

WARS AND RUMOURS OF WAR
1918–1945:
JAPAN, THE WEST AND
ASIA PACIFIC

SELECTED CONTEMPORARY READINGS
ON CRISES AND CONFLICT

SERIES 2: 1937–1945
FROM MANCHURIA TO TOKYO BAY



VOLUME 1: JAPAN
EDITED AND INTRODUCED
BY
ROGER BUCKLEY



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FOREWORD

BY

AKIRA IRIYE



Roger Buckley's examination of Japan, as well as the other major protagonists during the 1930s and the 1940s through the contemporary key papers and writings he has brought together in this valuable collection of documents, offers a good way to help us compare the world that existed then and the one in which we live today. To put it simply, today's world is comprehensible through such frameworks as globalization, transnationalization, and interdependence, whereas in those earlier days such words did not even exist, or even if they did, they did not correspond to any known reality.

The globe, it may be said, was not global but was subdivided into separate entities like nations, empires, colonies, and dependencies. The nation was the key unit in categorizing all humans, and national (and, by implication, international) affairs determined the destiny of individual beings. To be sure, people everywhere had many other identities besides nations and empires: races, religions, families, as well as their age, gender, sexual orientation, and health conditions. But these attributes did not suffice to produce cross-border (transnational) connections and were considered subnational categories.

In today's world, nations of course continue to exist, and they still behave toward one another as they always have, whether peacefully through diplomacy, trade, migration, or exchange programs, or more belligerently in terms of military force, nationalistic propaganda, or xenophobic public opinion. But in today's world non-national identities have become increasingly more relevant and, it may even be said, even more relevant than national identities. If the trend continues, the twenty-first century will be reversing the historical trend going back to the eighteenth century in Europe and North America and increasingly characterizing the rest of the world.

Buckley's volume helps us understand recent Japanese history by putting it in the framework of global history. That, after all, is the only sensible way to study modern history. No country exists in isolation from other countries. Nor do individuals live their separate lives confined to their countries. Japan is no exception, and indeed few countries have been

as dependent on other countries and people as the Japanese for their food, raw materials, manpower, and even for ideas and tastes. So, how globalization has come to Japan, and vice versa, is a key theme in modern world history, and reading this collection will be an excellent way to bring ourselves to that realization.

PREFACE



Historians are magpies. They collect and collect assorted material until shelves and storage spaces rebel, prompting either the start of an overdue project or a reluctant journey to the dumping ground. This Series began with a battered text outlining a future naval war between the United States and Japan bought for almost nothing in Tokyo's Jimbocho district on a subject that I knew next to nothing about. It progressed with the great help of hospitable librarians and their staff but also included en route the lucky purchase of journals that had remained uncut for over three quarters of a century and texts that had largely escaped scholarly citation. Serendipity surely deserves at least an honourable footnote in any decent work on the historian's craft. What follows is an attempt to gather in both well-known and perhaps neglected works that were published between the Sino-Japanese clashes of 1937 and the end of World War Two in the Asia Pacific. It is, of course, no more than a sample on high and low topics during an era of immense tension and bloodshed, though students starting out on these years may well feel that the result is excessively long and complicated. Yet its broad theme of a region at war can hardly be in doubt and is one that continues to resonate today and will indeed for the foreseeable future. The aim of the Series is to provide something of the general context within which leaders necessarily operated and to emphasize that a great deal of useful, if sometimes self-serving, English-language material was put out by all sides during these years. Greater attention to such contemporary public sources deserves to complement official documentation that has to date formed the standard backbone to analyses of this violent era.

Wars and Rumours of War offers an alternative history of multiple conflict in the Asia Pacific between 1937 and 1945. It provides a collection of secondary material that stands in contrast to earlier English-language texts based very largely on official records. The aim is to suggest that the large quantities of contemporary books and periodicals dealing with the Asia and Pacific wars deserve a fuller hearing in an era where the public demand for information and analysis could hardly be ignored by those in government. The context matters and politicians knew only too well that all-out war efforts required active support from those both at the sharp end and on the home front. For total war to be successful it could not be a simple top-down process; room had to be made, however reluctantly and often with considerable oversight, for what might prove to be less than compliant

authors, commentators and journalists, as well as war artists, poets and film crews. Equally, there was a need not only to inform one's own society but to attempt to persuade other states; rival regimes and potential allies were therefore an additional focus of official and unofficial attention. Once the battle lines had been clarified by Pearl Harbor this certainly changed but Imperial Japan had still to make its case within southeast Asia and voices in the United States rather than Britain were determined to put considerable weight on outlining how and why the post-war Asia Pacific deserved a new deal. It may, therefore, soon be practical to consider synthesizing primary state papers with greater recognition of the abundant secondary evidence to retrace the critical years when Asia moved rapidly out of the regional shadows to become and then remain a key factor in global politics.

The Asia Pacific wars of 1937–1945 have yet to go away. For three quarters of a century and more their legacies have continued to live on with events in the summer of 2016 underlining this centrality for all the belligerents. To take but five recent examples: President Obama became the first incumbent American president to visit Hiroshima, Japanese corporations issued apologies and made compensation to Asian forced labourers, British television retraced the exploits of the Chindits in Burma, a museum was constructed to honour the author Iris Chang and her work on the rape of Nanking and a new biography of Admiral Halsey and the war at sea was published. There can be little doubt that commemorations and controversies of this ilk are fated to continue for the foreseeable future, confirming in the process both the scale and importance of the conflicts and their impact on the region since VJ Day.

October 2016
Hope-under-Dinmore, Herefordshire
& Mita, Tokyo

'War will always interest men.'

Captain J.C. Dunn, *The War the Infantry Knew 1914–1919* (London, 1938)

'If she [Britain] will not give way, then war is inevitable, and the result will be that the British Empire will be broken up for ever.'

Publishers introduction to Tota Ishimaru *Japan Must Fight Britain* (London, 1937)

'Today the broadest masses, entire peoples are drawn into war. To win a victory in a serious conflict tremendous sacrifices are necessary, the entire strength of the people must be exerted; but in order to inspire the people to great deeds, to secure the necessary sacrifices, they must be promised rewards in the event of victory.'

Litvinov, Leningrad, 23 June 1938