nationalism like others have before, I reconstruct and analyse the meanings of the nation on the basis of primary sources and emphasize that this form of nationalism was not the only one present and it certainly did not remain static. Instead it changed through time and in its own part affected later forms of nationalism that faced their own challenges in their time. In my work I will focus on the challenge that was Japan's first modern war.

It is necessary to make the distinction between nationalism and national identity. Nationalism is an ideology. Identity, as defined by Kalle Kallio, is a concept that unites a person's societal, cultural, economic and political environment into one subjective totality.²⁵ Identity is not only dependent on these conditions but also constantly changing and actively being adjusted. There are multiple identities and national identity is one of them. People largely form their identity based on what they are not, which is why (national) identity is also defined in comparison to others.²⁶ In this context that other is the Chinese, the Koreans or the Westerners. In my visual material I have lots of pictures depicting brave Japanese soldiers in the focus driving away and killing the Chinese who can often be seen escaping, dying and losing, usually placed further in the picture, barely even seen as they are partly covered in smoke or the chaos of the battle. Mizuno Toshikata's picture depicting the battle of Seonghwan is an excellent example of this.²⁷

The modern Japanese nationalism took shape in great part as a reaction to growing Western influence and unequal trade treaties from early 1800's to 1860's. Being pressured by foreigners gave new flame to pre-existing national pride and sovereignty, encouraging the members of the warrior class to embrace a concept of Japan as a single nation to be governed and protected as such, instead of focusing on just a single domain of one's own.²⁸ In other words, dealing with *others* definitely was a major impact in defining *us*.

²⁴ Lincicome, 1999. 1-4.

²⁵ Kallio, 2007. 116.

²⁶ Kallio, 2007. 116.

²⁷ "Hurrah! Hurrah! For the Great Japanese Empire! Great Victory for Our Troops in the Assault on Seonghwan" Created in 1894 by Mizuno Toshikata (See image on page 10).

²⁸ Gordon, 2003. 50, 62

There were pre-modern national identities which in their own parts contributed to the modern nationalism. However as Gordon notes, those identities weren't as shared and similar among the Japanese as one might imagine when looking at Japan today. Firstly, the geography poses its challenges to the matter: Japan's islands are compact but mountains, forests and a lack of long, suitable rivers hindered transportation and communication in pre-modern times, providing challenges to centralized government. Local authorities had a lot of power and autonomy, even under the Tokugawa era which is known for its political peace and order.²⁹ On another note, geographic and climatic conditions were suitable for large number of people to inhabit the islands of Japan. The sea protected the country from foreign invaders and allowed Japan time to take in cultural influences at its own pace. At the same time mountains and forests ensured that local communities retained their own cultures even to these days. Due to these main reasons Japanese culture evolved to be rather unique compared to others.³⁰

Because of these reasons a commoner's identity was likely more based on his or her home region rather than a grander idea of Japan as a united nation. I will go into more detail about the pre-existing national identities in chapter 2.1. (page 24). Emperor played a major part in Japanese nationalism, and his role was important through the history. I will discuss emperor as a national symbol in more detail in chapter 2.3. (page 31), but basically the emperor has been a very powerful cultural and religious symbol, linked to many legends and myths.

I use two kinds of primary sources: newspapers of the era and traditional woodblock prints, *ukiyo-e*, made of the war. This way I have sources that are in format that was originally and more traditionally a Western format, and sources that are something that is national, a style of narrating that originated from Japan itself and is a very Japanese way of expression.

The *ukiyo-e* were made very quickly after the events they depicted, having been published usually within a month of the battle or other event that had inspired in their creation. The leading *ukiyo-e* artists of the time were Kobayashi Kiyochika (1847-1915), Ogata Gekkō (1859-1920) and Mizuno Toshikata (1866-1908). They led the woodblock-boom caused by the war and created many popular pieces.³¹ Because of their major role in creating the war prints I have focused on their works to make the analysis and comparison more fruitful and focused. My selection of images is further limited by what the British Library has in its collections, which I explain further in 1.4. Sources: Woodblock

²⁹ Gordon, 2003. 2.

³⁰ Fält, 2002. 9.

³¹ Merrit, 1990. 4.

prints (page 14). I bring Chinese or even European works up as comparison where possible.

To shortly introduce the newspaper sources, I have examined the *Japan Weekly Mail*, which was an English-language paper published in Japan during the war. Its goal was to report on the recent political events in Japan without taking a stance of its own: its writers were more like observers, relaying the information to their readers. As for how many of the Japanese themselves were able to participate in the political discussion, the literacy rates can offer some insight. Like Gordon notes in 1872 it became compulsory for all children to attend school for at least four years. The idea was that if the common folk was educated, they would find their own means to serve the state.³² Even before that the literacy rate in Japan was relatively high by international standards of the time. In the 18th century around 45% of men and 15% of women in Japan could read.³³ This suggests that an increasing percentage of the Japanese in the late 19th century had at least the basic skills required to understand written word.

Nationalistic ideas were expressed and conveyed both through textual and visual methods and these medias communicated with each other, both telling of similar events or themes either by themselves or together: for example a newspaper could include both an article and a picture of the subject, and often pictures included text that clearly underlined its message to the viewer. Through texts I reconstruct the political context and discussions of the time. Then I compare them to pictures and find out to which extent the different medias discussed same subjects using similar language and symbolism, and what was different between them.

An excellent example of the use of both visual and textual means is the same print I already mentioned, the battle of Seonghwan depicted by Mizuno Toshikata. The text on the right of the picture says: *Hurrah! Hurrah! For the Great Japanese Empire! Great Victory for Our Troops in the Assault on Seonghwan*³⁴. Words inform the viewer that the Japanese army has won a major victory in the war. The picture shows Japanese soldiers shooting at the Chinese who are located lower at the walls, relatively far away from the focus of the picture and cloaked in the smoke from the gunfire, and therefore barely seen but clearly losing ground. The Japanese soldiers are in the focus of the image, accompanied by their war flag Rising Sun. Together the text and picture create an image of the event for the viewer who was not there in person but can this way feel like they were a part of it. The combination of textual and visual message is likely to encourage the viewer rejoice because of the victory.

³² Gordon, 2006. 67.

³³ Rönqvist, 2004. 47-49.

³⁴ "Hurrah! Hurrah! For the Great Japanese Empire! Great Victory for Our Troops in the Assault on Seonghwan" Created in 1894 by Mizuno Toshikata see image on page 10.



"Hurrah! Hurrah! For the Great Japanese Empire! Great Victory for Our Troops in the Assault on Seonghwan" by Mizuno Toshikata in 1894.

My key focus will be on the words and concepts such as "emperor", "nation", "Japan", "honour" and "hero". Comparing Japanese and English texts can reveal differences between concepts when they are translated into other languages. For example the word "emperor" can have different meanings to English-speaking people than it has for the Japanese. In Japan the emperor is called *Tennō* (天皇) which means "heavenly sovereign". That title points to the fact that according to Japanese myths the emperors of Japan are direct descendants of the sun goddess Amaterasu³⁵. Following Japan's loss at the Second World War Emperor Hirohito had to officially reject the claim of him being a divine incarnation.³⁶ Despite this the word for the emperor is still the same and carries its original etymology.

Since the First Sino-Japanese War is the key event in my research I will also have a look on how the Chinese are presented by the Japanese, in other words how the "others" were used to define "us". Were the Chinese seen as something clearly lower, something to be conquered and ruled, or did the Japanese consider that the Chinese would still have something that the Japanese could learn from? As Gordon reminds, Japan had adopted lots of cultural concepts from China over the time but had always been reluctant to participate in the Chinese tributary system, where the emissaries of neighbouring countries were expected to regularly bow down to the Chinese emperor and offer him tribute in exchange for protection and lucrative trade possibilities. Thanks to the ocean between Japan

³⁵ Shillony, 2008. 1-2.

³⁶ Fält, 2002. 148-149; Vesterinen, 2012. 71.

and China, the former was rather successful in avoiding the tributary system. In the nineteenth century Japan quickly adopted Western system of diplomacy and international relations, which it then used to shift the power balance in its favour.³⁷

1.2. State of Research

Judith Fröhlich has written on various themes in history of Japan, and her article "Pictures of the Sino-Japanese War 1894-1895" (2014) is an important point of reference for my work as it discusses the images constructed during and depicting the war. Fröhlich has studied both Japanese and Chinese visual material and has found lots of similarities in them. She argues that both participants used Western-inspired iconography in their propaganda, and that Japan was victorious not only in the actual war but also in the visual front, adopting more of the discourses that were important in the West. Fröhlich pays attention on concrete Western things that can be seen in the pictures, such as military uniforms, weapons, hairstyles et cetera. The Western things present were both something that united the participants of the war but also created difference between them in what and how much they adopted of the ideas, technologies.

Mari Ichimura has studied pictures of the First Sino-Japanese War from several angles in dissertation *日清戦争期における戦争表象: 印刷媒体に表現されたイメージについて Nisshinsensō-ki ni okeru sensō hyōshō: Insatsu baitai ni hyōgen sa reta imēji ni tsuite* (2016). Woodblock prints, newspaper illustrations and photographs are all included and analysed. The main question is how images influenced views about the war.³⁸ Ichimura has devoted a whole chapter to Kobayashi Kiyochika, who is also one of the artists I have chosen to study in this thesis. Ichimura notes that Kobayashi produced more pieces about the war than other artists, and his works have also been among the most appreciated.³⁹

Ichimura's visual material has been vaster than mine, and on many instances we have analysed the same pictures. This has allowed for more specific discourse between our works. Ichimura and Fröhlich are with whom I discuss the most as we have similar questions and materials, but each of us have our own combinations of sources and a different angle from which we approach the subject. The fact that Fröhlich has studied the matter from both Japanese and Chinese points of view gives valuable insight on what kind of comparison can be done between them. I focus more on Japan, but since

³⁷ Gordon, 2003. 4.

³⁸ Ichimura, 2016. 1-5.

³⁹ Ichimura, 2016. 3, 160-174.

countries build their identity also in comparison to others (especially their enemies), considering Chinese propaganda as well is very useful in re-constructing Japanese discourses. I will build on Fröhlich and Ichimura's work a lot but also give new examples and insights on the matter, focusing on how the borrowed Western ideas were made a part of Japanese identity. My focus will not be as much on the concrete Western objects in the pictures, but rather more abstract ideas and constructs.

Helen Merrit's book *Modern Japanese Woodblock Prints: The Early Years* (1990) is an important source of inspiration for me regarding pictures. Traditional prints were very popular during the war and there are lots of images depicting war events, but when peace came many artists found themselves with no work. Merrit focuses mostly on the renaissance of woodblock prints in early 20th century but discusses earlier developments as well, giving me necessary background information on matters such as what was the status of this art during the war, how the artists worked and with what kind of motives, and how Western influence was present in this traditional way of telling.

As for explaining necessary war events themselves, the internet exhibit by Japan Center for Asian Historical Records (JACAR) & British Library has been very useful. I have selected the pictures I analyse from this same exhibit as well. The collection of First Sino-Japanese War includes 179 prints made by the Japanese as well as 56 prints produced in China, making it one of the largest collections of the war.⁴⁰ In addition to pictures the exhibit includes other documents and background information which gives the material a proper context. Therefore this exhibit is a major source for me for both background information and original sources alongside the newspapers.

It should be noted that sources have been selected in a few steps along the way. The pictures are limited to what events were depicted by artists, which pieces have survived to this day and made it to the collections of the British Library and then into the web exhibit. I have further chosen to limit my material to three specific artists who were among the most popular in their time, as I will explain in more detail in chapter 1.4. For newspapers the writers of the *Weekly Mail* have first read and selected articles from Japanese papers and then wrote their own summary of the recent political discussion. As the *Weekly Mail* did not have an open political agenda to advance in Japan, its writers likely attempted to give their readers a relatively neutral account of the war events to best serve their interests.

Japanese nationalism has been discussed quite a lot in research, mostly focusing on the Second World

⁴⁰ British Library & JACAR. jacar.go.jp, Introduction.

War. Mark E. Lincicome studies in the article "Nationalism, Imperialism, and the International Education Movement in Early Twentieth-Century Japan" (1999) what was the education system's role in constructing and spreading nationalism. As mentioned before Lincicome notes that the problem with many studies on Japanese nationalism is that their approach assumes that nationalism, state, education and the relationships between these are static and unchanging. Lincicome sees how these definitions and relationships developed over the time. Lincicome's article focuses on an international school of nationalism in Japan in 1920-1940's. He studies how this way of thinking challenged the traditional, state-controlled nationalism by approaching Japanese expansion through Asianism; an idea that Japan's influence would help other countries, a kind of humanitarian attitude instead of militaristic one. In the end this school failed because of state pressure and the fact that these international thinkers did not oppose many of the core components of mainstream nationalism, such as the central role of the Emperor. Lincicome concludes that still this movement is worth investigating because it offers valuable insight on Japanese society of the time and reminds us that the state nationalism was not the only way of defining Japanese identity.⁴¹

A modern history of Japan: From Tokugawa Times to the Present (2003) by Andrew Gordon is useful for explaining backgrounds, religion and political views of 19th century Japan. The articles by Olavi K. Fält and Anna Tuovinen (published in 2002 in book *Japanin kulttuuri*) have also been very useful in terms of Japanese culture and arts. A handy source for the First Sino-Japanese War itself is *The History of China* (2001) by David Curtis Wright. Even though its main purpose is to be a general view on the history of China, its short passage on the First Sino-Japanese War is one of the most informative explanations of the event I have come across.

To conclude, the interest in the First Sino-Japanese war seems to have been in rise in the last few years and various themes of it have been researched, including war indemnity, international politics and nationalism. Still the amount of research especially available in English is quite low, which gives lots of room and need for further study. Japanese nationalism has interested researchers a lot, but there too focus has most often been in the Second World War and beyond. Studying early steps of Japanese nationalistic ideas can be fruitful and offer us new insight on how Japanese nationalism was constructed and by whom, how it was spread and what kinds of narratives it adopted.

⁴¹ Lincicome, 1999. 1-20.

1.3. Sources: newspapers

Japan Weekly Mail (weekly edition of *Japan Daily Mail*) was an English-language newspaper published in Yokohama by A.H. Blackwell. In 1897 it merged with the newly founded Japan Times, a process that would eventually lead to the Japan Times of today. Due to this these days Japan Times claims its status as the oldest English-language Japanese newspaper.⁴²

Each volume of the *Weekly Mail* had a section titled “Vernacular Press this Week”, where its writers summarized what kind of stances on recent political issues Japanese newspapers had taken. This has been extremely valuable in reconstructing political discourses of the time and in seeing how the writers of the *Weekly Mail* understood the political atmosphere of Japan and relayed that information to English-reading audience. It should be noted that reception and translation of the Japanese discussion took place in Japan itself: The *Weekly Mail* had reporters who were fluent in Japanese and could follow the vernacular press well. Then they translated and relayed that information to their audience, sometimes also commenting on the matters. The writers have selected which newspapers to comment and what articles to bring up. While they do not take an active stance in the Japanese everyday politics, they have their motivations for what to tell to their own audience.

1.4. Sources: Woodblock prints

In addition to the newspapers my other main source are traditional woodblock prints, *ukiyo-e*, depicting the war. The pictures I analyse all belong to the collection of the British Library. This collection of First Sino-Japanese War includes 179 prints made by the Japanese as well as 56 prints produced in China, making it one of the largest collections of the said event.⁴³ The British Museum acquired these pictures in several consignments very soon after the conflict in 1895. The British Museum considered them an important visual record of the event. When the British Library was founded on 1973 the collection was transferred there. The Library was glad to organize an exhibit together with Japan Center for Asian Historical Records many years later, making the material more easily accessible to the public all around the world.⁴⁴

The Japanese woodblock prints are a very interesting and fruitful source in many kinds of researches,

⁴² Archive.org: Japan Daily Mail; The Japan Times Corporate Profile, Company History.

⁴³ British Library & JACAR. jacar.go.jp, Introduction.

⁴⁴ Todd Hamish, lead curator of Japanese and Korean Studies & Asian and African Studies, The British Library. jacar.go.jp, message from the British Museum on Introduction of the exhibit; British Library & JACAR, jacar.go.jp, Gallery.

in my case in studying Japanese nationalism. *Ukiyo-e* were popular among people during the Edo-period (17th-19th centuries) and they had various themes such as landscapes, popular actors and sumo-wrestlers, erotica and historical events. Although modern printing technologies and photographs widely replaced the use *ukiyo-e* in the newspapers and books in the 19th century, many publishers still continued to commission woodblocks for supplements in the newspapers and for other illustrations because multicoloured woodblock prints were still considered the best way of affecting a viewer's emotions.⁴⁵ *Ukiyo-e* was also a good method for depicting rain, night, air, underwater or war scenes that early photography could not capture as well.⁴⁶

The First Sino-Japanese War was a very popular subject and many woodblock prints were created of the dramatized war events, and they sold well: numerous⁴⁷ prints were made and out of those the most popular prints sold over 100 000 copies each. After the fervour for the war ended the demand for battle pictures decreased and a worse time for many *ukiyo-e*-artists and craftsmen began as they could not support themselves with their art anymore.⁴⁸ The importance of art as a method of serving the nation's purposes was recognized by contemporaries. For example on February 16th the Weekly Mail had a look into an article published in The *Mainichi*. The *Mainichi* praised Count Kamei, who had gone with the army to Port Arthur as photographer. The paper advised Japanese artists to keep creating pieces of the war, saying that Japan would benefit greatly from the productions of their pencils and brushes.⁴⁹

Ukiyo-e was originally seen as entertainment of lower classes and not considered real art in the same way as calligraphy, painting or poetry for example. Technique for woodblock printing arrived in Japan from China in the 10th century. The golden era of *ukiyo-e* was in Edo era when many of the most famous pieces were created. Creation of a print began from publisher who ordered the piece, and the artist who painted an ink painting where the lines and details were drawn strong and the areas of different colours clearly divided. That made it easier for the woodcarver to copy the image by carving on a cherry woodblock. The most complex details and patterns required a skilled artisan. The master of the woodcarvers had the right to fix the work of others and even sign the finished work. Despite that the person who had made the original painting was the artist to whose name the finished piece

⁴⁵ Merrit, 1990. 4.

⁴⁶ Fröhlich, 2014. 220.

⁴⁷ Merrit (1990, 4) says that the number of images was as high as 3000, but Fröhlich estimates that the number was significantly lower, 150-300 different prints in total. (Fröhlich, 2014.) Ichimura (2016, 2) mentions that around 300 prints were made. Considering that the collection of British Library has 179 prints an estimate of 150 would be too low, while 300 might be close to the truth. Whether the number is closer to 3000 or 300 each researcher agrees that the amount of different prints was high, especially considering the length of the conflict.

⁴⁸ Merrit, 1990. 4.

⁴⁹ Japan Weekly Mail, February 16th, 1895.

was credited.⁵⁰ So when referring to artist in this thesis the person in question is the painter. Koivunen points out that when researching illustrations it is important to be familiar with the whole creation process and to know who did what and why, and what followed from these decisions.⁵¹

As technology and the methods developed it became possible to add more colours and shine to the pieces. *Ukiyo-e* became popular product that was usually sold one piece at a time or in various series or as albums. It was also possible to create the piece for example in a shape that allowed it to be attached to a fan. One leaf was usually sized 38x 25 cm.⁵²

In 19th century woodblock prints were relevant in Europe as well because they formed the best method for producing printable images. The practitioners of this craft however were not regarded very highly. The works were usually signed by the main carver or the workshop in general.⁵³ It is interesting to compare a similar craft in Japan and in Europe, and find differences not only in technique but also in appreciation and who was credited for the finished piece. While that is not the main point of this thesis it is a valuable piece of information when analysing the *ukiyo-e* pictures and considering if the artists had been influenced by foreign art and ideas.

The prints resemble European war pictures of the late 19th century: it is likely Japanese artists used European photos and images as reference. Reference material available played an important role because few artists ever witnessed battles themselves, so they needed models for composition, specific objects such as warships and so on. An interesting notion is that because Japanese prints were easily available in China, Chinese artists used them when creating their works.⁵⁴

Prints created of the war tell from their part what the people who commissioned and published these pictures wanted people to see and think about the war. An interesting notion that I will discuss later is that while these prints were a traditional, native way of narration the Japanese relied much on Western-inspired iconography as argued by Judith Fröhlich in her article "Pictures of the Sino-Japanese War 1894-1895".⁵⁵ While all cultures have varying degrees of interaction with each other the Japanese culture has been well-known for borrowing from other cultures and editing the loaned aspect into a Japanese version of it. Good examples of this would be how Japanese aristocratic culture

⁵⁰ Tuovinen, 2002. 257-258.

⁵¹ Koivunen, 2006. 28-29.

⁵² Tuovinen, 2002. 259.

⁵³ Koivunen, 2006. 27, 230.

⁵⁴ Fröhlich, 2014. 225-227.

⁵⁵ Fröhlich, 2014. 215.

formed in Heian-period 794-1185 utilizing a lot of influences from China.⁵⁶

The initial purpose of the prints was to inform the Japanese about the war events and affect the views on the war. As Japan kept gaining victories the focus shifted towards international audiences as well, which is visible for in the bilingual Japanese-English titles that newspapers began using for the prints. The modernization efforts and negotiations with foreign powers were also a subject for art themselves: while intellectuals debated the advantages and disadvantages of a new idea, less educated people were fascinated by pictures depicting trains, steamships, scientific innovations, foreign customs and so on.⁵⁷ Just like sketches made by explorers allowed European people to experience Africa⁵⁸, war prints made it in a way possible for the Japanese to witness and be part of the war events without being actually present.

The Meiji-government had imposed censorship laws but as the war progressed in Japan's favour, the rules were loosened. Also many artists had decided to dedicate their work to patriotic pictures that lacked criticism of the government, so the message already was quite pleasing from the government's point of view: there was no reason to take tighter control of the print media since it already functioned in a way that supported Japanese propaganda.⁵⁹

An interesting question is whether the artists moved onto propagandist war imagery out of their own nationalistic feelings or simply because of their income, and the fact that it was practical to create something the state did not censor. For example in Mizuno Toshikata's production the masculine, brightly coloured and action-filled warprints are an exception compared to what he did before and after war: mainly serene scenes of beautiful women in traditional Japanese clothing participating in everyday activities and traditional Japanese arts such as tea ceremony.⁶⁰ Of course these feminine peace-time pictures could be considered from nationalistic point of view as well because they too paint an image of what the artist sees as valuable and worth depicting in Japanese culture. It would be interesting to study and compare these prints to war pictures in detail.

Pictures tell how the artists represented Japan. Researching images can be very fruitful and Burke encourages historians to study more visual material, but even so there are risks involved.⁶¹ Koivunen

⁵⁶ Burbank, Kazuko, Mansfield & Swinnerton, 2008. 21-27.

⁵⁷ Fröhlich, 2014. 222-223.

⁵⁸ Koivunen, 2006. 149.

⁵⁹ Fröhlich, 2014. 224.

⁶⁰ Mizuno Toshikata's production can be viewed in Ukiyo-e.org.

⁶¹ Burke, 2011. 1-14.

compares researching illustrations to a large puzzle that has pieces missing and some pieces that fit incorrectly. The most relevant information is not always available, but a comprehensible image can still be constructed.⁶² As Burke says, pictures are mute witnesses and it is not easy to translate their message into words. Images may have had an intended message of their own but historians often ignore this and read between the lines, therefore making the artist teach us something they did not know they were telling.⁶³ My job is to reconstruct the meanings given by the artists using contextualisation. This means that when analysing the images I consider matters such as the events that had taken place, the politics of the government and so on.

Just like with all kinds of sources it is important to be aware of their weaknesses. While source criticism of written documents has been well discussed and developed, similar tactic considering images remains underdeveloped. Just like with texts it is important to pay attention to how soon after the depicted event the image was created and what are its purposes as a picture.⁶⁴ In my material the prints depicting the war events were made rather quickly after the events themselves, and were usually published at tops a few weeks later than the events they depicted. As Fröhlich reminds, artists received the news via telegram and some of them even tried to predict events to produce a picture as fast as possible.⁶⁵ Because they were drawn images instead of photographs, they had that much clearer purpose in conveying a specific meaning to the viewer.

Sight is dominant yet also highly selective method of perception.⁶⁶ Kuusamo emphasizes that when we look at a picture we see it through the lenses provided to us by the culture we were brought up in, and our analysis of the image is influenced greatly by these factors. It's impossible to see innocently as we are always burdened by our cultural expectations and we place meanings in pictures before we even realize it.⁶⁷ Koivunen adds that age, gender, personal experiences, expectations, beliefs, hopes and desires affect analysing a visual image as well. Already existing visual presentations have an impact on our expectations. Artists are not immune either: when depicting something previously unknown it is impossible to be truly neutral because the visual language needed does not exist yet.⁶⁸

I am analysing these pictures as a foreigner to the time and culture they were produced in – although so are the Japanese people of today even though there are surely cultural matters that are more obvious

⁶² Koivunen, 2006. 28-29.

⁶³ Burke, 2011. 14.

⁶⁴ Burke, 2011. 14-16.

⁶⁵ Fröhlich, 2014. 227.

⁶⁶ Koivunen, 2006. 35-36.

⁶⁷ Kuusamo, 1990. 15-16.

⁶⁸ Koivunen, 2006. 20, 35-36.

to them than what they are to me, as well as better understanding of the language even though it has evolved during the years as well. I must be aware of the meanings I might give to the material based on my pre-existing knowledge and values, and focus on studying how the Japanese people of late 19th century saw those images; what they felt when they looked at those pictures?

Even with their limitations images can be seen as reliable sources on perception provided they are researched in their context as a whole and not separated from a larger series if they belong to one. Some even prefer research of pictures over text since words too can be deceptive.⁶⁹ In a way we are here at the very basis of historical research, considering the intentions and meanings of a person or people who created the text or image we study. Quoting Koivunen: “Just as there is no correct, objective way to observe, there is also no such manner to produce images. All pictures are partial truths, representations rather than facsimiles – portraits of their makers.”⁷⁰

Bätschmann reminds that there is a difference in studying a piece of art as itself and as evidence of something else. Historical explanation is important for reconstructing an artwork's historical and social context. Interpretation of a piece however is focused on not enclosing the piece of art in what we can explain. Therefore interpretation pays attention to what makes a work visible in terms of its materials, colour, depiction, composition and content; it is all about the multiple relationships between the various aspects of form and content. Interpretation begins from the open and revealing work of art and provides a basis for this hypothesis by exploring the essential difference between thought and social conditions and the work made of its materials. Thus Bätschmann states that when studying a piece of art it is important to include both historical and societal context and the interpretation. Bätschmann suggests that it is wise to consider these two aspects, the logical context and the interpretation, as separate questions that support each other.⁷¹

When we see a chair we understand it by its function, that being a piece of furniture a person can sit on. But when the chair is put on a display in an art museum, separated from its original function, we find ourselves asking various interesting questions such as “How was it made? What kind of materials did the artist use? What conventions and rules guided the artist in creating this piece? Why did the artist make the choices he or she made, and what kind of feelings or thoughts did the creator of this piece want to convey to the viewer?” Therefore knowing the chair's history allows us to understand its function while looking at it as its own object makes it possible to see it in a whole new light.

⁶⁹ van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2011. 5-6.

⁷⁰ Koivunen, 2006. 291.

⁷¹ Bätschmann, 2003. 179-181.

Logical function and interpretation support each other.⁷²

1.5 Combining the analysis of pictures and texts

I am interested in how language and pictures are political, and my main methodological challenge is how to place newspaper sources and images into dialogue with each other. How do they “talk” with each other and of similar subjects even though one is in the shape of words and the other a visual message? This ties to ideas discussed by Quentin Skinner, who sees historical documents as attempts to influence others⁷³. It is the duty of a historian to reconstruct the activity and deduce the meanings from the text's linguistic and social contexts. Skinner reminds us that it is easy to give texts meanings the author could not have told.⁷⁴ A just as easy mistake is to expect to find familiar meanings and again the author is given words they did not actually say. Therefore the texts should not be separated from their original contexts so they would not lose their intended meanings or gain new ones they could not have had.⁷⁵

Ever since the linguistic turn got more prominent in research of society in 1960s focus has been on the linguistic dimensions of political actions: language describes, creates and re-creates societal constructs and the relations between them.⁷⁶ The use of language is a major aspect in object of analysis. Language and culture belong with each other because language doesn't just describe but also creates reality and different languages see the world differently.⁷⁷ If there are translations a lot of cultural connotations and meanings may be lost in them and it is harder to find out what the speaker has originally wanted to say and what it meant to his or her own community. Language also changes with time just like concepts. As Hyvärinen says, concepts are not timeless nor universal. The same word might mean different things not only in different place but also in different time. To make things even more variant, the same word might – and often is – used by different political actors among the same culture and each user gives the concept a meaning that supports their own agenda.⁷⁸

Even though art is accessible through its physical form and experienced by our gaze, interpretations are articulated in written or spoken language. Reading and looking at a piece of art are however different in the sense of understanding. After reading something an automatic reaction occurs where

⁷² Bättschmann, 2003. 182-183.

⁷³ Skinner, 2002. 57-61.

⁷⁴ Skinner, 2002. 57-61.

⁷⁵ Skinner, 2002. 57, 62.

⁷⁶ Pöyhönen, Nuolijärvi, Saarinen & Kangasvieri, 2019. 13.

⁷⁷ Koskinen, 1994. 81

⁷⁸ Hyvärinen, 2003. 9-10.

a person attempts to understand what they just read. When looking at art understanding might not happen at all. At other times a viewer feels a very strong call when gazing a piece of art.⁷⁹

In addition to the semantic methods regarding pictures, discourse analysis and ways of new conceptual and political history form the basis of my methods as I analyse concepts, texts, and pictures. I analyse texts and pictures and consider the motives behind them: what did the author – or the commissioner of a piece of art – want to say and why? Who was the text or picture meant for? As Skinner reminds, it is vital to consider why someone is saying what they are saying; it is not useful to focus on only stating what someone is saying, but to think what they mean to say with it.⁸⁰ Important focus is on key words and concepts and analysing what they could mean in their context, especially concepts related to national. I piece together the vocabulary used when discussing national concepts: "people" or "the Japanese" could be used in various contexts but the kinds of words used to refer to them have different shades depending on whether they are talked about as an ethnic group or as citizens of Japan.

Pictures tell a story like texts even if the methods of affecting the receiver are different. In *History of Concepts: Comparative Perspectives* (1998) edited by Iain Hampsher-Monk, Karin Tilmans and Frank van Vree various examples are given of studies where conceptual history has been used to study sources combining texts and images. Bram Kempers has studied interpretation of Raphael's frescoes in the Vatican Palace, revealing how great an impact the frescoes had as a focus of conceptual intensity where political and cultural of a particular society at a specific moment in history came together. Meanwhile Eddy de Jongh has researched Dutch genre painting, noting how in Dutch art visual representations were often based on well-known phrases, proverbs and poems.⁸¹ Many of the woodblock prints in my material include writing that usually explains the event it represents, or a celebration of victory or other informative messages. In that way the texts and the pictures appear side by side and are already in a dialogue with each other and discourse analysis can be used to examine these written parts of the images.

This study belongs to new political history as it includes various aspects of that field of study. New political history studies political history from the point of view that emphasizes new ways of seeing conceptual history. Political history began being redefined after it suffered a major drop in scientific interest due the rise of social and cultural histories. These new historical fields contributed to how

⁷⁹ Bäschmann, 2003. 181-183.

⁸⁰ Skinner, 2002. 83.

⁸¹ Hampsher-Monk, Tilmans, van Vree, 1998. 7-8.

political history could find new themes to study and new points of views to use, giving new ideas and versatility to the field.⁸²

Conceptual history offers much valuable tools for any historical research and especially well it goes along with cultural history because both of them are versatile areas of history able to study the politics of the past from various points of views. Both ways of research study similar themes because concepts are strongly tied to their culture and a part of it: concepts are the way for people to describe and define their thinking, environment and themselves. As Nivala and Rantala state, the purpose of cultural history research is to reveal how concepts that initially seem natural and abstract are in the end sensual, picturesque and cultural structures with history.⁸³ Researching ways of thinking of past people is studying, finding, mapping, analysing and interpreting concepts.⁸⁴ Concepts can be seen as critical points of interpretations and understanding, and so much more in both micro- and macro-level human interactions.⁸⁵ In other words, concepts are key words that tell about how the people who used them understood their world and themselves.

Comparative study is possible to use in the parts where I compare Japan and China. As Kocka and Haupt explain, in comparative history two or more historical phenomena are systematically researched to find similarities and differences in order to contribute to their better description, explanation and interpretation.⁸⁶

Comparative history can have many methodological functions. It allows researchers to identify problems and questions that would otherwise be impossible or challenging to pose, and helps in applying a clear profile to individual cases or a single, especially interesting case. Comparative study also aids in explaining historical phenomena, and it can be used to de-familiarize the familiar, thus allowing a fresh point of view to a subject that has previously been studied a lot. There are different kinds of comparisons. Most often used is asymmetrical comparison, in which one or several other cases are looked into mainly to provide background information for the main area of study: the goal is to understand one's own case better by comparing it to other(s). While comparison overall is in a side role in these studies, this kind of research can still prove very fruitful. Kocka and Haupt remind that a researcher should be careful as not to overly homogenize the cases and trough that miss the whole point. They point out that comparative historian may fall victim to “asymmetrical

⁸² Steimnetz & Haupt, 2013. 11-21.

⁸³ Nivala, Rantala, 2013. 230.

⁸⁴ Nivala, Rantala, 2013. 234.

⁸⁵ Steinmetz & Freedden, 2017. 1.

⁸⁶ Kocka & Haupt, 2010. 2.

counterconcepts” with which the nations, classes and groups he or she studies distinguished themselves from others. Such comparison can end up reproducing political and cultural self-definitions and stereotypes without analysing the mechanisms through which they came to existence in the first place.⁸⁷

The comparison in this thesis is asymmetrical comparison as the focus is on Japan, while China is brought up mainly to better understand how the Japanese viewed the Chinese in comparison to themselves. Chinese sources regarding this war will be brought up when possible and necessary to provide a little contrast to the Japanese point of view. In my material the Chinese are mainly depicted as “the Other” through which the Japanese reflect themselves. This is highlighted in the woodblock prints where the Chinese are used to make the Japanese look heroic and victorious against enemy.

As Burke explains, where two cultures meet or confront each other two very different reactions may occur. One is to deny the cultural distance and show the other through a familiar analogy. For example sixteenth century Jesuit missionary St Francis Xavier explained the emperor of Japan as oriental pope. Through the analogy the exotic is explained and domesticated. The second reaction is the reverse of the first, the conscious or unconscious construction of another culture as the opposite of one's own culture.⁸⁸

In my material the Chinese are often othered, not only in their depiction in losing but also showing them in traditional clothing in comparison to the modernized Japanese who have Western-style uniforms and gear. Of course this can also be a realistic depiction of how Chinese soldiers looked like in the war but the way they are depicted emphasizes how outdated they were when compared to the Japanese. Comparison is an important method to me in general. I compare the Japanese-language newspaper to the English-written one, and then the newspapers to the pictures.

Physical objects, symbols and great persons might also include concepts or they could become such.⁸⁹ Nationalism uses a lot of abstract and concrete material world themes to build nationalistic feeling. Concepts in a form of a symbol are very common especially in visual material. Japan's war flag Rising Sun is an excellent example as will be confirmed in analysis.

Words and images are in essence different methods of recording, but it is not fruitful to strictly

⁸⁷ Kocka & Haupt, 2010. 3-6.

⁸⁸ Burke, 2011. 123-124.

⁸⁹ Liu, 2004. 212-213.

separate them from each other. That is because just like pictures language is not neutral either. Also as Koivunen points out, visual media does not have a sense of negation that can be done in texts.⁹⁰

1.6. The structure of the analysis

I will first talk shortly about the background of subject, beginning with Japan's Meiji restoration: how Japan modernized rapidly, how the Emperor's status was – at least symbolically – restored, how Shintoism and *bushidō* were used to build Japanese nationalism and how Japan rose into similar status with world's great powers, to their big surprise and confusion (Chapter 2: “Expanding Asian Empire”, page 24). After that I will move on to discuss the themes I have found and analyse them, following the war chronologically (Chapter 3: “The War in Art and Media”, page 37). Finally I will gather my conclusions (page 76).

2. Expanding Asian Empire

2.1. Everything under the heaven: from pre-modern to modern Japanese nationalism

During the Tokugawa era which preceded the Meiji era, a major concept used of Japan as a nation was *tenka*, which meant “the realm”, or more literally “under heaven”. It was first used by Oda Nobunaga, one of the 16th century warlords who re-united Japan after a long period of civil wars. He expected his vassals to address him as *tenka* and promised them not only earthly but also divine protection if they venerated him. This is concept resembles a lot of the later “I am the state” - rhetoric of king Louis XIV of France. After Nobunaga similar ideas were used by Toyotomi Hideyoshi and then the Tokugawa shōguns, who acted as the primary leader of the country even if the shōgun as a title was technically subordinate to emperor.⁹¹ The pre-modern concept *tenka* was therefore largely personified in the leader of the state, and the Japanese were his subjects rather than a people united under an identity based on nationality.

Societies have always used religion to validate and support their existence, power and goals. In Japan religion, especially mythology, has had a closer relationship to nationalism than in many other countries. Japan's indigenous religion is Shintoism. *Shinto* means the way of the gods, and Shinto divinities are called *kami*. There are a lot of different kami, and they are present in various aspects of

⁹⁰ Koivunen, 2006. 20.

⁹¹ Gordon, 2003. 34-35.

everyday life. Shinto practices entwined with the Buddhist ones and both played part in the lives of most Japanese people.⁹²

Traditionally it was believed that the emperors were descended from the sun goddess Amaterasu, giving the imperial lineage a divine origin linked to Shintoism.⁹³ This divine heritage was a major factor in why the emperor's throne has remained in the same family for its whole history while strong military leaders were content with subordinate titles like *shōgun* (generalissimo).⁹⁴ Then again no matter how sacred and unchallenged the status of the emperor was, only a few emperors in the history of Japan ever governed their country themselves in the way many other monarchs did. This combination of sanctity and weakness allowed others – like aristocrats or warlords – to control the emperor to achieve their own ambitions.⁹⁵ To define a few relevant terms, *Samurai* (or *bushi*) were Japan's warrior class.⁹⁶ They were a prominent but diverse group who became the de facto ruling class in Japan after the first *bakufu* (in English often referred to as “shogunate”), military government, was founded in the 1180's. Bakufu's claim for power was legitimized when the emperor granted its leader the title of shogun.⁹⁷ In this thesis I use both terms bakufu and shogunate to refer to shōgun's government.

Meiji politicians realized that a strong and united state should have a religious base, which is why state shinto was created. In 1889 religious freedom was added to constitution. In its spirit teaching and practising any religion was forbidden at schools, although moral principles common to all religions could be taught. State shinto however was a kind of artificial creation that was officially defined as reverence towards the state and the Emperor in the same way as Americans show respect to their flag. Since it was not technically a religion in the same sense as other faiths, practising it was allowed at schools. Foreigners living in Japan found this statement and the new form of Shintoism puzzling.⁹⁸

As mentioned in the introduction, *kokutai* (national polity) was the idea that Meiji leaders used to achieve national integrity. Theories discussing the exact nature of *kokutai* vary, but State Shinto and emperor veneration were vital parts of it.⁹⁹ The first to use the term *kokutai* was historian Kitabatake Chikafusa (1295-1354), whose book *Jinnō Shōtōki* (“Chronicles of the Authentic Lineages of the

⁹² Gordon, 2003. 6; Vesterinen, 2012. 11-12, 60-62, 95-101, 236.

⁹³ Shillony, 2008. 1-2.

⁹⁴ Imatani, 2008. 18.

⁹⁵ Shillony, 2008. 1-2.

⁹⁶ Gordon, 2003. 3; Imatani, 2008. 17.

⁹⁷ Fält, 2002. 51; Gordon, 2003. 3.

⁹⁸ Vesterinen, 2012. 236, 247.

⁹⁹ Shimazono, 2008. 53-55.

Divine Emperors") published already as early as in 1343 became a sort of catechism on the loyalty for the emperor for until the World War II. Kitakabe's main thesis is summarized in the book's beginning words:¹⁰⁰

*“Great Japan is the divine land. The heavenly progenitor founded it, and the sun goddess bequeathed it to her descendants to rule eternally. Only in our country is this true; there are no similar examples in other countries. This is why our country is called the divine land.”*¹⁰¹

According to Kitabatake Japan was superior to other countries because it was divine land, and it was divine because the imperial line had been unbroken ever since the Sun Goddess gave Japan to her offspring. This continuity made Japan superior to China and India, which had experienced changes in ruling dynasties over the course of history. Kitabatake also considered Japan as a country to be older than China, and the true preserver of East-Asian philosophical and religious traditions. An important part of his thinking was the special relationship between the emperor and his people. This is what Kitabatake called *kokutai*; national identity or typical unique traits of Japan. Kitabatake's influence during his own lifetime was short, but his thinking became popular in the 18th and 19th centuries among the imperial nationalists.¹⁰² A major point in Meiji *kokutai* was that the Emperor's divinity was an officially stated fact that couldn't be questioned.¹⁰³

The relationship between emperor and his people was spoken of by Yoshida Shōi (1830-1859), who was the most significant imperial loyalist of his time. His Confucian-Shintoist idea was that Japan was divine country created by the gods, which is why it could not be destroyed. Because the emperor was descended from the gods Japan could not exist without him, and that was the heart of *kokutai*. Nation could not respect anyone more than the emperor and the emperor could not respect anything more than he respected the Japanese people. The government and the people had been one ever since creation.¹⁰⁴

According to Yoshida the emperor's will was absolute no matter how cruel he was. The whole nation should be sacrificed if that was crucial in order to preserve its most relevant traits. Yoshida saw a bright and glorious future for the Japanese Empire, which should first purify itself and then move on to rule the rest of the world. Japan had the right to conquer others even by violent means because as

¹⁰⁰ Fält, 2002. 63.

¹⁰¹ Fält, 2002. 63. Official English translation checked from Wikipedia.

¹⁰² Fält, 2002. 63-64.

¹⁰³ Vesterinen, 2012. 248.

¹⁰⁴ Fält, 2002. 101.

a nation it signified goodness.¹⁰⁵

2.2. From closed country to rapid modernization

From 1633 to 1866 Japan practised closed country policy called *Sakoku*.¹⁰⁶ During *sakoku* only Dutch and Chinese ships could port in Japan, and only on the artificial island of Dejima that was located in front of city of Nagasaki. On the island foreigners were watched carefully and they had to behave according to rules set by the Japanese. The original goal of closing the country was not to separate Japan from the rest of the world, to turn Japan into similar centre in the Asia that China had been for a long time.¹⁰⁷ Therefore it can be said that Japan's wish to change the power balance in East Asia to their favour was not a new idea in the 19th century. They just did not have the tools and resources for it earlier.¹⁰⁸ Japan also traded with Korea, which was the only country with whom Japan had official relations during that time.¹⁰⁹

Gordon states that international trade was not all that important for Japanese economy around the time.¹¹⁰ Still it can be considered that since Chinese ships were among the only ones allowed to port in Japan, trade with China was likely at least somewhat valuable to Japan and the Chinese had products that the Japanese wanted or needed. Also even if the two countries were not the closest of friends, they certainly had a long history of relations: it would not have been wise or useful to cut off those connections. Fält reminds that despite the strict regulations in the 17th century Japan was the biggest exporter of silver in the world.¹¹¹ This an example that speaks for the importance of international trade.

Western pressure and influence in East Asia grew increasingly from the late 18th century onward. Foreign countries wanted to make trade deals to gain power and wealth in Asia. China's loss at Opium Wars in mid-19th century and unequal treaty with the victorious Britain troubled Japan greatly: could this happen in Japan too?¹¹² Ultimately Western pressure combined with the shogunate's responses to it weakened the shogunate.¹¹³

¹⁰⁵ Fält, 2002. 101-102.

¹⁰⁶ Vesterinen 2012. 244-245; Hesselink, 2001. 11-12.

¹⁰⁷ Hesselink, 2001. 11-12.

¹⁰⁸ In 1592-98 Japan's ruler at the time, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, launched two invasions on Korea with the goal of conquering China as well. While these invasions of Korea were unsuccessful they are technically Japan's first attempt at waging war against China, already in 16th century. (Ford, 1997; Fält, 2002. 71).

¹⁰⁹ Fält, 2002. 113.

¹¹⁰ Gordon, 2003. 33.

¹¹¹ Fält, 2002. 113.

¹¹² Gordon, 2003. 46-48.

¹¹³ Fält, 2002. 99; Gordon, 2003. 46-48.

In 1853 American Commodore Matthew Perry arrived in Japan as the most determined carrier of the message demanding Japan to open its ports for trade. The shogunate had to bend and sign the treaty with the USA, and similar treaties with other countries soon followed. These treaties were unequal to Japan the same way the post-Opium War treaty was to China.¹¹⁴

The increasing Western influence and shogunate's weakness caused tensions and disagreements in Japan. The pro-nationalistics wanted to overthrow the shogunate and restore the emperor's power. Strong emperors had always been very rare in the whole history of Japan and this did not change even when the nationalistics won the fight between them and the shogunate in 1868, at least symbolically restoring the power of young Emperor Meiji.¹¹⁵

The reasons the opposition chose to rise in the name of the emperor had long traditions. Firstly there was the emperor's role as the divine messenger between gods and mortals. Secondly many Japanese scholars believed Japan to be the successor of Ming-China that had fallen to the Manchus in the 17th century: since China could not reach the great ideals of harmony anymore, Japan would do it instead. In Confucian worldview the emperor was the supreme ruler but in Japanese feudal system it was the shōgun, which caused intellectual conflict. Add to that the Western pressure, economic troubles and several great natural disasters of the 18th century, and it was no wonder that many were discontent with the system.¹¹⁶

What makes the events in Japan especially interesting is that while the events of Meiji restoration certainly suit the term *revolution*, this Japanese revolution differed from its Western counterparts in a sense that it was more of an aristocratic revolution: in Europe newly empowered classes challenged and sometimes took down the privileges of aristocrats but in Meiji era Japan it was some of the members of the old samurai elite who led this attack against the old rule.¹¹⁷

Japan had traditionally been welcoming towards foreign cultural influences: it was typical that the Japanese adopted what they considered to be good and useful, and turned it into a Japanese version of it. First this had been applied to Chinese culture, and later Western. The Japanese prided themselves in having surpassed their teachers in what they had learnt.¹¹⁸

In this light it is understandable how the revolutionists who had survived for long enough realized the need to learn from the West, maybe even co-exist peacefully with it. During the latter 19th century

¹¹⁴ Fält, 2002. 100-101; Gordon, 2003. 49-50.

¹¹⁵ Gordon, 2003. 61.

¹¹⁶ Fält, 2002. 99-100.

¹¹⁷ Gordon, 2003. 61-62.

¹¹⁸ Fält, 2002. 118.

large reforms were made. The first dramatic move was to abolish the old domains of samurai lords and re-organize the land as newly constructed prefectures. Another reform that hurt the pride of many members of the samurai class was the military reform. Conscription army was created, meaning that now pretty much anyone could carry a sword instead of it being an exclusive right of the warrior class. Samurai were stripped from their income and social privileges, thus disbanding the whole class. While some rebelled, many landed on their feet because they still had the ambition and education of their old social class. Limitations on occupation, travel, clothing and such were also dismantled, making the Japanese a more united group in the eyes of law. Other big reforms included compulsory education and rapid industrialization.¹¹⁹

The people did not accept all the reforms with open arms. Opinions varied, and many were worried of the new and its effects on them. For example the conscript army was among the reforms that faced a lot of resistance from the people. In the 1870's the later fierce loyalty and nationalistic idealism of Japanese soldiers was not yet reality.¹²⁰

During Meiji era people turned into political actors instead of simply objects of political actions like they had been before. They had responsibilities defined in the new constitution – military service for men, taxes and education for everyone – but also rights. These rights included the right to vote and a chance to affect the state budget. These rights only applied to men, though, and the latter was an option only for those wealthy enough. The word *kokumin* emerged as concept which was used to refer to the Japanese people. It literally means “people of the country” and is often translated as “the people” or “the nation”. In the early 1900s *kokumin* was commonly used to refer to the empire.¹²¹

In the middle of all the rapid modernization an important matter was constructing Japanese nationalism: is there a Japanese identity and what is it? It was necessary to define something constant to which the idea of being Japanese could be tied to. The Emperor was the first figure that was used to create an idea that would unite the Japanese in thought and spirit.¹²² Japan's new constitution emphasized emperor's legal and cultural authority and emperor and empress were symbols for new modern order.¹²³ The figure of the emperor became coterminous with the concept of *kokutai*, national polity.¹²⁴

The figure of the Emperor only solved half of the problem. It was also necessary to define what

¹¹⁹ Gordon, 2003. 53, 63-70.

¹²⁰ Gordon, 2003. 66-67.

¹²¹ Gordon, 2003. 92, 135.

¹²² Goto-Jones, 2008. 23-24.

¹²³ Gordon, 2003. 68-70, 122.

¹²⁴ Goto-Jones, 2008. 24.

exactly were the ideas that the Emperor represented. How should the emperor be revered in modern Japan? In this matter *bushidō* – the way of the samurai – provided an answer. The ideology of warrior class was modified to answer to modern day challenges and to include all the Japanese, forming the base for the idea of Japanese nationalism.¹²⁵ Something that had belonged only to the elite now became a Japanese Spirit that applied to all the Japanese.

The reformers felt that maybe the most important unique trait for the Japanese was their sense of beauty and aesthetic. Many traditional aspects of culture flourished alongside the Western. Especially starting from mid-Meiji era traditional culture such as theatre and music were highly supported.¹²⁶ This is a good example of how despite all the modern and Western the Japanese wanted to stay Japanese and keep their own culture alive.

For centuries Japan's national religion Shintoism had lived entangled with Buddhism but during Meiji Shintoism became state religion and the government wanted to make clearer the differences between Shinto and Buddhist practices.¹²⁷ This was a harsh time for devout Buddhists, while Shintoism served its own important role in constructing Japanese nationalism.

An important idea that contributed to constructing nationalism was the idea of building the army with Western technology but according to Japanese values.¹²⁸ This is an excellent example of how the Japanese combined Western ideas and technologies with Japanese ideas to modify the concept to suit Japan better. Ultimately these ideas became then sources for national pride. As Fröhlich reminds, the model for the modern military was adopted from Prussia that had demonstrated its military prowess in the Franco-Prussian war 1870-71 and impressed the Japanese during their visit of 1873.¹²⁹

Many state programs and organizations bound the people to the nation, making sure that however they spent their time they would hear the governments ideas and likely grow to support them, and this project proved effective.¹³⁰

Meiji leaders and intellectuals had somewhat ambivalent view on Asia as a part of the world. Sometimes they called for pan-Asian solidarity against Western imperialism, but at the same time many considered Japan as natural hegemony in Asia: it would lead its neighbours to modernization

¹²⁵ Goto-Jones, 2008. 5.

¹²⁶ Gordon, 2003. 109-111, 122.

¹²⁷ Vesterinen 246-248.

¹²⁸ Gordon 2003. 122.

¹²⁹ Fröhlich, 2014. 230.

¹³⁰ Gordon, 2003. 137. Kushner, 2006. 20.

and equality with the West regardless of the opinions of others.¹³¹

Meanwhile Qing dynasty China was struggling with increasing external aggression and internal chaos. The Western great powers wanted to have a foothold in China, and in the 19th century Britain forced its way into the country when it could not persuade China to alter its business and diplomacy to British liking. Qing tried to overcome its numerous problems by initiating new policies, but these reforms were too little, too slow and began too late.¹³² Superficial reforms were enough to fix troubles of such scale. When the First Sino-Japanese War began Japan had already rapidly modernized and developed itself for 30 years, giving it notable advantage when compared to China.

As Gordon notes, the Meiji restoration contrasted with the earlier Western revolutions and resembled some of the latter ones.¹³³ Just like the German Empire engineered by Bismarck¹³⁴, the Meiji restoration was a revolution from above. Reforms were needed and a united nation to be created, but in both countries it was the members of the old elite who decided how these changes should be made. Both had an emperor but their roles were somewhat different. The German emperor technically had roots in the old Holy Roman Empire but at the same time the imperial title was newly constructed for the new empire, and careful consideration was put into what exactly the title should be so it would have the right connotations¹³⁵. In Japan the same imperial dynasty had ruled essentially from the dawn of history and now the emperor was officially restored to the power after a long period of shōguns governing Japan while emperor had existed in the background.

2.3. From a caterpillar to a butterfly: the transformation of the monarchy

The imperial family – still in power today – traces its heritage to the early sixth century. The Yamato family of chief priests and priestesses presided over one of the many clans competing for political supremacy. By the early eighth century they had achieved unrivalled political and sacred authority. In the 19th century the ancient mythology to which the Yamato clan had traced its lineage was revived as the orthodox modern view on imperial history. While the early emperors were politically powerful and active, soon their role switched to religious rites related to Shintoism, while certain aristocratic and later military families held the actual power in their hands.¹³⁶ As already mentioned, the imperial family was believed to be descended from the sun goddess Amaterasu.¹³⁷

¹³¹ Gordon, 2003. 74.

¹³² Wright, 2001. 99, 110.

¹³³ Gordon, 2003. 62.

¹³⁴ Kitchen, 2011. 104-106, 108.

¹³⁵ Kitchen, 2011. 108; Wilson & Evans, 2012. 1-4.

¹³⁶ Fält, 2002. 33-34; Gordon, 2003. 2-3.

¹³⁷ Fält, 2002. 35; Vesterinen, 2012. 89-90.

The restoration activists had carried out their coup in the name of the emperor, but once in power, they were unsure about what to do with him. The population was not especially committed to the emperor as a political symbol and young Meiji was not that impressive of a figure himself either. During the two decades following the year 1868 the image of the monarchy was forged a new just like other reforms were being made in the country. The government chose to place more and more symbolic weight on the emperor and the empress.¹³⁸ The plan can be seen as a huge success, because up until the end of the Pacific War Meiji – who reigned from 1867-1912 – was referred to as Meiji the Great (*Meiji Taitei*) and respected as the driving force behind Japan's rapid and impressive rise as an industrialized great power.¹³⁹

In 1880s the empress and her retinue adopted Western clothing as a part of the project to present the monarchy as a modern institution.¹⁴⁰ The emperor too went through a significant transformation into a symbol of a modern monarch. The constitution greatly increased the emperor's legal and cultural authority. From 1880s to 1930s the imperial institution formed into a powerful unifying force that became a basis for the national identity.¹⁴¹

A photo taken of Meiji's portrait created by Italian painter Edvardo Chiossone in 1888 was enshrined in schools all across Japan.¹⁴² In the 1870's and 1880's important painters received government support to promote Western oil painting. They drew from the Japanese traditions and adopted new Western techniques.¹⁴³

¹³⁸ Gordon, 2003. 68.

¹³⁹ Hara, 2008. 213.

¹⁴⁰ Gordon, 2003. 68.

¹⁴¹ Gordon, 2003. 68-70.

¹⁴² Gordon, 2003. 69; Hara, 2008. 219.

¹⁴³ Gordon, 2003. 108.



Painting of Emperor Meiji in Western Military clothing, created by Italian painter Edvardo Chiossone in 1888.

Rulers have always been depicted with symbols of power, and this portrait of Emperor Meiji (as well as some photographs taken of him¹⁴⁴) are very similar to their Western counterparts. If we look at photos of Meiji's contemporary rulers in the powerful countries of Europe, such as Emperor Alexander II of Russia or Emperor Wilhelm I of Germany, we can see them depicted in the same manner, wearing military attire. As Burke says, accessories present in pictures, be it paintings or photographs, have always been an important part of self-representation of the subject.¹⁴⁵ In these images of Meiji swords and uniforms for example have been clear repeating items. Where furniture can be seen it is regal and well-thought, contributing to the status and elegant manner of the subject.

The hats placed on the table instead of the monarch's head and somewhat relaxed postures can be seen as a follow-up of a trend set by Hyacinthe Rigaud (1659 – 1743) in his famous coronation painting of Louis XIV. Rigaud made the innovation of depicting the king in a more informal manner than before, yet still obviously royal and authoritative. Later in the 19th century it became customary to picture the ruler in a military uniform and place them closer to the eye-level of the viewer.¹⁴⁶

Portrait of Meiji never appeared on objects meant for everyday use such as banknotes or stamps, but

¹⁴⁴ Gordon, 2003. 69; Hara, 2008. 215.

¹⁴⁵ Burke, 2006. 26-27.

¹⁴⁶ Burke, 2006. 28-29.

his visage became omnipresent through photographs and prints published in newspapers and displayed at ceremonies and classrooms. The way he was depicted in followed the manner of Chiossone's painting: a modern ruler in military attire.¹⁴⁷

By dressing up in the same way as the Western rulers Emperor Meiji, descendant of gods and the official head of state, became a clear symbol for the new era and the reforms Japan was going through in order to become an even greater country. As the strongest cultural authority Meiji was showing example and encouraging the Japanese people to follow. Another message was that the Japanese emperor was as much of an emperor as the other emperors of the world, maybe even more so. This symbolises how Japan was rising and seeing itself among the great powers of the world. While not one initially, Emperor Meiji eventually turned into an important symbol and cultural authority, a process in its full bloom when the Sino-Japanese War broke out.

2.4. War over control of Korea

Korea's situation between Chinese and Japanese influence was a major element leading to the First Sino-Japanese War. There were many tensions and crises between Japan and China of which most concerned Korea.¹⁴⁸ Korea had been China's tributary for centuries, but Japan insisted that Korea was an independent state. This was because Japan wanted to dominate Korea while making sure that no one else annexed it.¹⁴⁹ By saying this Japan wished the world to see Korea as an independent state that could sign its own treaties and decide its own policies instead of Qing telling how Korean politics were to be played out. By separating Korea from China Japan could make better foothold for itself in the peninsula, a chance to be the one to dictate how Korea was to be modernized.

Korea-related incidents made the relations between Japan and China more and more tense.¹⁵⁰ One such incident was the assassination of Japan-sympathetic Korean reformist Kim Ok-guyn in March 1894. As Gordon explains, Kim was a reformist who earlier in 1894 led a coup d'état with secret promises of support from Japan. Kim's rebels murdered Korean conservative ministers and captured the king, but China sent troops to take down the rebellion. Many Koreans were furious at Japan because of its role behind the uprising, and they killed ten Japanese military advisors as well as about 30 other Japanese residents. Naturally this prompted calls for revenge from Japanese press.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁷ Fröhlich, 2014. 235-236.

¹⁴⁸ British Library & JACAR.

¹⁴⁹ Wright, 2001. 111.

¹⁵⁰ British Library & JACAR; Gordon, 2003. 116-117.

¹⁵¹ Gordon, 2003. 116.

As the *Japan Weekly Mail* reported, Kim's assassination was the main topic in Japanese newspapers in April and May 1894. In the volume of April 7th of *Weekly Mail* it was told that there was a movement in Tokyo organizing a fund to bring Kim's remains to Japan, to erect a memorial for him and offer aid to his surviving friends. The attitude towards Kim and his fate was highly sympathetic and some suspected that China and Korea were behind the assassination. One of the major papers, the *Jiji*, however disagreed, stating that it did not believe China to be a participant in “such a cruel and cowardly scheme.”¹⁵² Others called for decisive measures from the Japanese government. The *Jiji Shimpō* urged that peaceful methods should be tried first while the *Jiyu Shimbun* expressed that Japan should, under certain circumstances, be prepared to take up arms against the country behind the murder.¹⁵³

By April 21st the consensus among the vernacular press seemed to be that Korean government was to be blamed, or at least no one denied that possibility. The *Niroku* went as far as to state that it was not relevant whether a connection between Korea and the scheme was actually confirmed, it was enough that the Japanese public believed it to exist. For that article the paper was suspended.¹⁵⁴ Kim had been killed on Chinese ground and China's decision to send his body and killer to Korea aboard a Chinese man-of-war was seen as an insult by the Japanese.¹⁵⁵ On May 5th the *Weekly Mail* reported that the *Jiji* had noted that there were people who would have wanted Japan to recognize Korea as China's protectorate and help China in taking care of it, but at the same time China's political system was “rotten to the core” and the central government in Beijing “utterly incapable of defending its remote frontiers against foreign invaders.”¹⁵⁶ Kim's assassination is an excellent example of an incident that sparked discussion and worsened tensions between Japan and China. Kim became a martyr in Japan: he was painted as the victim of a cruel crime and his treatment gave Japan some justification to act against Korea and China.

In May 1894 the peasant army of Korean Donghak rebellion took over the imperial palace in Korea. China sent troops to help restore the peace and put down the rebellion, and Japan decided to do the same. This rapidly escalated the crisis between Japan and China who had been watching each other vigilantly already for a while.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵² Japan Weekly Mail, April 7th, 1894.

¹⁵³ Japan Weekly Mail, April 14th, 1894.

¹⁵⁴ Japan Weekly Mail, April 21st, 1894.

¹⁵⁵ Japan Weekly Mail, April 28th, 1894.

¹⁵⁶ Japan Weekly Mail, May 5th, 1894.

¹⁵⁷ British Library & JACAR.

Japan proposed co-operation in suppressing the rebellion and reforming Korea's internal affairs and stated that if China would not agree Japan would proceed unilaterally. Qing replied that the rebellion was already over, troops should be withdrawn and the matter of reform to be left to Koreans themselves. Japan refused to leave Korea. Japan asked Korea to let Japan carry on alone on the reform of Korea's internal affairs, and to confirm Korea's status as a tributary of Qing. Korea answered that they were an independent nation, which worked as a good reason for Japan to attack China: if Korea was an independent state, China was offending its rights by claiming it as vassal, so Japan would need to attack China on behalf of defending Korea.¹⁵⁸

Such opinions were expressed in major papers. For example the *Hochi Shinbun* featured an article stating that it was both Japan's duty and interest to “protect the independence and promote the civilization and prosperity of the Korean Kingdom”. Korea should trust Japan to keep it safe from other powers, and this arrangement would be beneficial for both countries. For this to succeed China would need to be stalled. The *Jiji* suggested that co-operation with China could be considered under certain circumstances, but instead of waiting Qing's response Japan should send some troops to Korea anyway, if only to protect Japanese residents there.¹⁵⁹ From Japan's part pushing Korean independence could have been a strategy of tricking Korea into saying something that would give Japan a permission to act openly against China. Korea likely told it was independent in order to shrug Japan off of its back - maybe even Qing too- but was trapped by its own words.

Through June and July 1894 the *Weekly Mail* reported a rising yearning for war among the Japanese. Newspapers followed the situation in Korea closely and offered their views on how Japan should proceed. The *Jiji Shimpo* commented that in the recent years the Chinese had come regard Japan with indifference or even contempt: “The Chinaman's old fashioned and fossilized intellect has been unable to grasp the true inwardness of the political situation in Japan”, which is why they did not expect Japan to be able to take decisive action abroad. However no matter how divided the Japanese were in their domestic politics, they were “ever ready to unite in a strong and courageous policy towards foreign foes”.¹⁶⁰

On June 23rd the *Weekly Mail* commented the growing war spirit as follows: “The Tokyo journals unite in urging upon the Government the importance of utilizing the present opportunity for wiping away the stain left on the national honour by the fatal error of 1894.” The *Jiji Shimpo* and the rest

¹⁵⁸ British Library & JACAR.

¹⁵⁹ Japan Weekly Mail, June 2nd, 1894.

¹⁶⁰ Japan Weekly Mail, June 16th, 1894.

pressed that Japan should not withdraw troops from Korea until its independence had been properly secured. China might object to such approach, but it would not matter: Japan had no obligation to please China at the expense of its own vital interests. The *Nichi Nichi Shinbun* was among the few to warn against using aggressive language about China and the situation at hand: Japan would not hesitate to fight China if it was necessary, but at the present time violence could still be avoided.¹⁶¹

In July Japanese newspapers were anxious for the government to declare war against China but the problem was whether Japan had a justified cause for it or not.¹⁶² Still the situation kept escalating and Japanese and Chinese troops engaged each other both on land and on the sea (battles of Pungdo and Seonghwan), and so the declaration of war was officially given on August 1st.¹⁶³ The war events themselves will be discussed in the analysis chapters according to what arises from the sources. As for the results, in the peace treaty of Shimonoseki in April 1895 it was stated that Japan gained Liaodong Peninsula and Taiwan and Qing had to formally recognize the independence of Korea. In addition to that China had to pay war indemnity to Japan. War had been Qing's first modern military clash and it certainly had not gone very well for them. Qing lost lots of prestige and China was revealed to the world as the "Sick Man of Asia" in full extent while Japan emerged as the pre-eminent military and economic power in East Asia.¹⁶⁴ The war was depicted in many woodblock prints which showed action-filled combat scenes and calm sunrises alike, as will be seen in the following chapters.

3. The War in Art and Media

3.1. The fighting begins: Battles of Pungdo and Seonghwan

As stated before, Japanese and Chinese troops engaged each other both on land and sea before an actual declaration for war had been made. The first contact between the armies was a naval battle near an island named Pungdo. This battle is also known as the "Kowshing incident" because a British merchant ship called Kowshing that was transporting Chinese soldiers was sunk by the Japanese.¹⁶⁵ Maybe a bit surprisingly Kowshing did not make it to the *Weekly Mail's* pages, but it could be because not many details had made it to the press in general yet. Also if Kowshing was sailing under Chinese colours or in any way working for the benefit of the Chinese as it was, it may have been genuinely mistaken for a Chinese vessel until more was known of the incident.

¹⁶¹ Japan Weekly Mail, June 23rd, 1894.

¹⁶² Japan Weekly Mail, July 7th, 1894.

¹⁶³ British Library & JACAR.

¹⁶⁴ Wright, 2001. 110-111.

¹⁶⁵ Fröhlich, 2014. 214-215; JACAR & British Library.

While Kowshing itself was not mentioned, the battle as a whole attracted attention in the media: “The news of the naval victory off A-San was received with universal joy and satisfaction. The enthusiasm excited by the intelligence was amply echoed by the vernacular press”, reported the *Weekly Mail*. It also noted that while the leading papers were thrilled by the victory, they also reminded their readers not to take success for granted. Japan would most certainly win the war, but there might be some losses along the way as well. Therefore people should not “attach extravagant confidence” in either news of victory or defeat.¹⁶⁶ In other words, people should wait patiently for confirmed information rather than react strongly to every gossip they might hear.

Kobayashi Kiyochika and Ogata Gekkō both created one piece depicting the battle of Pungdo. Kobayashi's print was published sooner, on the August 1894. Gekkō's piece came out in December 1894 and includes an explanation of the course of battle. Titles of both prints simply translate as “Battle of Pungdo”. Kobayashi's print depicts a battle at night, deep-blue night sky with crescent moon and a few stars forming a calm and clear background for the combat scenario¹⁶⁷. In the horizon ships can be seen firing at each other but the viewer's focus is most easily drawn to the ship depicted much closer, in the middle of the picture. The ship is a dark silhouette against orange fire and smoke from the explosion and fire currently in process of destroying the ship. Something is shown exploding aboard the ship: perhaps it is being hit by an enemy cannon, or previous damage has set gunpowder aboard the ship itself to fire. In any case the vessel is rapidly falling to pieces, its masts breaking at the very moment this image depicts.

Four rowboats filled with men are seen escaping the sinking ship. Their light-blue uniforms and white turbans reveal them to be Chinese troops. One of the boats has just made it to the shore, and the men are looking at the burning ship. Their facial expressions are not very detailed, but their gestures hint that most of them are tired or dispirited, or on a more positive thought perhaps just relieved to be alive. One of them is waving his hands at the sea: it is a bit hard to say whether he is expressing his anger towards the Japanese who have sank the ship (although we do not really see the Japanese ship behind the attack in the picture) or making sure his comrades also make it safely to the shore.

¹⁶⁶ Japan Weekly Mail, August 4th, 1894.

¹⁶⁷ “Battle of Pungdo” created in 1894 by Kobayashi Kiyochika. See image on page 39.



“Battle of Pungdo” by Kobayashi Kiyochika, August 1894.

The print depicts a scene of naval battle in a calmful manner; there must be noises from cannons, fire, explosions, the sea and the shouting men, but the picture itself is serene to look at. The Japanese are not shown in this piece, but their presence is implied by the escaping Chinese: someone must have gunned down their ship and forced them to go down with it or flee. The text in the picture explains the depicted event to the viewer, as Ichimura too points out¹⁶⁸.

¹⁶⁸ Ichimura, 2016. 60.



“Battle of Pungdo” by Ogata Gekkō, December 1894.

Ogata’s “Battle of Pungdo” on the comparison shows specifically a Japanese ship during battle. White ship flies four Japanese flags of two variants: Japan’s regular flag and the warflag that both depict a rising sun. There is another ship behind the first one. The flags it flies are not as clearly visible as the Rising Sun-flags, but the yellow colour hints that it is likely a Chinese ship. The vessels are in a middle of a combat against each other. Smoke from the cannons is prominent all around, but the explosions at the second ship indicate that it is being fired at by the Japanese vessel, which has not taken as serious damage itself. An explanation of the event is once again attached to the picture, longer than in Kobayashi’s print.

Both prints depict a Chinese ship taking damage in the battle. In Kobayashi’s piece Japanese vessels are not seen (except in the background, where ships are firing at each other) but their presence is

strongly indicated by what is happening to the Chinese. In Ogata's picture a Japanese ship, proudly flying Japanese flags, is in the focus of the image, combating a Chinese ship farther away. Both could in a way be seen as tributes to Japanese victory, showing their prowess on the sea.

While hardly any specific information was available yet, in July 28th 1894 the *Weekly Mail* stated that many Japanese believed the war to have already begun and there were rumours about battles having taken place on July 25th¹⁶⁹; rather accurate rumours too, since the naval combat of Pungdo took place on that very day. As reported in the *Weekly Mail* as well, many Japanese papers wrote that Japan should aim for big decisive victories instead of petty skirmishes. The *Nichi Nichi*, one of the more cautious newspapers, advised that it would be wise to defeat the Chinese navy in one place if possible. It also wished that international commerce and citizens of neutral countries would face as little inconveniences as possible. Even the Chinese people should be offered full protection, unless retaliation was considered necessary. The *Jiji Shimpo* shared a similar view, encouraging Chinese residents in Japan to remain calm as there was no reason to harm them.¹⁷⁰

While war was already seen as inevitable and Japan was encouraged to strike hard at China, some papers took the time and space to voice out an opinion that civilians should not face unnecessary violence because of the conflict. Here the common Chinese people are seen as innocent to the matter, human beings just like the Japanese. Then again The *Nichi Nichi* recognized that civilians might fall victim to actions of war if Japan saw reason to react to something China did first.

Battle of Seonghwan took place in July 29th 1894 and was the first land battle of the Sino-Japanese War. The Japanese army had been advancing in order to take Chinese stronghold at Asan and met Chinese troops encamped at Seonghwan on the way. The Japanese took control of Seonghwan and prepared to continue for Asan but the Chinese had already moved on by then, avoiding Asan's unfavourable terrain.¹⁷¹ In my material I have three Japanese prints depicting this event: one created by Mizuno Toshikata and already mentioned a few times¹⁷², and two by Kobayashi Kiyochika. In addition to those there are also Chinese images of the same event, providing an excellent ground for comparison.

Mizuno's print was published in August 1894, within a month of the event it depicted. The text on the

¹⁶⁹ Japan Weekly Mail, July 28th, 1894.

¹⁷⁰ Japan Weekly Mail, July 28th, 1894.

¹⁷¹ JACAR & British Library.

¹⁷² "Hurrah! Hurrah! For the Great Japanese Empire! Great Victory for Our Troops in the Assault on Seonghwan" Created in 1894 by Mizuno Toshikata (see image on page 10).

right side of the image is also its title which says *Long live the Great Japanese Empire! Our army's victorious attack on Seonghwan* (*Dai Nihon Teikoku banbanzai Seikan shōgeki waga gun taishō no zu*).¹⁷³ As explained already in the introduction, the print is an excellent example of how the Japanese and their enemies are commonly depicted in the *ukiyo-e* created of the war. The Japanese troops are in the focus of the picture, shooting at the retreating Chinese who can barely be seen among the smoke of the gunpowder. The Rising Sun is in a central position in the image, catching the viewer's attention. An interesting detail are the civilians on the lower right corner. They appear to be reporters and artists, taking notes of the battle and capturing it on the paper. Some of them are even named, but none of the names match Mizuno's name (水野年方) so it does not seem like he would have placed himself in the picture.

These civilians could be military observers sent by diplomatic representations, which was the usual way of learning about new strategies. Fröhlich however notes that the Sino-Japanese War did not draw all that much attention in the West at first. It was seen as a limited military conflict between two regional powers, whereas at the same time the situation of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire was more directly related to European colonial policy and received way more coverage in Europe and America. This changed as the war continued and Japan won battle after battle, surprising the West with how one-sided this conflict between two supposedly equally matched opponents was turning out.¹⁷⁴

It is more likely that these people in the picture are reporters and illustrators: Ichimura confirms that such were sent to accompany armies so they could document what they saw. *Ukiyo-e* artists typically were not among them; they had to rely on other sources in their creation. At the time of its publication, this piece by Mizuno was the only print depicting civilians that participated in war events by reporting about them.¹⁷⁵

Western-style military uniforms and modern weaponry of the Japanese are well-displayed in this image. The Chinese are armed with less advanced weapons and only one gun is visible on their side of the picture. However not everything about the Japanese is Western: the soldiers whose feet are shown are wearing Japanese sandals. Fröhlich reminds that while Japanese prints normally did not explicitly denigrate the foe, the uniformity, modern weapons, short haircuts and the central

¹⁷³ JACAR & British Library; "Hurrah! Hurrah! For the Great Japanese Empire! Great Victory for Our Troops in the Assault on Seonghwan" Created in 1894 by Mizuno Toshikata (see image on page 10).

¹⁷⁴ Fröhlich, 2014. 217.

¹⁷⁵ Ichimura, 2016. 1, 9-10.

positioning of the Rising Sun flag still gives a clear contrast to the varying clothing, archaic weapons, long hair and the general confusion of the Chinese.¹⁷⁶

Kobayashi Kiyochika's print *The Japanese army victorious at the Battle of Seonghwan* (*Seikan ni oite Nisshin gekisen waga hei taishō no zu*) was also published in August 1894 while the other named *The assault at the Ford of Ancheng during the Battle of Asan* (*Gazan gekisen Anjō-watashi shingeki no zu*) was published in September 1894. In the first one the Japanese are assaulting fortress of the Chinese with cannons and infantry. Their uniforms are similar like those in Mizuno's print, including the sandals as a part of the otherwise Western attire. Only the officer on horseback is wearing black boots.¹⁷⁷

The Japanese soldiers appear serious and focused on the battle. On their feet lying down are some Chinese soldiers pictured up close and clearly, distinguishable from the Japanese because of their light blue clothing, turbans and long queye-hairdos. Most of them appear to be dead or dying, while one seems to be begging for mercy from the Japanese man who is harshly dragging another Chinese prisoner by pulling his hair. This Chinese is wearing different, richer attire than the others, which could mean he is someone of higher rank.

The print's title and the depicted assault on the Chinese reveals to the viewer that the Japanese won the fight, but an interesting question that might arise is the fate of the Chinese prisoners: they are in a rather central position in the picture so one might wonder how the image's story continues for them. Were they perhaps interrogated, executed or ransomed, or what became of them? Official documents and other sources might tell what happened to captured enemies during the war, but in a picture like this what is not directly shown is left to viewer's interpretation. The newspapers had called for a merciful treatment of civilians, but enemy soldiers were whole another matter. Whatever was done to them was likely interpreted as justified in the situation of war.

¹⁷⁶ Fröhlich, 2014. 230-234.

¹⁷⁷ “The Japanese army victorious at the Battle of Seonghwan” created by Kobayashi Kiyochika in 1894. See image on page ; “The assault at the Ford of Ancheng during the Battle of Asan” created by Kobayashi Kiyochika in 1894. See image on page 44.



"The Japanese army victorious at the Battle of Seonghwan" by Kobayashi Kiyochika, August 1894.

The flower on officer's saddle cloth is difficult to recognize with certainty, but one possibility might be chrysanthemum. As explained by Fält and Tuovinen, chrysanthemum flower is the symbol of imperial family, rising sun and immortality. It, just like peony, reminds of hope and wish for long age. Nature plays an important role in Japanese art and conveys many symbolic meanings to the viewer.¹⁷⁸ In the warprints nature symbols are not very widely present, but what is depicted most likely has a thoughtful significance.

The second print by Kobayashi depicts fighting after night has fallen, and the explosions and smoke of the battle are coloured in bright and warm shades, clearly rising amid otherwise dark and calm picture.¹⁷⁹ A unit of mounted soldiers is looking at the combat taking place on the other side of the river, and silhouettes of Japanese infantry crossing the river can be seen. A few riders are also galloping towards the water, followed by cannons being brought closer. The men in the focus of the picture have a Rising Sun flag with them, and it is gently waving in the wind. The urgency of the battle and calmness of the night blend together in a fascinating manner.

¹⁷⁸ Fält, 2002. 102; Tuovinen, 2002. 194, 232.

¹⁷⁹ "The assault at the Ford of Ancheng during the Battle of Asan" created by Kobayashi Kiyochika in 1894. See image on page 45.



"The assault at the Ford of Ancheng during the Battle of Asan" by Kobayashi Kiyochika, September 1894.

Overall these three prints are quite similar in their depictions and have many repeating themes and symbols, even though the exact subjects and events shown vary a bit. An interesting notion is that not only the Japanese but also the Chinese saw the results of Seonghwan and Asan as a victory, or at least wanted to present them as such. One of the Chinese prints of the event, created in 1894 by an anonymous artist, is titled *News of the victory at Asan (Yashan jie Bao)*¹⁸⁰. While the Japanese won at Seonghwan the situation was not a complete loss for the Chinese either since they managed to move on before getting into an unfavourable situation at Asan, thus avoiding more losses. It is understandable that both sides wanted to put emphasis on the successful side of the matter, showing themselves as a victor.

¹⁸⁰ "News of the victory at Asan" created by an unknown Chinese artist in 1894. See image on page 46.



"News of the victory at Asan" by an unknown Chinese artist in 1894.

The Chinese print is quite different from the Japanese ones. Instead of showing the battle by focusing on a more specific group of soldiers this image depicts the combat from up, almost like from a bird's point of view, showing both sides of the conflict equally much. Only a few colours are used, mainly bright red and light, grey-ish blue. Red is used on most of the jackets of the Chinese soldiers and on a few Japanese ones, to those appearing to be officers. The colour is likely used in place of black, since in the Japanese prints the Japanese are wearing white or sometimes black uniforms. The sun in Japan's flags are left white, while the Chinese flags are coloured. This could be either an oversight or a genuine statement since clearly it would have been possible to use red on the suns had the artist chosen to do so. The fort can be seen in the distance at the upper left corner. The gear of each side seems to be pretty consistent with the Japanese images, but this time both sides are shown shooting at each other and from watching this picture without considering the title it would be hard to know which side is winning.

An exciting detail is the lone riding person in the lower left corner, being the only one depicted on horseback. He seems to be approaching the three Japanese men gathered around a cannon without them paying any attention to him, while one of the Chinese soldiers with a shield is looking at the rider instead of the Japanese. The rider could be a Chinese hero about to surprise the Japanese, but his position on the side of the picture does not put much emphasis on him so that might not be the case.

It was already mentioned that normally in Japanese prints the Chinese were not purposefully demonized or degenerated. Chinese artists often used same elements as the Japanese but turned the narrative the other way: the uniformity and Western equipment of the Japanese became a symbol of superficial mimicry instead of modernity, a weakness instead of a strength. Chinese narratives regarding the Japanese often focused on showing Japanese soldiers in feeble and morally bad situations, such as freezing to death in their uniforms, suffering from lack of supplies or using prostitutes.¹⁸¹ *News of Victory at Asan* does not take such stance, instead showing both sides in relatively equal standing.

Another difference between Japanese and Chinese images was the concept of humanitarianism. Japan had signed up to the Geneva Convention 1886 and its Red Cross Society was under “the special protection” of Empress Haruko. While Japan had general conscription, Red Cross Society and the concept of neutral aid service to the wounded soldiers, Chinese army was still a professional army and such humanitarian concepts were not widely present. In Japanese art humanitarianism was used as propaganda, a way to show own side in a good, civilized light, while the Chinese often misunderstood these messages for something else.¹⁸²

Following these battles Japan and China declared war on August 1st 1894.¹⁸³ According to writers of the *Weekly Mail*, the declaration of war on was “hailed by the nation with universal joy and enthusiasm.” Tokyo papers agreed that the war should not be ended until China had been “completely humbled” and many called for an attack to Beijing¹⁸⁴ itself. The *Hochi Shimbun* and several other papers noted that Japan winning the war would be beneficial to China as well, because if it agreed to Japan's terms, a lasting peace could be achieved in East Asia. The *Hochi* even stated that it was unnecessary to talk about land and war indemnity to be demanded of China since Japan's sole ambition was to “serve the purpose of permanent peace and progress in this part of the world”. Some newspapers like the *Kokkai* suggested that Japan “as the most civilized nation in Asia” should reform not only Korea but also China. This would protect China from the “onward march of the aggressive powers of the West”.¹⁸⁵

Instead of painting China simply as an enemy to be crushed the common narrative was that China's

¹⁸¹ Fröhlich, 2014. 231-33.

¹⁸² Fröhlich, 2014. 242-243.

¹⁸³ JACAR & British Library.

¹⁸⁴ Peking in the papers.

¹⁸⁵ Japan Weekly Mail, August 4th & 11th 1894.

conservative politics would be its downfall, and Japan as the most advanced country in East Asia had the right and even responsibility to reform its less civilized neighbours. Japan's goal was a peaceful and more unified East Asia that could stand up to Western powers, but this unity and strength should be achieved under Japan's own terms. The opinions regarding the actual war efforts against China were stronger in expression: most papers agreed that the war should not be ended until China was utterly defeated because if it was not, it could pose troubles to Japan later.

Despite this noble narrative of bringing peace by enlightening less modernized neighbours, negative attributes were assigned to China and the Chinese as well. Vernacular press disagreed on what kinds of methods were acceptable in this war. The *Mainichi* for example pressed that the Chinese were universally known to be treacherous and faithless in their politics, and thus it would not be wise to “stick to the enlightened rules of modern international law”.¹⁸⁶ So while some papers had expressed their compassion towards the civilians, some thought that against a dishonourable foe all tactics could be justly applied.

As for the involvement of the Japanese at home front, newspapers praised a project where principal citizens of Tokyo collected voluntarily contributions toward the war expenses. The *Mainichi Shimbun* alone stated that even though this patriotic gesture was to be appreciated, a war fund should be collected by the state by its own measures because accepting private donations would be prejudicial to the “true interests of the country”. Instead the paper encourages people to use the money to aid families of the soldiers fighting for Japan and to support the Red Cross Society.¹⁸⁷

3.2. Victories for the Japanese and the task to enlighten neighbours: Success in war and Japanese views on other nations

In early September 1894 Weekly Mail reported that several newspapers had changed their opinion of the war. It was too premature to talk about specific conclusions to the war, as it seemed like Japanese army would have to delve deeper into Chinese territory before it would be over. The general opinion was that Japan should not agree to negotiations until China had been “completely humbled and crushed”.¹⁸⁸ As the war progressed such narrative remained dominant among the vernacular press, as we will see in this thesis. Also it is interesting that while the warprints did not specifically demonize

¹⁸⁶ Japan Weekly Mail, August 11th, 1894.

¹⁸⁷ Japan Weekly Mail, August 4th, 1894.

¹⁸⁸ Japan Weekly Mail, September 1894 (specific date difficult to determine as the page has been damaged).

the foe, some of the newspapers were very vocal in listing negative traits of the Chinese or the Koreans as well as describing how these peoples were in many ways less civilized than the Japanese. This difference in the level of modernity and power allowed Japan to enforce its right to enlighten its neighbours (as the idea was presented in the press) and thus ensure a lasting peace in the East.

On September 13th 1894 a wave of patriotic feelings swept across the country as the Emperor journeyed to Hiroshima because the Imperial Military Headquarters was moved there. Crowds of citizens had gathered to see their Sovereign during his progression. Papers wondered for how long His Majesty would remain in Hiroshima, and whether the military headquarters would be moved further into West, even into Chinese territory as the war progressed.¹⁸⁹ This event was an excellent example of how important a figure Emperor Meiji had at that point become. According to the *Weekly Mail's* report, witnessing the sight as well as the fact that the Emperor himself was willing to sacrifice the luxury of his palace in favour of attending to military matters better in person raised patriotic spirit among the Japanese. In this way the Emperor was leading by example, becoming an inspiration for his people and in return receiving respect from them.

Later in September the *Nichi Nichi* noted that the most important thing was that the Emperor himself was overseeing the war efforts from Hiroshima, from a temporary lodging instead of his palace. The *Yomiuri* continued that the two Houses should focus on congratulating His Majesty on his victories at the sea and on the land, and bless him for his moral influence “which is enough to make each and all of his subjects to smile even in death for his sake, and which augments an army's strength a hundred times”.¹⁹⁰ The Emperor was not just the ruler of the country: he was a symbol that represented the nation. Japan's victories were the Emperor's victories, and the Emperor's existence inspired his soldiers and the citizens at home.

Battle of Pyongyang took place in September 15th 1894.¹⁹¹ Already on 15th the *Weekly Mail* reported that fighting had most likely begun in Pyongyang, and therefore further news were expected. Japanese papers pressed that Japan should not accept anything less than China's complete defeat. One of the main reasons for this was the fear of China asking European powers to mediate in peace negotiations. The *Jiji* said that if Western powers intervened, they would aim to negotiate a peace according to their own commercial interests. That would most likely lead to Japan gaining less than it had hoped to win in the war, which was why the *Jiji* stated that Japan should not agree to these kinds of pleas for

¹⁸⁹ Japan Weekly Mail, September 15th, 1894.

¹⁹⁰ Japan Weekly Mail, September 29th, 1894.

¹⁹¹ Fröhlich, 2014. 217; JACAR & British Library.

peace.¹⁹² These narratives were shared by many papers as we will soon see, and the arguments got stronger as the war progressed: whatever happened Japan should only accept China's complete defeat and reap the fruits of its justified victory. Western powers were outsiders who only looked to gain something for themselves, and in Japanese opinion they should stay out of the war.

Pyongyang was the first major land battle of the war.¹⁹³ All three artists studied in this thesis created pieces of this event: Mizuno and Ogata one each, Kobayashi two. Each of these works depicts Japanese victory over the Chinese. "*The Japanese army takes the enemy fortress at Pyongyang*" (平壤攻撃我軍敵壘ヲ抜ク *Heijō kōgeki waga gun tekirui o nuku*) by Mizuno, "*Japanese victory at the Battle of Pyongyang*" (平壤激戦我軍大勝利之図 *Heijō gekisen waga gun daishōri no zu*) by Kobayashi and "*The great victory at Pyongyang during the Sino-Japanese War*" (日清戦争平壤大捷ノ図 *Nisshin sensō Heijō taishō no zu*) by Ogata each show a scene in the middle of the battle.¹⁹⁴

The title of Mizuno's print emphasizes the battle and the actions of the Japanese army: successfully conquering the enemy base. The picture depicts a hectic combat scene where Japanese soldiers, dressed in white uniforms, shoot at the Chinese dressed in blue-red uniforms and white turbans. The Japanese appear organized and focused, while the Chinese are clearly losing ground, some of them falling over, dying, attempting to escape or just generally panicking and looking confused. Only one of the Chinese soldiers in the picture is shown shooting at the Japanese, wearing an expression that could be recognized as determined, desperate or angry. One of his comrades-in-arms has raised a rather archaic-looking shield to protect himself. In general the Chinese seem to have more or less miscellaneous weapons at their disposal, while the Japanese are each equipped with similar guns with bayonets. Overall it is the usual organised Japanese versus the chaotic Chinese-depiction that is typically seen in these warprints.

Two Japanese officers – recognizable by their black uniforms – are depicted in a more central position, giving orders or inspiring their troops. Instead of guns they are holding swords: the traditional sign of a warrior. Their gestures make them look heroic, leading their troops at the front by example, but at the same time they do not stand out so much from their fellow Japanese. All of them are in it together. The Rising Sun flag is once again present and in a central position, and so is a cannon.

¹⁹² Japan weekly Mail, September 15th, 1894.

¹⁹³ JACAR & British Library.

¹⁹⁴ "The Japanese army takes the enemy fortress at Pyongyang" created by Mizuno Toshikata in September 1894. See image on page 51; "Japanese victory at the Battle of Pyongyang" created by Kobayashi Kiyochika in October 1894. See image on page 52; "The great victory at Pyongyang during the Sino-Japanese War" created by Ogata Gekkō in 1894. See image on page 53.

Interestingly the cannon is placed facing the Japanese and smoke coming from it indicates it has been fired recently, but there are no injured or dead among the Japanese. The war is cruel but the Japanese soldiers are shown triumphing and overcoming the difficulties, heroically winning the day. Ichimura points out that in warprints modern and traditional themes are both used: modern technology and uniforms are shown, but the soldiers might also pick up a sword and be depicted like the samurai of old¹⁹⁵. Ichimura also notices a difference in depictions of land and naval battles: with land engagements more traditional warrior themes are often deployed, while pictures of naval combat focus on showing modern warfare in action.¹⁹⁶



"The Japanese army takes the enemy fortress at Pyongyang" by Mizuno Toshikata, September 1894.

Kobayashi's "*Japanese victory at the Battle of Pyongyang*" is very similar to Mizuno's in many ways. It also depicts a combat scene with organized, determined Japanese soldiers winning against the Chinese, who are seen lying dead or dying at the feet of the Japanese, and far away covered by the smoke from gunpowder. The commanding officer is shown heroically in the middle of the scene, standing higher than the rest of the men, sword in his hand and facing the enemy bravely. This picture shows a battle after nightfall, fullmoon casting its light despite some clouds in the deep-blue sky. A major difference compared to Mizuno's piece is the lack of the Rising Sun flag, but perhaps its colours would clash with the dominantly blue piece. Ichimura comments on colours used in prints on various occasions. For example in Mizuno's "*The Japanese army takes the enemy fortress at Pyongyang*" a

¹⁹⁵ Ichimura, 2016. 156.

¹⁹⁶ Ichimura, 2016. 156.

few more brightly coloured details, such as the red Rising Sun flag, draw attention, but otherwise calm colours are preferred¹⁹⁷.



"Japanese victory at the Battle of Pyongyang" by Kobayashi Kiyochika, October 1894.

The Rising Sun is present in Ogata's piece, further in the back but still clearly visible, as are Japan's flags in general. They are shown flying on the walls of the fortress, hinting that this scenario happens just after the Japanese have taken the fort. A similar shield like in Mizuno's print is seen lying in the water. Ogata's piece differs from the first two in the way that instead of showing a conflict between troops of soldiers it focuses on lone Japanese soldier making his way through the battlefield while the larger conflict is going on in the background. He is ducking while running, as if he is either dodging bullets or stumbling down after jumping over the body of a Chinese man. Once again the Chinese are shown dying or in trouble, and their flag is lying on the ground, scrambled, unlike the victorious Japanese flags up at the fort. Considering the context this scene could be the Japanese soldier's last heroic push in the final moments of the battle. Ichimura notes that the image could depict Chinese soldiers escaping after the fortress fell, and the Japanese chasing them¹⁹⁸.

¹⁹⁷ Ichimura, 2016. 68.

¹⁹⁸ Ichimura, 2016. 90-91.



"The great victory at Pyongyang during the Sino-Japanese War" by Ogata Gekkō, 1894.

Kobayashi's second piece, "Long Live Japan! : Victory song at Pyongyang" (日本万歳: 平壤之凱歌 *Nihon banzai: Heijō no gaika*) shows Japanese men singing a joyous victory song following the conclusion of the battle.¹⁹⁹ Even the horse is happily neighing along. Many Chinese men lie at the feet of the Japanese dead or dying, but for the Japanese the general feeling of the scenario is happy. Like in Kobayashi's other piece it is night and fullmoon is on the sky. No Rising Sun flag is present in this image either, but the Japanese have a flag with red and black wavy lines on it. It might be the sign of this particular troops. One of the soldiers is waving around a Chinese hat placed at the top of his bayonet, as if a flag of victory. One of the Chinese men still alive is shaking his fist while looking at the soldiers with the hat, likely offended at the mockery. Ichimura pays a lot of attention to the cruelty and disdain shown to the Chinese in this image, and mentions that such approach was the typical way of depicting the opponent²⁰⁰. Ichimura also points out how the title of the print speaks about a victory at Pyongyang, yet the image itself includes no clues about any specific location. It seems as if darkness is clearing above the Japanese.²⁰¹ The depiction of a dawn breaking with the victory of the Japanese further amplifies the sensation of triumph.

Despite the rather graphic violence depicted in the picture, if we focus on the more humoristic aspects of the image like the "singing" horse, this is a good place to point out that Kobayashi produced a lot

¹⁹⁹ "Long Live Japan! : Victory song at Pyongyang" created by by Kobayashi Kiyochika in October 1894. See image on page 54.

²⁰⁰ Ichimura, 2016. 18, 91.

²⁰¹ Ichimura, 2016. 91.

of humoristic pieces. As a related sidenote, *ukiyo-e* tradition had its part to play in the development of Japanese comic, manga.²⁰²



"Long Live Japan! : Victory song at Pyongyang" by Kobayashi Kiyochika, October 1894.

Around the time the *Jiji* commented that should a peace party arise in Japan it would most likely be formed of mercantile class because even if they possessed the virtues of patriotism to some degree, that spirit was not as strong in them as it was in other social classes who were "ever ready to sacrifice life and property for the sake of their Sovereign and their country". Therefore *Jiji* encouraged merchants to suffer temporarily and wait patiently for peace when trade would "revive with redoubled force".²⁰³

Trade suffered because of the war and thus the writers of *Jiji* suspected that the mercantile class might not share as strong patriotic spirit as many other Japanese. To keep them loyal and supportive of the war they were reminded that their losses would only be temporary and their suffering be rewarded richly later. The statements about the Japanese ready to sacrifice their life and property for the Emperor and for Japan are powerful, and embody Anderson's idea of a nation as a community where majority of its members recognize the responsibilities of their own and those of the others, in an extreme situation such as war enabling a person to be willing to lay down his life for the sake of the nation and its values. It can be also said that the writer of *Jiji* saw that the merchants had their own

²⁰² Tuovinen, 2002. 188.

²⁰³ Japan weekly Mail, September 15th, 1894.

role in Japanese society and while their attitude towards the war might not have been completely favourable, they were an important part of the community and thus they were spoken to.

Following the victory at Pyongyang, the *Jiyu Shimbun*, which *Weekly Mail* clarified to be a radical organ, stated that Japan's path now was to march to Beijing and dictate terms of peace: “We have no doubt that such is the unanimous opinion of the whole people. We shall not hesitate to denounce as a traitor any body who may at this juncture advocate the conclusion of a peace with the enemy.” Then the *Jiyu Shimbun* continued to emphasize how important it was for the modern civilization and general peace of the East to deliver a lasting blow to China.²⁰⁴ As will be brought up later in this thesis, the call for Japanese troops to take over Beijing and decide the terms of peace itself was a sentiment shared by many Japanese papers and that statement was made over and over again during the war. Similarly the papers shared the idea that Japan was fighting this war to build a lasting peace in Asia. In this narrative China was a constant troublemaker who had to be properly put to its place so it could not disturb the peace any longer. What separates the *Jiyu Shimbun* from most others was its aggressive tone: a person who would ask for peace before these goals were achieved was not a true citizen of Japan but a traitor to his or her country.

The *Mainichi Shimbun*, in agreement with other papers, considered that Chinese defeat at Pyongyang would give Japan an advantage in the war. The *Weekly Mail* noted that The *Mainichi Shimbun* had usually been known as more pacifist paper yet it now spoke in an aggressive tone, just like the political party behind it, *Kaishin-to*, clamoured for aggressive tactics. The *Mainichi Shimbun* stated that Japan was now determined to ensure its place as the one to oversee Korean independence, which would give Japan a commanding position in the East and raise its prestige in the eyes of the Western powers. The *Kokumin Shimbun* was angry with Western powers that had judged Japan's actions, reminding them that Japan's cause was the same that England had used when it had taken Egypt under its protection: the right of civilization to conquer barbarism.²⁰⁵

Japanese papers considered Korean reforms to be moving onwards slowly, and stated that for reforms to be able to happen Koreans should perceive Japan as superior to China, which made it even more important to reduce China to “a state of complete helplessness”.²⁰⁶ If Japan defeated China utterly, Koreans would see which one of its neighbours was stronger and would be more willing to submit to its suggestions. Also if China was made “completely helpless” it would not even have the resources

²⁰⁴ Japan weekly Mail, September 15th, 1894.

²⁰⁵ Japan Weekly Mail, September 15th, 1894.

²⁰⁶ Japan Weekly Mail, September 15th, 1894.

to properly intervene even if Koreans preferred them over the Japanese.

On September 22nd *The Weekly Mail* gathered the vernacular press' opinions on Pyongyang. The Japanese press had feared that a victory in Pyongyang would be the beginning of premature peace talks, and therefore the papers urged Japan to keep fighting until China was utterly crushed. The *Nippon* sneered at the “ignorance displayed by the Western nations about the actual conditions of Japan” when they expressed surprise over Japanese successes in the war. According to *The Nippon* to the Japanese themselves these victories did not mean anything yet: Japan would take Port Arthur and Weihaiwei and dictate terms of peace to China. The *Nippon* feared that jealousy would prompt the Western powers to interfere with negotiations, which Japan would not forgive.²⁰⁷ Again the Western powers were seen as parties that would unjustly interfere with matters that did not concern them: the war was between Japan and China, and Japan wanted to conduct the peace in the way it saw fitting. Even more so the Western powers were “ignorant” in regards of Japan: they had not expected the war to go the way it had and found Japan's overwhelming power hard to believe while the Japanese themselves were confident in their nation's strength.

Another subject that had gotten the attention of Japanese press around the time was the matter of Shanghai being a neutral territory. Japanese papers claimed that they had sources saying that the Chinese government had been using Shanghai to warlike purposes such as importing arms and ammunition and enlisting foreign adventurers. If China was indeed conducting wartime operations through Shanghai, Japan too would be justified to overlook the city's status as neutral territory.²⁰⁸ Over the course of the war a recurring theme among the press was the question of what was justified in war and what was not. The International Law provided a clear, modern set of rules to defer to, but more apparent was the opinion that if China did not abide by those rules, Japan too had the license to conduct acts that would otherwise have been seen as unjust or dishonourable. Still there was no single, widely shared opinion on this matter and therefore the discussion was brought up every now and then in following months.

Several papers discussed war indemnity that China should pay as a price for peace. China's ability to pay large sums was doubted. The *Kokkai* suspected that while China might agree to pay a larger sum in yearly instalments over a course of long period, that would not be agreeable to Japan as the purpose was to cripple China so that it would be unable to go to war with Japan for a long time.²⁰⁹ The war

²⁰⁷ Japan Weekly Mail, September 22nd, 1894.

²⁰⁸ Japan Weekly Mail, September 15th, 1894.

²⁰⁹ Japan Weekly Mail, September 22nd, 1894.

had begun favourably for Japan and it had crushed its opponent already in several engagements on land and on the sea. The question was not whether Japan would win; that much seemed obvious to the press, and that confidence showed. The real question was how much Japan should take from China, and the matter of war indemnity was discussed a lot for as long as the war continued. The *Kokkai's* call to cripple China economically so that it would be unable to wage war with Japan for a good while was another example of the mentality that to win this war right, Japan should aim to devastate its foe and therefore ensure its own growing status in Asia.

The *Chu-o* noted that the government and the people were united in the opinion of the war and therefore there was no need to hold a special session at the time. The members of the Diet were advised to go to Hiroshima to offer congratulations to the Emperor on his birthday.²¹⁰ The war had raised spirits and (at least according to The *Chu-o*) essentially everyone agreed on it which was why the field of politics was harmonious at the time. In October the *Weekly Mail* analysed that in the eve of the approaching opening of the Diet the vernacular press would have normally been colourful with opinions, but because of the war essentially all of them were united in their views: “The Bible itself could not be more peaceful or liberal in its language”. All agreed that the Houses should bury their old animosities and focus on prosecuting the war in a manner the authorities deemed best for Japan.²¹¹ Later in October when the special session was held the decisions on war budget were passed easily: the work of the Houses was so effective that the *Weekly Mail* applauded how well the Japanese could work with constitutional government, especially compared to earlier sessions.²¹²

English statesman Lord Randolph Churchill paid a visit to Japan in September 1894, which attracted a lot of positive attention from the press. According to the *Weekly Mail* the Japanese papers encouraged people to “do every honour to so distinguished a visitor” and wished that he would carry away with him “a stock of unbiased knowledge about this country”. It was hoped that Churchill would see how patriotic the Japanese were, how suited they were for constitutional government and how they were different from their neighbours in the West.²¹³ “The neighbours in the West” in this context likely means the Chinese and the Koreans, considering geography and the war, although the Japanese often compared themselves to the Europeans and Americans as well. The comparison is different in the way that in often repeated narratives the Japanese were described as more modern, enlightened and in many ways superior to other peoples in Asia, while Europe and America were from where Japan had learnt its modern technologies and ideas. Therefore the problem seemed to be that even

²¹⁰ Japan Weekly Mail, September 22nd, 1894.

²¹¹ Japan Weekly Mail, October 6th, 1894.

²¹² Japan Weekly Mail, October 27th, 1894.

²¹³ Japan Weekly Mail, September 22nd, 1894.

though Japan was superior to the Western powers as well (or at the very least equal with them), it at the same time had to prove itself to them. While the Western powers had been described as ignorant and troublesome by some writers, in this event it was important to give a good impression of Japan and the Japanese so that the message of their virtues would spread in the world.

The *Nippon*, The *Kokumin* and The *Mainichi* and many other papers all agreed that even though a lot depended on Japan's military success, diplomacy would be needed. One paper stated that it would be unwise for Western powers to support China whose “weakness and barbarism” they had already witnessed, and that China at its present state was a country that “all rational men should despise as the enemy of human nature itself”. The *Kokkai* considered Japanese victories as dawn of civilization in Asia at large, and condemned China as the enemy of civilization and enlightenment. The *Jiji* suspected that the “ostrich-like” ministers in China were not even aware of their losses at the sea and on the land, and would only stop dreaming of the strength and greatness of China and ask for peace “after the gates of Peking have been blown in by the Japanese.”²¹⁴ Painting a mental image of Chinese ministers as “ostriches” parading about their country's long lost glory while ignorant to its present state was a colourful expression about how civilized and more aware of the world Japan was in comparison to China and how the Chinese leaders would only face the truth when forced to do so by the Japanese.

The *Mainichi* also commented on English and Russian papers that had stated that Japan's goal in the ongoing war was to annex Korea. The *Mainichi* answered that while there may be people in Japan who dream of annexing China further in future, the goal of present war was not to absorb Korea.²¹⁵ Reforming it according to Japanese values and interests was another matter, one often discussed by the papers. Later The *Mainichi* further reminded that Japan was not waging war out of lust for conquest but for the better of everyone: should China be truly opened, all countries, even China herself, would enjoy even more fruitful trade than they already did.²¹⁶ In October the vernacular press praised the efforts of the Red Cross Society, thinking that it would be most effective in reforming the hearts of the Chinese and give China a lesson on benefits of civilization and general progress.²¹⁷ These are excellent examples on the narrative of Japan fighting a righteous war for the greater good: everyone would benefit if China was weakened and its eyes opened to see the error of its ways. Japan did not wish to see itself as the kind of warmonger the press painted China as, but instead a harbinger of civilization, modernity and peace. These were good arguments to use when justifying the war to

²¹⁴ Japan Weekly Mail, September 29th, 1894.

²¹⁵ Japan Weekly Mail, September 29th, 1894.

²¹⁶ Japan Weekly Mail, October 27th, 1894.

²¹⁷ Japan Weekly Mail, October 27th, 1894.

the people in Japan and in other countries alike.

The *Yomiuri* reminded that the events of the war might lead to Japan taking an important role in the stage of the world. The *Niroku Shimpo* urged the Houses not to be dazzled by military victories, as a country's status “does not depend more upon military strength than upon intellectual merit.” The *Hochi Shimbun* went to lengths to prove that China had waged many wars in modern times, and thus deserved the punishment.²¹⁸ In November The *Kokumin* declared that it was time for all the Japanese to broaden their view about the world because now Japan was stepping up to the stage of international politics the way it had not done before. The war was an example of Japan's military, technological and political advances as a modern nation and it would change her status in the world.²¹⁹ The press agreed that the ongoing Sino-Japanese war was a turning point in the history of Asia; a chance for Japan to prove itself and take its place among the powers of the world. To that end Japan should focus not only its military but also intellectual power so that it could succeed in the world of international politics.

The *Hochi* claimed that the Chinese were “the worst governed people in the world” and consequently easy to “bring under a foreign yoke”. They also lacked strong national pride visible in the French, the German, the English or the Japanese, which was why they would have fared well under the “mild and civilized rule of Japan”. The *Mainichi* joyed over the national pride displayed by the Japanese, and decided it was mainly due to two reasons: the establishment of constitutional government and conscription army. The *Nippon* presented an idea that the writers of the *Weekly Mail* commended: to ensure that the reforms in Korea would succeed Japan should first reform the spirit of the Koreans, and for that purpose Korean men should be brought with Japanese soldiers to fight in the war. The *Nippon* expected these Koreans to be useless as soldiers at first, but the experience would prove useful in the long term. The *Kokumin* reminded that the nation should not focus solely on military strength but also intellectual values, and that the youth should be educated in various ways they could serve their country in.²²⁰ Later The *Kokumin* stated that while the Chinese have had trouble governing themselves, should the burden of governing China fall to Japan, Japan would excel in it easily because of their talents in organization.²²¹

Here the West was seen in a positive light as it was from where Japan had gained its modern ideas. Japanese nationalism was being actively constructed and in comparison to that the Chinese were seen

²¹⁸ Japan Weekly Mail, October 6th, 1894.

²¹⁹ Japan Weekly Mail, November 3rd, 17th, 1894.

²²⁰ Japan Weekly Mail, October 6th, 1894.

²²¹ Japan Weekly Mail, November 3rd, 17th, 1894.

as disorganized and unenlightened. If Japan were to conquer China, the Chinese would live happily under its rule as their current state was pitiful compared to what Japan could offer them. Same mentality applied to the Koreans, who had to be awakened to see how listening to Japan would allow them to act in the best interests of Korea.

The *Jiji* described how the Koreans differed from the Japanese as a people, and suggested that while slow, education would be the best way towards reforms as the Koreans lacked the qualifications for progress and civilization.²²² The Korean reforms continued to be a much discussed topic in the following weeks as well.²²³ For example in late November the *Jiji* warned that the “crafty politicians of the Peninsula” might start thinking that Japan had no right to interfere with internal politics of an independent state as Korea was, and forget how much Japan had done in their favour.²²⁴ In December the *Kokumin* wrote that Korea was undoubtedly a thousand years behind Japan in progress, which made the task of reform challenging but that much more important.²²⁵ The main point was that the Koreans did not know what was best for them, so Japan would guide their way into modern world.

Ogata’s print “*Japanese negotiations’: Minister Ōtori arrives in Korea*” (日本譽談判：大鳥公使韓地向ふ *Nihon yodanpan: Ōtori Kōshi Kanchi ni mukau*) about a Japanese delegation to Korea is one of the few pieces of art in my material that depicts diplomacy.²²⁶ The Japanese men are shown wearing decorative Western-inspired outfits while the Koreans are dressed traditionally. They appear displeased or even shocked at what the Japanese are calmly suggesting while pointing at the document on the table. All save for the one Japanese man – supposedly minister Ōtori, who is also the one pointing at the paper – are sitting around the table as equals, but the calm, confident manner of the Japanese as well as minister Ōtori standing above everyone else gives the sense that he is leading the discussion, and that Japan has the upper hand in the negotiations. This piece goes well with the narrative favoured by Japanese press that Korea needed to be enlightened and modernized and Japan would be the best to oversee the process.

²²² Japan Weekly Mail, October 13th, 1894.

²²³ Japan Weekly Mail, October 27th, November 24th, 1894.

²²⁴ Japan Weekly Mail, November 24th, 1894.

²²⁵ Japan Weekly Mail, December 8th, 1894.

²²⁶ “*Japanese negotiations’: Minister Ōtori arrives in Korea*” created by Ogata Gekkō in December 1894. See image on page 61.



"Japanese negotiations: Minister Ōtori arrives in Korea" by Ogata Gekkō, December 1894.

As October turned to November, the vernacular press had lots to say about the weakness the Chinese had displayed in one battle after another. On November 3rd *The Weekly Mail* took up an especially colourful example by citing *The Hochi*. *The Hochi* went to lengths to describe how Chinese weapons of war had always been more about intimidation than killing; how they focused more on fine banners and parading around than actually winning wars. It was assumed that the harsh winter of Manchuria would prove greater challenge than the Chinese themselves. In the *Hochi* it was also written that China should be completely humbled because half-measures would not suffice to “arouse senile China from long lethargy and lead her into the path of civilization and enlightenment”. China was the great peace-disturber of the East, and for the sake of humanity, civilization and China herself Japan should not allow foreign intervention as it had been seen in the past that the half-measures applied by the Western powers were not effective enough in China; Japan should not listen to others until “the

Four Hundred Provinces of the colossal Kingdom have been made to recognize the glory of the 'Rising Sun'".²²⁷

While China was presented in rather uncivilized light its past greatness and vast size were acknowledged, which made it a worthy foe and Japan's victory against it commendable. The Rising Sun is a symbol that holds power in both textual and visual form: Japan was the land of the Rising Sun and that very same symbol was on its flag, and in this war Japan was figuratively aiming to bring forth a dawn to its less civilized neighbours.

In November Japanese papers focused on discussing what sort of terms of peace and war indemnity should be demanded of China. The vernacular press agreed that Japan should allow no foreign intervention in bringing the war to a conclusion, and that Japan should not go beyond what was necessary to achieve the purposes stated in the Imperial Declaration of War, to securing the integrity and independence of Korea and ensuring permanent peace in Eastern Asia. Where opinions differed was in territorial demands to be made to China and ensuring that China would not disturb Korea or the general peace in the East in the future.²²⁸

In late November 1894 The *Kokumin* reported China to have lost more than 6000 men in the war, and several papers expressed that the Chinese government should surrender and not ask for foreign intervention, for such would not work for Chinese interests either. The *Nippon* stated that "though Europe has many Christian men, it has not a solitary state so virtuous and upright in its dealings with its neighbours as to deserve the name of Christian".²²⁹ Western powers were presented as shrewd and only interested in their own gain. The *Nippon* concluded this opinion by nodding at all the times when a Western nation had not acted according to its Christian values. Japan was not a Christian country but there had been missionaries in the past and Japan had had a lot of dealings with Western people, so the writer at The *Nippon* possibly was aware of what those Christian values generally meant.

The *Kokkai* believed that all the Chinese brought under Japanese rule by conquest in Northern China had declared to be obedient and dutiful, and some of them even called Japan "our Japan" indicating that they were already genuine Japanese subjects. "Such a deficiency, nay absence, of national spirit, not to say patriotic fervour, proves the Chinese to be innate slaves, destined to grovel under the rule of a nobler race."²³⁰ It can be questioned how genuine it was when the Chinese of conquered regions

²²⁷ Japan Weekly Mail, November 3rd, 1894.

²²⁸ Japan Weekly Mail, November 3rd, 17th, 24th, 1894.

²²⁹ Japan Weekly Mail, November 24th, 1894.

²³⁰ Japan Weekly Mail, November 24th, 1894.

swore their loyalty to their conqueror, but spoken from the heart or not such message was useful for Japanese propaganda. These Chinese lacked the national spirit or patriotism as defined by the Japanese, which the writers of *Kokkai* presented in the light of the Chinese being “innate slaves” and subordinate to the “nobler race” of the Japanese.

The *Shin Choya* remarked that the care of the conquered territories should not be left to military: the new subjects were “little better than barbarians” and needed many guides to be led into the paths of progressive new life.²³¹ This was another notion about it being Japan's duty and call to civilise its less fortunate neighbours. While the war was won by military prowess, intellectual goals in China and in Korea would be achieved by gentler methods of education and governing.

In November, The *Mainichi* analysed the possible futures for China:

*“There has existed in China from the time immemorial a political idea, embodied in these words, 'The State is the State of the State and not the State of one man'. All Chinese political changes have been the result of that idea. Any one whose prowess or virtue or both were sufficient to force the people into submission could become Emperor of the Chinese.”*²³²

The writer concluded that China was not likely to suffer the same fate like other empires such as Rome, because in its history it had repeatedly experienced eras of anarchy followed by a new imperial dynasty as a suitable candidate made his way onto the throne. Furthermore while it would be preferable for Japan to make China “experience the sorrows of Poland”, that was not Japan's goal, and it would also prevent other powers from doing so.²³³ The difference between the Chinese Emperor and the Japanese Emperor is present in this statement. During its long history China had experienced several periods of chaos followed by the rise of a new imperial dynasty. Anyone could become the Emperor if the Gods considered their actions righteous enough.²³⁴ The title for the Emperor was *huangdi*, which meant “magnificent ruler” or even “magnificent god”.²³⁵ So the divine indication was there, yet it was still different from the Japanese Emperor who was descended from the Gods himself and the same dynasty had ruled Japan ever since mythical times.

In that article of *Mainichi*, Japan is shown in a noble light: it would benefit from destroying China,

²³¹ Japan Weekly Mail, December 15th, 1894.

²³² Japan Weekly Mail, November 24th, 1894.

²³³ Japan Weekly Mail, November 24th, 1894.

²³⁴ Wright, 2001. 18.

²³⁵ Wright, 2001. 47.

but such was not Japan's goal, and the writer was positive that after this troublesome era China would endure and go on like it had so many times before.

In late November 1894 the *Nippon* urged the public to pay more attention to matters other than war and diplomacy. In their opinion the people were too much consumed by the fervour for war when they should have paid more attention to more day-to-day matters.²³⁶ This suggests from its own part that the people were very much in high spirits regarding the war and focused on it so much that at least in this writer's opinion they neglected their regular responsibilities.

In late November 1894 in their article titled “China in Europe”, The *Kokumin* compared England to China, describing China as follows and then stating that England acted the same way:

*“It is characteristic of China to assume a haughty and arrogant mien towards other States, and to build air castles upon her historical and territorial greatness”.*²³⁷

From this point of view China and England both were seen as old powers too much focused on their great past while they should have paid more attention to their present state and the way they treated other states.

Following another Japanese victory at the Battle of Port Arthur the Japanese press congratulated the nation in union and shared the sentiment that at that point of the war China should not be allowed to negotiate, but forced to surrender.²³⁸ The *Shin Choya* continued that the victory at Port Arthur would surely raise Japan's status even higher in the eyes of the Western powers, and promised that “the walls of Peking will before long echo the stout steps of Japanese soldiers, and that the glory of the children of the Rising Sun will attain its zenith in the capital of the Tsing Sovereigns”.²³⁹

Kobayashi's “*The Battle at Jinzhoucheng on the way to Port Arthur*” (旅順道金州城戦 *Ryojundō Kinjūjō no tatakai*) is an example of the war efforts in the winter.²⁴⁰ Japanese men are advancing through the snowy forest, aiming at the enemy somewhere outside the boundaries of the picture. They seem to be observing the situation and making calculated choices, which shows a different side of the

²³⁶ Japan Weekly Mail, December 1st, 1894.

²³⁷ Japan Weekly Mail, December 29th, 1894.

²³⁸ Japan Weekly Mail, December 1st, 1894.

²³⁹ Japan Weekly Mail, December 8th, 1894.

²⁴⁰ “*The Battle at Jinzhoucheng on the way to Port Arthur*” created by Kobayashi Kiyochika in November 1894. See image on page 65.

war compared to the more hectic scenes right at the heart of the battle: here the direct enemy contact has not happened yet, and there is anticipation in the air. Instead of the sandals all men are wearing boots now, more suitable for the cold weather. Even though the battle scenes are often filled with action, there are also many prints like this where the general feeling is calm and the situation well under control.



“The Battle at Jinzhoucheng on the way to Port Arthur” by Kobayashi Kiyochika, November 1894.

Such is the piece Kobayashi created about the Battle of Port Arthur itself: “*The Japanese 2nd Army attacks Port Arthur*” (第二軍旅順口攻撃之図 *Dainigun Ryojunkō kōgeki no zu*).²⁴¹ A battle at night is depicted, shades of blue dominating the colour scheme. Orange fire and smoke in the distance bring a warmer contrast to the colours selected. A Japanese officer is overseeing his troops as they are shooting at the enemy in the horizon, behind a body of water. A heated combat is going on over there, visible to the viewer only via black silhouettes against the moon and the pale light casted by the fires. One might get the feeling of calm and control even though the picture depicts a battle; the Japanese soldiers on at the focus of the picture clearly know what they are doing and are in no danger themselves.

²⁴¹ “*The Japanese 2nd Army attacks Port Arthur*” created by Kobayashi Kiyochika in December 1894. See image on page 66.



“The Japanese 2nd Army attacks Port Arthur” by Kobayashi Kiyochika, December 1894.

The Port Arthur topic gained new shades in December as it had come to light that Japanese soldiers had treated civilians cruelly during and following the battle. The *Jiyu* defended the Japanese army and its actions by stating that the foreigners misinterpreted the situation about how Port Arthur had been taken. According to the *Jiyu* Port Arthur's defences had been planned so that the whole population played a part, and that most people in there were in fact soldiers or volunteers no matter how they may have looked like. What few women and children had been killed could be accounted to the general confusion of the battle. The *Nichi Nichi* pointed out how ridiculous and hypocritical the foreign attitudes were in their opinion: war is by nature cruel, and circumstances must be left to determine the number of lives lost.²⁴² The *Shin Choya Shimbun* offered the following statement:

“It is a regular habit with civilized Christians of the West to see no wrong in anything they do themselves to Oriental and other non-Christian races, and to be blind to every element of right or justice in the conduct of the men they call heretics. Nothing is more to be lamented by humane people than the destruction of innocent lives. Civilised Occidentals have often slaughtered Orientals and other heretics or savages, as though they were no better than fattened animals destined to die under the butcher's knife. During the past century, the history of savage nations that have come in contact with Christian Occidentals is all but written in blood. Our Second Army is railed against by Westerns, especially by Englishmen, on the ground that it wantonly killed a number of peaceable Chinese citizens at Port Arthur. But nothing could be more unfair than to denounce the whole Army as guilty

²⁴² Japan Weekly Mail, December 15th, 1894.

*of nefarious cruelty, because of some of its subordinate members went a little too far in their work of retaliation upon the barbarous Chinese. To cut a long story short, Occidentals ought to look at themselves in the mirror of Modern History, before they assert a title to attack the conduct of our soldiers at Port Arthur.”*²⁴³

Christianity had been mentioned in some texts before but in this article the religious differences play a large part. The writer pointed out that it was hypocritical of the “Civilized Occidentals” to blame the Japanese for cruelty in war when they had so many times before slaughtered and mistreated non-Christian people as if they were just “fatted animals destined to die under the butcher's knife”. A slaughtered animal is used for its meat and other properties, so this comparison could also be a nod towards the imperialist policies of the powerful nations: using others to gain something. The Asians together formed a group that the writer pitted against the Christian West (The Orientals versus the Occidentals), yet not all the Asian peoples were seen as equal: the Chinese were “barbarous” and in this narrative the Japanese soldiers were retaliating against them for something they had done first. The writer admits that perhaps some of these soldiers went too far but still the actions of a few should not put blame on the army as a whole. More so the Occidentals should “look at themselves in the mirror of Modern History” before they judged the Japanese.



“Fighting near Port Arthur” by Ogata Gekkō, November 1894.

²⁴³ Japan Weekly Mail, December 22nd, 1894.

In any case the Battle of Port Arthur was depicted in woodblock prints a lot. Ogata worked with the subject in three prints: *"Fighting near Port Arthur"* (旅順口附近激戦之図 *Ryojunkō fukin gekisen no zu*), *"Troops encamped in the mountains near Port Arthur honour the rising sun"* (旅順山間ニ露営將士日光ヲ拜ス図 (*Ryojun sankan ni roei shōshi nikkō o haisu*) and *"The fall of Port Arthur"* (旅順口陥落之図 *Ryojunkō kanraku no zu*).²⁴⁴ *"Fighting near Port Arthur"* and *"The fall of Port Arthur"* are both battle scenes. The first one depicts Japanese soldiers attacking Chinese troops from behind, taking them by surprise. The Japanese have a similar flag like in Kobayashi's *"Long Live Japan! : Victory song at Pyongyang"*, making it a repeating symbol in these prints. Weapons and shields of the Chinese are consistent with what we have seen in previous prints. The Chinese are once again shown losing, this time before they even properly realize they are under attack. Or it is also possible that this is not a surprise attack at all, but a scenario where the Japanese and the Chinese have already engaged with each other and the Chinese have attempted retreat, unsuccessfully.



"The fall of Port Arthur" by Ogata Gekkō, 1894.

"The fall of Port Arthur" takes place at the walls of the fortress. Chinese defenders are being overwhelmed by Japanese attackers, who seem to almost effortlessly cut their enemies down and push them away. A Chinese soldier appears to be begging for mercy of the Japanese soldier, who is approaching him with his sword raised ready to strike. Whether the Japanese soldier accepts his enemy's surrender is up to the viewer's imagination, but what is clear is that the Japanese are taking

²⁴⁴ *"Fighting near Port Arthur"* created by Ogata Gekkō in November 1894. See image on page 67; *"Troops encamped in the mountains near Port Arthur honour the rising sun"* created by by Ogata Gekkō in December 1894. See image on page 69; *"The fall of Port Arthur"* created by by Ogata Gekkō in 1894. See image on page 68.

the fort and winning the battle, as the title of the print suggests. Rising Sun flags can be seen flying on the masts of the ships in the horizon.



“Troops encamped in the mountains near Port Arthur honour the rising sun” by Ogata Gekkō, December 1894.

“Troops encamped in the mountains near Port Arthur honour the rising sun” depicts a moment of calm, and holds great symbolism: the sun is rising from behind the horizon and the soldiers greet it with respect. The matter of honouring the rising sun is present already in the title. The Rising Sun is Japan’s symbol, so the soldiers in this picture are not simply greeting the sun itself but honouring what it represents: Japan, their homeland. As we have seen so far, the Rising Sun has been the most repeated and powerful symbol both in *ukiyo-e* and the vernacular press. Everyone knew what it represented and with it is was possible to express both Japan’s beauty and virtues (like the peaceful, hopeful sunrise in Ogata’s creation) or its military strength (all the statements about Rising Sun flags decorating the walls of Beijing, for example). Ichimura suggests that since this print was published in December, it could also be meant as a lucky charm for the new year²⁴⁵. As discussed in more detail in the next chapter the New Year 1895 was welcomed in high spirits and with great hopes for Japan’s success.

Overall the latter part of the year 1894 was a thriving military success for Japan: it won many battles against China.²⁴⁶ The spirit was high among the vernacular press. It seemed clear that Japan was winning the war easily. The only questions revolved around how much to demand of China once it surrendered, and how important it was to avoid Western powers from getting involved in the process. Another important matter I have not gone into detail was the debate on war loan; how to pay for the

²⁴⁵ Ichimura, 2016. 121.

²⁴⁶ JACAR & British Library.

ongoing war. The discussion on that remained relevant in the Japanese press thorough Autumn 1894; for example the *Jiji* expressed that patriotism and money making were two separate things, which was why it should not be up to Japanese people to pay the price²⁴⁷.

In December The *Kokkai* was so confident about Japanese victory that it encouraged artists to start designing triumphant monuments that would be erected after the war. "The magestic arches and imposing statues in European Capitals and towns" were to be referred to for inspiration. The *Kokkai* also offered historical evidence as an encouragement that a winter campaign in China was possible, and therefore Japan should not halt for the winter months. "Rotten as China is, she may have vitality enough left to pull herself together".²⁴⁸ The *Kokkai's* call for patriotic public art was made again a few months later when Japan's victory looked even more likely. The *Kokkai* suggested the government to erect a triumphant arch to Tokyo, and statues of brave generals, admirals and others who had proven themselves heroic in the war. These monuments would be located just outside the Great Gate of the Imperial Palace, and they would serve to foster the martial spirit and patriotic sentiment of Japan's rising generation. Once more inspiration could be sought from European and American cities. The proposed triumphant arch would have famous battles and names of heroes inscribed on it, and it would be "the grand edifice fully characteristic of Japanese art".²⁴⁹

3.3. The Price for Peace: Conclusion of the War and peace negotiations

As the year turned to 1895, the *Weekly Mail* reported that the vernacular press had welcomed the new year traditionally, and other papers wrote in the same manner as the *Mainichi*. The *Weekly Mail* summarized what *Mainichi* said about the beginning year:²⁵⁰

"The New Year has come to renew everything. We cannot but feel glad. The flow of pleasurable sensation has limits, however. We can not drink the New Year's wine freely, for we find many a lesson of temperance in the facts that His Majesty is at Hiroshima superintending affairs of war in person, that there are no New Year's ceremonies and entertainments in the Imperial Household, and that the country's loyal and brave generals and soldiers are enduring great hardships and privations in Manchuria. Yet another thought strikes us, namely, that at no time have we ever had so much cause to rejoice, and so much reason to congratulate ourselves. Hitherto Europe was blind to Japan's true greatness and apt to slight her. Visitors from the civilized West saw the beauty of the rivers and

²⁴⁷ Japan Weekly Mail, December 1st, 1894.

²⁴⁸ Japan Weekly Mail, December 8th, 1894.

²⁴⁹ Japan Weekly Mail, March 9th, 1895.

²⁵⁰ Japan Weekly Mail, January 5th, 1895.

mountains of Japan and did not grudge her the pretty appellation of the 'Paradise of the East'. They praised the work of her painters and sculptors, and called her the leader of Art in Asia. Briefly, Europe loved but did not respect Japan. The Europeans befriended the Japanese but did not fear them. The history of the past thirty years has made Japan known to the West only by her Fujiyama and her lake Biwa, by her temples at Nikko and her brocades of Nishijin. But the war has brought a sudden and complete change in Europe's attitude towards Japan. This New Year's Day of the 28th year of Meiji is the beginning of not only of a new year, but also of a new era of Japanese greatness. An old saying has it that the embryo of the new year is in its opening day. The aphorism must be altered in the present case, the first day of 1895 contains a century in embryo."²⁵¹

The new year is a new beginning, and the future for Japan was deemed bright and glorious. There was a cause for celebration, yet also noble temperance, since His Majesty himself was showing example by focusing on the war effort rather than celebrating in his palace. It is noted that for years the Europeans have been affectionate of all things beautiful about Japan but have not seen the country as equal to their own; they have loved Japan but not respected her, befriended the Japanese but not feared them. The war and especially the beginning of the new year was seen as a turning point, a chance to show the world that Japan as a nation was as powerful and respectable as the other great powers. The aphorism at the end was a strong promise: the first day of 1895 would mark a beginning of a whole new glorious century.

The *Nippon* declared that in order to be truly great a state must be both rich and strong, which Japan should remember as it strived to be a truly great country.²⁵² The *Kokumin* praised the International Law and how Japan had lived up to it better than any other State:

*"International Law is Europe's gift to the world. But no nation has ever so fully recognized the sacredness of its principles and so faithfully carried them into execution as the Japanese. It is now patent to the world that the Emperor has distinctly ordered the nation to obey the tenets of International Law, and that the Japanese Army and Navy have succeeded in keeping within the bounds of that law."*²⁵³

They continued to suggest that after the war an assembly could be held in Japan so that new additions and amendments regarding the International Law could be discussed.²⁵⁴ Japan was not only claiming

²⁵¹ Japan Weekly Mail, January 5th, 1895.

²⁵² Japan Weekly Mail, January 5th, 1895.

²⁵³ Japan Weekly Mail, January 5th, 1895.

²⁵⁴ Japan Weekly Mail, January 5th, 1895.

a higher position in the world; in this opinion it should also be allowed in the table to negotiate new rules in the future. By noting that the International Law was “Europe’s gift to the world” and declaring Japan the protector of that said law, the writer made a statement that Japan was as civilized as Europe.

The *Mainichi Shimbun* declared that it would be beneficial for Japanese authorities to study the languages of their less progressive neighbours (the Chinese and the Koreans) so that they could in return be thought Japanese, which would increase Japanese influence in Asia.²⁵⁵ Meanwhile China had tried sending embassies to Japan to negotiate peace, but Japan had not been willing to open negotiations – which was the right move in the opinion of the vernacular press.²⁵⁶ The peace delegation received more press attention in the following weeks, the main opinion being that the Chinese had broken etiquettes by sending the envoy and that Japan should not prosecute the war yet. Overall the vernacular press said relatively little about the event, clearly taking a careful approach to the negotiations. In the *Choya Shimbun* China was called “old schemer” when pondering about its possible courses of action regarding the negotiations. The *Nichi Nichi* declared that Japan should receive no-one less than the Emperor of China to negotiate peace.²⁵⁷ Theoretically, should the Chinese Emperor himself have actually come to Japan to negotiate peace, it would have been greatly humiliating for China because that would also have been an acknowledgement that the Japanese Emperor was more powerful and influential than he was, and similarly Japan a greater nation than crumbling China. Therefore it can be said that this declaration of the *Nichi Nichi* was a bold statement indeed; if you want peace, your ruler himself has to come to beg for it.

The *Mainichi* stated that the war had enabled Japan to be acknowledged as a great power by the world, but to remain as such Japan would need to prove that it could also be great in arts of peace. For that purpose Japan would need to enrich itself and become wealthy so that it could excel in the mercantile battles to come.²⁵⁸ This was an example of how despite the fervour for war many already looked into the future; after the war different skills would be required, and there were many areas to be taken into notion when considering how to make Japan powerful.

As the Chinese pleads for peace went unanswered, they continued to struggle against the Japanese on the field and on the sea. In February the *Niroku* congratulated the successful Japanese attack in Weihaiwei, commenting that in Port Arthur China had lost her left arm and now her right in Weihaiwei. But even without arms China might prove to be able to continue fighting, and so *Niroku* encouraged

²⁵⁵ Japan Weekly Mail, January 12th, 1895.

²⁵⁶ Japan Weekly Mail, January 12th, 1895.

²⁵⁷ Japan Weekly Mail, January 26th, February 2nd, February 9th, 1895.

²⁵⁸ Japan Weekly Mail, February 2nd, 1895.

Japan to take her legs as well, those being the islands of Formosa and Chusan.²⁵⁹ In a similar tone, the *Jiji* quoted a proverb “Never leave a snake half-killed; it may regain vigour and strength enough to bite you”.²⁶⁰

The fall of Weihaiwei marked the way towards the end of the war. Admiral Ting's surrender in Weihaiwei was a popular topic among the vernacular press, and the attitude towards his actions was very understanding. The *Nichi Nichi* wrote that while the Japanese public might see Ting as untrue to his Sovereign and unworthy of his rank and profession, his choice was wise considering the conditions he was forced to work in. He saved thousands of lives by “wisely bowing to necessity”, and the government in Beijing would be smart and brave to follow his example.²⁶¹ Based on recent events the *Kokumin* predicted that the Rising Sun flags would decorate the walls of Beijing in March.²⁶² After Weihaiwei, another peace delegation was sent to Japan, and the general opinion of the vernacular press was that it too would fail as its predecessor.²⁶³

Meanwhile another topic being discussed was money to be assigned to Korean reforms. While the reforms were deemed necessary and important, The *Jiji* noted that at the present time lending money to the Korean government was “as imprudent as to put coins into the hands of a club of idiots and imbeciles”.²⁶⁴ It also stated that Japan should not be afraid of foreign powers thinking it was interfering with Korean affairs too much, as “none but Japanese can pave the way to Korean reform and civilization”.²⁶⁵

A peace conference was held in Shimonoseki on March 20th 1895. A shadow was cast upon the event by an incident where a Japanese person shot one of the Chinese representatives.²⁶⁶ The vernacular press had a lot to say about the Shimonoseki incident, and the main question was whether Japanese officials should issue an apology to the Chinese.²⁶⁷ Another incident that sparked discussion was that a group of Chinese soldiers had fired on the Japanese flag of truce. The *Nippon* stated that it was a serious violation of armistice, and Japan was justified to resume hostilities: China would learn only by force. The *Mainichi* commented that the Chinese explanation that the firing was conducted by soldiers unaware of international laws sounded weak: if ignorance of laws and usages could be

²⁵⁹ Japan Weekly Mail, February 9th, 1895.

²⁶⁰ Japan Weekly Mail, February 9th, 1895.

²⁶¹ Japan Weekly Mail, February 16th, 1895.

²⁶² Japan Weekly Mail, February 16th, 1895.

²⁶³ Japan Weekly Mail, March 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd, 1895.

²⁶⁴ Japan Weekly Mail, March 2nd, 1895.

²⁶⁵ Japan Weekly Mail, March 16th, 1895.

²⁶⁶ JACAR & British Library.

²⁶⁷ Japan Weekly Mail, March 30th, 1895.

claimed as an excuse to breach a mutually binding treaty, what use were such conventions at the end of the day?²⁶⁸ In the end both debates boiled down to the question of responsibility: if one or a few soldiers violated the truce with their actions (knowingly or unknowingly), was the nation as a whole to be blamed? Was it necessary to apologize to a country with whom one was still officially at war?

The vernacular press urged the government to take action in controlling the spreading of epidemic diseases among the soldiers. The *Kokkai* said that cholera or dysentery were enemies more terrible than the Chinese, and to show to the world that a Japanese soldiers were stronger than Chinese, they should be able to overcome this challenge as well.²⁶⁹

The *Jiji* commented on how the Japanese viewed the opinion of English papers on the war. The Japanese were now more conscious of their nation than before, and therefore thinking what other powers thought of Japan.²⁷⁰ England's actions regarding the Sino-Japanese war were in Japan seen as jealousy of triumphant Japan: England was not working towards tranquillity in the East or expressing good will towards China, but was only interested in her own advantages, as the *Mainichi* said. The *Weekly Mail* considered this matter in the opinions of English parties, stating that if the law of survival of the fittest determined every human action and England was right to be interested in her assets far away of her own borders, Japan had the similar right.²⁷¹

Peace was officially concluded on April 20th 1895 with the treaty of Shimonoseki.²⁷² Conflicts still continued for example in Taiwan for a while, but this was the official peace treaty. The signed conditions were as follows:²⁷³

1. China recognised Korea as a 'completely independent sovereign state'.
2. China ceded the Liaodong Peninsula, Taiwan and the Pescadores Islands.
3. China would pay Japan a large indemnity.
4. China would open the 4 cities of Shashi, Chongqing, Suzhou and Hangzhou to Japan.
5. Japan and China would sign a treaty of commerce and navigation.

²⁶⁸ Japan Weekly Mail, April 13th, 1895.

²⁶⁹ Japan Weekly Mail, April 13th, 1895.

²⁷⁰ Japan Weekly Mail, April 6th, 1895.

²⁷¹ Japan Weekly Mail, April 13th, 1895.

²⁷² JACAR & British Library.

²⁷³ JACAR & British Library.

Most Japanese papers agreed that the peace conditions were sufficient, and Japan had achieved what it had aimed for. Some papers expressed distrust towards China; the peace treaty would not be binding until the Chinese emperor had signed and ratified it, so there was the slight chance that China had only bought time with it and was planning something. Also Japan's victory would only then become concrete when the peace conditions were actually fulfilled.²⁷⁴ The *Jiji* turned its gaze on Japanese politicians: the war had united the Government and the Opposition, but could such harmony last now that the war was over?²⁷⁵

Following the peace treaty, Japanese papers focused on discussing on what Japan should do with her new land and citizens. The *Kokumin* stated that the Chinese living under Japanese rule should be demanded to cut their traditional hairdos, wear Japanese or Western clothes in ceremonies, and be forbidden from consuming opium and following the “unnatural tradition of cramping women's feet”. The *Kokkai* offered another opinion, saying that Japan should not intervene with Chinese customs too much.²⁷⁶ It was important to debate how to best rule the conquered people; could and should they be assimilated into Japanese culture as much as possible regardless of whether they wanted to or not, or would matters flow more fluently if locals were allowed to stick to their own customs for as long as they were obedient to Japan?

The *Choya* and The *Niroku* took a slightly aggressive stance and stated that should Russia or any other country disagree with the peace treaty, Japan would teach them a lesson like it had thought China.²⁷⁷ An example had been made, and the world ought to consider what it meant.

The *Nippon* thought that under the rule of Emperor Meiji Japan's achievements both at home and abroad were more accomplished than ever before in the Empire's history. To stay on such a good path the nation should focus on both refinement and military. The *Weekly Mail* commented on this article and the Imperial Rescript regarding the peace with China that the Japanese were “a nation of gentlemen”.²⁷⁸

²⁷⁴ Japan Weekly Mail, April 20th, 1895.

²⁷⁵ Japan Weekly Mail, April 20th, 1895.

²⁷⁶ Japan Weekly Mail, April 27th, 1895.

²⁷⁷ Japan Weekly Mail, April 27th, 1895.

²⁷⁸ Japan Weekly Mail, April 27th, 1895.

4. Conclusion

The First Sino-Japanese War was politically a great success for Japan: it gained better foothold in Korea, showed the world how bad shape China was in and became the leading economic and military power in East Asia. In April 1895 Germany, France and Russia all sent envoys to Japan in an attempt to make Japan reconsider taking possession of the Liaodong peninsula. Japan took their combined voices seriously, and in the end agreed to return the peninsula to China in return of a sum of indemnity. Within the next four years all countries involved in the intervention acquired leased territories from China, thus gaining better foothold in East Asia.²⁷⁹ Otherwise the conditions agreed on in the Treaty of Shimonoseki held: China recognised Korean independence, ceded Japan the territories it had demanded (save for the Liaodong Peninsula), opened up trade and paid war indemnity to Japan.²⁸⁰

The war and the victory were important for the cause of Japanese nationalism. Meiji system educated and socialized people to adopt the ideas of Japan as a modernized yet still essentially Japanese country and what being Japanese meant, and war against China was an excellent chance for building up the feeling of nationalism in the hearts of the Japanese. Apparently this worked too since people actively bought woodblock prints depicting the war events and showed their support for their country. The pictures presented Japanese soldiers in glorious combat against the Chinese, who were often depicted escaping, dying or surrendering. Heroism and honour of the Japanese can be seen as big themes in these pieces of art. The weakness and cowardice of the Chinese contrast the bravery, strength and willpower of the Japanese in these pictures. The vernacular press and the woodblock prints from their part built a narrative of what Japan and the Japanese were like, and how they compared to other nations. The adjectives and narratives present in the material can be summed up as follows.

Japan as a nation was described as righteous, modern, civilized and a bringer of peace, prosperity and enlightenment in East Asia. It was emphasized that Japan did not fight for the lust for conquest but for the benefit of all, as it was the most qualified to reform its less civilized neighbours. Japan as a modern nation followed the International Law, but there was a lot of discussion about whether it was obliged to if its opponent did not abide by those rules. There were varying opinions about what was just and necessary in war, but the most common narrative was that whatever Japan did was a justified act of retaliation, indicating that China was the party who had acted first.

Japan's most often used symbol was the Rising Sun, which was often depicted in art (in flags or as

²⁷⁹ Wright, 2001. 111; JACAR & British Library.

²⁸⁰ JACAR & British Library.

an actual sun) or mentioned in newspaper articles (for example calling Japan “the land of the Rising Sun” or demanding that the Rising Sun flags decorate the walls of Beijing). The other important symbol was the Emperor Meiji, who was respected and seen as a source of inspiration for his people. The Emperor moving to Hiroshima to oversee the war effort was seen as an exemplary action. Japan was a rising power and many suspected it would take a more important role in the international politics as a result of the war. For that purpose some reminded that Japan should focus on both military and intellectual strength. Japan was also described as Great, just like were its victories in war, and its Emperor.

Japanese soldiers were depicted as brave, organized, uniformed, focused, honourable, loyal but also humble (for example in honouring their homeland in the form of the Rising Sun). They were ready to give their lives for their nation. Japanese were considered to be patriotic in the way their neighbours were not, and the Chinese in particular were commented on their lack of national identity. Victories were a reason for celebration as seen in some prints. A recurring theme in Japanese prints were heroic officers leading their men by example. Some prints denied this heroism of Chinese soldiers, who were seen losing, escaping, dying or already dead, and in overall chaotic situations compared to the Japanese. This point of view is understandable since these prints were war propaganda, and therefore their purpose was to show Japan in a glorious light. The fact that the war was victorious for Japan from start to finish supported this approach.

In addition to what has already been summarized, the Chinese were described as disorganized and old-fashioned (with their way of thinking, clothing, technology and so on). Chinese politicians in particular received lots of negative comments from Japanese press. Chinese political system was considered to be rotten to the core and the ministers were incapable, treacherous and living in past glories instead of realizing how dire the current situation was. China’s great past and vast size were recognized, but in its current state it was seen as arrogant, troublesome and barbaric compared to Japan. As said by some writers, China was good at intimidating but bad at actually winning wars: diseases and winter conditions were seen as worse enemies to Japanese soldiers than the Chinese army. According to Japanese press, China only understood force and had to be taught a lesson. After that it should be reformed, perhaps by Japan itself.

Some even called for the Chinese Emperor to arrive in Japan himself to beg for peace, indicating his subordinate status compared to Japanese Emperor. Fröhlich stated that Japanese woodblock prints did not explicitly degenerate the Chinese but the uniformity and the success of the Japanese in comparison to the chaos of the Chinese made the difference clear. In Japanese press negative attitudes towards

China were more apparent. Overall no matter how non-civilized and weak China was seen as, it was still considered somewhat dangerous: like a snake that had to be killed properly so that it would not recover and bite back.

Koreans were not specifically seen in these prints but in newspapers the Korean situation was a much discussed topic. Korea was seen as barbaric and old-fashioned. The directly stated message was that the Koreans could not properly govern themselves and Japan needed to reform them. Similar adjectives were used of Chinese and Korean politicians.

The most complex was the attitude towards the Western powers. They were civilized and modern and Japan had learnt a lot from them. They were still looked up to for example when considering what sort of public art was good for patriotic purposes, and in terms of international politics Japan wanted to be seen as equal with them. However according to the Japanese view the Western powers were also ignorant of Japan and its successes; the Western people appreciated Japanese aesthetics but did not truly understand the nation. Western powers were seen as aggressive and shrewd, as outsiders who had no right to intervene with the situation in East Asia. Western powers were considered to be always looking for their own gain. They were also hypocritical (the notion of good Christians versus their actual actions in the past) and therefore had no right to judge Japan for its military conduct when they had done similar things themselves. Overall the Western powers were something that could not be trusted but at the same time had to be convinced and impressed so that Japan could rise among them in the field of international politics.

It should be noted that my sources were limited to work of three artists and even among them to the prints that depicted events that were mentioned in newspapers: there would be vast possibilities in studying prints created by different artists, or choosing a point of view that emphasizes different themes. Most of the pictures in this thesis were scenes of battle but the artists depicted various subjects in addition to combat, such as humanitarian efforts or diplomacy. It would also be interesting to study what kind of pieces a specific artist created before, during and after the war, and what were the motivations for choosing subjects to depict. My selection of newspapers was limited to what the English-language *Japan Weekly Mail* reported of the discussion in vernacular press; reading the Japanese papers directly might provide new insight. Even though there were some differences in what the prints depicted and what was discussed in the media, for the most part art and newspapers conveyed similar messages. The approach by *ukiyo-e* artists was in many ways more romantic than the direct tone of the papers.

In a way the First Sino-Japanese war can be seen as Japan's proof of power: a proof to the Japanese themselves, a proof to China and a proof to the rest of the world that came to realize that suddenly a non-European, non-white country had become so strong. However since this conflict took place in Asia between Asian nations it didn't amaze the Westerners nearly as much as the result of the Russo-Japanese War ten years later. In this war Japan triumphed over a traditional European great power and thus proved that it had risen among the great powers of the world. Japanese nationalism further developed in further conflicts and culminated in the Second World War, where Japan experienced a devastating loss and never before (and so far never since) seen destruction inflicted by the atomic bombs. But it was in the First Sino-Japanese War where the newly constructed Japanese nationalism bloomed and delivered its message to the people through words and pictures. In that sense the First Sino-Japanese war can be seen as a key turning point in the long history between Japan and China: a point where the past and recent tensions ignited and that was the beginning of many confrontations between the two nations during the 19th and 20th centuries.

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Ukiyo-e.org. Mizuno Toshikata's wider production can be viewed here: <https://ukiyo-e.org/artist/mizuno-toshikata>

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