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Concluding Remarks

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1. A Brief Summary

All five chapters fix us on a Japanese perspective of its empire. In Chapter 1, Kubota maps out the overlooked southward expansion of the Japanese empire from the Sino-Japanese War to the post-First World War via the Boxer Rebellion. Empires are concerned about their public images, and in Chapter 2, Sommen shows how the Japanese foreign ministry took this seriously with the establishment of the Department of Information. A further voice, we could hazard to say semi-state, was presented by Andrea Revelant in Chapter 3, through his analysis of the *Manshū Nippō*. Bringing us back to Japan's southward imperial expansion, but into the 1920s Sogo analyzed the Kenseikai and its policies with regard to Taiwan in particular in Chapter 4. Finally, reminding us that in addition to commercial and political interests, armies are a vital aspect of imperial expansion, Sugawara in Chapter 5 casts his gaze onto the limits of imperial cooperation via the withering military relations between Japan and Britain in China.

2. What was the Overriding Theme?

The key connecting thread is imperial management. If we are to understand how Japan's imperial management functioned in the 1920s, we have to see what came before it. As Antony Best and Oliviero Frattolillo remind us on the outbreak of the First World War, Japan had a dual identity: one as an up-and-coming empire with a growing military

and economy (Frattolillo and Best 2015, 2). If Japan was not considered a Great Power before the First World War, it certainly was one by 1918. Beneath the surface, however, there were broad social issues that were the reverse side of the coin of this modernization project; industrial revolution and imperial expansion created its own tensions. Indeed, Best and Frattolillo point to Japan's victory in the Russo-Japanese War as a double-edged sword: success cemented Japan's position in East Asia but almost crippled the Empire financially, leaving Japan burdened with heavy loans that restricted the Imperial Japanese Army's appetite for further expansion. We could say that the First World War is where we really see this intersection of imperial expansion and international cooperation at its most Machiavellian. Excluding the central powers, we could propose the notion that the 1920s was an era of international cooperation extending from the mid-1910s.

3. Avenues for Further Exploration

The contributions to this text have given us plenty of food for thought on Japan's creation of its empire. Here, perhaps it will be useful to widen our focus to see where this all fits together. Sugawara shows us a new perspective on Japan's declining relationship with Britain in the 1920s, but I wonder if we can extend the analysis further. A couple of directions that have been hinted at in this book may be useful for exploration.

The First World War is, I hope, now recognized as a pivotal moment in the history of imperialism in East Asia. As Sommen points out, it also led to a re-working of how states thought about their public image: propaganda (which had not by then gained its negative connotations) was seen as an important wing of international diplomacy. Maintaining a positive image of the empire, both to Japanese citizens and further

afield, was seen as essential in the post-war new diplomacy. This links to Revelant's discussion on the *Manshū Nippō* as an organ of pushing a conservative voice with a former army intelligence officer in charge of the newspaper.

The First World War, as Sugawara and others have pointed to, changed the security makeup of the empire in East Asia. Kubota reminds us of how vital maintaining security was in guaranteeing the profits of Japanese companies. Perhaps we could consider the imperial security apparatus further to connect Manchuria, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, private companies, Kenseikai policies to colonial rule, and Anglo-Japanese relations. This connecting tissue is the Japanese policing of East Asia. Erik Esselstrom's excellent work on the police administration in Manchuria hints at this (Esselstrom 2009). Further, Isabella Jackson shows us how the First World War drastically altered the makeup of the police force in Shanghai's international settlement, with a slew of Japanese recruits replacing Germans, but mainly British who moved to the Western Front (Jackson 2018). As Sugawara points out, the British Municipal police force rather than military were the main force used to deal with quelling the 30th of May Movement. What can looking at Anglo-Japanese police relations add to this story and to today's discussion as a whole?

Another avenue I believe would be useful for further exploration would be to borrow from our colleagues at Doshisha University, who are conducting research into trans-imperial history (Doshisha University n.d.). From the police perspective, we can also shine a light on another aspect that has been overlooked here: those who were in the firing line of imperial expansion. China's attempts to push back at Japanese imperial expansion were a main factor in China entering the First World War. How did Japanese imperial planners take into account the local population? In constructing imperial propaganda, to what extent is the

foreign ministry thinking of a Chinese audience, and does the *Manshū Nippō* cater for a local audience?

It can also help us to understand how Japan faced the ideological challenges to its empire. Shanghai, apart from London, was the only city outside Japan's empire to have its own branch of the Tokkō (thought police), attached to the consular police. Tensions of different models of empire come into focus in the city's divided landscape, the international settlement, the Chinese section, and the French concession.

From my perspective as someone who has done extensive research on German Africa and the First World War, I would be really interested in how the discussions in this book could be further linked into 1920s international cooperation. The Washington conference, of course, has been discussed, but I was a little surprised that the League of Nations received scant mention. The 1920s is often viewed as the heyday of international cooperation, centered around the League of Nations. However, this view has been challenged by Tara Zahra's excellent work on interwar anti-global movements (Zahra 2023). However, we should not discount it completely, as it did remain an important public forum for Japan to defend and justify its imperial expansion while, at the same time, partaking in the global management of borders (in particular in the 1920s).

Japan was also a mandate power, and I think there may be much merit in taking a comparative angle. Sogo points to an interesting connection between Taiwan and the Nanyo mandates. Could we look at the relationship between Nanyo and Taiwan as described by Sogo in a similar way to that of the Union of South Africa and what was German Southwest Africa, or that of Samoa and New Zealand or New Guinea and Australia? These were the "class C" mandates. For the Union of South Africa, possession of a Mandate represented a successful outcome of the "sub-imperial mission" it undertook during the war by taking

control of neighboring territory. Certainly, there are many differences, but it would be interesting to investigate the links forming between Taiwan and Nanyo as a similar sub-imperial expansion, with Tokyo delegating responsibility for aspects of the mandates' management to the imperial government in Taipei.

Management of Mandates was done in a public manner with annual reports compiled and sent to Geneva. While Nanyo was tightly under Japanese control, how did the international scrutiny of the Mandate affect decisions made in other parts of the empire? I am thinking here of how Sogo's chapter reflects arguments Michael Callahan makes with reference to the French management of the Mandates of Cameroon and Togo. Callahan highlights French frustrations with the League prying into its imperial policies, but also how having to compose different policies for its mandates of Cameroon and Togo affected its actions in other areas of West Africa and even Indochina (Callahan 1999).

4. Conclusion

The 1920s were a period of changing imperial strategy, and here we see Japan changing its mind from the need to "Get out of Asia and turn to the West" to instead deciding to "Return to Asia and leave the West": a cultural re-embrace of Asia certainly, but a vision of Asia's closer economic dependence on Japan (Frattolillo and Best 2015, 6). As this book's five enlightening chapters show, imperial management and international cooperation could not always work hand in hand, challenging the often-held assumption that the 1920s were a high point of international cooperation, only to be disrupted by the economic collapse and the Great Depression.

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6. Dr. Mahon MURPHY

Concluding Remarks

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