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S. C. M. Paine. *The Japanese Empire: Grand Strategy from the Meiji Restoration to the Pacific War.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017. 220 pp. $74.99, cloth, ISBN 978-1-107-01195-3.

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An examination of Japan's multiple wars in Asia during the late nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries is essential to understanding the recent history of international relations as well as the modern Japanese experience. S. C. M. Paine's *Japanese Empire*, designed as an analytical survey, offers an informative treatment of the subject accessible to nonspecialists. Covering an era spanning the founding of the Meiji state (1868) and Japan's surrender in World War II (1945), it complements works of a similar genre, such as W. G. Beasley's *Japanese Imperialism: 1895-1945* (1987) and Michael Barnhart's *Japan and the World since 1868* (1993). Despite the title, the book does not deal with the topic of Japanese imperialism in the manner of Beasley's work, nor does it touch on colonialism. Instead, it explores Japan's relentless pursuit of great power status that produced a succession of armed conflicts in Asia, the first two apparently successful, but the last, a catastrophic failure. It frames its overarching concern by asking, "Although the goal to become and remain a great power had not changed, the conflicts produced antithetical outcomes. The question is, why?" (p. 2). This puzzle, in its various iterations, has provided one of the main engines of Japan-related historiography since the end of World War II. As Edwin O. Reischauer, the postwar dean of American Japan specialists put it, "what went wrong?"[1] Paine reiterates some long-established answers but also adds fresh insight through two thematic emphases.

First, the author sees Japan's quest for great power status facing two divergent choices from the outset: whether to develop as a maritime power or as a continental power. "The Industrial Revolution brought trade of global scope and wealth of unimaginable scale. It heralded an incoming maritime world order, which gradually supplanted the outgoing continental world order of empires underlying so many great civilizations. Formerly, land had been the currency of power. It produced the agricultural commodities to be sold and the peasant conscripts to field mass armies. In the nineteenth century, commerce became the juggernaut of wealth creation, which in turn underwrote high standards of living and expensive ambitions, armaments, and allies." Geography had blessed Japan with the opportunity to pursue the maritime route, but in the end, Japanese elites of the Meiji era (1868-1912) opted instead for continental power. "The Meiji generation lived at the transition between two global orders but they charted a course to the outgoing one, then at high tide, because they and so many others did not yet apprehend the incoming one just beyond the horizon" (p. 77). The book delves into this pivotal choice, its repeated reaffirmation across decades

despite growing signs of miscalculation, and its consequences for Japan and its wartime adversaries. Although the conclusion that Japan's catastrophic defeat in 1945 might be understood as the path-dependent outcome of decisions made by the Meiji elite is hardly new, Paine offers an enlightening perspective based on a reassessment of Japan's performance in its first two wars. Japan overcame China in 1894-95 and Russia in 1904-5 not because of a prodigious strategic superiority but because its adversaries had failed to exploit the vulnerabilities inherent in a Japanese bid to dominate the Asian mainland. The perception of success, however, led the Japanese elite to draw erroneous lessons about the viability of Japanese continental power in the twentieth century.

The second thematic emphasis lies in what Paine calls "grand strategy," defined in the following way: "Grand strategy, in distinction to military (or operational-level) strategy, integrates all relevant elements of national power" (p. 7). The successful conduct of war requires the coordination of military policy proper with intelligence gathering, diplomacy, and economic and financial planning, along with the preparation of "exit" strategies. The fundamentally problematic choice of the continental path aside, the author argues that the difference in outcomes between the first two wars, on the one hand, and those that followed, on the other, lay in the effectiveness of the grand strategies formulated by Meiji leaders and in the essential lack of such strategies in the wars waged by their successors in the 1930s and 1940s. At the same time, integrated preparation, planning, and execution across all spheres of war-related activity during the Meiji era rested heavily on the informal and personal relationships among Japan's oligarchic leaders, the founders of the Meiji state. Hints of the perilous inadequacy of a grand strategy managed by ad hoc methods surfaced during the Sino-Japanese (1894-95) and Russo-Japanese (1904-5) wars, but victorious outcomes obscured the need for rectification and the institutionalization of coordinated leadership. As a result, the inevitable passing of the oligarchs in the decade following the Russo-Japanese War left the country without an effective mechanism to manage the more complex and much larger-scale wars it would launch in the 1930s. Although the oligarchic succession problem has been highlighted by historians in the past, Paine emphasizes a connection to the consequences of Meiji era victories that depended a great deal on good luck and what she calls "cooperative adversaries," who failed to leverage their advantages in these conflicts.

The book is organized into seven chapters. The first, which also serves as an introduction, explores the emergence of modern Japan in the Meiji era. It touches on incipient continental ambitions linked to models of great power status provided by the West. The second and third chapters deal with the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese wars respectively, where the author outlines underlying and proximate causes, incorporating some of the international and domestic developments preceding both outbreaks. They also review elements of the grand strategy in each case. These chapters provide fairly detailed accounts of the conduct of the wars from both sides, useful descriptions in their own right but that serve, in particular, to expose areas of Japanese vulnerability that China and Russia each had the capacity to exploit. The fourth chapter covers the interwar era spanning 1906 to 1931, with some extension into the mid-1930s in treating developments in army ideology. It explores a wide range of developments, including changes in the international environment, the passing of the oligarchs and its consequences, the growing intrusion of army power into politics, the rise of parliamentary government, the outbreak of civil war in China, and the rise of Shintō extremism.

The fifth and sixth chapters deal with the conflict that many Japanese historians describe as the Fifteen Year War (1931-45), which Paine segments into two periods: the ten years spanning 1931-41 and the five years between 1941 and 1945. These

chapters employ a narrative structure roughly parallel to those provided for the first two wars, which facilitates comparison. Although he covers material familiar to students of World War II in Asia and the Pacific, Paine frames the course of events with the theme of continental versus maritime power, highlighting the strategic inflexibility of continental imperialism, which left Japanese military planners few options other than to escalate the conflict in response to any setbacks. The author also uses the idea of "sunk costs" in explaining the pattern of relentless escalation as an effort to make good on the lives lost and treasure spent that precluded any meaningful negotiation (p. 135). In the final analysis, the inflexibility of the quest for continental power left no room for a conditional end to hostilities, leading to an enforcement of unconditional surrender by the Allies. The last chapter provides a conclusion that reiterates the themes of the book.

In addition to a fresh look at the "what went wrong" debate, one of the most important contributions this book makes to the historical study of both modern Japan and international relations lies in highlighting the divergent options of maritime and continental power facing Japan's political elites after 1868. In English-language treatments of Japanese imperialism and foreign policy, this theme has received limited emphasis, with the exception of such recent work as Charles Schencking's ***Making Waves: Politics, Propaganda, and the Emergence of the Imperial Japanese Navy, 1868-1922*** (2008). The land-or-sea theme is much more developed in Japanese-language historiography, which uses it to frame broader political debates going back to the 1880s over Japan's place in the world and its future direction. Such works as Kitaoka Shin'ichi's ***Nihon rikugun to tairiku seisaku*** (Japanese army and continental policy) (1978) and Bannō Junji's ***Taishō seihen*** (Taishō political crisis) (1995) have seen the tension between advocates of continental and maritime power as fundamental to the politics of the period between 1906 and 1918. During this period of ascendant liberalism that would culminate in the first party cabinet in 1918, champions of the interlocking causes of army expansion, continental imperialism, and domestic political conservatism locked horns with an opposing coalition that combined the causes of navalism, maritime imperialism, and parliamentary rule at home. The moderately liberal maritime position, its navalism checked by international arms limitation agreements, gained the upper hand during the 1920s and even succeeded in forcing a 20 percent reduction in the army's complement of infantry divisions. The Manchurian Incident of 1931, however, turned the tables decisively, locking the nation into a continentalist course.

Paine frames Japan's disastrous choice of continentalism as a problem of "misidentifying Japan as a continental, not maritime power" and of a leadership that "failed to appreciate their great gift of geography" (pp. 109, 179). Studies of Japanese political history, though, suggest that the issue was not so much a collective failure to understand the advantages of a maritime course of development as the political defeat of the advocates of navalism and maritime power at the hands of the army and its continentalist allies. Advocates of maritime power, such as journalist and parliament member Takekoshi Yosaburō, indeed, echoed early in the twentieth century many of the same points Paine makes about the two modes of power in the world, including the trend lines of history rendering continental imperialism obsolete.[2] Taking this political contest into account might have strengthened the overall argument. So too would have a closer look at the evolving ideology of the Imperial Japanese Army and its continentalist program. Paine relies on the concept of Shintō political extremism drawn from Walter Skya's ***Japan's Holy War: The Ideology of Radical Shinto Ultranationalism*** (2009) in explaining the army's ideological orientation. This rubric encompasses the Young Officers, the name of the specific movement responsible for the February 1936 coup attempt, which the book applies somewhat

loosely to a variety of terrorist groups and actors. The author also includes the architects of the Manchurian Incident of 1931 within this grouping. Various strains of radicalism were, no doubt, mutually stimulating, but few historians of this era would grant Shintō extremism such a blanket influence on army activity. Work on army continentalism in the 1920s and 1930s, such as James B. Crowley's *Japan's Quest for Autonomy: National Security and Foreign Policy, 1930-1938* (1966), Mark Peattie's *Ishiwara Kanji and Japan's Confrontation with the West* (1975), and Michael Barnhart's *Japan Prepares for Total War: The Search for Economic Security* (1987), point to a very different line of thinking rooted in rather far-fetched but nonetheless functionally rational programs through which Japan might secure the vast resource base necessary to wage total war against either the Soviet Union or the United States. Such studies, emphasizing the army's efforts to create a "national defense state" with an autarkic defense perimeter extending deep into China, provide an analysis of army behavior that tend to marginalize Shintō extremism as such.

Paine's argument for "what went wrong" nonetheless stands up well as presented, and the book's interpretation of the Japanese case as a cautionary tale in the history of international relations is compelling: "The lessons are relevant to the United States, which, like Japan back in the day, is prone to intervening abroad. Like Japan, its maritime location provides relative sanctuary, insulating it from problems elsewhere, so that intervention is often a matter of choice, not of necessity. Yet the choices matter. Some, as the Japanese discovered, are irrevocable" (p. xi).

Notes

[1]. Edwin O. Reischauer, "What Went Wrong," in *Dilemmas of Growth in Prewar Japan*, ed. James W. Morley (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1971), 489.

[2]. Takekoshi Yosaburō, *Nangoku ki* (Tokyo: Niyūsha, 1910), 1-15.

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