

Document 01

Japanese Views of the War

“Britain and America had been colonizing China for many years. Japan came to this late. China was such a backward nation. At the time of the **Manchurian Incident** in 1931, we felt Japan should go out there and use Japanese technology and leadership to make China a better country. What was actually happening on the battlefield was all secret then, but I felt sure that the **Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere** would be of crucial importance to the backward races. Japan and Germany would only have to combine forces to break the Anglo-Saxon hold on Asia, and redistribute the colonies. That’s how we felt then.”

—Nogi Harumichi, member of the Patriotic Students’ Alliance in 1940

“Many of us common people really cheered the soldiers during the February 26 Incident of 1936. I thought, ‘They’ve done it! Fantastic!’ People were looking for a breakthrough because times were hard and no one thought of war in a realistic way. Even after the rebels backed down, I imagined that a single shot from our army would just blow the Chinks away. We went to war with light hearts in ’37 and ’38.”

—Kumagaya Tokuichi, Japanese machinist for munitions factory

“What Japan seeks is the establishment of a new order that will insure the permanent stability of East Asia. In this lies the ultimate purpose of our present military campaign. This new order has for its foundation a tripartite relationship of mutual aid and co-ordination between Japan, Manchukuo, and China in political, economic, cultural, and other fields.”

—Konoe Fumimaro, Japanese Prime Minister in 1938

“On New Year’s Day we were invited to Chô’s house for a feast. He [a Manchurian] was the leader of his hamlet, but my husband bought many of the things they made there. He called my husband “*Jianguì*,” meaning “Leader.” My husband told me not to confide in Manchurians. Treat them kindly, warmly, he said, but in your heart, you cannot completely trust them. My husband said, “They’re likely to have vengeful feelings towards Japan.” Even the kids who worked for us would sometimes blurt out to me that Japan was bad for taking away their land.”

—Fukushima Yoshie, Japanese settler in Manchuria

“‘It’s finally come’ was all I thought when I heard the news of Pearl Harbor. From the onset of war, I thought Japan would lose. It had no mobility and no material strength. One day after Pearl Harbor, a special meeting was called in Tokyo by the Cabinet Board of Information. The real reason for the war was the enemy’s egotistic ambition to control the world, they told us. The New World Order would now become ‘Hakkô Ichiu,’ ‘Eight Corners of the World Under One Roof.’ Publishers were to emphasize Japan’s superior position in the ongoing war and they should strive to instill a deep hatred for America and Britain in the minds of the people. These were only a few of the instructions issued.”

—Hatanaka Shigeo, editor of *Chûô Kôron* [The Central Review], 1941

“Dadao riben diguozhuyi!” [Down with Japanese Imperialism!]

—Chinese Anti-Japanese slogan, 1930s.