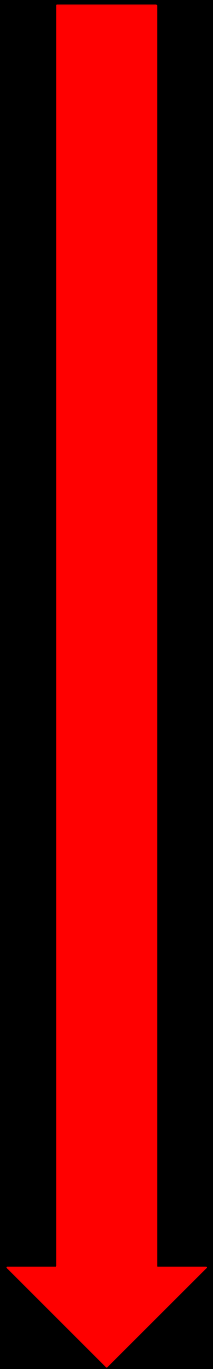


# How and why did Japan become an Imperial Power?

*L/O – To understand the causes and effects of Japanese Imperialism, from the Sino-Japanese War (1894-5) to the Russo-Japanese War (1904-5)*



- 
- 1871 – New Imperial Army created, 10,000 Samurai
  - 1873 – Mass Conscription Introduced, men 20+ for 3 years
  - 1876 – Treaty of Kanghwa – Unfair treaty imposed on Korea
  - 1882 – Imperial Rescript to Soldiers & Sailors, Indoctrination
  - 1894-5 – Sino-Japanese War – Japan wins, gains Taiwan
  - 1890s – Ending of the Unfair Treaties on Japan
  - 1902 – Anglo-Japanese Alliance
  - 1904-5 – Russo-Japanese War – Japan wins!
  - 1910 – Japan annexes Korea

# Reasons for Japanese Imperialism

- The desire of the Meiji Reformers to **resist domination** by Western Powers had always been one of the main goals of the Meiji Restoration.
- Therefore alongside economic reforms came military reforms - **fukoku kyō nei** (rich country, strong army).
- **Yamagata Aritomo**, an ex-Samurai from Choshu, became the founding father and pioneer of the **modern Japanese army**, serving as War Minister 1873, Prime Minister 1889 and Field Marshall 1898. He was also one of the original **Genrō**.



**Yamagata Aritomo  
(1838-1922)**

# Reasons for Japanese Imperialism

- Yamagata had learnt his lessons from the Western nations – **the strong eat up the weak**, i.e. **survival of the fittest** (**Social Darwinism**).
- In the age of empires, Japan realised that an Imperial Power needed an **empire of its own to survive**.
- This idea became the **rationale** for building a huge military establishment **capable of overseas missions**.

*In the West there is England,  
In the North, Russia.  
My countrymen, be careful!  
Outwardly they make treaties,  
But you cannot tell  
What is at the bottom of their  
hearts.  
There is a Law of Nations, it is  
true,  
But when the moment comes,  
remember,  
The Strong eat up the Weak.*

**(Popular Japanese song, 1880s)**

# Story from the Sino-French War (1884) by Utagawa Kunisada III



# Reasons for Japanese Imperialism

- To the Japanese, China appeared to be the **perfect negative example**. The Japanese criticised China for **not adapting** to the changing world.
- Japan believed it had a right and duty to use force to make China and Korea adopt the path of '**progress**' before they were taken over by the West.
- This would make all of Asia stronger. However some Japanese would come to **resent the weakness** of their neighbours and called for Japan to '**throw off Asia**'.

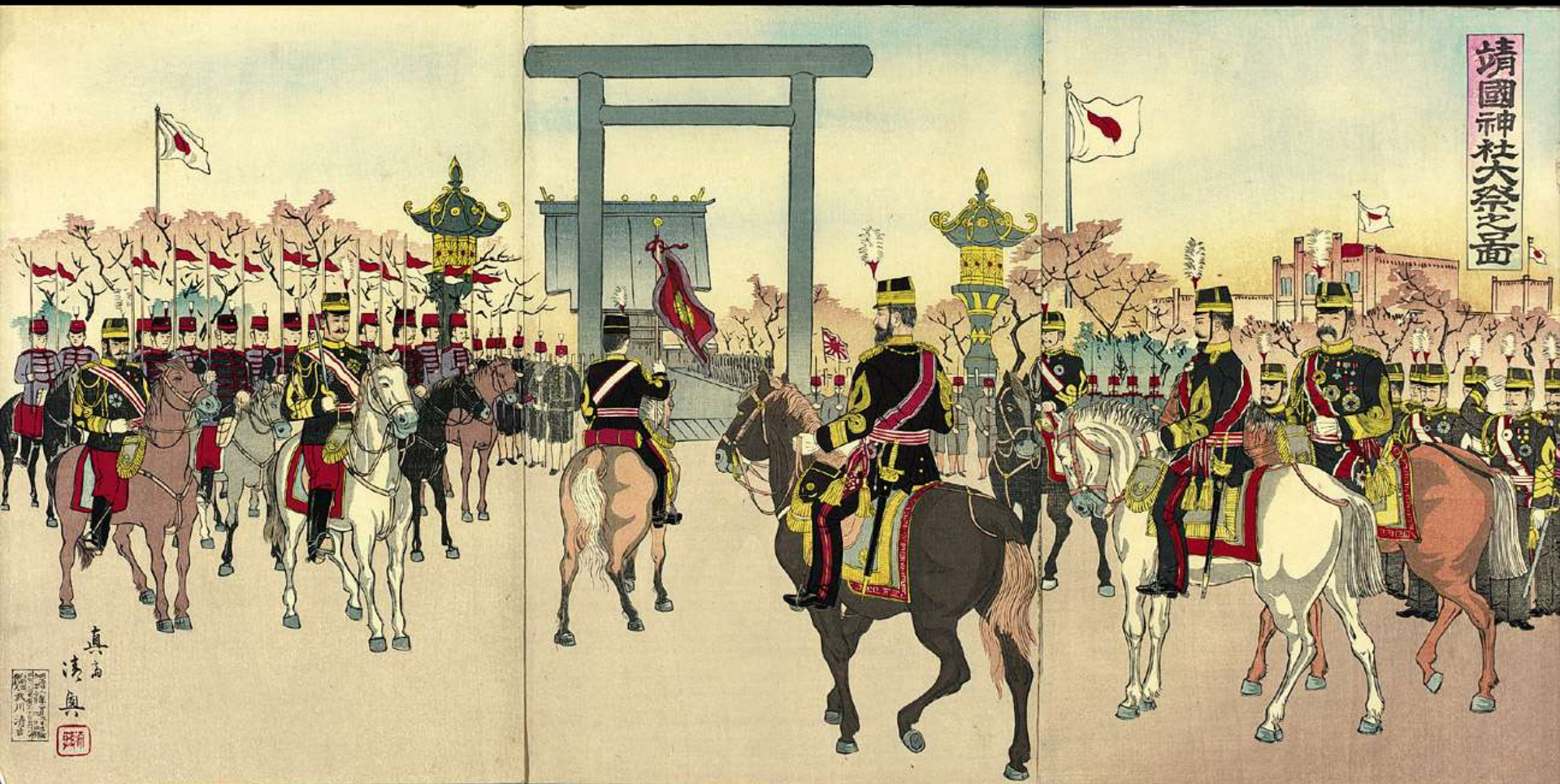


**Fukugawa Yukichi  
(1835-1901)**

*We must not wait for neighbouring countries to become civilized so that we can together promote Asia's revival. Rather we should leave their ranks and join forces with the civilized countries of the West. We don't have to give China and Korea any special treatment just because they are neighbouring countries. We should deal with them as Western people do. Those who have bad friends cannot avoid having a bad reputation. I reject the idea that we must continue to associate with bad friends in East Asia.*

***From 'On Throwing off Asia' by Fukuzawa Yukichi, Quoted in Oka Yoshitake's excellent "Prologue" to Marlene Mayo, ed., The Emergence of Imperial Japan***

The Spiritual Glory of dying for the Emperor  
was promoted through Shinto Shrines like  
the *Yasukuni* in Tokyo





# Illustration of a Military Review (1887) by Toyohara Chikanobu



Observance by His Imperial Majesty of  
Military Maneuvers of Combined Army and  
Navy Forces (1890) by Toyohara Chikanobu



# Growing Imperialism

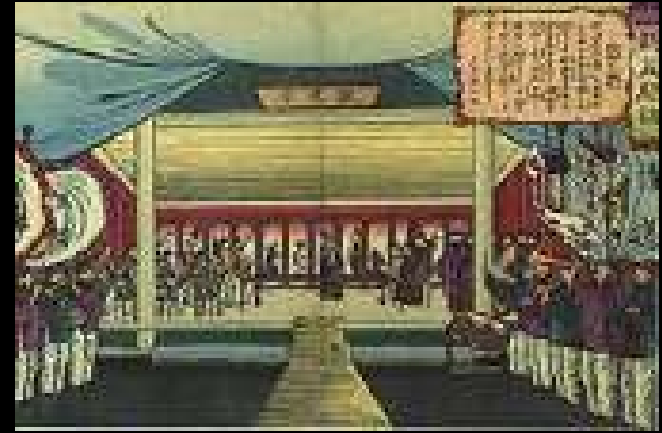
- In order to become an imperial power, the Japanese military needed **reforming**. **Yamagata Aritomo** led the changes, having decided to follow the **Prussian model** after visiting Germany as part of the **Iwakura mission** in 1872.
- 1871 – **Imperial Army created** by Yamagata Aritomo, 10,000 Samurai.
- 1873 – **Mass Conscription** introduced, all men over 20 years for 3 years.



**Yamagata Aritomo  
(1838-1922)**

# 1876 – The Treaty of Kanghwa

- The Japanese navy led a military mission to Korea. After some minor battles, the Korean government was forced to sign the **Treaty of Kanghwa**.
- This recognised **Korean independence** but **opened Korea to trade on preferential terms** with Japan. Japan was also **exempt from customs duties**.
- This angered China who saw Korea as its **'protectorate'** and **vassal state**.



# 1882 – Imperial Rescript...

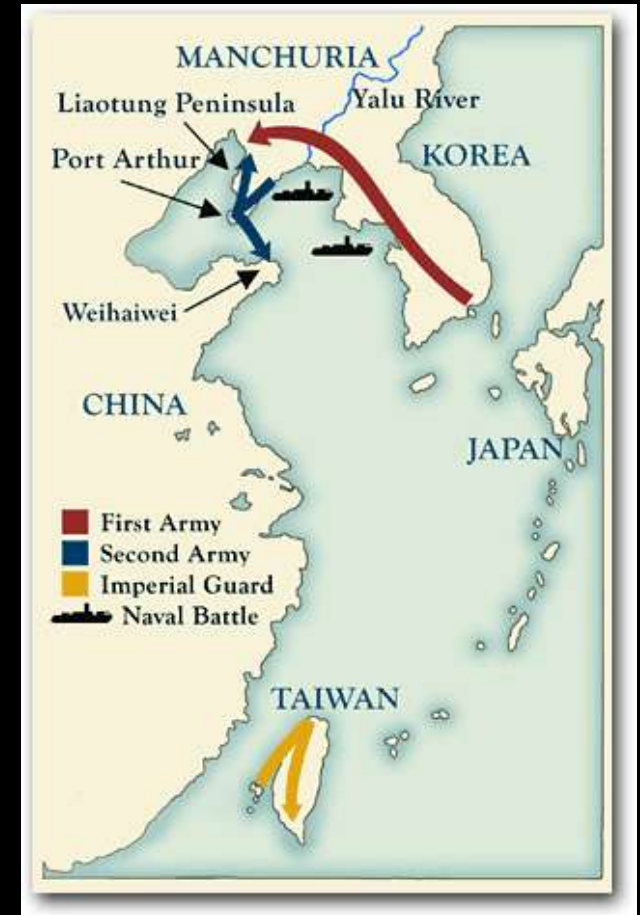
- The emperor releases the *Imperial Rescript to Soldiers and Sailors*. This was the official code of ethics for military personnel.
- They were instructed to be **personally loyal** to the emperor, avoid politics, live simply and respect civilians.
- Military personnel had to memorise the document, **strengthening the unquestioning bond between soldier and emperor.**

***‘Duty is weightier than a mountain, while death is lighter than a feather’.***

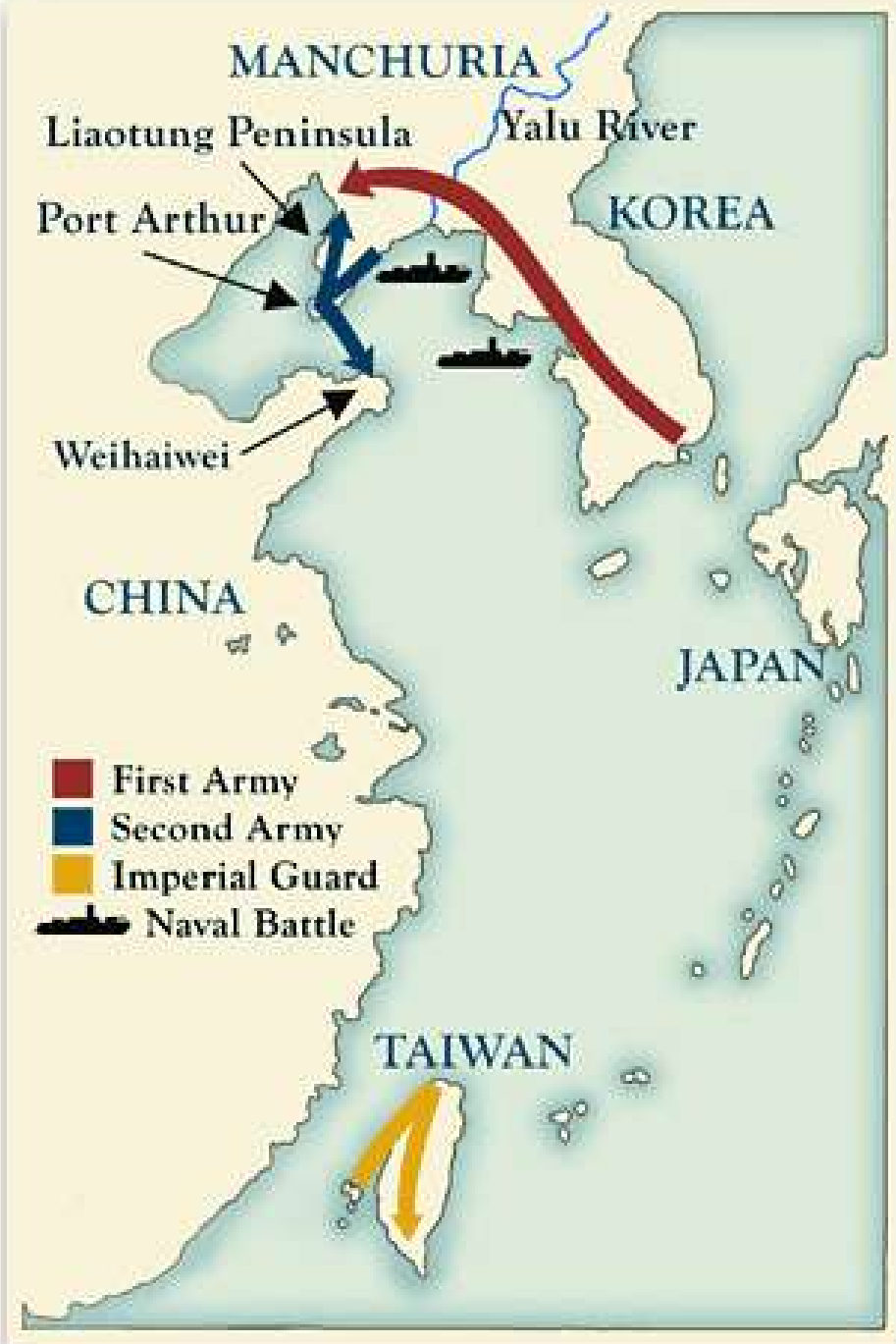


# 1894-95: Sino-Japanese War

- The **Tonghak Rebellion** in Korea, partly against Japanese influence begins. China sends troops in support of government.
- Japan sent over 200,000 troops to protect its '**zones of influence**'. In reality, Japan was trying to cement its control of Korea and Manchuria.
- Fighting spills out into Manchuria and Taiwan, with Japan **completely defeating** China.





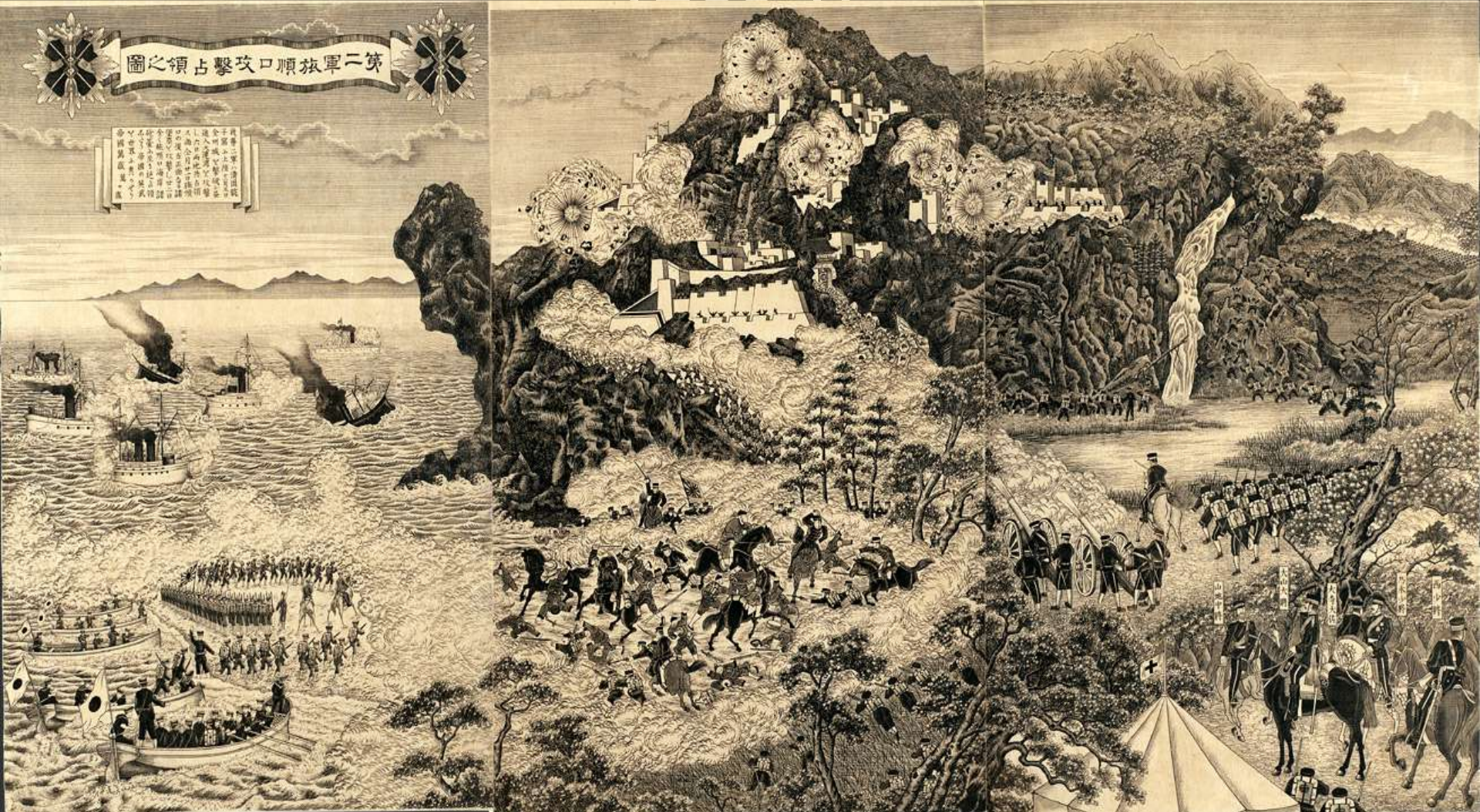




*Minister Otori escorting the Korean Regent as they enter the Palace at Keijo (1894) by Toyohara Chikanobu*



# Illustration of the Second Army attacking and occupying Port Arthur (1894)



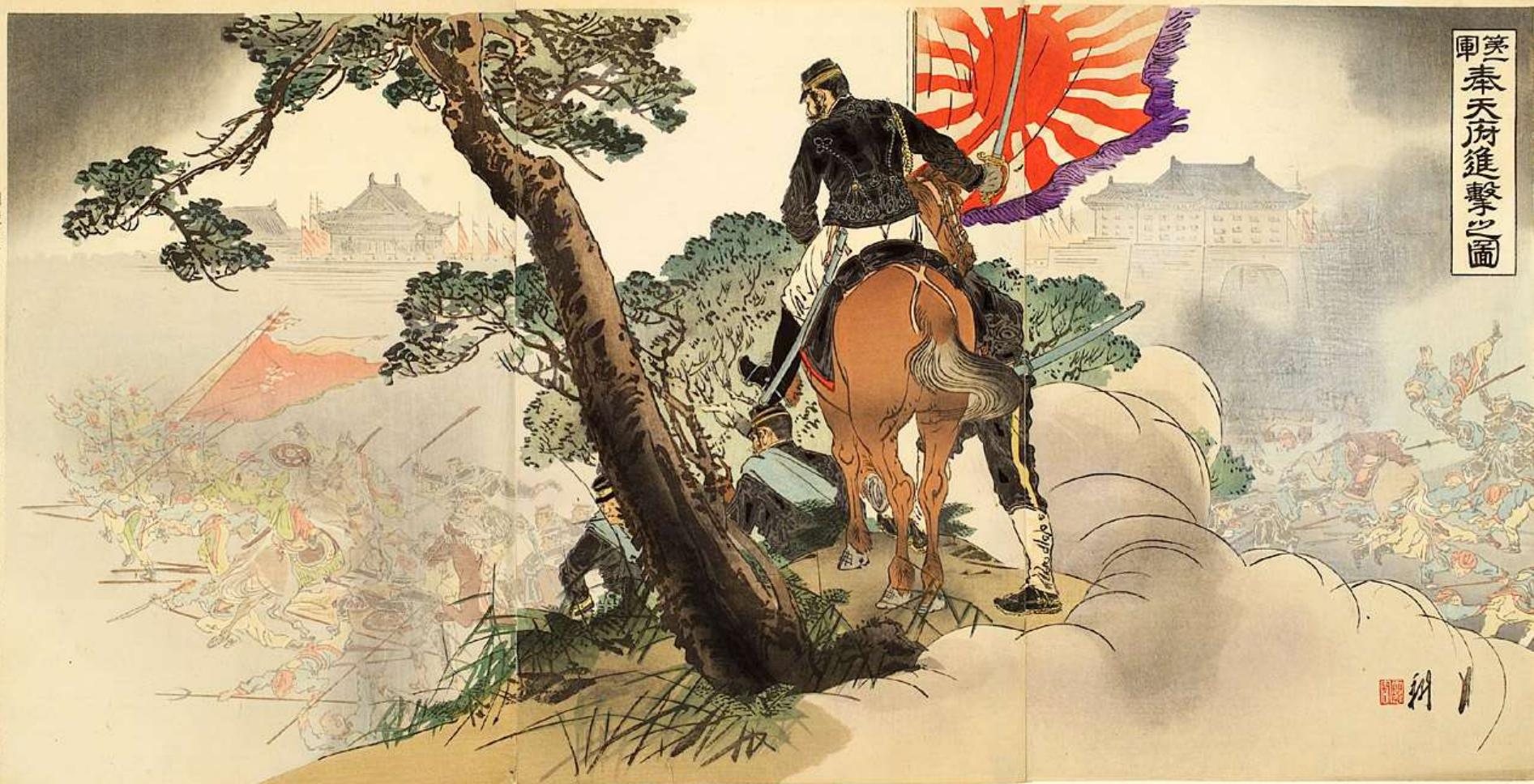
*Hurrah, Hurrah for the Great Japanese Empire! Picture of the Assault on Songhwan, a Great Victory for Our Troops (1894) by Mizuno Toshikata*



# *Our Forces' Great Victory and Occupation of Jiuliancheng (1894) by Watanabe Nobukazu*



# Picture of the First Army Advancing on Fengtienfu (1894) by Ogata Gekko



# 1894-95: Sino-Japanese War

- In the resulting **Treaty of Shimonoseki**, Japan cements its influence over Korea, wins control of **Taiwan** and the **Liaodong Peninsula** in Manchuria. Also received cash reparations amounting to **\$170 million gold** from China.
- However Russia, France and Germany protest and Japan is **forced to give up** control of the Liaodong Peninsula to Russia.
- Despite '**throwing off Asia**' and defeating China, Japan is still not treated as an equal by the West.



# 1902: Anglo-Japanese Alliance

- The Sino-Japanese War was significant not just because Japan gained an empire. It also led to Western Powers **ending the unfair treaties** in the late 1890s.
- Japan even signed a **defensive military alliance** with Great Britain, against Russia.
- Japan had now become respected by the most powerful nation on earth but with imperialism came **racist attitudes**:



*The real birthday of the new Japan ... began with the conquest of China. The war is ended; the future, though clouded, seems big with promise; and, however grim the obstacles to loftier and more enduring achievements, Japan has neither fears nor doubts.*

*Perhaps the future danger is just in this immense self-confidence. It is not a new feeling created by victory. It is a race feeling, which repeated triumphs have served only to strengthen.*

**Quoted from Lafcadio Hearn's book: *Kokoro*, by Shumpei Okamoto in *Impressions of the Front*.**



# 1904-5: Russo-Japanese War

- Fired by their victory over China, tensions between Russia and Japan over Manchuria and Korea continued.
- On **8<sup>th</sup> February 1904**, the Japanese naval launched a surprise attack on the **Russian Far Eastern Fleet** at Port Arthur. Japan declared war 3 hours later!
- Japan mobilises over **1 million men** and defeats the Russians in Manchuria after a series of land battles. **90,000 Japanese die.**



MANCHURIA

Mukden  
Liaoyang

Vladivostok

Gulf of Liaotung

Port Arthur

39th parallel

Inchon

KOREA

Shimonoseki

Sasebo

(Naval base)



Battle of Tsushima

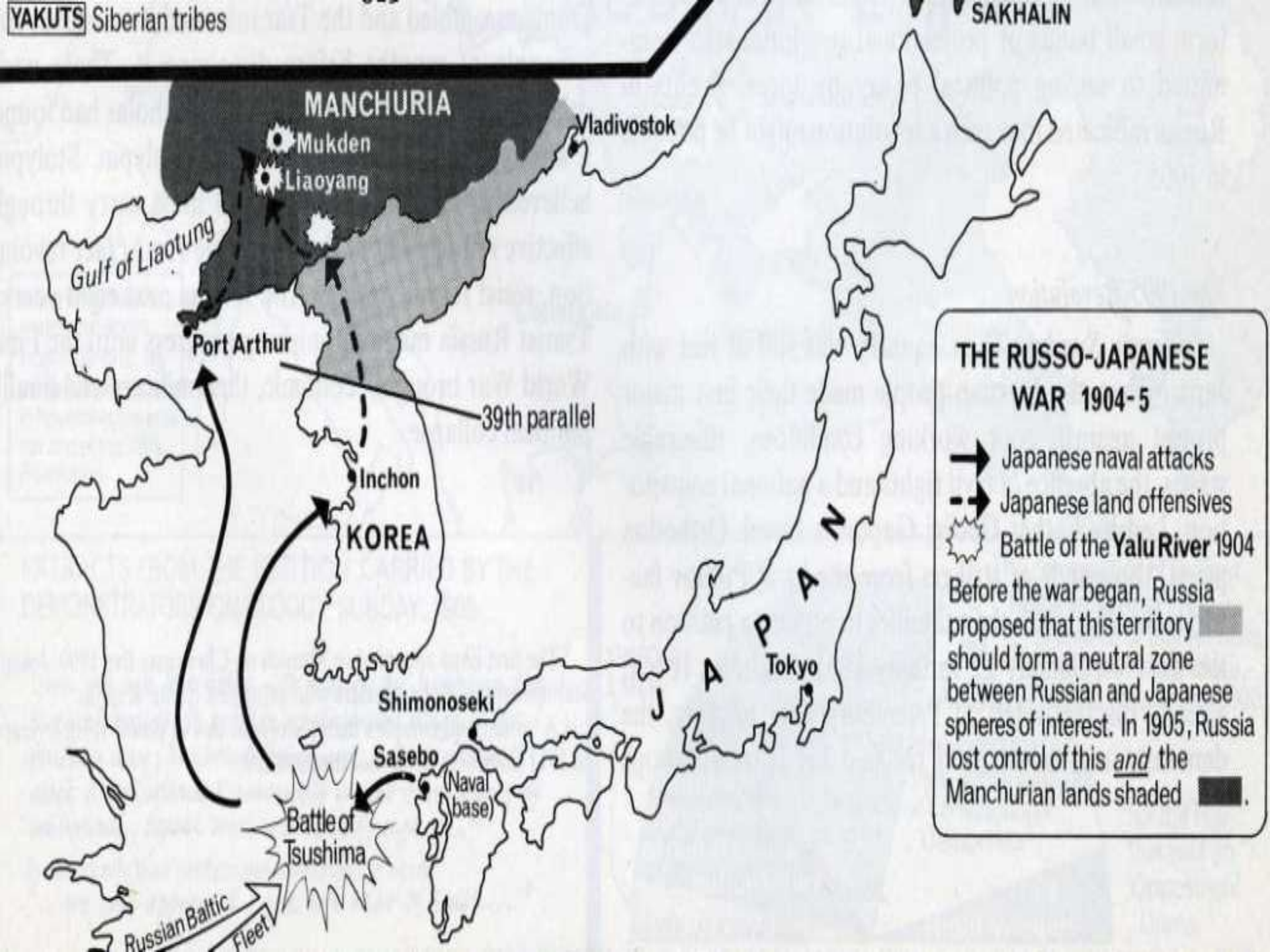
Russian Baltic Fleet

J A P A N  
Tokyo

THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR 1904-5

- Japanese naval attacks
- - - Japanese land offensives
- ☼ Battle of the Yalu River 1904

Before the war began, Russia proposed that this territory  should form a neutral zone between Russian and Japanese spheres of interest. In 1905, Russia lost control of this and the Manchurian lands shaded .



*Illustration of Our Torpedo Hitting Russian Ship  
at Great Naval Battle of Port Arthur (1904) by  
Kobayashi Kiyochika*



*Illustration of the Great Naval Battle at the Harbor Entrance to Port Arthur in the Russo-Japanese War (1904) by Rosetsu*



# Harbor Entrance of Port Arthur: Russian Flagship Sinking at Port Arthur (1904) by Nitei



# 1904-5: Russo-Japanese War

- In the **Battle of Mukden**, 250,000 Japanese confronted a Russian army of 320,000 and won.
- The final blow came when the **Russian Baltic Fleet** of 45 ships, who had sailed round the world, were completely annihilated by **Admiral Togo** in the **Straits of Tsushima**.
- Japan became the first Asian nation to defeat a Western Power and had established itself as a **major world power**.





*Hurrah pour la Russie!*

LE GRAND DUEL JAUNE ET BLANC

Collection T. Bianco.

22/8-04



# 1904-5: Russo-Japanese War

- In the resulting **Treaty of Portsmouth**, Russia was forced to **recognise Japanese claims** over Korea and gave Japan a **25-year lease** over Port Arthur in Manchuria.
- Russian itself was **humiliated** and the defeat in the war was one of the major causes of the later **Russian Revolution** in 1917.



# THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR AND PEACE 1904-1905



0 200 Miles  
0 200 Kms

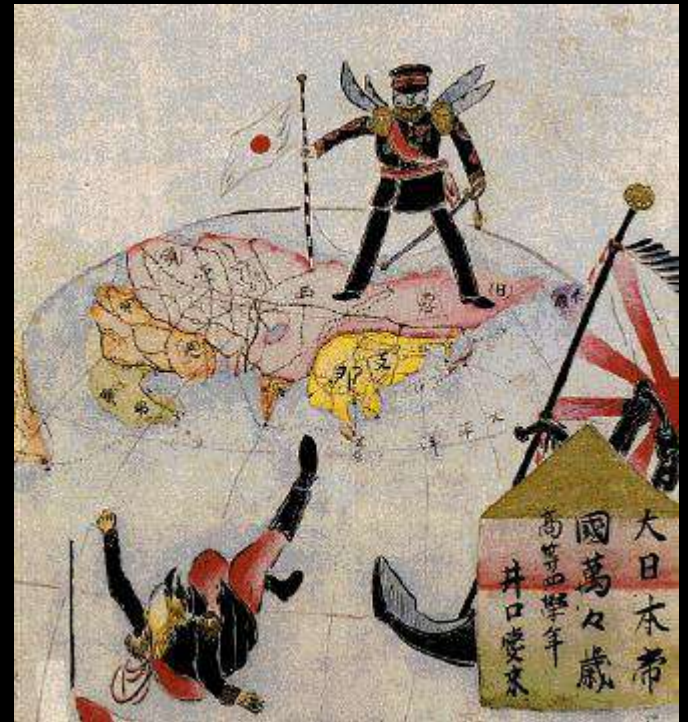


- Extent of Russian control before the War
- Japanese territory before the War
- Article II (Demand I) Japanese control of Korea recognized by Russia
- Article III (Demand II) Russian frontier defined by the Treaty
- Article V (Demand VI) Chinese territory evacuated by Russia Lease of Port Arthur & Talien to Japan
- Article VI & VII (Demand VII & VIII) Railroads controlled by Russia
- Railroads controlled by Japan
- Article IX (Demand V) Russian Sakhalin Island territory ceded to Japan
- Article XI Coastal Fishing Rights granted to Japan in the Bering Sea & Seas of Japan and Okhotsk

- 1904 Japanese landing
- Land or Sea Battle

# 1910: Japan annexes Korea

- In 1910 Korea was formally handed over to the Emperor of Japan and became part of the **Japanese empire**.
- Japan had officially become an **Imperial Power**. They had 'thrown off Asia', defeated the hated Unequal Treaties and had defeated a major Western Power. The goals of the Restoration had been achieved, but at **what cost** to Japan itself?



*Allegory of Japanese Power: Japanese Man Kicking a Cowering Chinaman and a Fearful Westerner (1906?) – Artist Unknown*



# Questions

1. Explain the reasons why Japan wanted a strong military.
2. What rationale did Japan have for needing an overseas empire?
3. What did Fukugawa Yukichi mean by 'throwing off Asia'?
4. How did the **Treaty of Kanghwa** increase tensions between China and Japan?
5. What was the purpose of the 1882 Imperial Rescript to Soldiers & Sailors?
6. What did Japan gain from the Sino-Japanese War?
7. Why was Japan angered by the **Treaty of Shimonoseki**?
8. What was so significant about the Anglo-Japanese Alliance?
9. What did Japan gain from the Russo-Japanese War?
10. When did Japan annex Korea?

# Questions

**11. Research the Sino-Japanese War and Russo-Japanese War.** For each war, make a note of the causes, events and effects on Japan.

For this task, make sure to organize the information in a structured way. For example:

## **Sino- Japanese War**

**A. Causes**

**B. Events**

**C. Effects on Japan**

Finally, make sure to cite all your sources at the bottom of the page