

Russo-Japanese War 1904-1905

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Chapter 1

Russo-Japanese War

This article is about the war between the Russian Empire and the Empire of Japan. For the conflict between the Soviet Union and Japan in the 1930s, see [Soviet–Japanese border conflicts](#). For the war in 1945, see [Soviet–Japanese War \(1945\)](#).

The **Russo-Japanese War** (8 February 1904 – 5 September 1905) was fought between the [Russian Empire](#) and the [Empire of Japan](#) over rival [imperial](#) ambitions in [Manchuria](#) and [Korea](#). The major theatres of operations were the [Liaodong Peninsula](#) and [Mukden](#) in Southern Manchuria and the seas around Korea, Japan and the [Yellow Sea](#).

Russia sought a [warm-water port](#) on the [Pacific Ocean](#) for their navy and for maritime trade. [Vladivostok](#) was operational only during the summer, whereas [Port Arthur](#), a naval base in Liaodong Province leased to Russia by China, was operational all year. Since the end of the [First Sino-Japanese War](#) in 1895, negotiations between Russia and Japan proved impractical. Russia had demonstrated an expansionist policy in the [Siberian Far East](#) from the reign of [Ivan the Terrible](#) in the 16th century.*^[4] Through threat of Russian expansion, Japan offered to recognize Russian dominance in [Manchuria](#) in exchange for recognition of Korea as being within the Japanese sphere of influence. Russia refused and demanded Korea north of the 39th parallel to be a neutral buffer zone between Russia and Japan. The Japanese government perceived a Russian threat to its strategic interests and chose to go to war. After negotiations broke down in 1904, the Japanese Navy opened hostilities by attacking the Russian Eastern Fleet at Port Arthur in a surprise attack.

Russia suffered numerous defeats by Japan, but [Tsar Nicholas II](#) was convinced that Russia would win and chose to remain engaged in the war; at first, to await the outcomes of certain naval battles, and later to preserve the dignity of Russia by averting a “humiliating peace”. The war concluded with the [Treaty of Portsmouth](#), mediated by US President [Theodore Roosevelt](#). The complete victory of the Japanese military surprised world observers. The consequences transformed the balance of power in East Asia, resulting in a reassessment of Japan's recent entry onto the world stage. Scholars continue to debate the historical significance of the war.

1.1 Historical Background

In 1853 [Commodore Perry](#) of the [US Navy](#) arrived in Japan and brought an end to Japan's [policy of self-isolation](#) by forcing the [Tokugawa shogunate](#) to sign the [Convention of Kanagawa](#) the following year. This encounter with a modern Western power served to portray the West as having a confrontational and imperialist political agenda, which Japan viewed with respect through World War II.*^[5] Japan sought to maintain its autonomy and resisted colonialism by Western nations. The [Meiji Restoration](#) in 1868 served as an early Japanese response to the challenges of the modern world.

After the Meiji Restoration in 1868, the Meiji government endeavored to assimilate Western ideas, technological advances and customs. By the late 19th century, Japan had transformed itself into a modernized industrial state. The Japanese wanted to preserve their sovereignty and be recognized as equal with the Western powers.

Tsarist Russia, as a major imperial power, had ambitions in the East. By the 1890s it had extended its realm across [Central Asia](#) to [Afghanistan](#), absorbing local states in the process. The [Russian Empire](#) stretched from Poland in the west to the [Kamchatka Peninsula](#) in the east.*^[6] With its construction of the [Trans-Siberian Railway](#) to the port of [Vladivostok](#), Russia hoped to further consolidate its influence and presence in the region. In the [Tsushima incident](#)



An anti-Russian satirical map produced by a Japanese student at Keio University during the Russo-Japanese War. It follows the design used by the Englishman Frederick Rose for a similar map first published in 1877. (Harwood 2006, 128)

of 1861 Russia had directly assaulted Japanese territory. Fearing Russian expansion, Japan regarded Korea (and to a lesser extent Manchuria) as a protective buffer.

1.1.1 Sino-Japanese War (1894–95)

Main article: [First Sino-Japanese War](#)

Between the Meiji Restoration and its participation in World War I, the Empire of Japan fought in two significant wars. The first war Japan fought was the **First Sino-Japanese War**, fought in 1894 and 1895. The war revolved around the issue of control and influence over Korea under the rule of the **Joseon dynasty**. From the 1880s onward, there had been vigorous competition for influence in Korea between China and Japan.*[7] The Korean court was prone to factionalism, and was badly divided by a reformist faction that was pro-Japanese and a more conservative faction that was pro-Chinese.*[8] In 1884, a pro-Japanese coup attempt was put down by Chinese troops, and a “residency” under General Yuan Shikai was established in Seoul.*[7] A peasant rebellion led by the Tonghak religious movement led to a request by the Korean government for the **Qing dynasty** to send in troops to stabilize the country.*[9] The Empire of Japan responded by sending their own force to Korea to crush the Tonghak and installed a puppet government in Seoul. China objected and war ensued. Hostilities proved brief, with Japanese ground troops routing Chinese forces on the **Liaodong Peninsula** and nearly destroying the Chinese Navy in the **Battle of the Yalu River**. Japan and China signed the **Treaty of Shimonoseki**, which ceded the Liaodong Peninsula and the island of Taiwan to Japan. After the peace treaty, Russia, Germany, and France forced Japan to **withdraw from the Liaodong Peninsula**. The leaders of Japan did not feel that they possessed the strength to resist the combined might of Russia, Germany and France, and so gave in to the ultimatum presented by St. Petersburg, Berlin and Paris. At the same time, the Japanese did not abandon their attempts to force Korea into the Japanese sphere of influence. On 8 October 1895, **Queen Min** of Korea, the leader of the anti-Japanese and pro-Chinese faction at the Korean court was murdered by Japanese agents within the halls of the **Gyeongbokgung** palace, an act that backfired badly as it turned Korean public opinion against Japan.*[10] In early 1896, King Gojong of Korea fled to the Russian legation in Seoul under the grounds that his life was in danger from Japanese agents, and Russian influence in Korea started to predominate.*[10] In the aftermath of



Chinese generals in Pyongyang surrender to the Japanese, October 1894.

the flight of the king, a popular uprising overthrew the pro-Japanese government and several cabinet ministers were lynched on the streets.*[10]

In 1897, Russia occupied the Liaodong Peninsula, built the **Port Arthur** fortress, and based the **Russian Pacific Fleet** in the port. Russia's acquisition of Port Arthur was primarily an anti-British move to counter the British occupation of Wei-hai-Wei, but in Japan, this was perceived as an anti-Japanese move.*[11] Germany occupied **Jiaozhou Bay**, built the **Tsingtao** fortress, and based the **German East Asia Squadron** in this port. Between 1897–1903, the Russians built the **Chinese Eastern Railway (CER)** in Manchuria.*[12] The Chinese Eastern Railroad was owned jointly by the Russian and Chinese governments, but the company's management was entirely Russian, the line was built to the Russian gauge and Russian troops were stationed in Manchuria to protect rail traffic on the CER from bandit attacks.*[12] The headquarters of the CER company was located in the new Russian-built city of **Harbin**, the “Moscow of the Orient”.*[12] From 1897 onwards, Manchuria-while still nominally part of the “Great Qing Empire”-started to resemble more and more a Russian province.*[12]

1.1.2 Russian encroachment

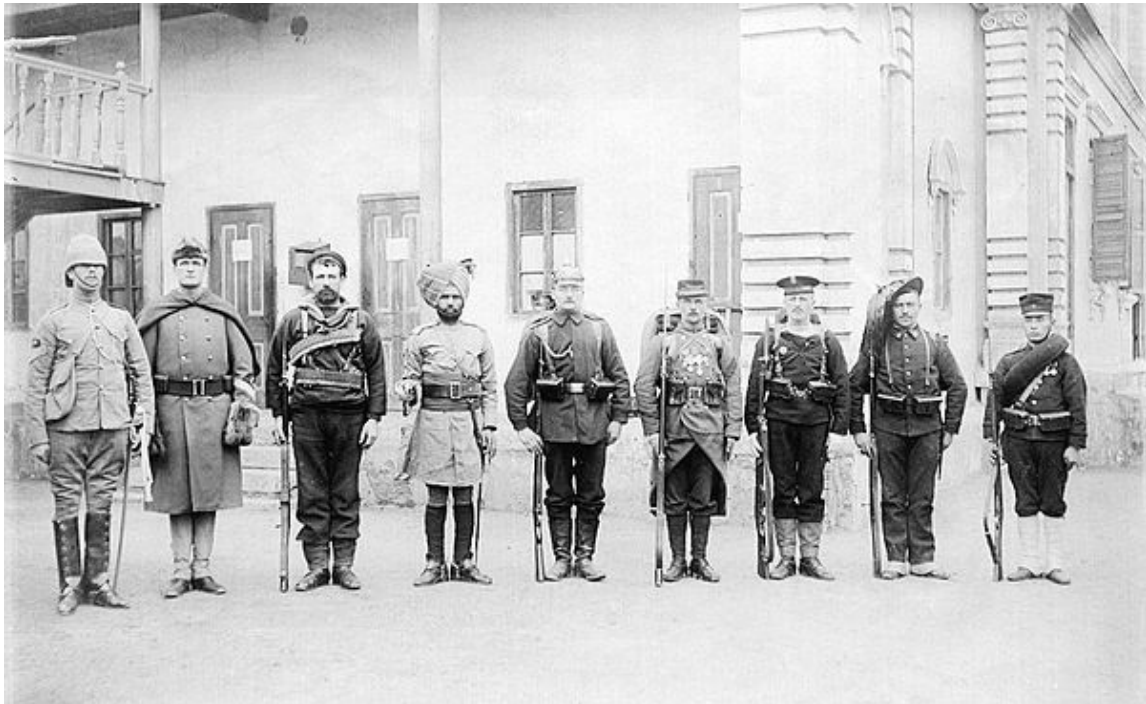
In December 1897 a **Russian** fleet appeared off Port Arthur. After three months, in 1898, China and Russia negotiated a convention by which China leased (to Russia) Port Arthur, **Talienwan** and the surrounding waters. The two parties further agreed that the convention could be extended by mutual agreement. The Russians clearly expected such an extension, for they lost no time in occupying the territory and in fortifying Port Arthur, their sole warm-water port on the Pacific coast and of great strategic value. A year later, to consolidate their position, the Russians began to build a new railway from **Harbin** through **Mukden** to Port Arthur, the South Manchurian Railroad.*[12] The development of the railway became a contributory factor to the **Boxer Rebellion**, when **Boxer forces** burned the railway stations.*[13]

The Russians also began to make inroads into Korea. By 1898 they had acquired mining and forestry concessions near the Yalu and Tumen rivers,*[14] causing the Japanese much anxiety. Japan decided to attack before the Russians completed the Trans-Siberian Railway.

1.1.3 Boxer Rebellion

Main article: **Boxer Rebellion**

The Russians and the Japanese both contributed troops to the **eight-member international force** sent in 1900 to quell the Boxer Rebellion and to relieve the international legations under siege in the Chinese capital, Beijing. Russia had already sent 177,000 soldiers to **Manchuria**, nominally to protect its railways under construction. The troops of the Qing Empire and the participants of the Boxer Rebellion could do nothing against such a massive army and were ejected from Manchuria. After the Boxer Rebellion, 100,000 Russian soldiers were stationed in Manchuria.*[16] The Russian troops settled in*[17] and despite assurances they would vacate the area after the crisis, by 1903 the Russians



Troops of the eight-nation alliance in 1900. Left to right: Britain, United States, Australia,[15] India, Germany, France, Russia, Italy, Japan.*

had not established a timetable for withdrawal*[18] and had actually strengthened their position in Manchuria.

1.1.4 Pre-war negotiations

The Japanese statesman **Itō Hirobumi** started to negotiate with the Russians. He regarded Japan as too weak to evict the Russian militarily, so he proposed giving Russia control over Manchuria in exchange for Japanese control of northern Korea. Meanwhile, Japan and Britain had signed the **Anglo-Japanese Alliance** in 1902, the British seeking to restrict naval competition by keeping the Russian Pacific seaports of Vladivostok and Port Arthur from their full use. The alliance with the British meant, in part, that if any nation allied itself with Russia during any war against Japan, then Britain would enter the war on Japan's side. Russia could no longer count on receiving help from either Germany or France without there being a danger of British involvement in the war. With such an alliance, Japan felt free to commence hostilities, if necessary.

On 28 July 1903, the Japanese minister in **St. Petersburg** was instructed to present his country's view opposing Russia's consolidation plans in Manchuria. On 12 August, the Japanese minister handed in the following document to serve as the basis for further negotiations:*[19]

1. Mutual engagement to respect the independence and territorial integrity of the Chinese and Korean empires and to maintain the principle of equal opportunity for the commerce and industry of all nations in those countries.
2. Reciprocal recognition of Japan's preponderating interests in Korea and Russia's special interests in railway enterprises in Manchuria, and of the right of Japan to take in Korea and of Russia to take in Manchuria such measures as may be necessary for the protection of their respective interests as above defined, subject, however, to the provisions of article I of this agreement.
3. Reciprocal undertaking on the part of Russia and Japan not to impede development of those industrial and commercial activities respectively of Japan in Korea and of Russia in Manchuria, which are not inconsistent with the stipulations of article I of this agreement. Additional engagement on the part of Russia not to impede the eventual extension of the Korean railway into southern Manchuria so as to connect with the East China and Shan-hai-kwan-Newchwang lines.
4. Reciprocal engagement that in case it is found necessary to send troops by Japan to Korea, or by Russia to Manchuria, for the purpose either of protecting the interests mentioned in article II of this agreement, or of

suppressing insurrection or disorder calculated to create international complications, the troops so sent are in no case to exceed the actual number required and are to be forthwith recalled as soon as their missions are accomplished.

5. Recognition on the part of Russia of the exclusive right of Japan to give advice and assistance in the interest of reform and good government in Korea, including necessary military assistance.
6. This agreement to supplant all previous arrangements between Japan and Russia respecting Korea.

On 3 October, the Russian minister to Japan, **Roman Rosen**, presented to the Japanese government the Russian counterproposal as the basis of negotiations, as follows:*[20]

1. Mutual engagement to respect the independence and territorial integrity of the Korean Empire.
2. Recognition by Russia of Japan's preponderating interests in Korea and of the right of Japan to give advice and assistance to Korea tending to improve the civil administration of the empire without infringing the stipulations of article I.
3. Engagement on the part of Russia not to impede the commercial and industrial undertakings of Japan in Korea, nor to oppose any measures taken for the purpose of protecting them so long as such measures do not infringe the stipulations of article I.
4. Recognition of the right of Japan to send for the same purpose troops to Korea, with the knowledge of Russia, but their number not to exceed that actually required, and with the engagement on the part of Japan to recall such troops as soon as their mission is accomplished.
5. Mutual engagement not to use any part of the territory of Korea for strategical purposes nor to undertake on the coasts of Korea any military works capable of menacing the freedom of navigation in the Straits of Korea.
6. Mutual engagement to consider that part of the territory of Korea lying to the north of the 39th parallel as a neutral zone into which neither of the contracting parties shall introduce troops.
7. Recognition by Japan of Manchuria and its littoral as in all respects outside her sphere of interest.
8. This agreement to supplant all previous agreements between Russia and Japan respecting Korea.

Negotiations then followed; although by early January 1904, the Japanese government had realised that Russia was neither interested in settling the **Manchurian** nor Korean issues. Instead, Russia's goal was buying time – via diplomacy – to further buildup militarily. *[21] Nevertheless, on 13 January 1904, Japan proposed a formula by which Manchuria would be outside the Japanese sphere of influence and, reciprocally, Korea outside Russia's. By 4 February 1904, no formal reply had been received and on 6 February **Kurino Shinichiro**, the Japanese minister, called on the Russian foreign minister, **Count Lamsdorf**, to take his leave. *[22] Japan severed diplomatic relations with Russia on 6 February 1904. *[21]

Potential diplomatic resolution of territorial concerns between Japan and Russia failed; historians have argued that this directly resulted from the actions of Tsar **Nicholas II**. One crucial error of Nicholas was his mismanagement of government. Although certain scholars contend the situation arose from the determination of Tsar Nicholas II to use the war against Japan to spark a revival in Russian patriotism, no historical evidence supports this claim. *[23] The Tsar's advisors did not support the war, foreseeing problems in transporting troops and supplies from European Russia to the East. *[24] Convinced that his rule was divinely ordained and that he held responsibility to God, Nicholas II held the ideals of preserving the autocracy and defending the dignity, honor, and worth of Russia. *[25] This attitude by the Tsar led to repeated delays in negotiations with the Japanese government. The Japanese understanding of this can be seen from a telegram dated 1 December 1903 from Japanese minister of foreign affairs, Komura, to the minister to Russia, in which he stated:

"...the Japanese government have at all times during the progress of the negotiations made it a special point to give prompt answers to all propositions of the Russian government. The negotiations have now been pending for no less than four months, and they have not yet reached a stage where the final issue can with certainty be predicted. In these circumstances the Japanese government cannot but regard with grave concern the situation for which the delays in negotiations are largely responsible" .*[26]

Errors by Nicholas II in managing the Russian government also led to his misinterpreting the type of situation in which Russia was to become involved in with Japan. Some scholars have suggested that Tsar Nicholas II dragged Japan into war intentionally, in hopes of reviving Russian nationalism. This notion is disputed by a comment made by Nicholas to Kaiser William of Germany, saying there would be no war because he “did not wish it”.^[27] This does not reject the claim that Russia played an aggressive role in the East, which it did; rather, it means that Russia unwisely calculated that Japan would not go to war against its far larger and seemingly superior navy and army. Nicholas held the Japanese in contempt as “yellow monkeys”, and he took for granted that the Japanese would simply yield in the face of Russia's superior power, which thus explains his unwillingness to compromise.^[28] Evidence of Russia's false sense of security and superiority to Japan is seen by Russian reference to Japan as a big mistake.^[29]

1.2 Declaration of war



Greater Manchuria. Russian (outer) Manchuria is the lighter red region to the upper right

Japan issued a declaration of war on 8 February 1904.^[30] However, three hours before Japan's declaration of war was received by the Russian government, the Japanese Imperial Navy attacked the Russian Far East Fleet at Port Arthur. Tsar Nicholas II was stunned by news of the attack. He could not believe that Japan would commit an act of war without a formal declaration, and had been assured by his ministers that the Japanese would not fight. When the attack came, according to Cecil Spring Rice, first secretary at the British Embassy, it left the Tsar “almost incredulous”.^[31] Russia declared war on Japan eight days later.^[32] Japan, in response, made reference to the Russian attack on Sweden in 1809 without declaration of war, and the requirement to declare war before commencing hostilities was not made international law until the Second Hague Peace Conference was held in October 1907.^[33]

The Qing Empire favoured the Japanese position and even offered military aid, but Japan declined it. However, Yuan Shikai sent envoys to Japanese generals several times to deliver foodstuffs and alcoholic drinks. Native Manchurians joined the war on both sides as hired troops.^[34]

1.3 Campaign of 1904

Port Arthur, on the Liaodong Peninsula in the south of Manchuria, had been fortified into a major naval base by the Russian Imperial Army. Since it needed to control the sea in order to fight a war on the Asian mainland, Japan's first military objective was to neutralize the Russian fleet at Port Arthur.

1.3.1 Battle of Port Arthur

Main article: [Battle of Port Arthur](#)

On the night of 8 February 1904, the Japanese fleet under Admiral [Tōgō Heihachirō](#) opened the war with a surprise



Japanese infantry during the occupation of Seoul, Korea, in 1904

torpedo boat destroyer*[\[35\]](#) attack on the Russian ships at Port Arthur. The attack heavily damaged the *Tsesarevich* and *Retvizan*, the heaviest battleships in Russia's far Eastern theater, and the 6,600 ton cruiser *Pallada*.[* \[36\]](#) These attacks developed into the [Battle of Port Arthur](#) the next morning. A series of indecisive naval engagements followed, in which Admiral Togo was unable to attack the Russian fleet successfully as it was protected by the shore batteries of the harbour, and the Russians were reluctant to leave the harbour for the open seas, especially after the death of Admiral [Stepan Osipovich Makarov](#) on 13 April 1904. Although the actual Battle of Port Arthur was indecisive, the initial attacks had a devastating psychological effect on Russia, which had been confident about the prospect of war. The Japanese had seized the initiative while the Russians waited in port.[* \[37\]](#)

These engagements provided cover for a Japanese landing near [Incheon](#) in Korea. From Incheon the Japanese occupied Seoul and then the rest of Korea. By the end of April, the Japanese Imperial Army under [Kuroki Itei](#) was ready to cross the [Yalu River](#) into Russian-occupied Manchuria.

1.3.2 Blockade of Port Arthur

The Japanese attempted to deny the Russians use of Port Arthur. During the night of 13–14 February, the Japanese attempted to block the entrance to Port Arthur by sinking several concrete-filled steamers in the deep water channel to the port,[* \[38\]](#) but they sank too deep to be effective. A similar attempt to block the harbour entrance during the night of 3–4 May also failed. In March, the charismatic Vice Admiral [Makarov](#) had taken command of the First Russian Pacific Squadron with the intention of breaking out of the Port Arthur blockade.

On 12 April 1904, two Russian [pre-dreadnought](#) battleships, the flagship *Petropavlovsk* and the *Pobeda*, slipped out of port but struck Japanese mines off Port Arthur. The *Petropavlovsk* sank almost immediately, while the *Pobeda* had to be towed back to port for extensive repairs. Admiral Makarov, the single most effective Russian naval strategist of the war, perished on the battleship *Petropavlovsk*.

On 15 April 1904, the Russian government made overtures threatening to seize the British war correspondents who were taking the ship *Haimun* into warzones to report for the London-based *Times* newspaper, citing concerns about the possibility of the British giving away Russian positions to the Japanese fleet.



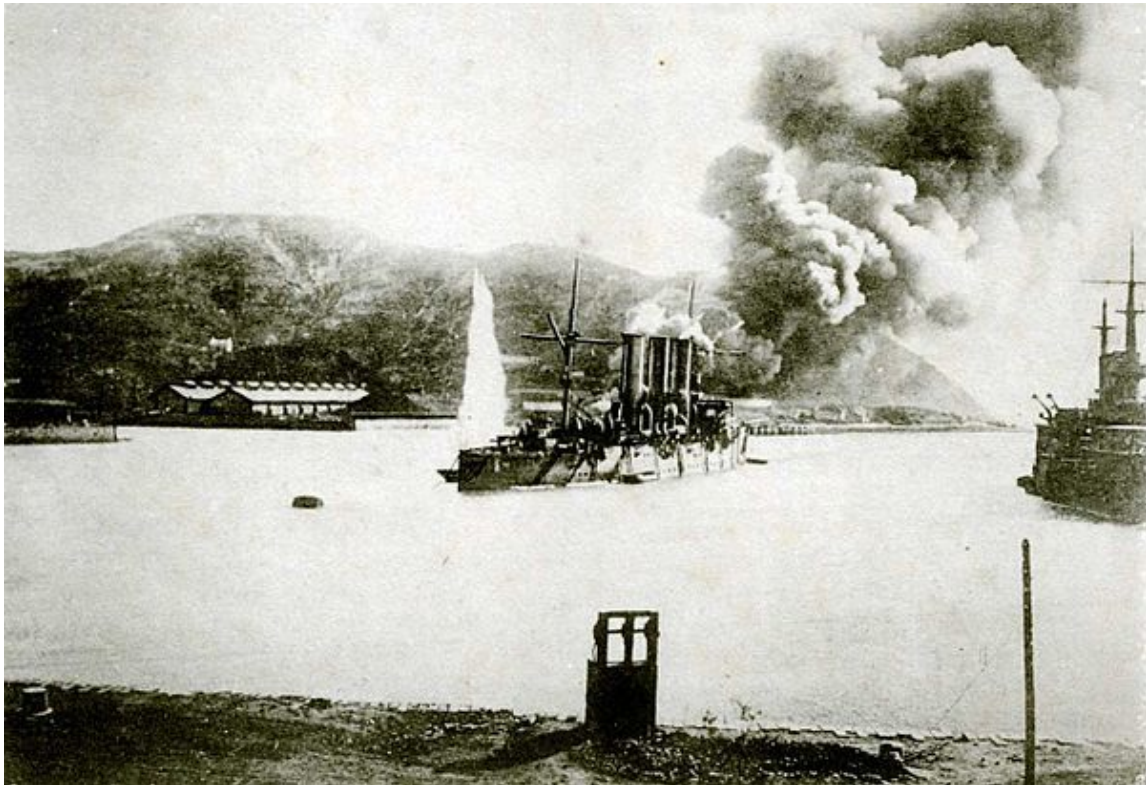
Battlefields in the Russo-Japanese War

The Russians quickly learned, and soon employed, the Japanese tactic of offensive minelaying. On 15 May 1904, two Japanese battleships, the *Yashima* and the *Hatsuse*, were lured into a recently laid Russian minefield off Port Arthur, each striking at least two mines. The *Hatsuse* sank within minutes, taking 450 sailors with her, while the *Yashima* sank while under tow towards Korea for repairs. On 23 June 1904, a **breakout attempt** by the Russian squadron, now under the command of Admiral **Wilhelm Vitgeft**, failed. By the end of the month, Japanese artillery were firing shells into the harbour.

1.3.3 Siege of Port Arthur

Main article: [Siege of Port Arthur](#)

The Siege of Port Arthur commenced in April 1904. Japanese troops tried numerous frontal assaults on the fortified



Bombardment during the Siege of Port Arthur

hilltops overlooking the harbour, which were defeated with Japanese casualties in the thousands. Eventually, though, with the aid of several batteries of 11-inch (280 mm) [Krupp howitzers](#), the Japanese were able to capture the key hilltop bastion in December 1904. From this vantage point, the long-range artillery was able to shell the Russian fleet, which was unable to retaliate effectively against the land-based artillery and was unable or unwilling to sail out against the blockading fleet. Four Russian battleships and two cruisers were sunk in succession, with the fifth and last battleship being forced to scuttle a few weeks later. Thus, all [capital ships](#) of the Russian fleet in the Pacific were sunk. This is probably the only example in military history when such a scale of devastation was achieved by land-based artillery against major warships.

Meanwhile, attempts to relieve the besieged city by land also failed, and, after the [Battle of Liaoyang](#) in late August, the northern Russian force that might have been able to relieve Port Arthur retreated to Mukden ([Shenyang](#)). Major General [Anatoly Stessel](#), commander of the Port Arthur garrison, believed that the purpose of defending the city was lost after the fleet had been destroyed. In general, the Russian defenders were suffering disproportionate casualties each time the Japanese attacked. In particular, several large underground [mines](#) were exploded in late December, resulting in the costly capture of a few more pieces of the defensive line. Stessel, therefore, decided to surrender to the surprised Japanese generals on 2 January 1905. He made his decision without consulting either the other military staff present, or the Tsar and military command, who all disagreed with the decision. Stessel was convicted by a [court-martial](#) in 1908 and sentenced to death on account of an incompetent defense and for disobeying orders. He was later pardoned.

1.3.4 Anglo-Japanese intelligence co-operation

Even before the war, British and Japanese intelligence had co-operated against Russia.*[\[39\]](#) During the war, [Indian Army](#) stations in [Malaya](#) and China often intercepted and read wireless and telegraph cable traffic relating to the war, which was shared with the Japanese.*[\[40\]](#) In their turn, the Japanese shared information about Russia with the British with one British official writing of the “perfect quality” of Japanese intelligence.*[\[41\]](#) In particular, British



Japanese assault on the entrenched Russian forces, 1904

and Japanese intelligence gathered much evidence that Germany was supporting Russia in the war as part of a bid to disturb the balance of power in Europe, which led to British officials increasingly perceiving that country as a threat to the international order.*[42]

1.3.5 Battle of Yalu River

Main article: [Battle of Yalu River \(1904\)](#)

In contrast to the Japanese strategy of rapidly gaining ground to control Manchuria, Russian strategy focused on fighting delaying actions to gain time for reinforcements to arrive via the long Trans-Siberian railway, which was incomplete near [Irkutsk](#) at the time. On 1 May 1904, the [Battle of Yalu River](#) became the first major land battle of the war; Japanese troops stormed a Russian position after crossing the river. The defeat of the Russian Eastern Detachment removed the perception that the Japanese would be an easy enemy, that the war would be short, and that Russia would be the overwhelming victor.*[43] This battle was also the first battle in decades to be an Asian victory over a European power and marked Russia's inability to match Japan's military prowess.*[44] Japanese troops proceeded to land at several points on the Manchurian coast, and in a series of engagements, drove the Russians back towards Port Arthur. The subsequent battles, including the [Battle of Nanshan](#) on 25 May 1904, were marked by heavy Japanese losses largely from attacking entrenched Russian positions.

1.3.6 Battle of the Yellow Sea

Main article: [Battle of the Yellow Sea](#)

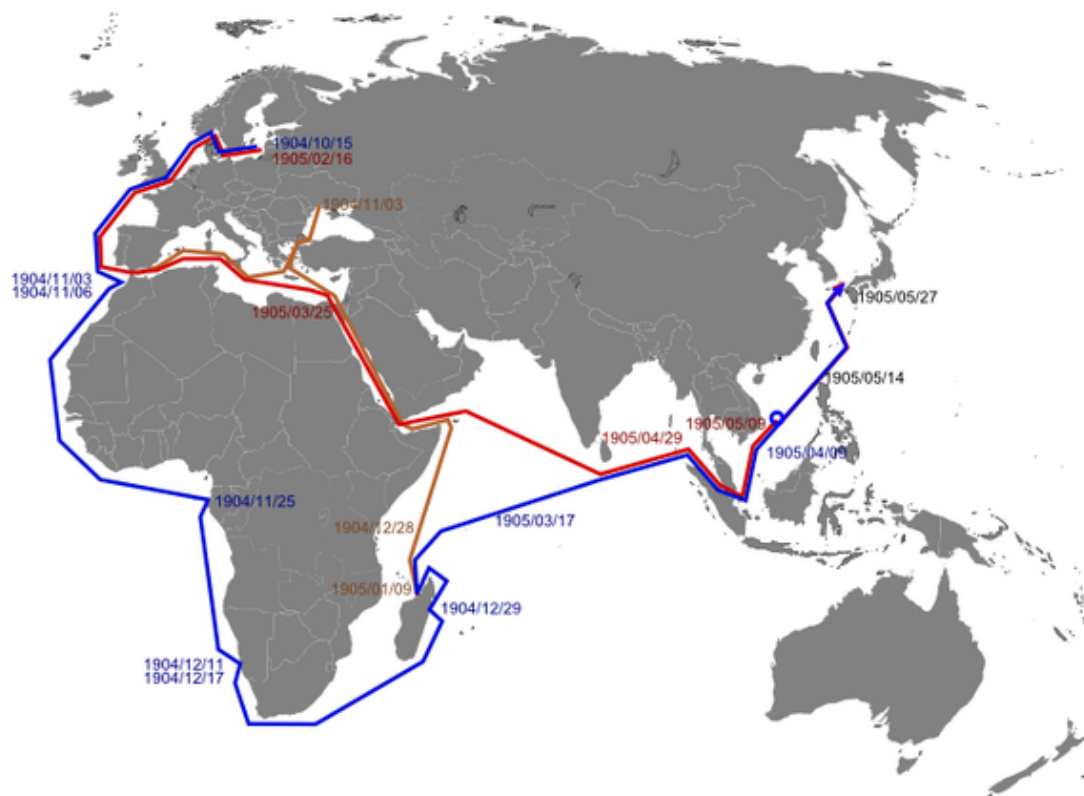
With the death of Admiral [Stepan Makarov](#) during the siege of Port Arthur in April 1904, Admiral [Wilhelm Vitgeft](#) was appointed command of the battle fleet and was ordered to make a [sortie](#) from Port Arthur and deploy his force to [Vladivostok](#). Flying his flag in the French-built pre-dreadnought [Tsesarevich](#), Vitgeft proceeded to lead his six

battleships, four cruisers, and 14 torpedo boat destroyers into the Yellow Sea in the early morning of 10 August 1904. Waiting for him was Admiral Togo and his fleet of four battleships, 10 cruisers, and 18 torpedo boat destroyers.

At approximately 12:15, the battleship fleets obtained visual contact with each other, and at 13:00 with Togo crossing Vitgeft's T, they commenced main battery fire at a range of about eight miles, the longest ever conducted up to that time.* [45] For about thirty minutes the battleships pounded one another until they had closed to less than four miles and began to bring their secondary batteries into play. At 18:30, a hit from one of Togo's battleships struck Vitgeft's flagship's bridge, killing him instantly.

With the *Tsesarevich*'s helm jammed and their admiral killed in action, she turned from her battle line, causing confusion among her fleet. However, Togo was determined to sink the Russian flagship and continued pounding her, being saved only by the gallant charge of the American-built Russian battleship *Retvizan*, whose captain successfully drew away Togo's heavy fire from the Russian flagship.* [46] Knowing of the impending battle with the battleship reinforcements arriving from Russia (the Baltic Fleet), Togo chose not to risk his battleships by pursuing his enemy as they turned about and headed back into Port Arthur, thus ending naval history's longest-range gunnery duel up to that time and the first modern clash of steel battleship fleets on the high seas.

1.3.7 Baltic Fleet redeploy



Route of Baltic Fleet, to and back

Meanwhile, the Russians were preparing to reinforce their Far East Fleet by sending the Baltic Fleet, under the command of Admiral Zinovy Rozhdestvensky. After a false start caused by engine problems and other mishaps, the squadron finally departed on 15 October 1904, and sailed half way around the world from the Baltic Sea to the Pacific via the Cape of Good Hope in the course of a seven-month odyssey that was to attract worldwide attention. The fleet was forced to take this longer route after the Dogger Bank incident on 21 October 1904, where the Russian fleet fired on British fishing boats that they mistook for enemy torpedo boats. This caused the British to deny them access to the Suez Canal, thus forcing them around Africa, and nearly sparking a war with the United Kingdom (an ally of Japan, but neutral, unless provoked).

1.4 Campaign of 1905



*Retreat of Russian soldiers after the **Battle of Mukden**.*

With the fall of **Port Arthur**, the Japanese 3rd Army could continue northward to reinforce positions south of Russian-held **Mukden**. With the onset of the severe Manchurian winter, there had been no major land engagements since the **Battle of Shaho** the previous year. The two sides camped opposite each other along 60 to 70 miles (110 km) of front lines south of Mukden.

1.4.1 Battle of Sandepu

Main article: **Battle of Sandepu**

The Russian Second Army under General **Oskar Gripenberg**, between 25 and 29 January, attacked the Japanese left flank near the town of Sandepu, almost breaking through. This caught the Japanese by surprise. However, without support from other Russian units the attack stalled, Gripenberg was ordered to halt by **Kuropatkin** and the battle was inconclusive. The Japanese knew that they needed to destroy the Russian army in Manchuria before Russian reinforcements arrived via the Trans-Siberian railroad.

1.4.2 Battle of Mukden

Main article: **Battle of Mukden**

The Battle of Mukden commenced on 20 February 1905. In the following days Japanese forces proceeded to assault the right and left flanks of Russian forces surrounding Mukden, along a 50-mile (80 km) front. Approximately half a million men were involved in the fighting. Both sides were well entrenched and were backed by hundreds of artillery pieces. After days of harsh fighting, added pressure from the flanks forced both ends of the Russian defensive line to curve backwards. Seeing they were about to be encircled, the Russians began a general retreat, fighting a series of fierce rearguard actions, which soon deteriorated in the confusion and collapse of Russian forces. On 10 March 1905, after three weeks of fighting, **General Kuropatkin** decided to withdraw to the north of Mukden. The Russians lost 90,000 men in the battle.

The retreating Russian Manchurian Army formations disbanded as fighting units, but the Japanese failed to destroy them completely. The Japanese themselves had suffered heavy casualties and were in no condition to pursue. Although



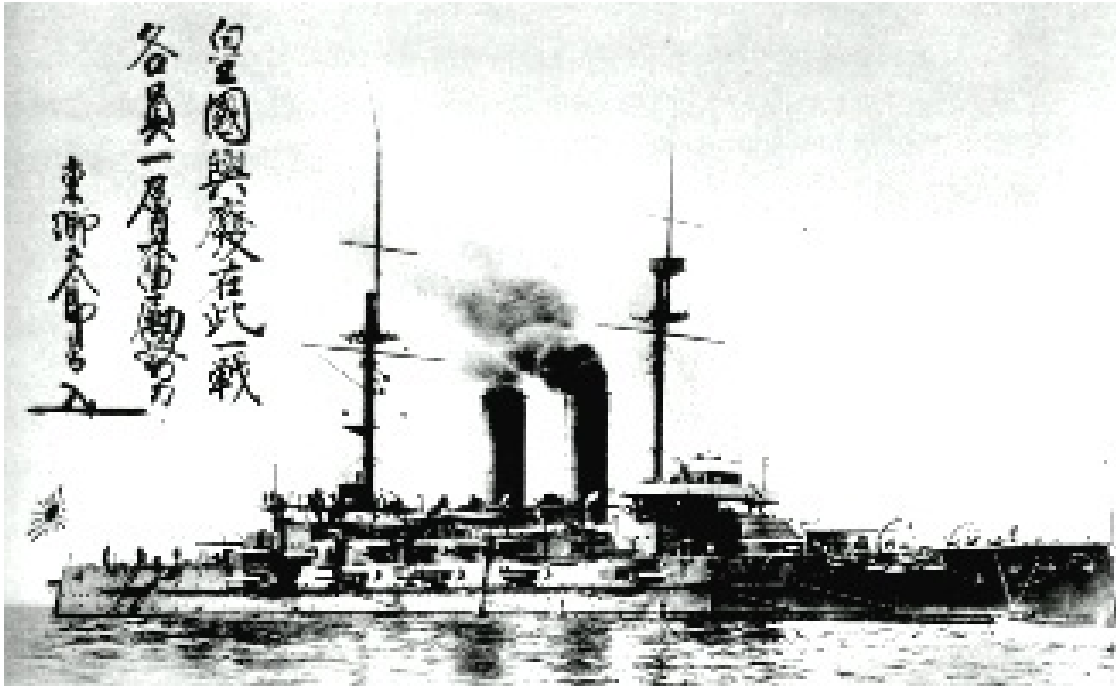
An illustration of a Japanese assault during the Battle of Mukden.

the Battle of Mukden was a major defeat for the Russians and was the most decisive land battle ever fought by the Japanese, the final victory still depended on the navy.

1.4.3 Battle of Tsushima

Main article: [Battle of Tsushima](#)

After a stopover of several weeks at the minor port of Nossi-Bé, [Madagascar](#), that had been reluctantly allowed



Japanese battleship Mikasa, the flagship of Admiral Tōgō Heihachirō at the Battle of Tsushima.

by neutral France in order not to jeopardize its relations with its Russian ally, the Russian Baltic fleet proceeded to [Cam Ranh Bay](#) in [French Indochina](#) passing on its way through the [Singapore Strait](#) between 7 and 10 April 1905.*[47][48] The fleet finally reached the Sea of Japan in May 1905. The logistics of such an undertaking in the age of coal power was astounding. The squadron required approximately 500,000 tons of coal to complete the journey, yet by international law, it was not allowed to coal at neutral ports, forcing the Russian authorities to acquire a large fleet of colliers to supply the fleet at sea. The weight of the ships' stores needed for such a long journey was to be another major problem.*[49] The Russian Second Pacific Squadron (the renamed Baltic Fleet) sailed 18,000 nautical miles (33,000 km) to relieve Port Arthur. The demoralizing news that Port Arthur had fallen reached the fleet while it was still at Madagascar. Admiral Rozhdestvensky's only hope now was to reach the port of Vladivostok. There were three routes to Vladivostok, with the shortest and most direct passing through [Tsushima Strait](#) between Korea and Japan. However, this was also the most dangerous route as it passed between the Japanese home islands and the Japanese naval bases in Korea.

Admiral Togo was aware of Russian progress and understood that, with the fall of Port Arthur, the Second and Third Pacific squadrons would try to reach the only other Russian port in the Far East, Vladivostok. Battle plans were laid down and ships were repaired and refitted to intercept the Russian fleet.

The Japanese [Combined Fleet](#), which had originally consisted of six battleships, was now down to four (two had been lost to mines), but still retained its cruisers, destroyers, and torpedo boats. The Russian Second Pacific Squadron contained eight battleships, including four new battleships of the [Borodino](#) class, as well as cruisers, destroyers and other auxiliaries for a total of 38 ships.

By the end of May, the Second Pacific Squadron was on the last leg of its journey to Vladivostok, taking the shorter, riskier route between Korea and Japan, and travelling at night to avoid discovery. Unfortunately for the Russians, while in compliance with the [rules of war](#), the two trailing hospital ships had continued to burn their lights,*[50] which were spotted by the Japanese [armed merchant cruiser](#) *Shinano Maru*. Wireless communication was used to inform Togo's headquarters, where the Combined Fleet was immediately ordered to sortie.*[51] Still receiving naval

intelligence from scouting forces, the Japanese were able to position their fleet so that they would “cross the T”^[52] of the Russian fleet. The Japanese engaged the Russians in the Tsushima Straits on 27–28 May 1905. The Russian fleet was virtually annihilated, losing eight battleships, numerous smaller vessels, and more than 5,000 men, while the Japanese lost three torpedo boats and 116 men. Only three Russian vessels escaped to Vladivostok. After the Battle of Tsushima, a combined Japanese Army and Navy operation occupied Sakhalin Island to force the Russians into suing for peace.

1.5 Peace and aftermath

1.5.1 Treaty of Portsmouth

Main article: [Treaty of Portsmouth](#)

The defeats of the Russian Army and Navy shook up Russian confidence. Throughout 1905, the Imperial Russian

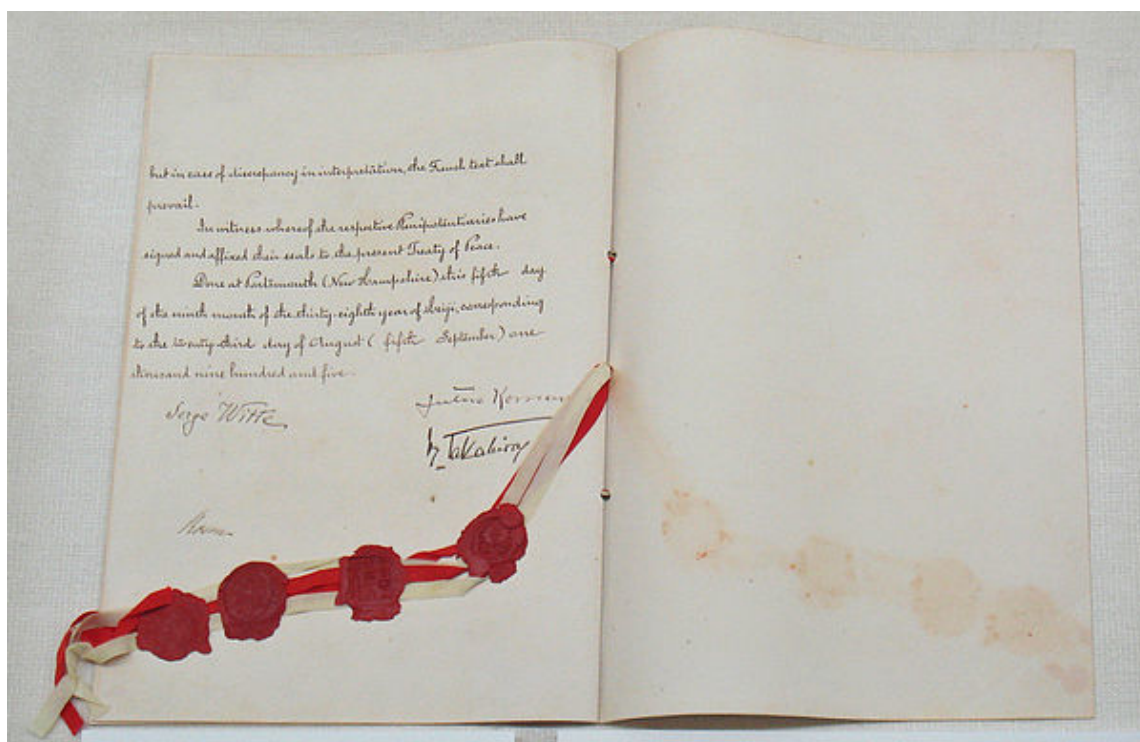


Negotiating the Treaty of Portsmouth (1905). From left to right: the Russians at far side of table are Korostovetz, Nabokov, Witte, Rosen, Plancon; and the Japanese at near side of table are Adachi, Ochiai, Komura, Takahira, Sato. The large conference table is today preserved at the Museum Meiji-mura in Inuyama, Aichi Prefecture, Japan.

government was rocked by **revolution**. The population was against escalation of the war. The empire was certainly capable of sending more troops, but the poor state of the economy, the embarrassing defeats of the Russian Army and Navy by the Japanese, and the relative unimportance of the disputed land to Russia made the war extremely unpopular.^[53] Tsar Nicholas II elected to negotiate peace so he could concentrate on internal matters after the disaster of **Bloody Sunday** on 22 January 1905.

Both sides accepted the offer of Theodore Roosevelt, the President of the United States, to mediate; meetings were held in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, with Sergius Witte leading the Russian delegation and Baron Komura, a graduate of Harvard, leading the Japanese delegation. The Treaty of Portsmouth was signed on 5 September 1905 at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard on Seavey's Island, Kittery, Maine, while the delegates stayed in Portsmouth, New Hampshire.^[54] Witte became Russian Prime Minister the same year.

After courting the Japanese, Roosevelt decided to support the Tsar's refusal to pay indemnities, a move that policy-makers in Tokyo interpreted as signifying that the United States had more than a passing interest in Asian affairs. Russia recognized Korea as part of the Japanese sphere of influence and agreed to evacuate Manchuria. Japan would annex Korea in 1910 (Japan–Korea Treaty of 1910), with scant protest from other powers.^[55]



Japan-Russia Treaty of Peace, 5 September 1905

Russia also signed over its 25-year leasehold rights to Port Arthur, including the naval base and the peninsula around it, and ceded the southern half of **Sakhalin Island** to Japan. Both would be taken back by the Soviet Union following the defeat of the Japanese in World War II. * [56] * [57]

Roosevelt earned the **Nobel Peace Prize** for his effort. **George E. Mowry** concludes that Roosevelt handled the arbitration well, doing an “excellent job of balancing Russian and Japanese power in the Orient, where the supremacy of either constituted a threat to growing America.” * [58]

1.5.2 Casualties

Sources do not agree on a precise number of deaths from the war because of a lack of **body counts** for confirmation. The number of Japanese Army dead in combat is put at around 47,000 with around 27,000 additional casualties from disease, and between 6,000 and 12,000 wounded. Estimates of Russian Army dead range from around 40,000 to around 70,000 men. The total number of army dead is generally stated as around 130,000 to 170,000. * [59] China suffered 20,000 civilian deaths, and financially the loss amounted to over 69 million **taels**’ worth of silver.

During many of the battles at sea, several thousand soldiers being transported drowned after their ships went down. There was no consensus about what to do with transported soldiers at sea, and as a result, many of the ships failed or refused to rescue soldiers that were left shipwrecked. This led to the creation of the **second Geneva Convention** in 1906, which gave protection and care for shipwrecked soldiers in armed conflict.

1.5.3 Political consequences

This was the first major military victory in the **modern era** of an Asian power over a European nation. Russia’s defeat was met with shock in the West and across the Far East. Japan’s prestige rose greatly as it came to be seen as a modern nation. Concurrently, Russia lost virtually its entire Pacific and Baltic fleets, and also much international esteem. This was particularly true in the eyes of Germany and **Austria-Hungary** before World War I. Russia was France’s and **Serbia’s** ally, and that loss of prestige had a significant effect on Germany’s future when planning for war with France, and Austria-Hungary’s war with Serbia.

In the absence of Russian competition, and with the distraction of European nations during World War I, combined with the **Great Depression** that followed, the Japanese military began efforts to dominate China and the rest of Asia,



Japanese propaganda of the war: woodcut print showing Tsar Nicholas II waking from a nightmare of the battered and wounded Russian forces returning from battle. Artist Kobayashi Kiyochika, 1904 or 1905.

which eventually led to the **Second Sino-Japanese War** and the **Pacific War** theatres of World War II.



THE SANDS RUNNING OUT

(January 4, 1905)

The Tsardom was badly shaken by its war with Japan.

66

Punch cartoon, 1905; A cartoon in the British press of the times illustrating Russia's loss of prestige after the nation's defeat. The hour-glass represents Russia's prestige running out.

Effects in Russia

Although popular support for the war had existed following the Japanese attack on Port Arthur in 1904, discontent occurred following continued defeats at the hands of Japan. For many Russians, the immediate shock of unexpected

humiliation at the hands of Japan caused the conflict to be viewed as a metaphor for the shortcomings of the Romanov autocracy. * [60] Popular discontent in Russia after the war added more fuel to the already simmering **Russian Revolution of 1905**, an event Nicholas II had hoped to avoid entirely by taking intransigent negotiating stances prior to coming to the table. Twelve years later, that discontent boiled over into the **February Revolution** of 1917. In Poland, which Russia **partitioned** in the late 18th century, and where Russian rule already caused **two major uprisings**, the population was so restless that an army of 250,000–300,000—larger than the one facing the Japanese—had to be stationed to put down **the unrest**. * [61] Some political leaders of the Polish insurrection movement (in particular, **Józef Piłsudski**) sent emissaries to Japan to collaborate on sabotage and intelligence gathering within the Russian Empire and even plan a Japanese-aided uprising. * [62]

In Russia, the defeat of 1905 led in the short term to a reform of the Russian military that allowed it to face Germany in World War I. However, the revolts at home following the war planted seeds that presaged the **Russian Revolution of 1917**. This was because Tsar Nicholas II issued the **October Manifesto**, which included only limited reforms such as the Duma and failed to address the societal problems of Russia at the time. * [63]

Effects on Japan

Japan had become the rising Asian power and had proven that its military could combat the major powers in Europe with success. Most Western powers were stunned that the Japanese not only prevailed but decisively defeated Russia. In the Russo-Japanese War, Japan had also portrayed a sense of readiness in taking a more active and leading role in Asian affairs, which in turn had led to widespread nationalism throughout the region. * [60]

Although the war had ended in a victory for Japan, Japanese public opinion was shocked by the very restrained peace terms which were negotiated at the war's end. * [64] Widespread discontent spread through the populace upon the announcement of the treaty terms. Riots erupted in major cities in Japan. Two specific requirements, expected after such a costly victory, were especially lacking: territorial gains and monetary reparations to Japan. The peace accord led to feelings of distrust, as the Japanese had intended to retain all of **Sakhalin Island**, but were forced to settle for half of it after being pressured by the United States, with President Roosevelt opting to support Nicholas II's stance on not ceding territory or paying reparations. The Japanese had wanted reparations to help families recover from lost fathers and sons as well as heavy taxation from the government. * [65] Without them, they were at a loss.

The U.S. held strength in the Asian region from aggravating European imperialist encroachment. To Japan, this represented a developing threat to the autonomy of the region. U.S.-Japanese relations would recover a bit in the early 20th century, but by the early 1920s, few in Japan believed that the United States meant anything positive for the future of Asia. * [66] By the 1930s, the U.S. presence in Asian affairs, along with the instability in China and the collapse of the Western economic order, Japan would act aggressively with respect to China, setting the precedent that would ultimately culminate in the **Greater East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere**. Some scholars suggest that Japan's road to World War II had begun not upon winning the Russo-Japanese War, but when it lost the peace. * [67]

1.5.4 Treatment of civilians

During the fighting in Manchuria, Russian troops routinely looted and burned Chinese villages, raped the women and killed all who resisted or who were just in the way. * [68] The Russian justification for all this was that Chinese civilians, being Asian, must have been helping their fellow Asians, the Japanese, inflict defeat on the Russians, and therefore deserved to be punished. * [68] The Russian troops were gripped by the fear of the "**Yellow Peril**", and saw all Asians, not just the Japanese, as the enemy. * [68] All the Russian soldiers were much feared by the Chinese population of Manchuria, but it was the Cossacks whom they feared the most on the account of their brutality and insatiable desire to loot. * [68] Largely because of the more disciplined behavior of the Japanese, the Han and Manchu population of Manchuria tended to be pro-Japanese. * [68] Even the Japanese were much prone to looting, albeit in a considerably less brutal manner than the Russians and to summarily executing any Chinese or Manchu whom they suspected of being spies. * [68] The city of Liaoyang had the misfortune to be sacked three times within three days; first by the Russians, then by the Chinese police, and finally by the Japanese. * [68] The Japanese hired Chinese bandits known variously as the **Chunguses**, **Chunchuse** or *khunhuzy* to engage in guerrilla warfare by attacking Russian supply columns. * [34] Only once did the Chunguses attack Japanese forces, and that attack was apparently motivated by the Chunguses mistaking the Japanese forces for a Russian one. * [69] **Zhang Zuolin**, a prominent bandit leader and the future "Old Marshal" who would rule Manchuria as a warlord between 1916–28 worked as a Chunguse for the Japanese. Manchuria was still officially part of the Chinese Empire, and the Chinese civil servants tried their best to be neutral as Russian and Japanese troops marched across Manchuria. * [69] In the parts of Manchuria occupied by the Japanese, Tokyo appointed "civil governors" who worked to improve health, sanitation and the state of the roads. * [69]

These activities were self-interested as improved roads lessened Japanese logistics problems while improved health amongst the Chinese lessened the dangers of diseases infecting the Japanese troops.*[69] By contrast, the Russian made no effort to improve sanitation or health amongst the Chinese they ruled over, and destroyed everything when they retreated.*[69] Many Chinese tended to see the Japanese as the lesser evil.*[69]

1.5.5 Historical significance

The effects and impact of the Russo-Japanese War introduced a number of characteristics that came to define 20th century politics and warfare. Many of the technological innovations brought on by the Industrial Revolution first became present on the battlefield in the Russo-Japanese War. Weapons and armaments were more technological than ever before. Technological developments of modern armaments, such as rapid firing artillery and machine guns, as well as more accurate carbine rifles, were first used on a mass scale in the Russo-Japanese War. The improved capability of naval forces was also demonstrated. Military operations on both sea and land demonstrated that warfare in a new age of technology had undergone a considerable change since the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–71.*[67] Most army commanders had previously envisioned using these weapon systems to dominate the battlefield on an operational and tactical level but, as events played out, these technological advancements forever altered the capacity in which mankind would wage war.*[70] For East Asia it was the first confrontation after thirty years involving two modern armed forces.

The advanced weaponry led to massive casualty counts. Neither Japan nor Russia had prepared for the number of deaths that would occur in this new kind of warfare, or had the resources to compensate for these losses. This also left its impression on society at large, with the emergence of transnational and nongovernmental organizations, like the Red Cross, becoming prominent after the war. The emergence of such organizations can be regarded as the beginning of a meshing together of civilizations through the identification of common problems and challenges; a slow process dominating much of the 20th century.*[71]

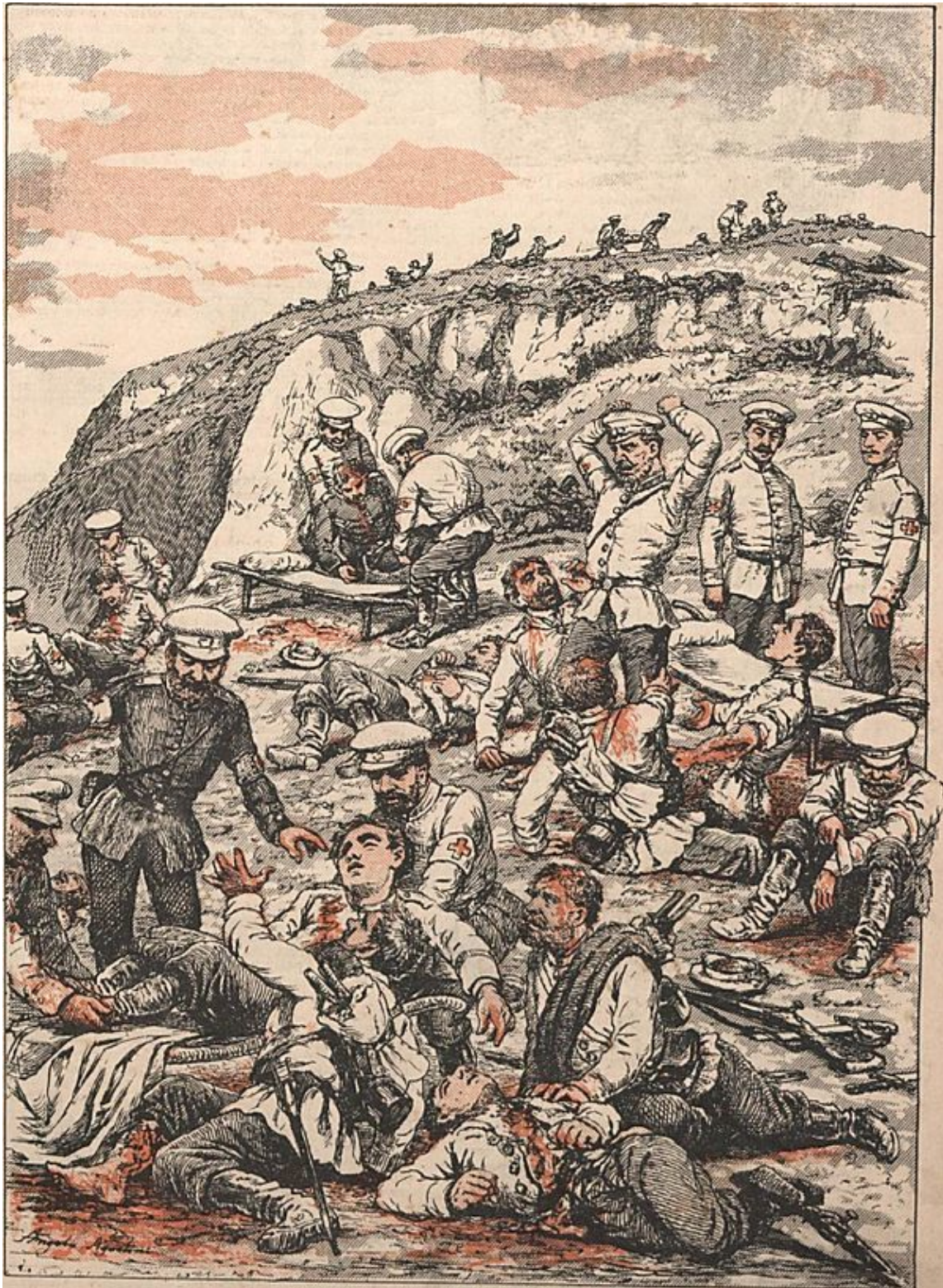
Debate with respect to the Russo-Japanese War prelude World War II is a topic of interest to scholars today. Arguments that are favorable toward this perspective consider characteristics specific to the Russo-Japanese War to the qualities definitive of “total war”.*[72] Numerous aspects of total war characterize the Russo-Japanese War. Encompassed on both ends was the mass mobilization of troops into battle. For both Russia and Japan, the war required extensive economic support in the form of production of equipment, armaments, and supplies at such a scale that required both domestic support as well as foreign aid.*[67] The conclusion of the Russo-Japanese War also demonstrated the need for world leaders to regard domestic response to foreign policy, which is argued by some scholars as setting in motion the dissolution of the Romanov dynasty by demonstrating the inefficiencies of tsarist Russia's government.*[67]

1.5.6 Reception around the world

To the Western powers, Japan's victory demonstrated the emergence of a new Asian regional power. With the Russian defeat, some scholars have argued that the war had set in motion a change in the global world order with the emergence of Japan as not only a regional power, but rather, the main Asian power.*[73] Rather more than the possibilities of diplomatic partnership were emerging, however. The Japanese success increased self-confidence among anti-colonial nationalists in colonised Asian countries – Vietnamese, Indonesians, Indians and Filipinos – and to those in countries like Turkey and Iran in immediate danger of being absorbed by the Western powers. It also encouraged the Chinese who, despite having been at war with the Japanese only a decade before, still considered Westerners the greater threat. “We regarded that Russian defeat by Japan as the defeat of the West by the East. We regarded the Japanese victory as our own victory,” declared Sun Yat-sen.*[74] And Jawaharlal Nehru, “Japan's victory lessened the feeling of inferiority from which most of us suffered. A great European power had been defeated, thus Asia could still defeat Europe as it had done in the past.”*[75]

In Europe too, subject populations were similarly encouraged. James Joyce's novel *Ulysses*, set in Dublin in 1904, contains hopeful Irish allusions as to the outcome of the war.*[76] And in partitioned Poland the artist Józef Mehoffer chose 1905 to paint his “Europa Jubilans” (Europe rejoicing), which portrays an aproned maid taking her ease on a sofa against a background of Eastern artefacts. Executed following demonstrations against the war and Russian cultural suppression, and in the year of Russia's defeat, its subtly coded message looks forward to a time when the Tsarist masters will be defeated in Europe as they had been in Asia.*[77]

The significance of the war for oppressed classes as well as subject populations was clear too to the Socialist thinker Rosa Luxemburg: “The Russo-Japanese War now gives to all an awareness that even war and peace in Europe – its



After the Battle of Liaoyang: Transport of injured Russians by the Red Cross (Angelo Agostini).

destiny – isn't decided between the four walls of the European concert, but outside it, in the gigantic maelstrom of world and colonial politics. And it's in this that the real meaning of the current war resides for social-democracy, even if we set aside its immediate effect: the collapse of Russian absolutism. This war brings the gaze of the international proletariat back to the great political and economic connectedness of the world, and violently dissipates in our ranks the particularism, the pettiness of ideas that form in any period of political calm." ^[78] It was this realisation of the universal significance of the war that underlines the historical importance of the conflict and its outcome.

1.5.7 Assessment of war results

Russia had lost two of its three fleets. Only its Black Sea Fleet remained, and this was the result of an earlier treaty that had prevented the fleet from leaving the Black Sea. Japan became the sixth-most powerful naval force,^[79] while the Russian Navy declined to one barely stronger than that of Austria–Hungary.^[79] The actual costs of the war were large enough to affect the Russian economy and, despite grain exports, the nation developed an external balance of payments deficit. The cost of military re-equipment and re-expansion after 1905 pushed the economy further into deficit, although the size of the deficit was obscured.^[80]

The Japanese were on the offensive for most of the war and used massed infantry assaults against defensive positions, which would later become the standard of all European armies during World War I. The battles of the Russo-Japanese War, in which machine guns and artillery took a heavy toll on Russian and Japanese troops, were a precursor to the trench warfare of World War I.^[81] A German military advisor sent to Japan, Jakob Meckel, had a tremendous impact on the development of the Japanese military training, tactics, strategy, and organization. His reforms were credited with Japan's overwhelming victory over China in the First Sino-Japanese War of 1894–1895. However, his over-reliance on infantry in offensive campaigns also led to a large number of Japanese casualties.

Military and economic exhaustion affected both countries. Japanese historians regard this war as a turning point for Japan, and a key to understanding the reasons why Japan may have failed militarily and politically later. After the war, acrimony was felt at every level of Japanese society and it became the consensus within Japan that their nation had been treated as the defeated power during the peace conference.^[64] As time went on, this feeling, coupled with the sense of “arrogance” at becoming a Great Power, grew and added to growing Japanese hostility towards the West, and fueled Japan's military and imperial ambitions. Only five years after the war, Japan *de jure* annexed Korea as part of its colonial empire. In 1931, 21 years later, Japan invaded Manchuria in the Mukden Incident. This culminated in the invasion of East, Southeast and South Asia in World War II, in an attempt to create a great Japanese colonial empire, the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. As a result, most Chinese historians consider the Russo-Japanese War as a key development of Japanese militarism.

Following the victory of the Battle of Tsushima, Japan's erstwhile English ally presented a lock of Admiral Nelson's hair to the Imperial Japanese Navy, judging its performance then as on a par with Britain's victory at Trafalgar in 1805. It is still on display at Kyouiku Sankoukan, a public museum maintained by the Japan Self-Defense Force. Nevertheless, there was a consequent change in English strategic thinking, resulting in enlargement of its naval docks at Auckland, New Zealand; Bombay, British India; Fremantle and Sydney, Australia; Simon's Town, Cape Colony; Singapore and British Hong Kong.^[82] The naval war confirmed the direction of the British Admiralty's thinking in tactical terms even as it undermined its strategic grasp of a changing world.^[83] Tactical orthodoxy, for example, assumed that a naval battle would imitate the conditions of stationary combat and that ships would engage in one long line sailing on parallel courses; but more flexible tactical thinking would now be required as a firing ship and its target maneuvered independently.^[84]

The US and Australian reaction to the war had also been mixed, with fears of a Yellow Peril eventually shifting from China to Japan.^[85] American figures such as W. E. B. Du Bois and Lothrop Stoddard saw the victory as a challenge to white supremacy.^[86] A few Australian invasion literature novels appeared.^[87]

1.6 Military attachés and observers

Main article: *Military attachés and observers in the Russo-Japanese War*

Military and civilian observers from every major power closely followed the course of the war. Most were able to report on events from the perspective of embedded positions within the land and naval forces of both Russia and Japan. These military attachés and other observers prepared first-hand accounts of the war and analytical papers. In-depth observer narratives of the war and more narrowly focused professional journal articles were written soon after the war; and these post-war reports conclusively illustrated the battlefield destructiveness of this conflict. This was the first time the tactics of entrenched positions for infantry defended with machine guns and artillery became vitally important. Both would become dominant factors in World War I. Even though entrenched positions had already been a significant part of both the Franco-Prussian War and the American Civil War, it is now apparent that the high casualty counts, and the tactical lessons readily available to observer nations, were completely disregarded in preparations for war in Europe, and during much of the course of World War I.^[88]

In 1904–1905, Ian Standish Monteith Hamilton was the military attaché of the British Indian Army serving with the Japanese Army in Manchuria. As one of the several military attachés from Western countries, he was the first to arrive in Japan after the start of the war.^[89] He therefore would be recognized as the dean of multi-national attachés



Japanese general, Kuroki, and his staff, including foreign officers and war correspondents after the Battle of Shaho (1904).

and observers in this conflict, although out-ranked by British field marshal, William Gustavus Nicholson, 1st Baron Nicholson, who was later to become chief of the Imperial General Staff.

1.7 Financing

Despite its gold reserves of 106.3 million pounds, Russia's pre-war financial situation was not enviable. The country had large budget deficits year after year, and was largely dependent on borrowed money.*[90]

Russia's war effort was funded primarily by France, in a series of loans totalling 800 million francs (30.4 million pounds); another loan in the amount of 600 million francs was agreed upon, but later cancelled. These loans were extended within a climate of mass bribing of the French press (made necessary by Russia's precarious economic and social situation and poor military performance). Although initially reluctant to participate in the war, the French government and major banks were co-operative since it became clear that Russian and French economic interests were tied. In addition to French money, Russia secured a loan in the amount of 500 million marks (24.5 million pounds) from Germany, who also financed Japan's war effort.*[90]*[91]

Conversely, Japan's pre-war gold reserves were a modest 11.7 million pounds; a major portion of the total cost of the war was covered by money borrowed from the United Kingdom,*[92] Canada, and the United States.

During his canvassing expedition in London, the Japanese vice-governor of the Bank of Japan met Jacob Schiff, an American banker and head of Kuhn, Loeb & Co.. Schiff, in response to Russia's anti-Jewish pogroms and sympathetic to Japan's cause, extended a critical series of loans to the Empire of Japan, in the amount of 200 million US dollars (41.2 million pounds).*[93]*[94]

Japan's total war expenditure was 2,150 million yen, of which 38%, or 820 million yen, was raised overseas.*[91]

1.8 List of battles

See also: Battles of the Russo-Japanese War

- 1904 Battle of Port Arthur, 8 February: naval battle inconclusive
- 1904 Battle of Chemulpo Bay, 9 February: naval battle Japanese victory
- 1904 Battle of Yalu River, 30 April to 1 May: Japanese victory

- 1904 Battle of Nanshan, 25 to 26 May, Japanese victory
- 1904 Battle of Te-li-Ssu, 14 to 15 June, Japanese victory
- 1904 Battle of Motien Pass, 17 July, Japanese victory
- 1904 Battle of Tashihchiao, 24 July, Japanese victory
- 1904 Battle of Hsimucheng, 31 July, Japanese victory
- 1904 Battle of the Yellow Sea, 10 August: naval battle Japanese victory strategically, tactically inconclusive
- 1904 Battle off Ulsan, 14 August: naval battle Japanese victory
- 1904–1905 Siege of Port Arthur, 19 August to 2 January: Japanese victory
- 1904 Battle of Liaoyang, 25 August to 3 September: inconclusive
- 1904 Battle of Shaho, 5 to 17 October: inconclusive
- 1905 Battle of Sandepu, 26 to 27 January: inconclusive
- 1905 Battle of Mukden, 21 February to 10 March: Japanese victory
- 1905 Battle of Tsushima, 27 to 28 May naval battle: Japanese victory

1.9 Cultural legacy



Getsuzō's woodblock print of "The Battle of Liaoyang", 1904

1.9.1 Graphic arts

The Russo-Japanese War was covered by dozens of foreign journalists who sent back sketches that were turned into **lithographs** and other reproducible forms. Propaganda images were circulated by both sides, often in the form of postcards and based on insulting racial stereotypes.*[95] These were produced not only by the combatants but by those from European countries who supported one or the other side or had a commercial or colonial stake in the area. War photographs were also popular, appearing in both the press and in book form.*[96]

In Russia, the war was covered by anonymous satirical graphic **luboks** for sale in markets, recording the war for the domestic audience. Around 300 were made before their creation was banned by the Russian government. Their

Japanese equivalents were **woodblock prints**. These had been common during the Sino-Japanese war a decade earlier and celebrations of the new conflict tended to repeat the same imagery and situations. But by this time in Japan postcards had become the most common form of communication and they soon replaced prints as a medium for topographical imagery and war reportage. In some ways, however, they were still dependent on the print for their pictorial conventions, not least in issuing the cards in series that assembled into a composite scene or design, either as **diptychs**, **trptychs** or even more ambitious formats. However, captioning swiftly moved from the calligraphic side inscription to a printed title below, and not just in Japanese but in English and other European languages. There was a lively sense that these images served not only as mementoes but also as propaganda statements.*[96]

War artists were to be found on the Russian side and even figured among the casualties. **Vasily Vereshchagin** went down with the *Petropavlovsk*, Admiral Makarov's flagship, when it was sunk by mines. However, his last work, a picture of a council of war presided over by the admiral, was recovered almost undamaged.*[97] Another artist, **Mykola Samokysh**, first came to notice for his reports during the war and the paintings worked up from his diary sketch-books. Other depictions appeared after the event. The two by the Georgian naïve painter **Niko Pirosmiani** from 1906 must have been dependent on newspaper reports since he was not present.*[98] Then Yuri Repin made an episode during the Battle of Yalu River the subject of a broad heroic canvas in 1914 at the outset of World War I.*[99]

1.9.2 Music

On either side, there were lyrics lamenting the necessity of fighting in a foreign land, far from home. One of the earliest of several Russian songs still performed today was the waltz "Amur's Waves" (*Amurskie volny*), which evokes the melancholy of standing watch on the frontier between Russia and Manchuria.*[100]

Two others grew out of incidents during the war. "On the Hills of Manchuria" (*Na sopkah Manchzhurii*) (1906) is another waltz composed by Ilya Shatrov, a decorated military musician whose regiment suffered badly in the battle of Mukden. Originally only the music was published, under the longer title "The Mokshansky Regiment on the Hills of Manchuria"; the words by **Stepan Petrov** were added later.*[101] These lyrics mourned the fallen lying in their graves and threatened revenge.*[102] Another song, *Variag*, commemorates the **Battle of Chemulpo Bay** in which that cruiser and the gunboat *Koriets* steamed out to confront an encircling Japanese squadron rather than surrender. That act of heroism was first celebrated in a German song by Rudolf Greintz in 1907 but was quickly translated into Russian and sung to a martial accompaniment.*[103]

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov also reacted to the war by composing the satirical opera *The Golden Cockerel*, completed in 1907. Although it was ostensibly based on a verse fairy tale by **Alexander Pushkin** written in 1834, the authorities quickly realised its true target and immediately banned it from performance. The opera was premiered in 1909, after Rimsky-Korsakov's death, and even then with modifications required by the censors.

1.9.3 Poetry

Some Japanese poetry dealing with the war still has a high profile. General **Nogi Maresuke**'s "Outside the Goldland fortress" was learned by generations of schoolchildren and valued for its bleak stoicism.*[104] The army surgeon **Mori Ōgai** kept a verse diary which tackled such themes as racism, strategic mistakes and the ambiguities of victory which can now be appreciated in historical hindsight.*[105] Nowadays too there is growing appreciation of **Yosano Akiko**'s parting poem to her brother as he left for the war, which includes the critical lines.

Never let them kill you, brother!
His Imperial Majesty would not come out to fight ...
How could He possibly make them believe
that it is honourable to die? *[106]

Even the **Emperor Meiji** himself entered the poetic lists, writing in answer to all the lamentations about death in a foreign land that the patriotic soul returns to the homeland.*[107]

European treatments were similarly varied. Jane H. Oakley attempted an epic treatment of the conflict in the 86 cantos of her contemporary *A Russo-Japanese War Poem* (Brighton 1905).*[108] The French poet **Blaise Cendrars** was later to represent himself as on a Russian train on its way to Manchuria at the time in his *La prose du Transsibérien et de la Petite Jehanne de France* (1913) and energetically evoked the results of the war along the way:

I saw the silent trains the black trains returning from the Far East and passing like phantoms...
 At Talga 100,000 wounded were dying for lack of care
 I visited the hospitals of Krasnoyarsk
 And at Khilok we encountered a long convoy of soldiers who had lost their minds
 In the pesthouses I saw gaping gashes wounds bleeding full blast
 And amputated limbs danced about or soared through the raucous air*[109]

Much later, the Scottish poet **Douglas Dunn** devoted an **epistolary poem** in verse to the naval war in *The Donkey's Ears: Politovsky's Letters Home* (2000). This follows the voyage of the Russian Imperial Navy flagship *Kniaz* to its sinking at the battle of Tsushima.*[110]

1.9.4 Fiction

Fictional coverage of the war began even before it was over. An early example was **Allen Upward's** *The International Spy, being the secret history of the Russo-Japanese War* (1904). Set in both Russia and Japan, it ends with the Dogger Bank incident involving the Baltic Fleet.*[111] The political thinking displayed there is typical of the time. There is great admiration for the Japanese, who were English allies. Russia is in turmoil, but the main impetus towards war is not imperialism as such but commercial forces. "Every student of modern history has remarked the fact that all recent wars have been promoted by great combinations of capitalists. The causes which formerly led to war between nation and nation have ceased to operate" (p. 40). The true villain plotting in the background, however, is the German Emperor, seeking to destabilise the European balance of power in his country's favour. Towards the end of the novel, the narrator steals a German submarine and successfully foils a plot to involve the English in the war. The submarine motif reappeared in **George Griffith's** science fiction novel, *The Stolen Submarine* (1904), although in this case it is a French super-submarine which its developer sells to the Russians for use against the Japanese in another tale of international intrigue.*[112]

Though most English-language fiction of the period took the Japanese side, the Rev. W. W. Walker's Canadian novella, *Alter Ego* (1907), is an exception. It features a Canadian volunteer in the Russian army who, on his return, agrees to talk about his experiences to an isolated upcountry community and relates his part in the battle of Mukden.*[113] Though this incident only occupies two of the book's six chapters, it is used to illustrate the main message there, that war is "anti-Christian and barbarous, except in a defensive sense" (Ch.3).

Various aspects of the war were also common in contemporary children's fiction. Categorised as **Boys' Own** adventure stories, they offer few insights into the conflict, being generally based on news articles and sharing unreflectingly in the contemporary culture of imperialism.*[114] Among these, **Herbert Strang** was responsible for two novels: *Kobo: A Story of the Russo-Japanese War* (1905), told from the Japanese side,*[115] and *Brown of Moukden* (1906), viewed from the Russian side.*[116] Three more were written by the prolific American author, **Edward Stratemeyer**: *Under the Mikado's Flag, or Young Soldiers of Fortune* (1904);*[117] *At the Fall of Port Arthur, or a young American in the Japanese navy* (1905);*[118] and *Under Togo for Japan, or Three Young Americans on Land and Sea* (1906). Two other English stories begin with the action at Port Arthur and follow the events thereafter: *A Soldier of Japan: a tale of the Russo-Japanese War* by Captain **Frederick Sadleir Brereton**, and *The North Pacific* (1905) by Willis Boyd Allen (1855–1938).*[119] Two more also involve young men fighting in the Japanese navy: Americans in *For the Mikado, a Japanese Middy in Action* (1905)*[120] by **Kirk Munroe**, and a temporarily disgraced English officer in *Under the Ensign of the Rising Sun* (1916)*[121] by Harry Collingwood, the pen-name of William Joseph Cosens Lancaster (1851–1922), whose speciality was **naval fiction**.

Russian novelist **Alexey Novikov-Priboy** really did serve in the Baltic Fleet and wrote about the conflict on his return, but his early work was suppressed. It was not until the changed political climate under Soviet rule that he began writing his historical epic *Tsushima*, based on his personal experiences on board the battleship *Orel* as well as on testimonies of fellow sailors and government archives. The first part was published in 1932, the second in 1935, and the whole novel was later awarded the **Stalin Prize**. It describes the heroism of Russian sailors and certain officers whose defeat, in accordance with the new Soviet thinking, was due to the criminal negligence of the Imperial Naval command. A German novel by **Frank Thiess**, originally published as *Tsushima* in 1936 (and later translated as *The Voyage of Forgotten Men*), covered the same journey round the world to defeat.

Later there appeared a first-hand account of the siege of Port Arthur by Alexander Stepanov (1892–1965). He had been present there as the 12-year-old son of a battery commander and his novel, *Port Arthur: a historical narrative* (1944), is based on his own diaries and his father's notes. The work is considered one of the best historical novels



Painting of Admiral Tōgō on the bridge of the Japanese battleship Mikasa, before the Battle of Tsushima in 1905.

of the Soviet period.* [122] A later novel in which the war appears is Valentin Pikul's *The Three Ages of Okini-San* (1981). Centred on the life of Vladimir Kokovtsov, who rose through the ranks to admiral of the Russian fleet, it covers the period from the Russo-Japanese War through to the February and October Revolutions.* [123] A much later Russian genre novel uses the period of the war as background. This is Boris Akunin's *The Diamond Chariot* (2003), in the first part of which the detective Erast Fandorin is charged with protecting the Trans-Siberian Railway from Japanese sabotage.

The main historical novel dealing with the war from the Japanese side is Shiba Ryōtarō's immense *Clouds above the hill*, published serially in several volumes between 1968–72.* [124] The closely researched story spans the decade from the Sino-Japanese War to the Russo-Japanese War and went on to become the nation's favourite book.* [125]

1.10 Filmography

See also film list about Russo-Japanese war

- *Port Arthur* (1936)
- *Kreiser Varyag* (1946)
- *Nichiro sensō shōri no hishi: Tekichū ōdan sanbyaku-ri* (1957)
- *Meiji tennō to nichiro daisen* (1958)
- *The Battle of the Japan Sea* (1969, 佐藤勝: 日本海大海戦, *Nihonkai-Daikaisen*) depicts the naval battles of the war, the attacks on the Port Arthur highlands, and the subterfuge and diplomacy of Japanese agents in Sweden. Admiral Togo is portrayed by Toshiro Mifune.
- *The Battle of Tsushima* (1975) [documentary], depiction of the naval Battle of Tsushima

- *The Battle of Port Arthur* (1980, sometimes referred as *203 Kochi**[126]) depiction of the Siege of Port Arthur
- *Nihonkai daikaisen: Umi yukaba* (1983)
- *Reilly, Ace of Spies* (1983). Russian-born British spy Sidney Reilly's role in providing intelligence that allowed the Japanese surprise attack that started the *Siege of Port Arthur* is dramatised in the second episode of this TV series
- *Bogatstvo* (2004)
- *Saka no Ue no Kumo* (2009)

1.11 See also

- Kaneko Kentarō
- Baron Rosen
- Manchuria under Qing rule
- Western imperialism in Asia
- Liancourt Rocks
- List of wars
- List of warships sunk during the Russo-Japanese War
- Russian Imperialism in Asia and the Russo-Japanese War

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- [14] Paine, p. 317
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- [18] Paine, p. 320.
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Chapter 2

First Sino-Japanese War

The **First Sino-Japanese War** (1 August 1894 – 17 April 1895) was fought between the **Qing Empire** of China and the **Empire of Japan**, primarily over control of **Korea**. After more than six months of unbroken successes by Japanese land and naval forces and the loss of the Chinese port of **Weihaiwei**, the Qing government **sued for peace** in February 1895.

The war demonstrated the failure of the Qing Empire's attempts to modernize its military and fend off threats to its sovereignty, especially when compared with Japan's successful **Meiji Restoration**.^{*[1]} For the first time, regional dominance in **East Asia** shifted from China to Japan; the prestige of the Qing Empire, along with the classical tradition in China, suffered a major blow. The humiliating loss of Korea as a **vassal state** sparked an unprecedented public outcry. Within China, the defeat was a catalyst for a series of political upheavals led by **Sun Yat-sen** and **Kang Youwei**, culminating in the 1911 **Xinhai Revolution**.

The war is commonly known in China as the **War of Jiawu** (Chinese: 甲午战争; pinyin: *Jiǎwǔ Zhànzhēng*), referring to the year (1894) as named under the traditional **sexagenary system** of years. In Japan, it is called the **Japan–Qing War** (Japanese: 日清戦争 Hepburn: *Nisshin sensō*). In Korea, where much of the war took place, it is called the **Qing–Japan War** (Korean: 청일전쟁; Hanja: 中日戰爭).

2.1 Background

After two centuries, the Japanese **policy of seclusion** under the **shoguns** of the **Edo period** came to an end when the country was forced open to trade by **American intervention** in 1854. The years following the **Meiji Restoration** of 1868 and the fall of the Shogunate had seen Japan transform itself from a feudal society into a modern industrial state. The Japanese had sent delegations and students around the world to learn and assimilate Western arts and sciences, with the intention of making Japan an equal to the Western powers.^{*[2]} Korea continued to try to exclude foreigners, refusing embassies from foreign countries and firing on ships near its shores. At the start of the war, Japan had the benefit of three decades of reform, leaving Korea outdated and vulnerable.

2.1.1 Conflict over Korea

As a newly risen power, Japan turned its attention toward its neighbor, Korea. Japan wanted to block any other power from annexing or dominating Korea, resolving to end the centuries-old Chinese **suzerainty**. As Prussian advisor Major **Klemens Meckel** put it to the Japanese, Korea was “a dagger pointed at the heart of Japan”.^{*[4]} Moreover, Japan realized the potential economic benefits of Korea's coal and iron ore deposits for Japan's growing industrial base, and of Korea's agricultural exports to feed the growing Japanese population.

On February 27, 1876, after several confrontations between Korean isolationists and Japanese, Japan imposed the **Japan–Korea Treaty of 1876**, forcing Korea open to Japanese trade. Similar treaties were signed between Korea and other nations.

Korea had traditionally been a **tributary state** of China's **Qing Empire**, which exerted large influence over the conservative Korean officials gathered around the royal family of the **Joseon** kingdom. Opinion in Korea itself was split: conservatives wanted to retain the traditional relationship under China, while reformists wanted to approach Japan



Satirical drawing in the magazine *Punch** [3] (29 September 1894), showing the victory of “small” Japan over “large” China.

and Western nations. After fighting two Opium Wars against the British in 1839 and 1856, and another war against the French in 1885, China was unable to resist the encroachment of Western powers (see *Unequal Treaties*). Japan saw the opportunity to take China's place in the strategically vital Korea.

2.1.2 1882 crisis

Main article: *Imo Incident*

In 1882, the Korean peninsula experienced a severe drought which led to food shortages, causing much hardship and discord among the population. Korea was on the verge of bankruptcy, even falling months behind on military pay, causing deep resentment among the soldiers. On July 23, a military mutiny and riot broke out in *Seoul* in which troops, assisted by the population, sacked the rice granaries. The next morning, the crowd attacked the royal palace and barracks, and then the Japanese legation. The Japanese legation staff managed to escape to *Chemulpo* and then *Nagasaki* via the British survey ship *HMS Flying Fish*.

In response, Japan sent four warships and a battalion of troops to Seoul to safeguard Japanese interests and demand reparations. The Chinese then deployed 4,500 troops to counter the Japanese. However, tensions subsided with the *Treaty of Chemulpo*, signed on the evening of August 30, 1882. The agreement specified that the Korean conspirators would be punished and 50,000 *yen* would be paid to the families of slain Japanese. The Japanese government would also receive 500,000 *yen*, a formal apology, and permission to station troops at their diplomatic legation in Seoul.

2.1.3 Gapsin Coup

Main article: *Gapsin Coup*

In 1884, a group of pro-Japanese reformers briefly overthrew the pro-Chinese conservative Korean government in a bloody *coup d'état*. However, the pro-Chinese faction, with assistance from Qing forces led by the general *Yuan Shikai*, succeeded in regaining control in an equally bloody counter-coup. These coups resulted not only in the deaths



The flight of the Japanese legation in 1882

of a number of reformers, but also in the burning of the Japanese legation and the deaths of several legation guards and citizens. This caused a crisis between Japan and China, which was eventually settled by the Sino-Japanese Convention of Tientsin of 1885, in which the two sides agreed to pull their expeditionary forces out of Korea simultaneously, not send military trainers to the Korean military, and give warning to the other side should one decide to send troops to Korea. Chinese and Japanese troops then left, and diplomatic relations were restored between Japan and Korea.

However, the Japanese were frustrated by repeated Chinese attempts to undermine their influence in Korea. Yuan Shikai remained set as “Chinese Resident”, in what the Chinese intended as a sort of viceroy role directing Korean affairs. He attempted to encourage Chinese and hinder Japanese trade, though Japan remained Korea's largest trading partner, and his government provided Korea with loans. The Chinese built telegraphs linking Korea to the Chinese network.

2.1.4 Nagasaki incident

Main article: [Nagasaki incident](#)

The Nagasaki incident was a riot that took place in the Japanese port city of Nagasaki in 1886. Four warships from the Qing Empire's navy, the Beiyang Fleet, stopped at Nagasaki, apparently to carry out repairs. Some Chinese sailors caused trouble in the city and started the riot. Several Japanese policemen confronting the rioters were killed. The Qing government did not apologize after the incident, which resulted in a wave of anti-Qing sentiment in Japan.

2.1.5 Bean controversy

A poor harvest in 1889 caused a governor of Korea's Hamgyong Province to prohibit soybean exports to Japan. Japan requested and received compensation in 1893 for their importers. The incident highlighted the growing dependence Japan felt on Korean food imports.*[5]

2.1.6 Kim Ok-gyun affair

On March 28, 1894, a pro-Japanese Korean revolutionary, Kim Ok-gyun, was assassinated in Shanghai. Kim had fled to Japan after his involvement in the 1884 coup and the Japanese had turned down Korean demands that he be extradited. Ultimately, he was lured to Shanghai, where he was killed by a Korean, Hong Jong-u, at a Japanese inn in the international settlement. His body was then taken aboard a Chinese warship and sent back to Korea, where it was quartered and displayed as a warning to other rebels. The Japanese government took this as an outrageous affront.*[6]



Kim Ok-gyun photographed in Nagasaki in 1882. His assassination in China would contribute to tensions leading to the First Sino-Japanese War.

2.2 Donghak Rebellion

Main article: [Donghak Peasant Revolution](#)

Tension ran high between China and Japan by June 1894 but war was not yet inevitable. On June 4, the Korean king, [Gojong](#), requested aid from the Qing government in suppressing the [Donghak Rebellion](#). Although the rebellion was not as serious as it initially seemed and hence Qing reinforcements were not necessary, the Qing government still sent the general [Yuan Shikai](#) as its plenipotentiary to lead 28,000 troops to Korea. According to the Japanese, the Qing government had violated the [Convention of Tientsin](#) by not informing the Japanese government of its decision to send troops, but the Qing claimed that Japan had approved this.*[7] The Japanese countered by sending a 8,000-troops expeditionary force (the Oshima Composite Brigade) to Korea. The first 400 troops arrived on June 9 en route to [Seoul](#), and 3,000 landed at [Inchon](#) on June 12.*[8]

However, Japanese officials denied any intention to intervene. As a result, the Qing viceroy [Li Hongzhang](#) “was lured into believing that Japan would not wage war, but the Japanese were fully prepared to act.”*[9] The Qing government turned down Japan's suggestion for Japan and China to cooperate to reform the Korean government. When Korea demanded that Japan withdraw its troops from Korea, the Japanese refused.

In early June 1894, the 8,000 troops captured the Korean king [Gojong](#), occupied the [Royal Palace](#) in Seoul and, by June 25, replaced the existing Korean government with members of the pro-Japanese faction.*[8] Even though Qing forces were already leaving Korea after finding themselves unneeded there, the new pro-Japanese Korean government granted Japan the right to expel Qing forces while Japan dispatched more troops to Korea. The Qing Empire rejected the new Korean government as illegitimate.

2.3 Status of combatants

2.3.1 Japan

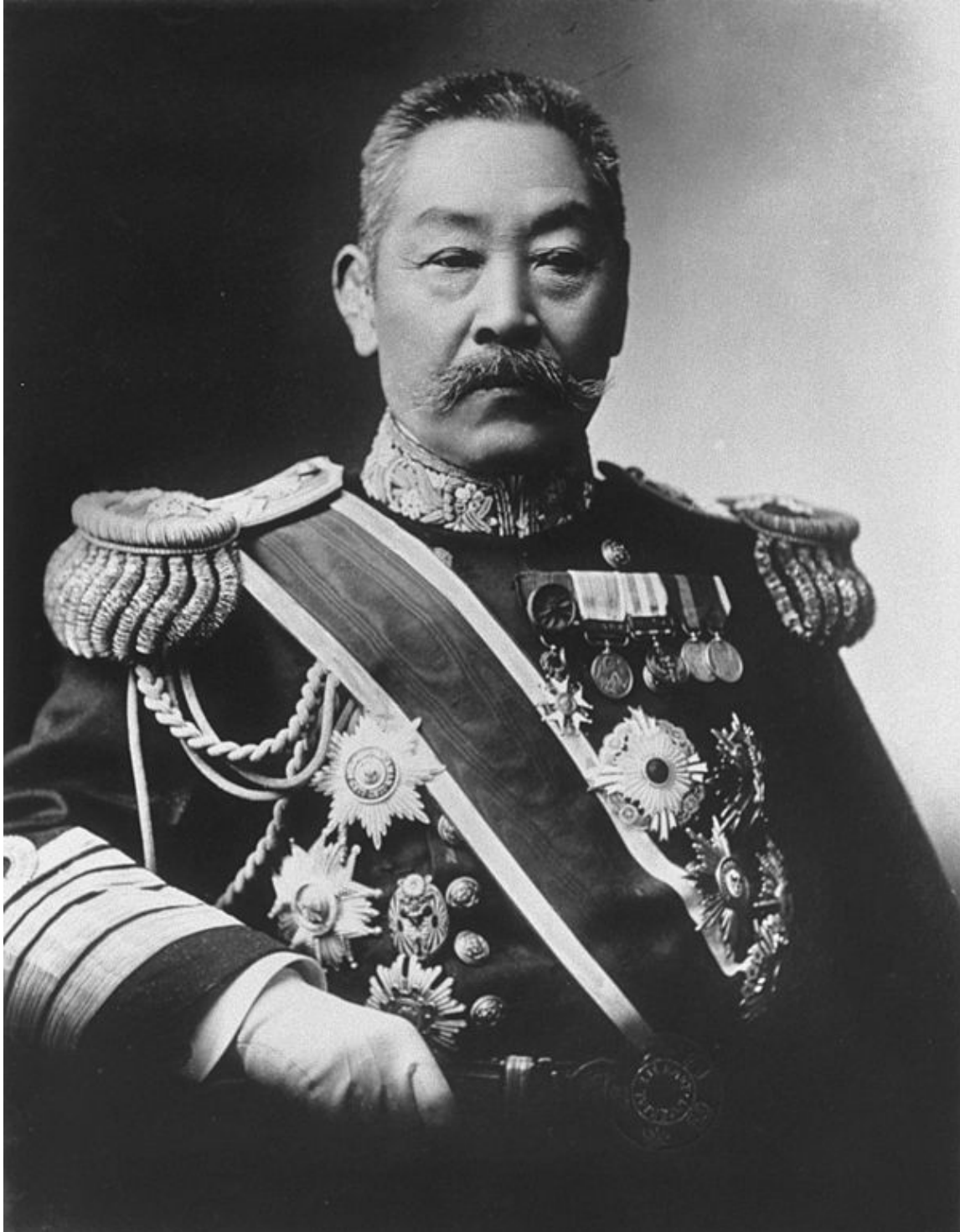


Japanese troops during the Sino-Japanese War

Japan reforms under the [Meiji Emperor](#) gave significant priority to the creation of an effective modern national army

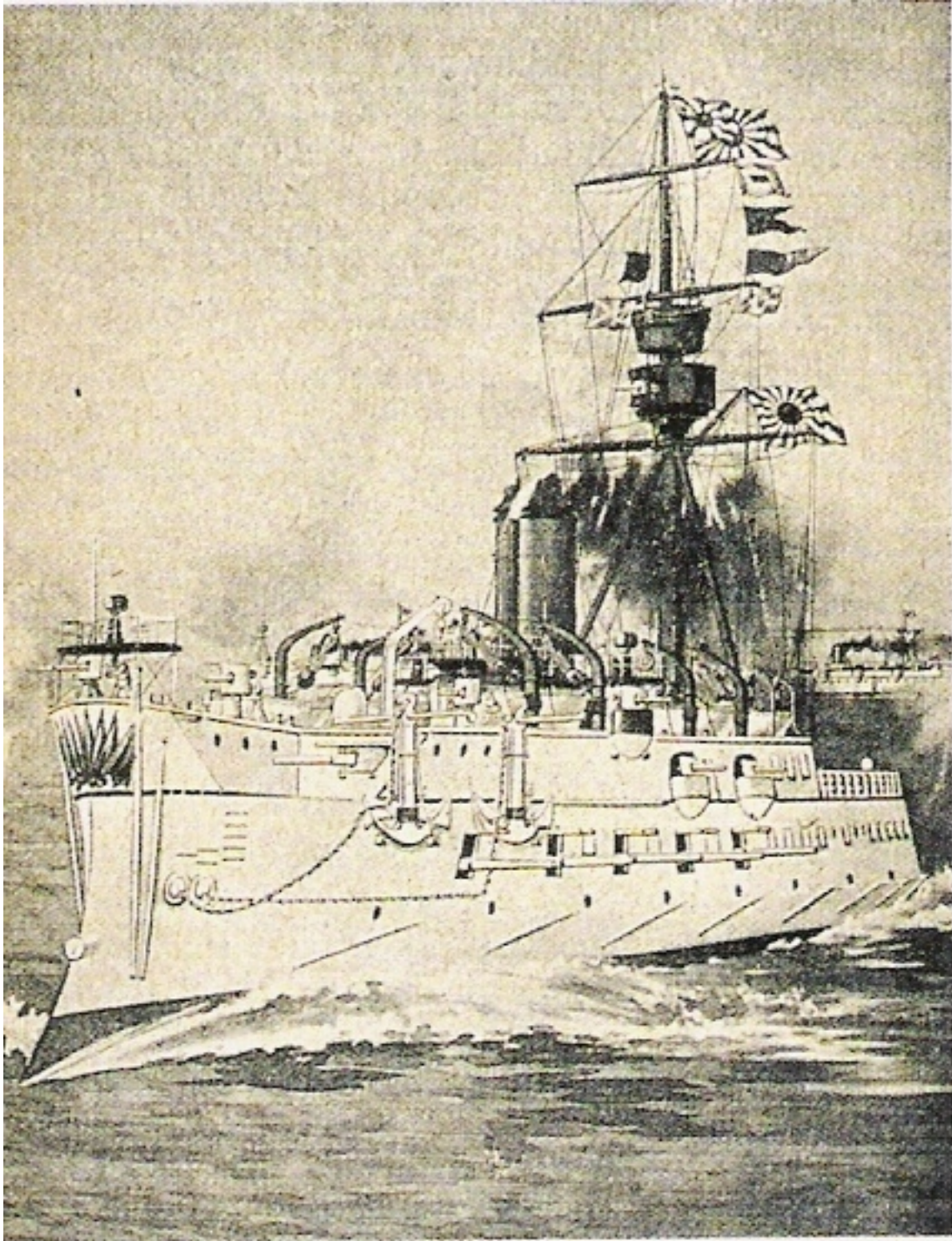
and navy, especially naval construction. Japan sent numerous military officials abroad for training and evaluation of the relative strengths and tactics of Western armies and navies.

Imperial Japanese Navy



Itō Sukeyuki was the Commander-in-Chief of the Japanese Combined Fleet.

The Imperial Japanese Navy was modeled after the British Royal Navy,^[10] at the time the foremost naval power. British advisors were sent to Japan to train the naval establishment, while Japanese students were in turn sent to Britain to study and observe the Royal Navy. Through drilling and tuition by Royal Navy instructors, Japan developed naval



The French-built Matsushima, flagship of the Imperial Japanese Navy during the Sino-Japanese conflict.

officers expert in the arts of gunnery and seamanship.* [11]

At the start of hostilities, the Imperial Japanese Navy comprised a fleet of 12 modern warships, (*Izumi* being added during the war), the frigate *Takao*, 22 torpedo boats, and numerous auxiliary/armed merchant cruisers and converted liners.

Japan did not yet have the resources to acquire battleships and so planned to employ the *Jeune École* doctrine which favoured small, fast warships, especially cruisers and torpedo boats, with guns powerful enough to destroy larger craft.

Many of Japan's major warships were built in British and French shipyards (eight British, three French and two Japanese-built) and 16 of the torpedo boats were known to have been built in France and assembled in Japan.

Imperial Japanese Army

The Meiji government at first modeled their army after the **French Army**. French advisers had been sent to Japan with two military missions (in 1872–1880 and 1884), in addition to one mission under the shogunate. Nationwide conscription was enforced in 1873 and a Western-style conscript army was established; military schools and arsenals were also built.

In 1886, Japan turned toward the German-Prussian model as the basis for its army, adopting German doctrines, military system and organisation. In 1885 **Klemens Meckel**, a German adviser, implemented new measures, such as the reorganization of the command structure into divisions and regiments; the strengthening of army logistics, transportation, and structures (thereby increasing mobility); and the establishment of artillery and engineering regiments as independent commands.

By the 1890s, Japan had at its disposal a modern, professionally trained Western-style army which was relatively well equipped and supplied. Its officers had studied in Europe and were well educated in the latest tactics and strategy. By the start of the war, the **Imperial Japanese Army** could field a total force of 120,000 men in two armies and five divisions.

2.3.2 China

The **Beiyang Army** and **Beiyang Fleet** were the best equipped and most modernized Chinese military, but suffered from corruption. Military leaders and officials systematically embezzled funds, even during the war. As a result, the Beiyang Fleet did not purchase any battleships after its establishment in 1888. The purchase of ammunition stopped in 1891, with the funding diverted to renovate the **Summer Palace in Beijing**. Logistics were lacking, as construction of railroads in Manchuria had been discouraged. The Qing Empire's military morale was generally very low due to lack of pay, low prestige, use of **opium**, and the poor leadership which had contributed to defeats such as the abandonment of the very well-fortified and defensible **Weihaiwei**.

Beiyang Army

Main article: **Beiyang Army**

The Qing Empire did not have a national army. Following the **Taiping Rebellion**, the Qing army had been segregated into separate forces based on ethnicity (**Manchu**, **Han Chinese**, **Mongol**, **Hui (Muslim)**, etc.)* [12] and further divided into largely independent regional commands. The war was mainly fought by the Beiyang Fleet and Beiyang Army, whose soldiers were mainly from the former **Huai Army** raised to suppress the Taiping rebels. The Qing government's pleas for help from other regional armies and navies were ignored due to rivalry among the different regional commands.

Beiyang Fleet

Main article: **Beiyang Fleet**

The Beiyang Fleet was one of the four modernised Chinese navies in the late Qing dynasty. The navies were heavily sponsored by **Li Hongzhang**, the **Viceroy of Zhili**. The Beiyang Fleet was the dominant navy in East Asia before the first Sino-Japanese War. However, ships were not maintained properly and indiscipline was common.* [13] Sentries spent their time gambling, watertight doors were left open, rubbish was dumped in gun barrels and gunpowder for explosive shells was sold and replaced with cocoa. At the Yalu River, a battleship had one of its guns pawned by the admiral **Ding Ruchang**.* [14]

13 or so torpedo boats, numerous Gunboats and chartered merchant vessels

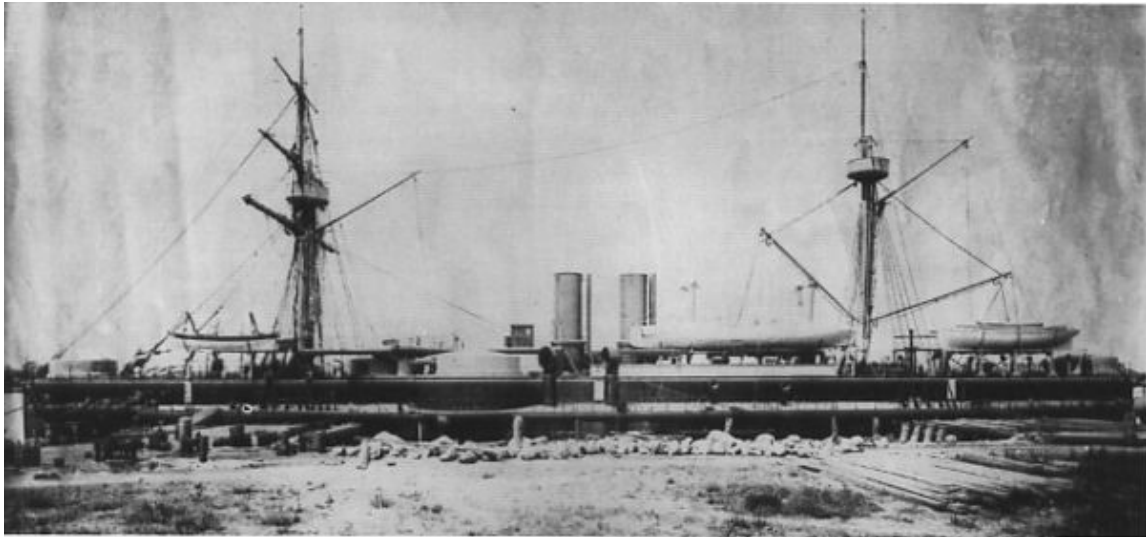


Empress Dowager Cixi spent military funds on renovating the Summer Palace.

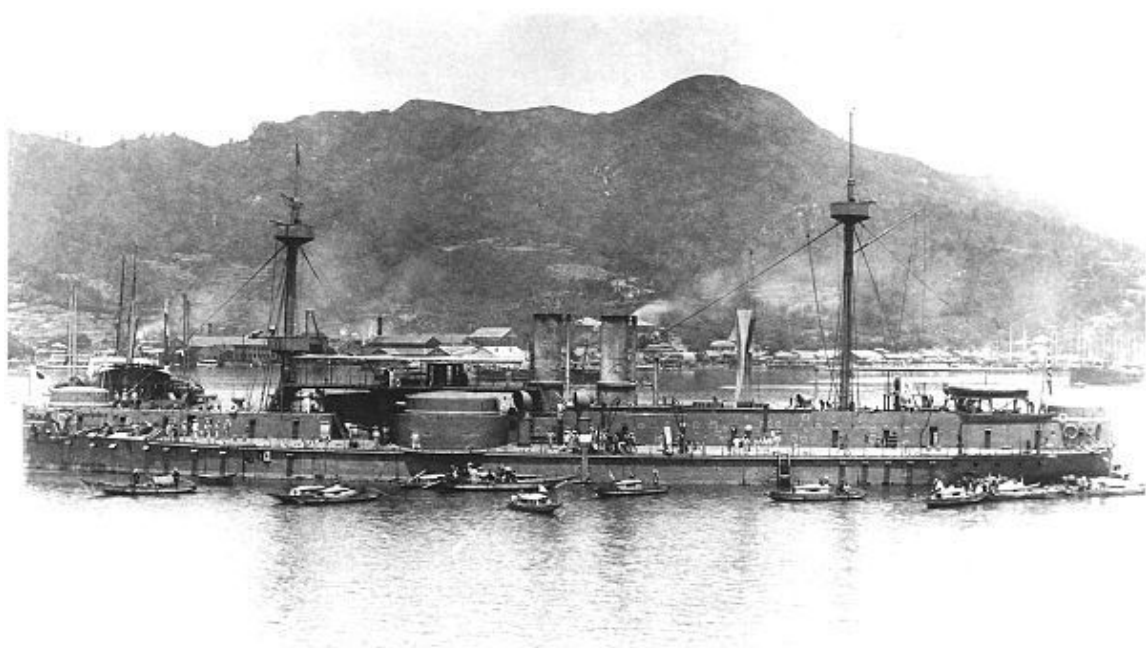
2.3.3 Foreign opinions of Chinese and Japanese forces

The prevailing view in the West was that the modernized Chinese forces would crush the Japanese. Observers commended Chinese units such as the **Huai Army** and **Beiyang Fleet**.*[15]

The **German General Staff** predicted Japanese defeat. William Lang, a British advisor to the Chinese military, praised Chinese training, ships, guns, and fortifications, stating that “in the end, there is no doubt that Japan must be utterly



Dingyuan, the flagship of the Beiyang Fleet.



Zhenyuan.

crushed” .*[16]

2.3.4 Contemporaneous wars fought by the Qing Empire

While the Qing Empire was fighting the First Sino-Japanese War, it was also simultaneously engaging rebels in the **Dungan Revolt** in northwestern China, where thousands lost their lives. The generals **Dong Fuxiang**, **Ma Anliang** and **Ma Haiyan** were initially summoned by the Qing government to bring the Hui troops under their command to participate in the First Sino-Japanese War, but they were eventually sent to suppress the Dungan Revolt instead.*[17]

2.4 Early stages of the war

1 June 1894 : The **Donghak Rebel Army** moves toward Seoul. The Korean government requests help from the Qing government to suppress the revolt.

6 June 1894: Approximately 2,465 Chinese soldiers are transported to Korea to suppress the Donghak Rebellion. Japan asserts that it was not notified and thus China has violated the **Convention of Tientsin**, which requires that China and Japan must notify each other before intervening in Korea. China asserts that Japan was notified and approved of Chinese intervention.

8 June 1894: First of approximately 4,000 Japanese soldiers and 500 marines land at **Jemulpo (Incheon)**.

11 June 1894: End of the **Donghak Rebellion**.

13 June 1894: The Japanese government telegraphs the commander of the Japanese forces in Korea, **Ōtori Keisuke**, to remain in Korea for as long as possible despite the end of the rebellion.

16 June 1894: Japanese Foreign Minister **Mutsu Munemitsu** meets with **Wang Fengzao**, the Qing ambassador to Japan, to discuss the future status of Korea. Wang states that the Qing government intends to pull out of Korea after the rebellion has been suppressed and expects Japan to do the same. However, China retains a **resident** to look after Chinese primacy in Korea.

22 June 1894: Additional Japanese troops arrive in Korea. Japanese Prime Minister **Itō Hirobumi** tells **Matsukata Masayoshi** that since the Qing Empire appear to be making military preparations, there is probably “no policy but to go to war.” Mutsu tells Ōtori to press the Korean government on the Japanese demands.

26 June 1894: Ōtori presents a set of reform proposals to the Korean king **Gojong**. Gojong's government rejects and in return insists on troop withdrawals.

7 July 1894: Failure of mediation between China and Japan arranged by the British ambassador to China.

19 July 1894: Establishment of the Japanese **Combined Fleet**, consisting of almost all vessels in the **Imperial Japanese Navy**. Mutsu cables Ōtori to take any necessary steps to compel the Korean government to carry out a reform program.

23 July 1894: Japanese troops occupy Seoul, capture Gojong, and establish a new pro-Japanese government, which terminates all Sino-Korean treaties and grants the **Imperial Japanese Army** the right to expel the Qing Empire's **Beiyang Army** from Korea.

25 July 1894: First battle of the war: **Battle of Pungdo** / Hoto-oki kaisen

2.5 Events during the war

2.5.1 Opening moves

By July 1894, Qing forces in Korea numbered 3000–3500 and were outnumbered by Japan. They could only be supplied by sea through **Asan Bay**. The Japanese objective was first to blockade the Chinese at **Asan** (south of Seoul, South Korea) and then encircle them with their land forces.

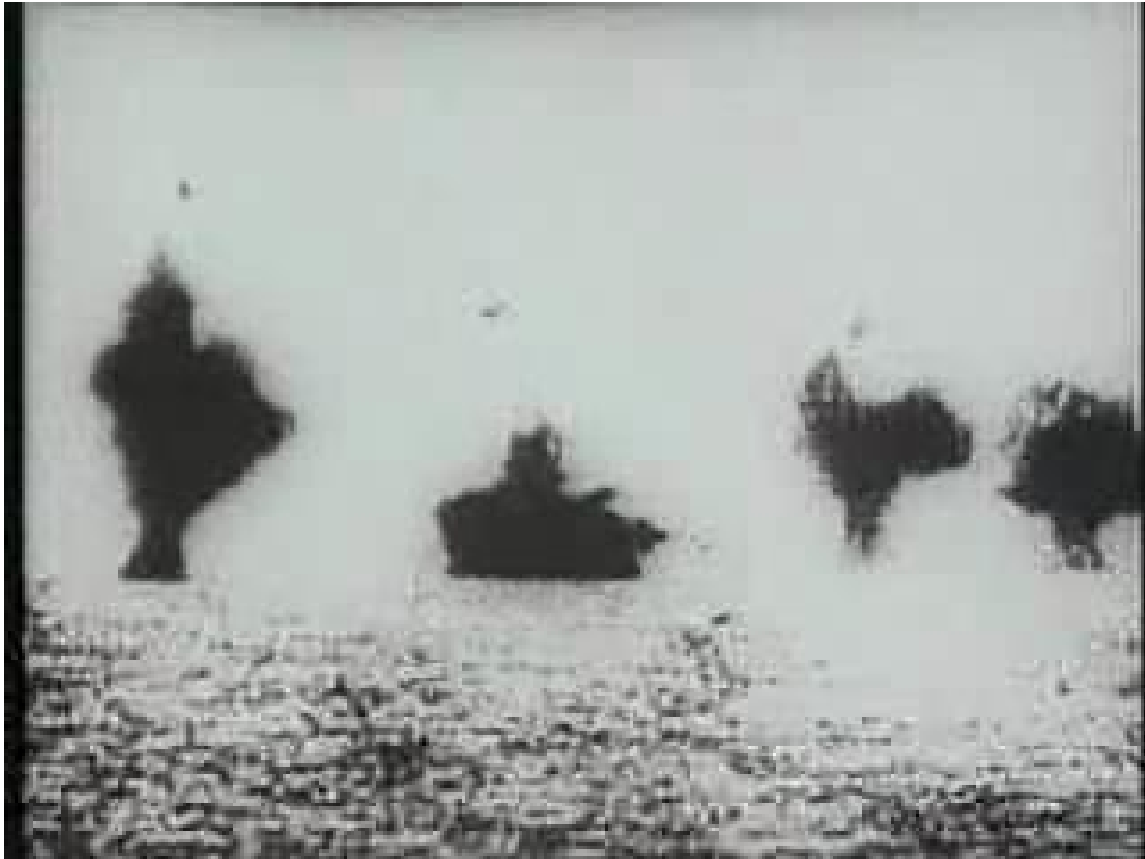
2.5.2 Sinking of the *Kow-shing*

Main article: **Battle of Pungdo**

On 25 July 1894, the cruisers *Yoshino*, *Naniwa* and *Akitsushima* of the Japanese flying squadron, which had been patrolling off **Asan Bay**, encountered the Chinese cruiser *Tsi-yuan* and gunboat *Kwang-yi*.^[18] These vessels had steamed out of Asan to meet the transport *Kow-shing*, escorted by the Chinese gunboat *Tsao-kiang*. After an hour-long engagement, the *Tsi-yuan* escaped while the *Kwang-yi* grounded on rocks, where its powder-magazine exploded.

The *Kow-shing* was a 2,134-ton British merchant vessel owned by the *Indochina Steam Navigation Company* of London, commanded by Captain T. R. Galsworthy and crewed by 64 men. The ship was chartered by the Qing government to ferry troops to Korea, and was on her way to reinforce Asan with 1,100 troops plus supplies and equipment. A German artillery officer, Major von Hanneken, advisor to the Chinese, was also aboard. The ship was due to arrive on 25 July.

The cruiser *Naniwa*, under Captain **Tōgō Heihachirō**, intercepted the *Kow-shing* and captured its escort. The Japanese



Footage of a naval battle during the First Sino-Japanese War (1894).

then ordered the *Kow-shing* to follow *Naniwa* and directed that Europeans be transferred to *Naniwa*. However the 1,100 Chinese on board, desperate to return to Taku, threatened to kill the English captain, Galsworthy, and his crew. After four hours of negotiations, Captain Togo gave the order to fire upon the vessel. A torpedo missed, but a subsequent broadside hit the *Kow Shing*, which started to sink.

In the confusion, some of the Europeans escaped overboard, only to be fired upon by the Chinese. The Japanese rescued three of the British crew (the captain, first officer and quartermaster) and 50 Chinese, and took them to Japan. The sinking of the *Kow-shing* almost caused a diplomatic incident between Japan and Great Britain, but the action was ruled in conformity with international law regarding the treatment of mutineers (the Chinese troops).

The German gunboat *Itis* rescued 150 Chinese, the French gunboat *Le Lion* rescued 43, and the British cruiser *HMS Porpoise* rescued an unknown number.*[19]

2.5.3 Conflict in Korea

Main articles: [Battle of Seonghwan](#) and [Battle of Pyongyang \(1894\)](#)

Commissioned by the new pro-Japanese Korean government to forcibly expel Chinese forces, Major-General Ōshima Yoshimasa led mixed Japanese brigades numbering about 4,000 on a rapid forced march from Seoul south toward Asan Bay to face 3,500 Chinese troops garrisoned at Seonghwan Station east of Asan and Kongju.

On 28 July 1894, the two forces met just outside Asan in an engagement that lasted till 0730 hours the next morning. The Chinese gradually lost ground to the superior Japanese numbers, and finally broke and fled towards [Pyongyang](#). Chinese casualties amounted to 500 killed and wounded, compared to 82 Japanese casualties.

On 1 August, war was officially declared between China and Japan.

By 4 August, the remaining Chinese forces in Korea retreated to the northern city of [Pyongyang](#), where they were met by troops sent from China. The 13,000–15,000 defenders made defensive repairs to the city, hoping to check the Japanese advance.



Depiction from the French periodical *Le Petit Journal* (1894) of the sinking of the Kow-shing and the rescue of some of its crew by the French gunboat *Le Lion*.



Japanese soldiers of the Sino-Japanese War, Japan, 1895.

On 15 September, the **Imperial Japanese Army** converged on the city of Pyongyang from several directions. The Japanese assaulted the city and eventually defeated the Chinese by an attack from the rear; the defenders surrendered. Taking advantage of heavy rainfall overnight, the remaining Chinese troops escaped Pyongyang and headed northeast toward the coastal city of **Uiju**. Casualties were 2,000 killed and around 4,000 wounded for the Chinese, while the Japanese casualties totaled 102 men killed, 433 wounded, and 33 missing. In the early morning of 16 September, the entire Japanese army entered Pyongyang.

Qing Hui Muslim General Zuo Baogui (左寶貴) (1837–94), from **Shandong** province, died in action in **Pyongyang**, Korea from Japanese artillery in 1894 while securing the city. A memorial to him was constructed.*[20] Before the battle Zuo Baogui performed ablution (**Wudu** or **Ghusl**) according to Islamic custom.*[21]*[22]*[23]*[24] During the war against Japan the Chinese army included soldiers and officers from the Hui Muslim minority.*[25]

2.5.4 Defeat of the Beiyang fleet

Main article: **Battle of the Yalu River (1894)**

On September 17, 1894, Japanese warships encountered the larger Chinese **Beiyang Fleet** off the mouth of the **Yalu River**. The **Imperial Japanese Navy** destroyed eight out of the ten Chinese warships, assuring Japan's command of the **Yellow Sea**. The Chinese were able to land 4,500 troops near the Yalu River.

The **Battle of the Yalu River** was the largest naval engagement of the war and was a major propaganda victory for Japan.*[26]



Korean soldiers and Chinese captives



The Battle of the Yalu River

2.5.5 Invasion of Manchuria

Main article: [Battle of Jiuliancheng](#)

With the defeat at [Pyongyang](#), the Chinese abandoned northern Korea and instead took up defensive positions in fortifications along their side of the Yalu River near [Jiuliancheng](#). After receiving reinforcements by 10 October, the Japanese quickly pushed north toward [Manchuria](#).

On the night of 24 October 1894, the Japanese successfully crossed the Yalu River, undetected, by erecting a pontoon



An illustration of Japanese soldiers beheading 38 Chinese soldiers as a warning to others by Utagawa Kokunimasa.

bridge. The following afternoon of 25 October at 1700 hours, they assaulted the outpost of **Hushan**, east of Jiuliancheng. At 2030 hours the defenders deserted their positions and by the next day they were in full retreat from Jiuliancheng.

With the capture of Jiuliancheng, General Yamagata's 1st Army Corps occupied the nearby city of **Dandong**, while to the north, elements of the retreating **Beiyang Army** set fire to the city of **Fengcheng**. The Japanese had established a firm foothold on Chinese territory with the loss of only four killed and 140 wounded.

The Japanese 1st Army Corps then split into two groups with General Nozu Michitsura's 5th Provincial Division advancing toward the city of **Mukden** (present-day **Shenyang**) and Lieutenant-General Katsura Tarō's 3rd Provincial Division pursuing fleeing Chinese forces west along toward the **Liaodong Peninsula**.

By December, the 3rd Provincial Division had captured the towns of Tatungkau, **Takushan**, **Xiuyan**, **Tomucheng**, **Haicheng** and **Kangwaseh**. The 5th Provincial Division marched during a severe Manchurian winter towards Mukden.

The Japanese 2nd Army Corps under Ōyama Iwao landed on the south coast of **Liaodong Peninsula** on 24 October and quickly moved to capture **Jinzhou** and **Dalian Bay** on 6–7 November. The Japanese laid siege to the strategic port of **Lüshunkou** (Port Arthur).

2.5.6 Fall of Lüshunkou

Main articles: **Battle of Lushunkou** and **Port Arthur massacre (China)**

By 21 November 1894, the Japanese had taken the city of **Lüshunkou** (Port Arthur). Furious over the Chinese massacre, torture and mutilation of captured wounded Japanese soldiers, the Japanese army massacred thousands of the city's civilian Chinese inhabitants in an event that came to be called the **Port Arthur Massacre** (although the scale and nature of the killing continues to be debated).

By 10 December 1894, **Kaipeng** (present-day **Gaizhou**) fell to the Japanese 1st Army Corps.

2.5.7 Fall of Weihaiwei

Main articles: **Battle of Weihaiwei** and **Battle of Yingkou**

The Chinese fleet subsequently retreated behind the **Weihaiwei** fortifications. However, they were then surprised by Japanese ground forces, who outflanked the harbor's defenses in coordination with the navy.*[27] The Battle of Weihaiwei would be a 23-day siege with the major land and naval components taking place between 20 January and



First Sino-Japanese War, major battles and troop movements.

12 February 1895.

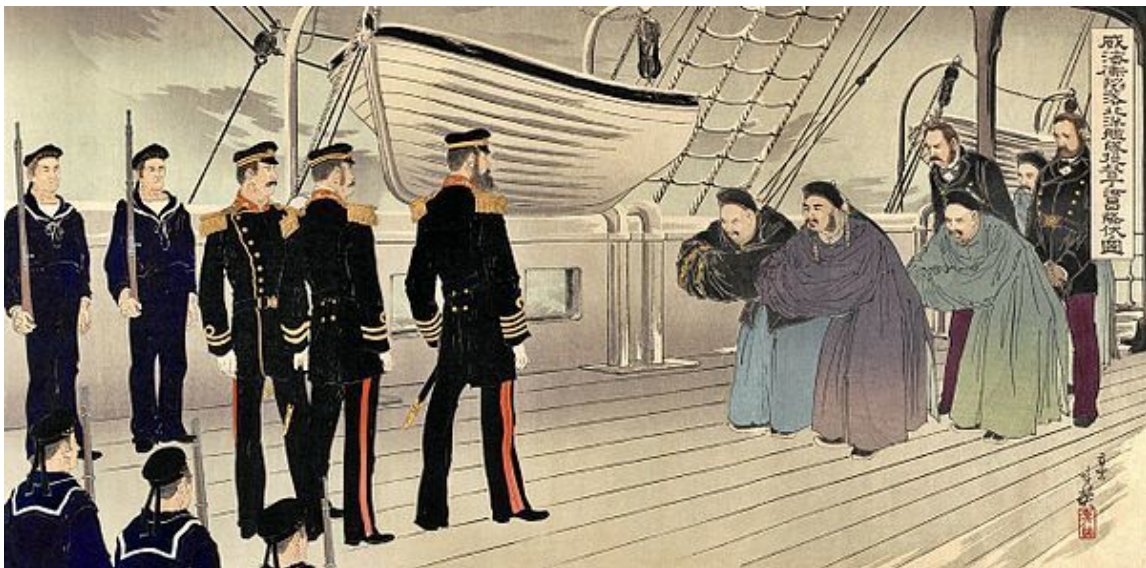
After Weihaiwei's fall on 12 February 1895, and an easing of harsh winter conditions, Japanese troops pressed further into southern Manchuria and northern China. By March 1895 the Japanese had fortified posts that commanded the sea approaches to Beijing. This would be the last major battle to be fought; numerous skirmishes would follow. The Battle of Yinkou was fought outside the port town of Yingkou, Manchuria, on 5 March 1895.

2.5.8 Occupation of the Pescadores Islands

Main article: [Pescadores Campaign \(1895\)](#)

On 23 March 1895, Japanese forces attacked the [Pescadores Islands](#), off the west coast of [Taiwan](#). In a brief and almost bloodless campaign, the Japanese defeated the islands' Chinese garrison and occupied the main town of [Magong](#). This [operation](#) effectively prevented Chinese forces in Taiwan from being reinforced, and allowed the Japanese to press their demand for the cession of Taiwan in the negotiations leading to the conclusion of the [Treaty of Shimonoseki](#) in April 1895.

2.6 End of the war



Revisionist depiction of Chinese delegation, led by Admiral Ding Ruchang and their foreign advisors, boarding the Japanese vessel to negotiate the surrender with Admiral Itō Sukeyuki after the Battle of Weihaiwei. In reality, Ding had committed suicide after his defeat and never surrendered.

The [Treaty of Shimonoseki](#) was signed on 17 April 1895. The Qing Empire recognized the total independence of Korea and ceded the [Liaodong Peninsula](#), Taiwan and [Penghu Islands](#) to Japan “in perpetuity”. The [disputed islands](#) known as “[Senkaku/Diaoyu](#)” islands were not named by this treaty, but Japan annexed these uninhabited islands to [Okinawa Prefecture](#) in 1895. Japan asserts this move was taken independently of the treaty ending the war, and China asserts that they were implied as part of the cession of Taiwan.

Additionally, the Qing Empire was to pay Japan 200 million [taels](#) of silver as war reparations. The Qing government also signed a commercial treaty permitting Japanese ships to operate on the [Yangtze River](#), to operate manufacturing factories in treaty ports and to open four more ports to foreign trade. The [Triple Intervention](#), however, forced Japan to give up the [Liaodong Peninsula](#) in exchange for another 30 million [taels](#) of silver (equivalent to about 450 million yen).

After the war, according to the Chinese scholar, [Jin Xide](#), the Qing government paid a total of 340,000,000 [taels](#) (13,600 tons) of silver to Japan in both war reparations and trophies. This was equivalent to about 510,000,000 Japanese yen at the time, about 6.4 times the Japanese government's revenue.

2.6.1 Japanese invasion of Taiwan

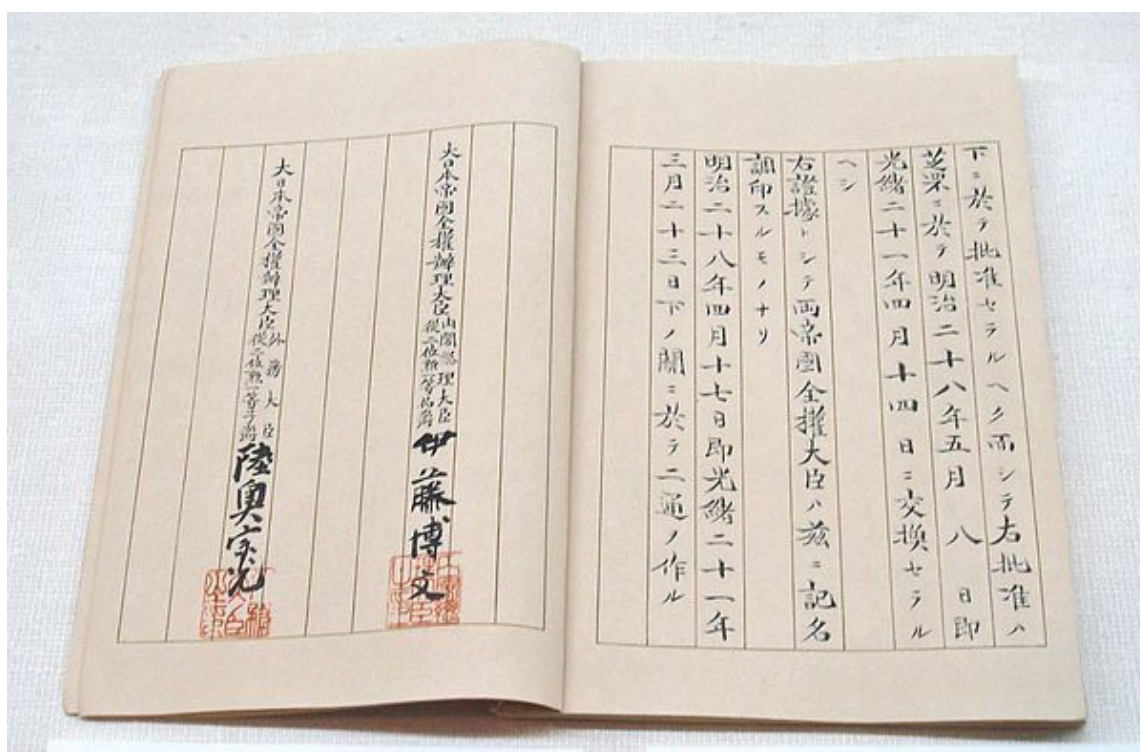
Main article: [Japanese invasion of Taiwan \(1895\)](#)

“The cession of the island to Japan was received with such disfavour by the Chinese inhabitants that a

large military force was required to effect its occupation. For nearly two years afterwards, a bitter guerrilla resistance was offered to the Japanese troops, and large forces — over 100,000 men, it was stated at the time — were required for its suppression. This was not accomplished without much cruelty on the part of the conquerors, who, in their march through the island, perpetrated all the worst excesses of war. They had, undoubtedly, considerable provocation. They were constantly attacked by ambushed enemies, and their losses from battle and disease far exceeded the entire loss of the whole Japanese army throughout the Manchurian campaign. But their revenge was often taken on innocent villagers. Men, women, and children were ruthlessly slaughtered or became the victims of unrestrained lust and rapine. The result was to drive from their homes thousands of industrious and peaceful peasants, who, long after the main resistance had been completely crushed, continued to wage a vendetta war, and to generate feelings of hatred which the succeeding years of conciliation and good government have not wholly eradicated.” - The Cambridge Modern History, Volume 12* [28]

Several Qing officials in Taiwan resolved to resist the cession of Taiwan to Japan under the Treaty of Shimonoseki, and on 23 May declared the island to be an independent Republic of Formosa. On 29 May, Japanese forces under Admiral Motonori Kabayama landed in northern Taiwan, and in a five-month campaign defeated the Republican forces and occupied the island's main towns. The campaign effectively ended on 21 October 1895, with the flight of Liu Yongfu, the second Republican president, and the surrender of the Republican capital Tainan.

2.7 Aftermath

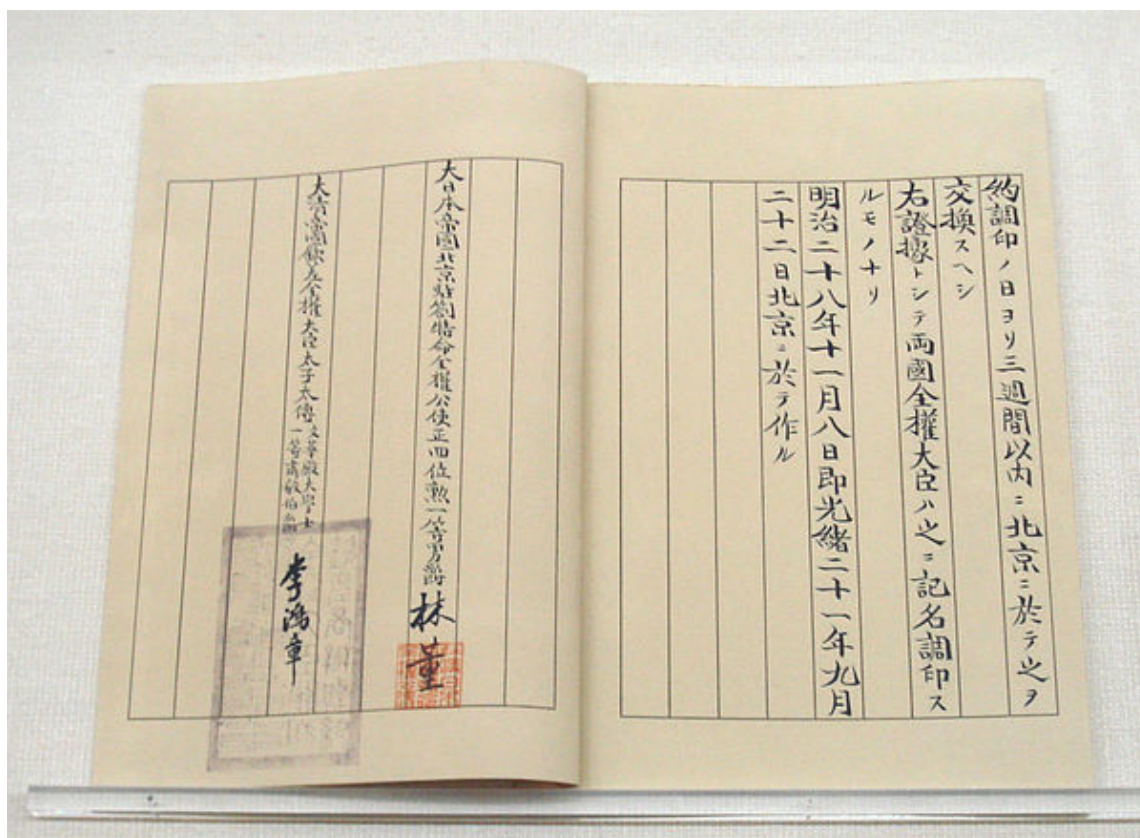


Japan–China Peace Treaty, 17 April 1895.

The Japanese success during the war was the result of the modernisation and industrialisation embarked upon two decades earlier.* [29] The war demonstrated the superiority of Japanese tactics and training from the adoption of a Western-style military. The Imperial Japanese Army and Imperial Japanese Navy were able to inflict a string of defeats on the Chinese through foresight, endurance, strategy and power of organisations. Japanese prestige rose in the eyes of the world. The victory established Japan as the dominant power in Asia.* [30]* [31]

For China, the war revealed how ineffective and corrupt were its government and policies and the Qing administration. Traditionally, China viewed Japan as a subordinate part of the Chinese cultural sphere. Although China had been defeated by European powers in the 19th century, defeat at the hands of an Asian power and a former tributary state was a bitter psychological blow. Anti-foreign sentiment and agitation grew, which would later culminate in the form

of the **Boxer Rebellion** five years later. The **Manchu** population was devastated by the fighting during the First Sino-Japanese War and the Boxer Rebellion, with massive casualties sustained during the wars and subsequently being driven into extreme suffering and hardship in Beijing and northeast China. * [32]



Convention of retrocession of the Liaodong Peninsula, 8 November 1895.

Although Japan had achieved what it had set out to accomplish and ended Chinese influence over Korea, Japan had been forced to relinquish the **Liaodong Peninsula**, (**Port Arthur**), in exchange for an increased financial indemnity. The European powers (especially Russia) had no objection to the other clauses of the treaty but felt that Japan should not gain Port Arthur, for they had their own ambitions in that part of the world. Russia persuaded Germany and France to join in applying diplomatic pressure on Japan, resulting in the **Triple Intervention** of 23 April 1895.

Japan succeeded in eliminating Chinese influence over Korea, but it was Russia who reaped the benefits. Korea proclaimed itself the **Korean Empire** and announced its independence from the Qing Empire. The Japanese sponsored **Gabo reforms** (Kabo reforms) from 1894-1896 transformed Korea: legal slavery was abolished in all forms; the **yangban** class lost all special privileges; outcastes were abolished; equality of law; equality of opportunity in the face of social background; **child marriage** was abolished, **Hangul** was to be used in government documents; Korean history was introduced in schools; the **Chinese calendar** was replaced with the **Gregorian calendar** (**Common Era**); education was expanded and new textbooks written. * [8]

In 1895, a pro-Russian official tried to remove the king of Korea to the Russian legation and failed, but a second attempt succeeded. Thus, for a year, the King reigned from the Russian legation in Seoul. The concession to build a Seoul-Inchon railway had been granted to Japan in 1894 was revoked and granted to Russia. Russian guards guarded the king in his palace even after he left the Russian legation.

China's defeat precipitated an increase in railway construction in the country, as foreign powers demanded China to make railway concessions. * [33] * [34]

In 1898, Russia signed a 25-year lease on the Liaodong Peninsula and proceeded to set up a naval station at Port Arthur. Although that infuriated the Japanese, the latter were more concerned with the Russian encroachment in Korea than that in Manchuria. Other powers, such as France, Germany and Britain, took advantage of the situation in China and gained land, port, and trade concessions at the expense of the decaying Qing Empire. **Qingdao** and **Jiaozhou** was acquired by Germany, **Guangzhouwan** by France, and **Weihaiwei** and the **New Territories** by Britain.

Tensions between Russia and Japan would increase in the years after the First Sino-Japanese War. During the **Boxer Rebellion**, an **eight-member international force** was sent to suppress and quell the uprising; Russia sent troops into Manchuria as part of this force. After the suppression of the Boxers, the Russian government agreed to vacate the area. However, by 1903, it had actually increased the size of its forces in Manchuria.

Negotiations between the two nations (1901–1904) to establish mutual recognition of respective spheres of influence (Russia over Manchuria and Japan over Korea) were repeatedly and intentionally stalled by the Russians. They felt that they were strong and confident enough not to accept any compromise and believed Japan would not go to war against a European power. Russia also had intentions to use Manchuria as a springboard for further expansion of its interests in the Far East. In 1903, Russian soldiers began construction of a fort at Yongnampo but stopped at Japanese protests.* [8]

In 1902, Japan formed an **alliance with Britain**, the terms of which stated that if Japan went to war in the Far East and that a third power entered the fight against Japan, then Britain would come to the aid of the Japanese.* [35] This was a check to prevent Germany or France from intervening militarily in any future war with Russia. Japan sought to prevent a repetition of the Triple Intervention that deprived her of Port Arthur. The British reasons for joining the alliance were to check the spread of Russian expansion into the Pacific area;*[35] to strengthen Britain's hand to focus on other areas and to gain a powerful naval ally in the Pacific.

Increasing tensions between Japan and Russia were a result of Russia's unwillingness compromise and the prospect of Korea falling under Russia's domination, therefore coming into conflict with and undermining Japan's interests. Eventually, Japan was forced to take action. This would be the deciding factor and catalyst that would lead to the **Russo-Japanese War** of 1904–05.

2.8 In popular culture

The events of the First Sino-Japanese War are depicted or fictionalised in films and television series such as *Mga Bakas ng Dugo sa Kapirasong Lupa*, *Empress Myeongseong* (2001), *The Sword with No Name* (2009), *Saka no Ue no Kumo* (2009), *The Sino-Japanese War at Sea 1894* (2012).

2.9 See also

- History of China
- History of Japan
- History of Korea
- History of Taiwan
- Military history of China
- Military history of Japan
- Second Sino-Japanese War
- Russo-Japanese War
- Sino-Japanese relations

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- [4] Duus, P. (1976). *The rise of modern Japan* (p. 125). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
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- [10] Evans & Peattie 1997, p. 12.
- [11] "The skills of the Japanese officers and men was [sic] astronomically higher those of their Chinese counterparts."
- [12] Michael Dillon (1999). *China's Muslim Hui community: Migration, settlement and sects*. Richmond: Curzon Press. p. 72. ISBN 978-0-7007-1026-3. Retrieved 2010-06-28.
- [13] Sondhaus 2001, pp. 169-170.
- [14] Geoffrey Regan, *Naval Blunders*, page 28
- [15] John King Fairbank; Kwang-Ching Liu; Denis Crispin Twitchett, eds. (1980). *Late Ch'ing, 1800-1911*. Volume 11, Part 2 of The Cambridge History of China Series (illustrated ed.). Cambridge University Press. p. 268. ISBN 0-521-22029-7. Retrieved 2012-01-18. On the eve of the Sino-Japanese War, China appeared, to undiscerning observers, to possess respectable military and naval forces. Praise for Li Hung-chang's Anhwei Army and other Chinese forces was not uncommon, and the Peiyang Navy elicited considerable favourable comment.179 When war between China and Japan appeared likely, most Westerners thought China had the advantage. Her army was vast, and her navy both out-
- [16] John King Fairbank; Kwang-Ching Liu; Denis Crispin Twitchett, eds. (1980). *Late Ch'ing, 1800-1911*. Volume 11, Part 2 of The Cambridge History of China Series (illustrated ed.). Cambridge University Press. p. 269. ISBN 0-521-22029-7. Retrieved 2012-01-18. numbered and outweighed Japan's. The German general staff considered a Japanese victory improbable. In an interview with Reuters, William Lang predicted defeat for Japan. Lang thought that the Chinese navy was well-drilled, the ships were fit, the artillery was at least adequate, and the coastal forts were strong. Weihaiwei, he said, was impregnable. Although Lang emphasized that everything depended on how China's forces were led, he had faith that 'in the end, there is no doubt that Japan must be utterly crushed'.180
- [17] 董福祥与西北马家军阀的故事 - 360Doc 个人图书馆
- [18] Evans & Peattie 1997, p. 41.
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- [27] Evans & Peattie 1997, p. 46.
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- [29] Schencking 2005, p. 78.

- [30] Paine 2003, pp. 293.
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- [35] Evans & Peattie 1997, p. 65.

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2.10.3 Other

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2.12 External links

- [程映虹：從" 版畫事件" 到《中國向西行進》](#) Peter Perdue 濮德培和中國當代民族主義 (Chinese)
- *Detailed account of the naval Battle of the Yalu River* by Philo Norton McGiffen
- [Under the Dragon Flag — My Experiences in the Chino-Japanese War](#) by James Allan' at Project Gutenberg
- [Print exhibition at MIT](#)
- [The Sinking of the Kowshing – Captain Galsworthy's Report](#)
- [SinoJapaneseWar.com](#) A detailed account of the Sino-Japanese War
- [The Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895: as seen in prints and archives](#) (British Library/Japan Center for Asian Historical Records)

Chapter 3

Boxer Rebellion

For the rock band from London, see [The Boxer Rebellion \(band\)](#).
“The Boxers” redirects here. For other uses, see [Boxers \(disambiguation\)](#).

The **Boxer Rebellion**, **Boxer Uprising** or **Yihequan Movement** was a violent anti-foreign and anti-Christian uprising which took place in China towards the end of the Qing dynasty between 1899 and 1901. It was initiated by the Militia United in Righteousness (*Yihetuan*), known in English as the “Boxers”, and was motivated by proto-nationalist sentiments and opposition to imperialist expansion and associated Christian missionary activity. An Eight-Nation Alliance invaded China to defeat the Boxers and took retribution.

The uprising took place against a background of severe drought and the disruption caused by the growth of foreign spheres of influence. After several months of growing violence against the foreign and Christian presence in Shandong and the North China plain in June 1900, Boxer fighters, convinced they were invulnerable to foreign weapons, converged on Beijing with the slogan “Support Qing government and exterminate the foreigners.” Foreigners and Chinese Christians sought refuge in the Legation Quarter. In response to reports of an armed invasion to lift the siege, the initially hesitant Empress Dowager Cixi supported the Boxers and on June 21 issued an Imperial Decree declaring war on the foreign powers. Diplomats, foreign civilians and soldiers as well as Chinese Christians in the Legation Quarter were placed under siege by the Imperial Army of China and the Boxers for 55 days.

Chinese officialdom was split between those supporting the Boxers and those favoring conciliation, led by Prince Qing. The supreme commander of the Chinese forces, the Manchu General Ronglu (Junglu), later claimed that he acted to protect the besieged foreigners. The Eight-Nation Alliance, after being initially turned back, brought 20,000 armed troops to China, defeated the Imperial Army, and captured Beijing on August 14, lifting the siege of the Legations. Uncontrolled plunder of the capital and the surrounding countryside ensued, along with the summary execution of those suspected of being Boxers.

The Boxer Protocol of 7 September 1901 provided for the execution of government officials who had supported the Boxers, provisions for foreign troops to be stationed in Beijing, and 450 million taels of silver—more than the government’s annual tax revenue—to be paid as indemnity over the course of the next thirty-nine years to the eight nations involved.*[6]

3.1 Historical background

3.1.1 Origins of the Boxers

The Righteous and Harmonious Fists or “Boxers United in Righteousness” (Yihequan) arose in the inland sections of the northern coastal province of Shandong long known for social unrest and martial societies. American Christian missionaries were probably the first to refer to the well-trained, athletic young men as “Boxers”, because of the martial arts and calisthenics they practiced. The Boxers’ primary practice was a type of spiritual possession which involved the whirling of swords, violent prostrations, and chanting incantations to deities.*[7]

The excitement and moral force of these possession rituals was especially attractive to unemployed and powerless village men, many of whom were teenagers.*[8] The Boxers believed that through training, diet, martial arts and

prayer they could perform extraordinary feats. Furthermore, they popularly claimed that millions of soldiers of **Heaven** would descend to assist them in purifying China of foreign oppression.*[9] The Boxers, armed with rifles and swords, claimed supernatural invulnerability towards blows of cannon, rifle shots, and knife attacks. The Boxers' beliefs are characteristic of **millenarian** folk religious movements of a martial character.*[10]



A Boxer during the revolt

In spite of ambivalence toward their heterodox practices, in 1895, **Yuxian**, a Manchu who was then prefect of Caozhou and would later become provincial governor, used the **Big Swords Society** in fighting bandits. The Big Swords, emboldened by this official support, also attacked their local Catholic village rivals, who turned to the Church for protection. The Big Swords responded by attacking Catholic churches and burning them. “The line between Christians and bandits”, remarks one recent historian, “became increasingly indistinct.” As a result of diplomatic pressure in the capital, Yuxian executed several Big Sword leaders, but did not punish anyone else. More martial secret societies started emerging after this.*[11]

The early years saw a variety of village activities, not a broad movement or a united purpose. Martial folk religious societies such as the **Baguadao** (Eight Trigrams) prepared the way for the Boxers. Like the Red Boxing school or the **Plum Flower Boxers**, the Boxers of Shandong were more concerned with traditional social and moral values, such as filial piety, than with foreign influences. One leader, for instance, Zhu Hongdeng (Red Lantern Zhu), started as a wandering healer, specializing in skin ulcers, and gained wide respect by refusing payment for his treatments.*[12] Zhu claimed descent from **Ming dynasty** emperors, since his surname was the surname of the Ming imperial family. He announced that his goal was to “Revive the Qing and destroy the foreigners” (“扶清灭洋 *fu Qing mie yang*”).*[13]

Although women were not allowed to join the Boxer units, they formed their own groups, the **Red Lanterns**. Popular local lore reported that they were able to fly, walk on water, set Christians' homes on fire, and stop foreign guns, powers which the male Boxers themselves did not claim. But the only reliable account of their actual activities comes from the **Battle of Tientsin**, when they nursed wounded Boxers and did work such as sewing and cleaning.*[14]

3.1.2 Causes of conflict and unrest

International tension and domestic unrest fueled the spread of the Boxer movement. First, a drought followed by floods in Shandong province in 1897–1898 forced farmers to flee to cities and seek food. As one observer said, “I am convinced that a few days' heavy rainfall to terminate the long-continued drought ... would do more to restore tranquility than any measures which either the Chinese government or foreign governments can take.”*[15]

Another cause of unrest was the outbreak of **bubonic plague** that originated in rural China in 1855.*[16] As with earlier plague pandemics, this one 'affected every aspect of society'.*[16] The **third plague pandemic**, known as the 'Modern Plague', spread to the major seaports of **Hong Kong** and **Guangzhou** by 1894,*[17] reached India in 1898, and appeared as far away as San Francisco in the early years of the 20th century. In China and India alone, the modern outbreak of the bacterium, ***Yersinia pestis***, may have killed as many as 13 million people.*[16] Some in the province of Shangtung blamed foreigners in general and recent Christian converts in particular for the pestilence, which they regarded as divine retribution from China's traditional gods.*[18]

A major cause of discontent in north China was missionary activity. The **Treaty of Tientsin** (or Tianjin) and the **Convention of Peking**, signed in 1860 after the **Second Opium War**, had granted foreign missionaries the freedom to preach anywhere in China and to buy land on which to build churches.*[19] On 1 November 1897, a band of armed men who were perhaps members of the **Big Swords Society** stormed the residence of a German missionary from the **Society of the Divine Word** and killed two priests. This attack is known as the **Juye Incident**. When **Kaiser Wilhelm II** received news of these murders, he dispatched the **German East Asia Squadron** to occupy **Jiaozhou Bay** on the southern coast of the Shandong peninsula.*[20] Germany's action triggered a “scramble for concessions” by which Britain, France, Russia and Japan also secured their own **sphere of influence** in China.*[21]

In October 1898, a group of Boxers attacked the Christian community of Liyuantun village where a temple to the **Jade Emperor** had been converted into a Catholic church. Disputes had surrounded the church since 1869, when the temple had been granted to the Christian residents of the village. This incident marked the first time the Boxers used the slogan “Support the Qing, destroy the foreigners” (“扶清灭洋 *fu Qing mie yang*”) that would later characterise them.*[22] The “Boxers” called themselves the “Militia United in Righteousness” for the first time one year later, at the **Battle of Senluo Temple** (October 1899), a clash between Boxers and Qing government troops.*[23] By using the word “Militia” rather than “Boxers”, they distanced themselves from forbidden martial arts sects, and tried to give their movement the legitimacy of a group that defended orthodoxy.*[24]

Aggression toward missionaries and Christians drew the ire of foreign (mainly European) governments.*[25] In 1899, the French minister in Beijing helped the missionaries to obtain an edict granting official status to every order in the Roman Catholic hierarchy, enabling local priests to support their people in legal or family disputes and bypass the local officials. After the German government took over Shandong many Chinese feared that the foreign missionaries and quite possibly all Christian activities were imperialist attempts at “carving the melon”, i.e., to divide and colonize China piece by piece.*[26] A Chinese official expressed the animosity towards foreigners succinctly, “Take away your missionaries and your opium and you will be welcome.”*[27]



A French political cartoon depicting China as a pie about to be carved up by Queen Victoria (Britain), Kaiser Wilhelm II (Germany), Tsar Nicholas II (Russia), Marianne (France) and a samurai (Japan), while a Chinese mandarin helplessly looks on.

The early growth of the Boxer movement coincided with the **Hundred Days' Reform** (11 June – 21 September 1898). Progressive Chinese officials, with support from Protestant missionaries, persuaded the **Guangxu Emperor** to institute reforms which alienated many conservative officials by their sweeping nature. Such opposition from conservative officials led **Empress Dowager Cixi** to intervene and reverse the reforms. The failure of the reform movement disillusioned many educated Chinese and thus further weakened the Qing government. After the reforms ended, the

conservative Empress Dowager Cixi seized power and placed the reformist Guangxu Emperor under house arrest.

The national crisis was widely seen as being caused by foreign aggression.* [28] Foreign powers had defeated China in several wars, asserted a right to promote Christianity and imposed *unequal treaties* under which foreigners and foreign companies in China were accorded special privileges, extraterritorial rights and immunities from Chinese law, causing resentment and xenophobic reactions among the Chinese. France, Japan, Russia and Germany carved out spheres of influence, so that by 1900 it appeared that China would likely be dismembered, with foreign powers each ruling a part of the country. Thus, by 1900, the Qing dynasty, which had ruled China for more than two centuries, was crumbling and Chinese culture was under assault by powerful and unfamiliar religions and secular cultures.* [29]

3.2 Boxer War

3.2.1 Intensifying crisis

In January 1900, with a majority of conservatives in the imperial court, Empress Dowager Cixi changed her long policy of suppressing Boxers, and issued edicts in their defence, causing protests from foreign powers. In spring 1900, the Boxer movement spread rapidly north from Shandong into the countryside near Beijing. Boxers burned Christian churches, killed Chinese Christians and intimidated Chinese officials who stood in their way. American Minister *Edwin H. Conger* cabled Washington, “the whole country is swarming with hungry, discontented, hopeless idlers.” On 30 May the diplomats, led by British Minister *Claude Maxwell MacDonald*, requested that foreign soldiers come to Beijing to defend the legations. The Chinese government reluctantly acquiesced, and the next day an international force of 435 navy troops from eight countries disembarked from warships and travelled by train from *Dagu (Taku)* to Beijing. They set up defensive perimeters around their respective missions.* [32]

On 5 June, the railway line to Tianjin was cut by Boxers in the countryside and Beijing was isolated. On 11 June, at *Yongding gate*, the secretary of the Japanese legation, *Sugiyama Akira*, was *attacked and killed by the soldiers* of general *Dong Fuxiang*, who were guarding the southern part of the Beijing walled city.* [33] Armed with *Mausers* rifles but wearing traditional uniforms,* [34] Dong's troops had threatened the foreign Legations in the fall of 1898 soon after arriving in Beijing,* [35] so much that troops from the *United States Marine Corps* had been called to Beijing to guard the legations.* [36] The German Kaiser *Wilhelm II* was so alarmed by the Chinese Muslim troops that he requested the *Caliph Abdul Hamid II* of the *Ottoman Empire* to find a way to stop the Muslim troops from fighting. The Caliph agreed to the Kaiser's request and sent *Enver Pasha* (*not the future Young Turk leader*) to China in 1901, but the rebellion was over by that time.* [37]

Also on 11 June, the first Boxer, dressed in his finery, was seen in the Legation Quarter. The German Minister, *Clemens von Ketteler*, and German soldiers captured a Boxer boy and inexplicably executed him.* [38] In response, thousands of Boxers burst into the walled city of Beijing that afternoon and burned many of the Christian churches and cathedrals in the city, burning some victims alive.* [39] American and British missionaries had taken refuge in the Methodist Mission and an attack there was repulsed by American Marines. The soldiers at the British Embassy and German Legations shot and killed several Boxers,* [40] alienating the Chinese population of the city and nudging the Qing government toward support of the Boxers. The Muslim Gansu braves and Boxers, along with other Chinese then attacked and killed Chinese Christians around the legations in revenge for foreign attacks on Chinese.* [41]

3.2.2 Seymour Expedition

Main article: *Seymour Expedition*

As the situation grew more violent, a second international force of 2,000 sailors and marines under the command of the British Vice-Admiral *Edward Seymour*, the largest contingent being British, was dispatched from *Dagu* to Beijing on 10 June 1900. The troops were transported by train from *Dagu* to Tianjin with the agreement of the Chinese government, but the railway between Tianjin and Beijing had been severed. Seymour resolved to move forward and repair the railway, or progress on foot if necessary, keeping in mind that the distance between Tianjin and Beijing was only 120 km. When Seymour left Tianjin and started toward Beijing, it angered the imperial court. As a result, the pro-Boxer Manchu Prince Duan became leader of the *Zongli Yamen* (foreign office), replacing Prince Qing. Prince Duan was a member of the imperial *Aisin Gioro* clan (foreigners called him a “Blood Royal”), and Empress Dowager Cixi had named his son as next in line for the *imperial throne*. He became the effective leader of the Boxers, and he was extremely anti-foreigner like his friend *Dong Fuxiang*, and wanted to expel them from China. He soon ordered the Qing imperial army to attack the foreign forces. Confused by conflicting orders from Beijing, General *Nie Shicheng* let Seymour's army pass by in their trains.* [42]



*Chinese Muslim troops from Gansu, also known as the Gansu Braves, killed a Japanese diplomat on 11 June 1900. Foreigners called them the “10,000 Islamic rabble.” *^[30] The Muslim Kansu Braves formed the “Rear Division” . *^[31]*



Japanese marines who served in the Seymour Expedition.

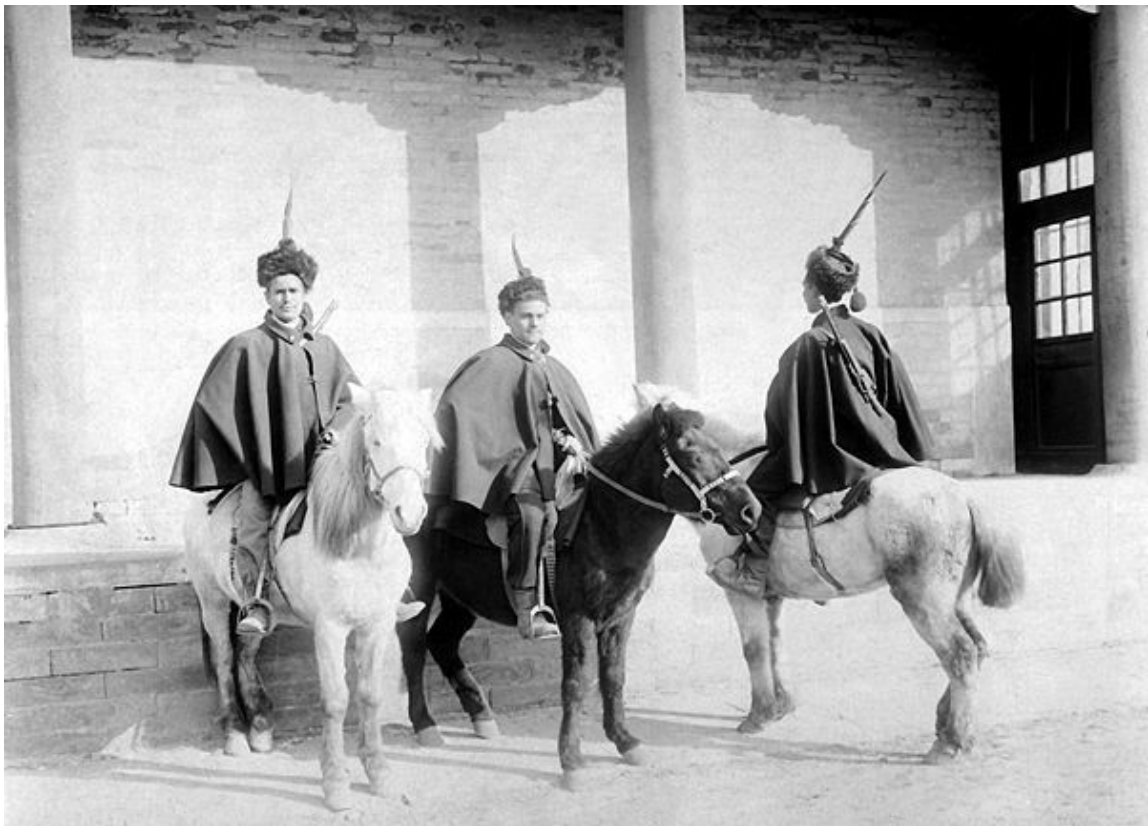
After leaving Tianjin, the convoy quickly reached Langfang, but found the railway there to be destroyed. Seymour's engineers tried to repair the line, but the allied army found itself surrounded, as the railway both behind and in front of them had been destroyed. They were attacked from all parts by Chinese irregulars and Chinese governmental troops. Five thousand of Dong Fuxiang's "Gansu Braves" and an unknown number of "Boxers" won a costly but major victory over Seymour's troops at the **Battle of Langfang** on 18 June. ^[43]^[44]^[45] As the allied European army retreated from Langfang, they were constantly fired upon by cavalry, and artillery bombarded their positions. It was reported that the Chinese artillery was superior to the European artillery, since the Europeans did not bother to bring along much for the campaign, thinking they could easily sweep through Chinese resistance. The Europeans could not locate the Chinese artillery, which was raining shells upon their positions. ^[46] Mining, engineering, flooding and simultaneous attacks were employed by Chinese troops. The Chinese also employed pincer movements, ambushes and sniper tactics with some success against the foreigners. ^[47]

News arrived on 18 June regarding attacks on foreign legations. Seymour decided to continue advancing, this time along the Beihe river, toward **Tongzhou**, 25 kilometres (16 mi) from Beijing. By the 19th, they had to abandon their efforts due to progressively stiffening resistance and started to retreat southward along the river with over 200 wounded. Commandeering four civilian Chinese **junks** along the river, they loaded all their wounded and remaining supplies onto them and pulled them along with ropes from the riverbanks. By this point they were very low on food, ammunition and medical supplies. Unexpectedly they then happened upon the **Great Xigu Arsenal**, a hidden Qing munitions cache of which the Allied Powers had had no knowledge until then. They immediately captured and occupied it, discovering not only **Krupp** field guns, but rifles with millions of rounds of ammunition, along with millions of pounds of rice and ample medical supplies.

There they dug in and awaited rescue. A Chinese servant was able to infiltrate through the Boxer and Qing lines, informing the Eight Powers of the Seymour troops' predicament. Surrounded and attacked nearly around the clock by Qing troops and Boxers, they were at the point of being overrun. On 25 June, a regiment composed of 1,800 men (900 Russian troops from **Port Arthur**, 500 British seamen, with an ad hoc mix of other assorted Alliance troops) finally arrived on foot from Tientsin to rescue Seymour. Spiking the mounted field guns and setting fire to any munitions that they could not take (an estimated £3 million worth), Seymour, his force, and the rescue mission



Admiral Seymour returning to Tianjin with his wounded men, on 26 June.



Italian mounted infantry near Tientsin in 1900

marched back to Tientsin, unopposed, on 26 June. Seymour's casualties during the expedition were 62 killed and

228 wounded.*[48]

3.2.3 Conflicting attitudes within the Qing imperial court



Qing imperial soldiers during the Boxer Rebellion

Meanwhile, in Beijing, on 16 June, Empress Dowager Cixi summoned the imperial court for a mass audience and addressed the choices between using the Boxers to evict the foreigners from the city or seeking a diplomatic solution. In response to a high official who doubted the efficacy of the Boxers' magic, Cixi replied:

Perhaps their magic is not to be relied upon; but can we not rely on the hearts and minds of the people? Today China is extremely weak. We have only the people's hearts and minds to depend upon. If we cast them aside and lose the people's hearts, what can we use to sustain the country?

Both sides of the debate at the imperial court realised that popular support for the Boxers in the countryside was almost universal and that suppression would be both difficult and unpopular, especially when foreign troops were on the march.*[49]*[50]

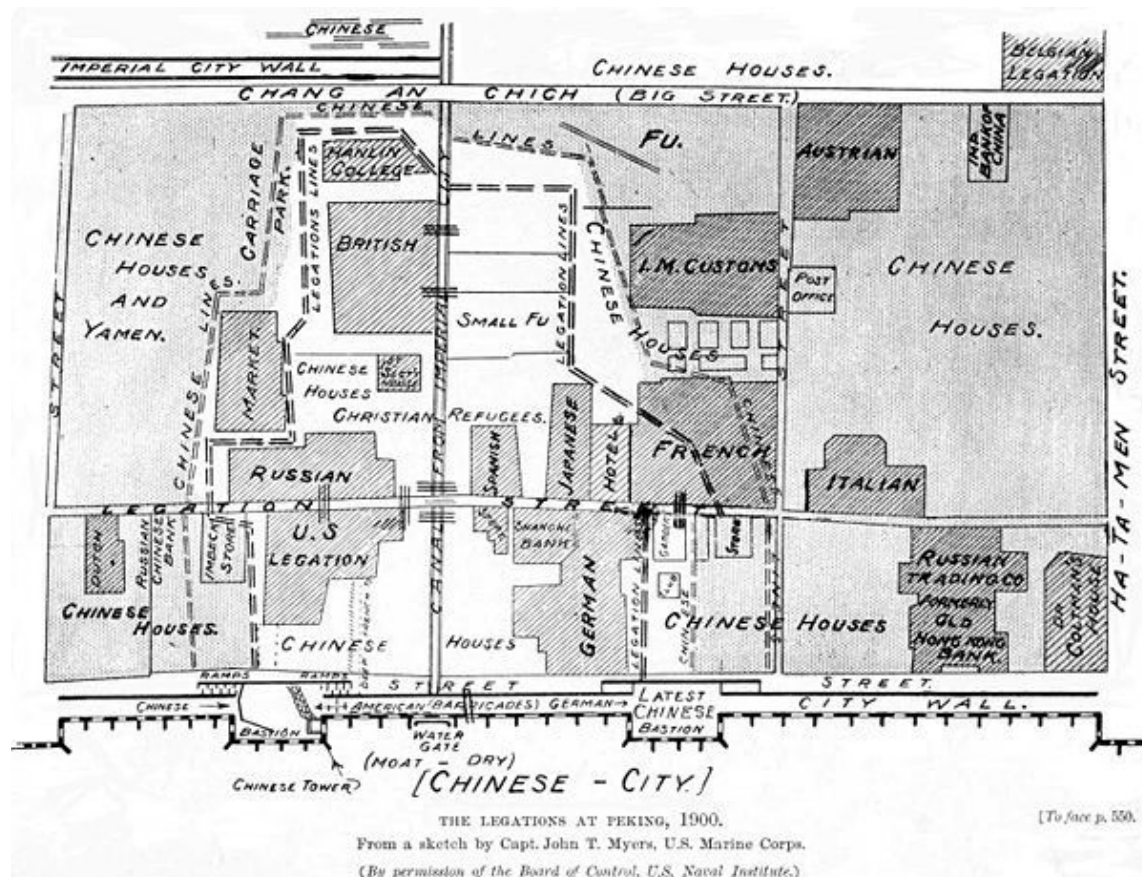
Two factions were active during this debate. On one side were anti-foreigners who viewed foreigners as invasive and imperialistic and evoked a nativist populism. They advocated taking advantage of the Boxers to achieve the expulsion of foreign troops and foreign influences. The pro-foreigners on the other hand advanced rapprochement with foreign governments, seeing the Boxers as superstitious and ignorant.

The event that tilted the Qing imperial government irrevocably toward support of the Boxers and war with the foreign powers was the attack of foreign navies on the **Dagu Forts** near Tianjin, on 17 June 1900.

3.2.4 Siege of the Beijing legations

Main article: [Siege of the International Legations](#)

On 15 June, Qing imperial forces deployed electric mines in the **River Beihe** (Peiho) to prevent the Eight-Nation Alliance from sending ships to attack.*[51] With a difficult military situation in Tianjin and a total breakdown of



Locations of foreign diplomatic legations and front lines in Beijing during the siege

communications between Tianjin and Beijing, the allied nations took steps to reinforce their military presence significantly. On 17 June they took the Dagu Forts commanding the approaches to Tianjin, and from there brought increasing numbers of troops on shore. When Cixi received an ultimatum demanding that China surrender total control over all its military and financial affairs to foreigners,^[52] she defiantly stated before the entire **Grand Council**, "Now they [the Powers] have started the aggression, and the extinction of our nation is imminent. If we just fold our arms and yield to them, I would have no face to see our ancestors after death. If we must perish, why not fight to the death?"^[53] It was at this point that Cixi began to blockade the legations with the armies of the **Peking Field Force**, which began the siege. Cixi stated that "I have always been of the opinion, that the allied armies had been permitted to escape too easily in 1860. Only a united effort was then necessary to have given China the victory. Today, at last, the opportunity for revenge has come", and said that millions of Chinese would join the cause of fighting the foreigners since the Manchus had provided "great benefits" on China.^[54] On receipt of the news of the attack on the Dagu Forts on the 19th of June, Empress Dowager Cixi immediately sent an order to the legations that the diplomats and other foreigners depart Beijing under escort of the Chinese army within 24 hours.^[55]

The next morning, diplomats from the besieged legations met to discuss the Empress's offer. The majority quickly agreed that they could not trust the Chinese army. Fearing that they would be killed, they agreed to refuse the Empress's demand. The German Imperial Envoy, Baron Klemens Freiherr von Ketteler, was infuriated with the actions of the Chinese army troops and determined to take his complaints to the royal court. Against the advice of the fellow foreigners, the baron left the legations with a single aide and a team of porters to carry his sedan chair. On his way to the palace, von Ketteler was killed on the streets of Beijing by a Manchu captain.^[56] His aide managed to escape the attack and carried word of the baron's death back to the diplomatic compound. At this news, the other diplomats feared they also would be murdered if they left the legation quarter and they chose to continue to defy the Chinese order to depart Beijing. The legations were hurriedly fortified. Most of the foreign civilians, which included a large number of missionaries and businessmen, took refuge in the British legation, the largest of the diplomatic compounds.^[57] Chinese Christians were primarily housed in the adjacent palace (Fu) of Prince Su who was forced to abandon his property by the foreign soldiers.^[58]

On the 21st of June, Empress Dowager Cixi declared war against all foreign powers. Regional governors who com-



Representative U.S., Indian, French, Italian, British, German, Austrian and Japanese military and naval personnel forming part of the Allied forces

mandated substantial modernised armies, such as Li Hongzhang at Canton, Yuan Shikai in Shandong, Zhang Zhidong* [59]* [60] at Wuhan and Liu Kunyi at Nanjing, refused to join in the imperial court's declaration of war and withheld knowledge of it from the public in the south. Yuan Shikai used his own forces to suppress Boxers in Shandong, and Zhang entered into negotiations with the foreigners in Shanghai to keep his army out of the conflict. The neutrality of these provincial and regional governors left the majority of Chinese out of the conflict.* [61] They were called *The Mutual Protection of Southeast China*.* [62]

The legations of the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, Austria-Hungary, Spain, Belgium, the Netherlands, the United States, Russia and Japan were located in the *Beijing Legation Quarter* south of the *Forbidden City*. The Chinese army and Boxer irregulars besieged the Legation Quarter from 20 June to 14 August 1900. A total of 473 foreign civilians, 409 soldiers, marines and sailors from eight countries, and about 3,000 Chinese Christians took refuge there.* [63] Under the command of the British minister to China, *Claude Maxwell MacDonald*, the legation staff and military guards defended the compound with small arms, three machine guns, and one old muzzle-loaded cannon, which was nicknamed the *International Gun* because the barrel was British, the carriage Italian, the shells Russian and the crew American. Chinese Christians in the legations led the foreigners to the cannon and it proved important in the defence. Also under siege in Beijing was the *Northern Cathedral (Beitang)* of the Catholic Church. The Beitang was defended by 43 French and Italian soldiers, 33 Catholic foreign priests and nuns, and about 3,200 Chinese Catholics. The defenders suffered heavy casualties especially from lack of food and mines which the Chinese exploded in tunnels dug beneath the compound.* [64] The number of Chinese soldiers and Boxers besieging the Legation Quarter and the Beitang is unknown.

On the 22nd and 23 June, Chinese soldiers and Boxers set fire to areas north and west of the British Legation, using it as a “frightening tactic” to attack the defenders. The nearby *Hanlin Academy*, a complex of courtyards and buildings that housed “the quintessence of Chinese scholarship ... the oldest and richest library in the world”, caught fire. Each side blamed the other for the destruction of the invaluable books it contained.* [65]

After the failure to burn out the foreigners, the Chinese army adopted an anaconda-like strategy. The Chinese built barricades surrounding the Legation Quarter and advanced, brick by brick, on the foreign lines, forcing the foreign legation guards to retreat a few feet at a time. This tactic was especially used in the Fu, defended by Japanese and Italian sailors and soldiers, and inhabited by most of the Chinese Christians. Fusillades of bullets, artillery and



1900, soldiers burned down the Temple, Shanhaiguan. The destruction of a Chinese temple on the bank of the Pei-Ho, by Amédée Forestier

firecrackers were directed against the Legations almost every night—but did little damage. Sniper fire took its toll among the foreign defenders. Despite their numerical advantage, the Chinese did not attempt a direct assault on the Legation Quarter although in the words of one of the besieged, “it would have been easy by a strong, swift movement on the part of the numerous Chinese troops to have annihilated the whole body of foreigners ... in an hour.”*[66] American missionary **Frank Gamewell** and his crew of “fighting parsons” fortified the Legation Quarter,*[67] but impressed Chinese Christians to do most of the physical labour of building defences.*[68]

The Germans and the Americans occupied perhaps the most crucial of all defensive positions: the Tartar Wall. Holding the top of the 45 ft (14 m) tall and 40 ft (12 m) wide wall was vital. The German barricades faced east on top of the wall and 400 yd (370 m) west were the west-facing American positions. The Chinese advanced toward both positions by building barricades even closer. “The men all feel they are in a trap”, said the American commander, Capt. **John T. Myers**, “and simply await the hour of execution.”*[69] On 30 June, the Chinese forced the Germans off the Wall, leaving the American Marines alone in its defence. At the same time, a Chinese barricade was advanced to within a few feet of the American positions and it became clear that the Americans had to abandon the wall or force the Chinese to retreat. At 2 am on 3 July, 56 British, Russian and American marines and sailors, under the command of Myers, launched an assault against the Chinese barricade on the wall. The attack caught the Chinese sleeping, killed about 20 of them, and expelled the rest of them from the barricades.*[70] The Chinese did not attempt to advance their positions on the Tartar Wall for the remainder of the siege.*[71]

Sir Claude MacDonald said 13 July was the “most harassing day” of the siege.*[72] The Japanese and Italians in the Fu were driven back to their last defence line. The Chinese detonated a mine beneath the French Legation pushing the French and Austrians out of most of the French Legation.*[72] On 16 July, the most capable British officer was killed and the journalist **George Ernest Morrison** was wounded.*[73] But American Minister **Edwin Hurd Conger** established contact with the Chinese government and on 17 July, an armistice was declared by the Chinese.*[74] More than 40% of the legation guards were dead or wounded. The motivation of the Chinese was probably the realization that an allied force of 20,000 men had landed in China and retribution for the siege was at hand.



Han Chinese General Nie Shicheng, who fought both the Boxers and the Allies.[75]*

3.2.5 Officials and commanders at cross purposes

The Manchu General Ronglu concluded that it was futile to fight all of the powers simultaneously, and declined to press home the siege.*[76] The Manchu Zaiyi (Prince Duan), an anti-foreign friend of Dong Fuxiang, wanted artillery for Dong's troops to destroy the legations. Ronglu blocked the transfer of artillery to Zaiyi and Dong, preventing them from attacking.*[77] Ronglu forced Dong Fuxiang and his troops to pull back from completing the siege and destroying the legations, thereby saving the foreigners and making diplomatic concessions.*[78] Ronglu and Prince Qing sent food to the legations, and used their Manchu Bannermen to attack the Muslim Gansu Braves (“Kansu Braves” in the spelling of the time) of Dong Fuxiang and the Boxers who were besieging the foreigners. They issued

edicts ordering the foreigners to be protected, but the Gansu warriors ignored it, and fought against Bannermen who tried to force them away from the legations. The Boxers also took commands from Dong Fuxiang. * [79] Ronglu also deliberately hid an Imperial Decree from General **Nie Shicheng**. The Decree ordered him to stop fighting the Boxers because of the foreign invasion, and also because the population was suffering. Due to Ronglu's actions, General Nie continued to fight the Boxers and killed many of them even as the foreign troops were making their way into China. Ronglu also ordered Nie to protect foreigners and save the railway from the Boxers. * [80] Because parts of the Railway were saved under Ronglu's orders, the foreign invasion army was able to transport itself into China quickly. General Nie committed thousands of troops against the Boxers instead of against the foreigners. Nie was already outnumbered by the Allies by 4,000 men. General Nie was blamed for attacking the Boxers, as Ronglu let Nie take all the blame. At the **Battle of Tianjin (Tientsin)**, General Nie decided to sacrifice his life by walking into the range of Allied guns. * [81]



Soldiers of the Qing imperial army

Xu Jingcheng, who had served as the Qing Envoy to many of the same states under siege in the Legation Quarter, argued that “the evasion of extraterritorial rights and the killing of foreign diplomats are unprecedented in China and abroad.”*[82] Xu and five other officials urged Empress Dowager Cixi to order the repression of Boxers, the execution of their leaders, and a diplomatic settlement with foreign armies. The Empress Dowager, outraged, sentenced Xu and the five others to death for “willfully and absurdly petitioning the Imperial Court” and “building subversive thought.” They were executed on July 28, 1900 and their severed heads placed on display at **Caishikou** Execution Grounds in Beijing.*[83]

Reflecting this vacillation, some Chinese soldiers were quite liberally firing at foreigners under siege from its very onset. Empress Dowager Cixi did not personally order imperial troops to conduct a siege, and on the contrary had ordered them to protect the foreigners in the legations. Prince Duan led the Boxers to loot his enemies within the imperial court and the foreigners, although imperial authorities expelled Boxer troops after they were let into the city and went on a looting rampage against both the foreign and the Qing imperial forces. Older Boxers were sent outside Beijing to halt the approaching foreign armies, while younger men were absorbed into the Muslim Gansu army.*[84]

With conflicting allegiances and priorities motivating the various forces inside Beijing, the situation in the city became increasingly confused. The foreign legations continued to be surrounded by both Qing imperial and Gansu forces. While Dong Fuxiang's Gansu army, now swollen by the addition of the Boxers, wished to press the siege, Ronglu's imperial forces seem to have largely attempted to follow Empress Dowager Cixi's decree and protect the legations. However, to satisfy the conservatives in the imperial court, Ronglu's men also fired on the legations and let off firecrackers to give the impression that they, too, were attacking the foreigners. Inside the legations and out of communication with the outside world, the foreigners simply fired on any targets that presented themselves, including messengers from the imperial court, civilians and besiegers of all persuasions.*[85] Dong Fuxiang was denied artillery held by Ronglu which stopped him from leveling the legations, and when he complained to Empress Dowager Cixi on June 23, she dismissively said that “Your tail, is becoming too heavy to wag.” The Alliance discovered large amounts of unused Chinese Krupp artillery and shells after the siege was lifted.*[86]

The armistice, although occasionally broken, endured until 13 August when, with an allied army led by the British **Alfred Gaselee** approaching Beijing to relieve the siege, the Chinese launched their heaviest fusillade on the Legation Quarter. As the foreign army approached, Chinese forces melted away.

3.2.6 Gaselee Expedition

Main articles: **Eight-Nation Alliance** and **Gaselee Expedition**

Foreign navies started building up their presence along the northern China coast from the end of April 1900. Several international forces were sent to the capital, with varying success, and the Chinese forces were ultimately defeated by the **Eight-Nation Alliance** of **Austria-Hungary**, **France**, **Germany**, **Italy**, **Japan**, **Russia**, the **United Kingdom** and the **United States**.

British Lieutenant-General **Alfred Gaselee** acted as the commanding officer of the Eight-Nation Alliance, which eventually numbered 55,000. The main contingent was composed of Japanese (20,840), Russian (13,150), British (12,020), French (3,520), U.S. (3,420), German (900), Italian (80), Austro-Hungarian (75) and anti-Boxer Chinese troops.*[88] The “First Chinese Regiment” (**Weihaiwei Regiment**) which was praised for its performance, consisted of Chinese collaborators serving in the British military.*[59] The international force finally captured Tianjin on 14 July under the command of the Japanese Colonel Kuriya, after one day of fighting.

Notable events included the seizure of the **Dagu Forts** commanding the approaches to Tianjin and the boarding and capture of four Chinese destroyers by British Commander **Roger Keyes**. Among the foreigners besieged in Tianjin was a young American mining engineer named **Herbert Hoover**, who would go on to become the 31st President of the United States.*[89]*[90]

The march from Tianjin to Beijing of about 120 km included about 20,000 allied troops. On 4 August, there were approximately 70,000 Qing imperial troops and anywhere from 50,000 to 100,000 Boxers along the way. The allies only encountered minor resistance, fighting battles at **Beicang** and **Yangcun**. At Yangcun, the **14th Infantry Regiment** of the U.S. and British troops led the assault. The weather was a major obstacle. Conditions were extremely humid with temperatures sometimes reaching 42 °C (108 °F). These high temperatures and insects plagued the Allies. Soldiers dehydrated and horses died. Chinese villagers killed Allied troops who searched for wells.*[91]

The heat killed Allied soldiers, who foamed at the mouth. The tactics along the way were gruesome on either side. Allied soldiers beheaded already dead Chinese corpses, bayoneted or beheaded live Chinese, and raped Chinese girls and women.*[92] Cossacks were reported to have killed Chinese civilians almost automatically and Japanese

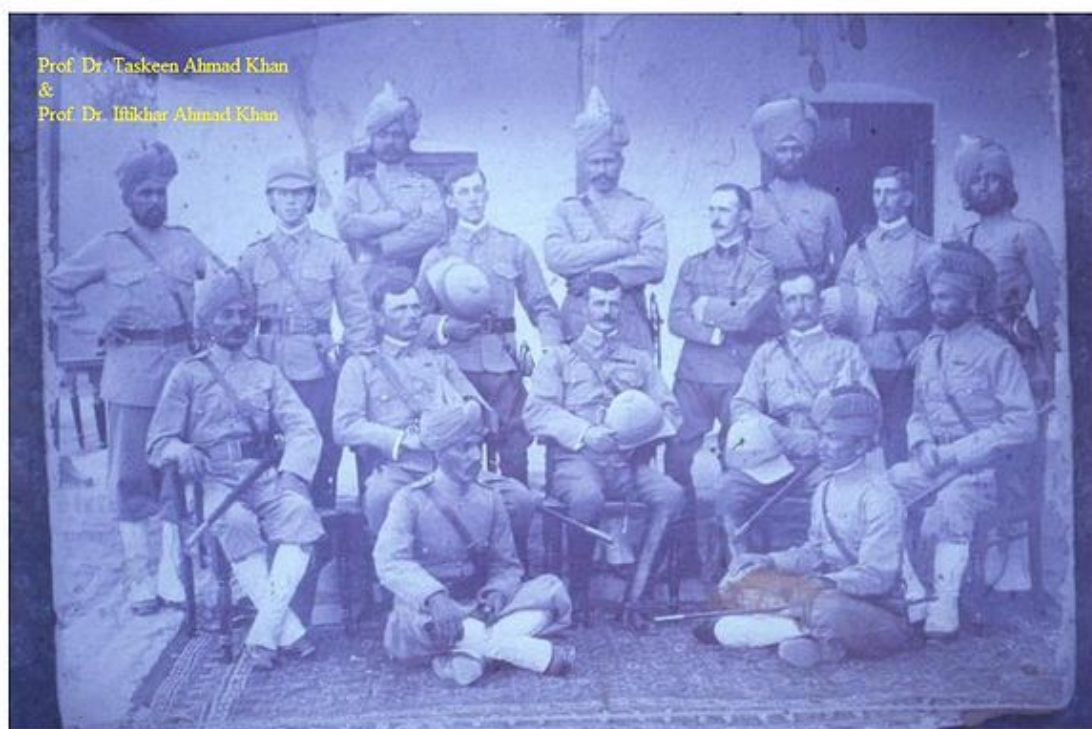


Han Chinese General Dong Fuxiang was overtly hostile to foreigners and his “Gansu Braves” relentlessly attacked the besieged legations.

kicked a Chinese soldier to death.*[93] The Chinese responded with violence and mutilation, slaughtered captured Russians,*[92] and Lieutenant Smedley Butler saw the remains of two Japanese soldiers who were tortured and killed by the Chinese, who gouged the eyes and cut off the tongues of Japanese soldiers before nailing them to doors.*[94]



The Boxers bombarded Tianjin in June 1900, and Dong Fuxiang's Muslim troops attacked the British Admiral Seymour and his expeditionary force.



A Group Photograph at Quetta, Baluchistan (Chief Commissioner's Province), British India of some of the Officers of the 26th Baluchistan Regiment of Bombay Infantry of British India - before leaving India to go to China in 1900 to suppress the Boxer Rebellion (1899-1901).

Lieutenant Butler was wounded during the expedition in the leg and chest by bullets, later receiving the Brevet Medal in recognition for his actions.

The international force reached Beijing on 14 August. Following the defeat of Beiyang army during the humiliating First Sino-Japanese War, the Chinese government had invested heavily in modernising the imperial army, which



The capture of the southern gate of Tianjin. British troops were positioned on the left, Japanese troops at the centre, French troops on the right.



Chinese troops wearing modern uniforms in 1900

was equipped with modern **Mauser** repeater rifles and **Krupp** artillery. Three modernised divisions consisting of Manchu **Bannermen** protected the Beijing Metropolitan region. Two of them were under the command of the anti-Boxer **Prince Qing** and Ronglu, while the anti-foreign Prince Duan commanded the ten-thousand-strong **Hushenying**, or “Tiger Spirit Division”, which had joined the Gansu Braves and Boxers in attacking the foreigners. It was a Hushenying captain who had assassinated the German diplomat Ketteler. The Tenacious Army under Nie Shicheng received western style training under German and Russian officers in addition to their modernised weapons and uniforms. They effectively resisted the Alliance at the **Battle of Tientsin** before retreating and astounded the Alliance

forces with the accuracy of their artillery during the siege of the Tianjin concessions (the artillery shells failed to explode upon impact due to corrupt manufacturing). The Gansu Braves under Dong Fuxiang, which some sources described as “ill disciplined”, were armed with modern weapons but were not trained according to western drill and wore traditional Chinese uniforms. They led the defeat of the Alliance at Langfang in the Seymour Expedition and were the most ferocious in besieging the Legations in Beijing. Some **Banner** forces were given modernised weapons and western training, becoming the Metropolitan Banner forces, which were decimated in the fighting. Among the Manchu dead was the father of the writer **Lao She**.



Corporal Titus scaling the walls of Peking

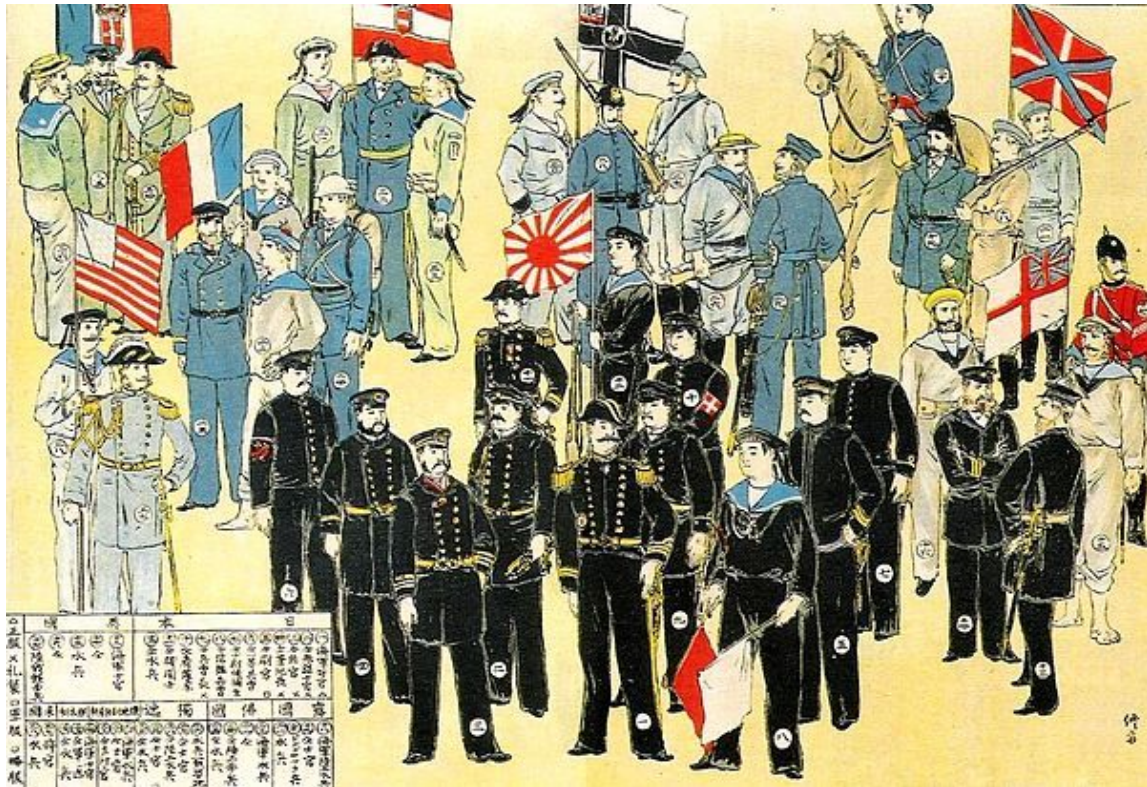
The British won the race among the international forces to be the first to reach the besieged Legation Quarter. The U.S. was able to play a role due to the presence of U.S. ships and troops stationed in Manila since the U.S. conquest of the Philippines during the **Spanish–American War** and the subsequent **Philippine Insurrection**. In the U.S. military, the action in the Boxer Rebellion was known as the **China Relief Expedition**. American soldiers scaling the walls of Beijing is an iconic image of the Boxer Rebellion.*[95]

The British Army reached the legation quarter on the afternoon of 14 August and relieved the Legation Quarter. The Beitang was relieved on 16 August, first by Japanese soldiers and then, officially, by the French.*[96]

3.2.7 Evacuation of the Qing imperial court from Beijing to Xi'an

In the early hours of 15 August, just as the Foreign Legations were being relieved, Empress Dowager Cixi, dressed in the padded blue cotton of a farm woman, the Guangxu Emperor, and a small retinue climbed into three wooden ox carts and escaped from the city covered with rough blankets. Legend has it that the Empress Dowager then either ordered that the Guangxu Emperor's favourite concubine, **Consort Zhen**, be thrown down a well in the Forbidden City or tricked her into drowning herself. The journey was made all the more arduous by the lack of preparation, but the Empress Dowager insisted this was not a retreat, rather a “tour of inspection.” After weeks of travel, the party arrived in Xi'an in **Shaanxi** province, beyond protective mountain passes where the foreigners could not reach, deep in Chinese Muslim territory and protected by the Gansu Braves. The foreigners had no orders to pursue the Empress Dowager, so they decided to stay put.*[97] Ma Yukun and Dong Fuxiang's soldiers were the ones who guarded the court during the evacuation.*[98]

The Muslim Gansu Braves under the general **Ma Fulu** engaged in fierce fighting during the Battle of Peking at **Zhengyang Gate** against the Eight Nation Alliance.*[99]*[100]*[101] Ma Fulu and 100 of his fellow Hui and Dongxiang Muslim soldiers from his home village died in that battle.*[102]*[103] Ma Fulu's paternal cousins Ma Fugui 馬福貴, Ma Fuquan 馬福全, and his paternal nephews Ma Yaotu 馬耀圖, and Ma Zhaotu 馬兆圖 died in the battle. The



Painting of Western and Japanese troops

Battle at Zhengyang was fought against the British.*[104] Ma Fulu's brother Ma Fuxiang took over his posts. The Gansu Braves escorted the imperial family to Xi'an when they decided to flee. The Muslim general **Ma Anliang** was part of the escort. **Ma Fuxiang** was rewarded by the Guangxu Emperor, being appointed governor of Altay for his service.*[105] **Ma Fuxing** also served under Ma Fulu to guard the imperial court during the fighting.*[106] **Ma Biao**, who became famous for fighting the Japanese in the **Second Sino-Japanese War**, served under the Muslim general **Ma Haiyan** while fighting in the Boxer Rebellion and guarding the imperial court.*[107] **Ma Haiyan** died of exhaustion after the imperial court reached its destination, and his son **Ma Qi** took over his posts. The Muslim troops were described as “*the bravest of the brave, the most fanatical of fanatics : and that is why the defence of the Emperor's city had been entrusted to them.*” *[108]

3.3 Russian invasion of Manchuria

The Russian Empire and the Qing Empire had maintained a long peace, starting with the **Treaty of Nerchinsk** in 1689, but Tsarist forces took advantage of Chinese defeats to impose the **Aigun Treaty** of 1858 and the **Treaty of Peking** of 1860 which ceded formerly Chinese territory in Manchuria to Russia, much of which is held by Russia to the present day (**Primorye**). The Russians aimed for control over the **Amur River** for navigation, and the all weather ports of **Dairen** and **Port Arthur** in the **Liaodong peninsula**. The rise of Japan as an Asian power provoked Russia's anxiety, especially in light of expanding Japanese influence in Korea. Following Japan's victory in the **First Sino-Japanese War** of 1895, the **Triple Intervention** of Russia, Germany and France forced Japan to return the territory won in Liaodong, leading to a de facto Sino-Russian alliance.

Local Chinese in Manchuria were incensed at these Russian advances and began to harass Russians and Russian institutions, such as the **Chinese Eastern Railway**. In June 1900, the Chinese bombarded the town of **Blagoveshchensk** on the Russian side of the Amur. The Czar's government used the pretext of Boxer activity to move some 200,000 troops into the area to crush the Boxers. The Chinese used arson to destroy a bridge carrying a railway and a barracks on 27 July. The Boxers destroyed railways and cut lines for telegraphs and burned the Yantai mines.*[109]

By 21 September, Russian troops took Jilin and Liaodong, and by the end of the month completely occupied Manchuria, where their presence was a major factor leading to the **Russo-Japanese War**.



Russian officers in Manchuria during the Boxer Rebellion

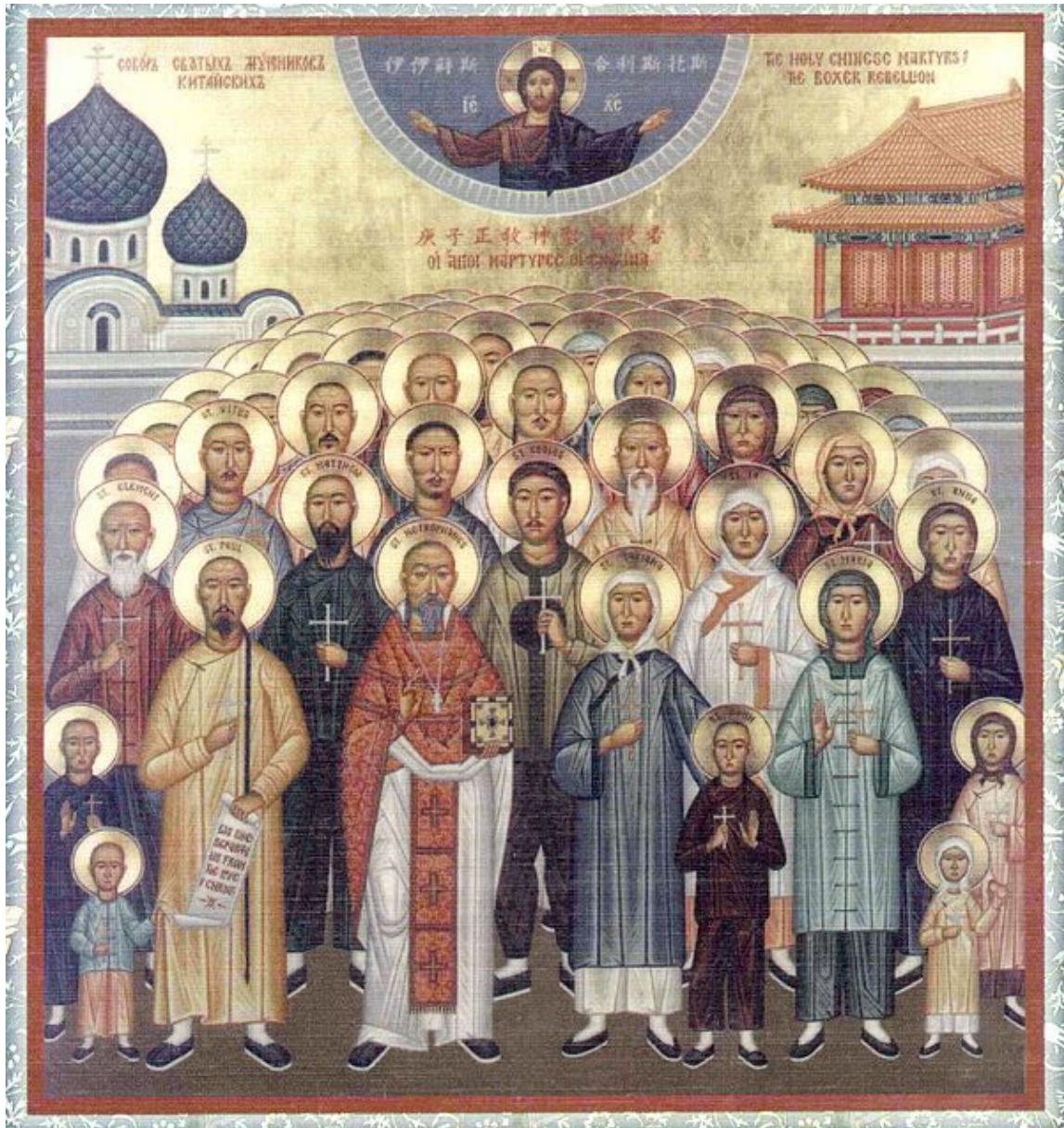
The Chinese **Honghuizi** bandits of Manchuria, who had fought alongside the Boxers in the war, did not stop when the Boxer rebellion was over, and continued guerilla warfare against the Russian occupation up to the **Russo-Japanese war** when the Russians were defeated by Japan.

3.4 Massacre of missionaries and Chinese Christians

Orthodox, Protestant and Catholic missionaries and their Chinese parishioners were massacred throughout northern China, some by Boxers and others by government troops and authorities. After the declaration of war on Western powers in June 1900, Yuxian, who had been named governor of **Shanxi** in March of that year, implemented a brutal anti-foreign and anti-Christian policy. On 9 July, reports circulated that he had executed forty-four foreigners (including women and children) from missionary families whom he had invited to the provincial capital **Taiyuan** under the promise to protect them. ^[110]^[111] Although the purported **eye witness** accounts have recently been questioned as improbable, this event became a notorious symbol of Chinese anger, known as the **Taiyuan Massacre**.^[112] By the summer's end, more foreigners and as many as 2,000 Chinese Christians had been put to death in the province. Journalist and historical writer Nat Brandt has called the massacre of Christians in Shanxi “the greatest single tragedy in the history of Christian evangelicalism.” ^[113]

In 1900, insurgents placed a wooden cross in front of the only open gate to a mission station. Nearly 100 students were inside. They were told to either come out of the building and walk on top of the cross or be shot. A number of students came out and walked on the cross, and their lives were spared. One girl came out and knelt down before the cross and prayed. She then stood up, walked around the cross and toward the insurgents. She was shot and killed. The rest of the students followed her example and walked around the cross. They were all shot and killed.^[114]

During the Boxer Rebellion as a whole, a total of 136 Protestant missionaries and 53 children were killed, and 47 Catholic priests and nuns. Thirty thousand Chinese Catholics, 2,000 Chinese Protestants, and 200 to 400 of the 700 Russian Orthodox Christians in Beijing were estimated to have been killed. Collectively, the Protestant dead were called the **China Martyrs of 1900**.^[115] 222 of Russian Christian **Chinese Martyrs** including St. **Metrophanes** were locally canonised as **New Martyrs** on 22 April 1902, after archimandrite Innocent (Fuguorovsky), head of the Russian



The Holy Chinese Martyrs of the Orthodox Church as depicted in an icon commissioned in 1990

Orthodox Mission in China, solicited the Most Holy Synod to perpetuate their memory. This was the first local canonisation for more than two centuries. * [116] The Boxers went on to murder Christians across 26 prefectures. * [117] The White Lotus sect was attacked by the Boxers. * [118]

3.5 Aftermath

3.5.1 Occupation, looting and atrocities

Beijing, Tianjin, and other cities in northern China were occupied for more than one year by the international expeditionary force under the command of German General Alfred Graf von Waldersee. Atrocities by foreign troops were common, but German troops in particular were criticized. The German force arrived too late to take part in the fighting, but undertook punitive expeditions to the countryside. Kaiser Wilhelm II on July 27 during departure ceremonies for the German relief force included an impromptu, but intemperate reference to the Hun invaders of continental Europe would later be resurrected by British propaganda to mock Germany during the First World War



“The Fall of the Peking Castle” from September 1900. British and Japanese soldiers assaulting Chinese troops.

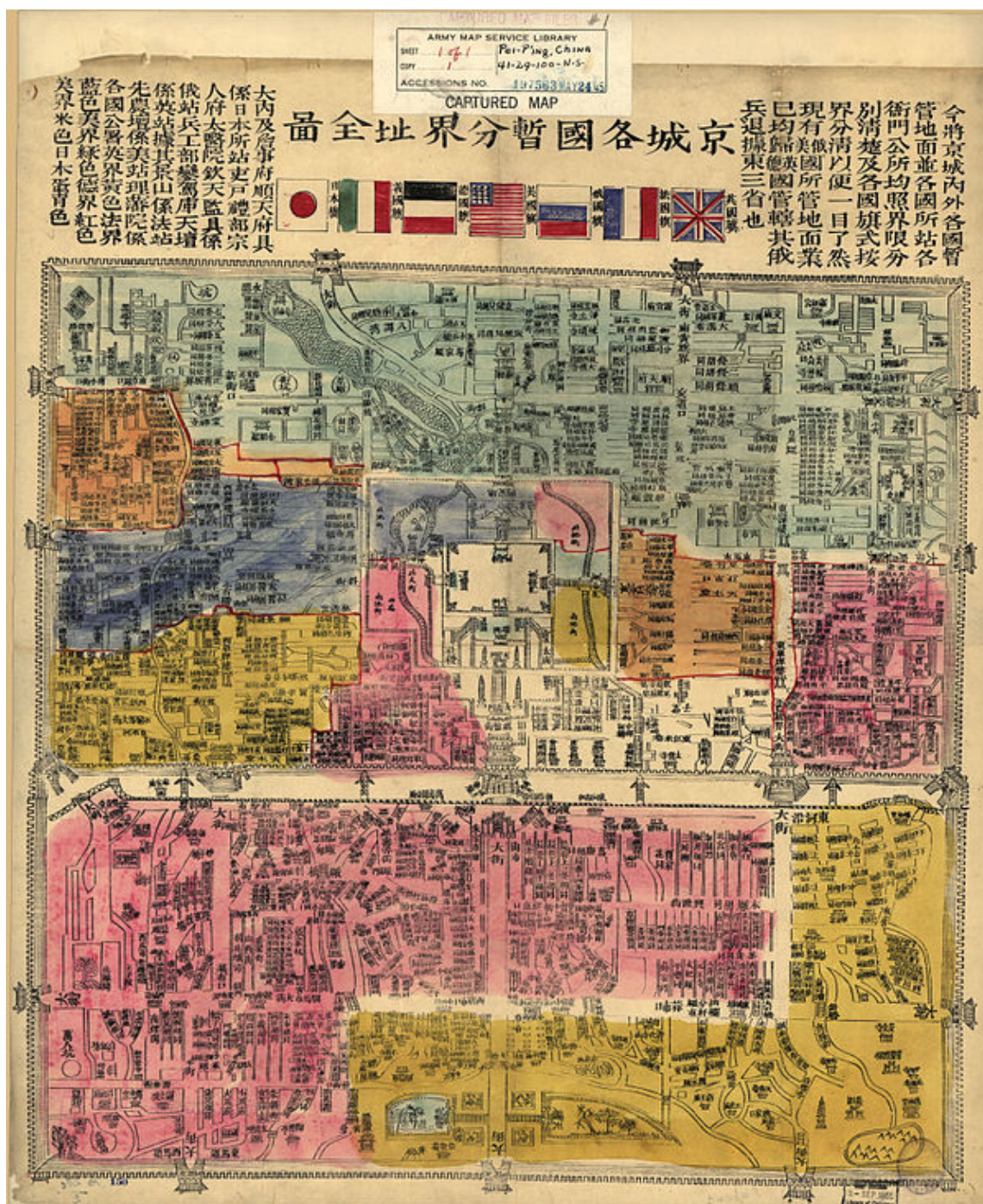
and Second World War:

Should you encounter the enemy, he will be defeated! No quarter will be given! Prisoners will not be taken! Whoever falls into your hands is forfeited. Just as a thousand years ago the Huns under their King Attila made a name for themselves, one that even today makes them seem mighty in history and legend, may the name German be affirmed by you in such a way in China that no Chinese will ever again dare to look cross-eyed at a German. ^[119]

The Germans were not the only offenders. French troops ravaged the countryside around Beijing on behalf of Chinese Catholics. The Americans and British paid General Yuan Shikai and his army (the **Right Division**) to help the Eight Nation Alliance suppress the Boxers. Yuan Shikai's forces killed tens of thousands of people in their anti Boxer campaign in **Zhili Province** and **Shandong** after the Alliance captured Beijing. ^[120] Yuan operated out of **Baoding** during the campaign, which ended in 1902. ^[121] Li Hongzhang commanded Chinese soldiers to kill “Boxers” by and to assist the foreign invaders. ^[122]

One newspaper called aftermath of the siege a “carnival of loot”, and others called it “an orgy of looting” by soldiers, civilians and missionaries. These characterisations called to mind the **sacking of the Summer Palace in 1860**. ^[123] Each nationality accused the others of being the worst looters. An American diplomat, **Herbert G. Squiers**, filled several railroad cars with loot. The British Legation held loot auctions every afternoon and proclaimed, “looting on the part of British troops was carried out in the most orderly manner.” However, one British officer noted, “it is one of the unwritten **laws of war** that a city which does not surrender at the last and is taken by storm is looted.” For the rest of 1900-1901, the British held loot auctions everyday except Sunday in front of the main-gate to the British Legation. Many foreigners, including **Sir Claude Maxwell MacDonald** and **Lady Ethel MacDonald** and **George Ernest Morrison** of *The Times*, were active bidders among the crowd. Many of these looted items ended up in Europe. ^[124] The Catholic **Beitang** or North Cathedral was a “salesroom for stolen property.” ^[125] The American commander **General Adna Chaffee** banned looting by American soldiers, but the ban was ineffectual. ^[126]

The missionaries were the most condemned. To provide restitution to missionaries and Chinese Christian families whose property had been destroyed, **William Ament**, a missionary of **American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions**, guided American troops through villages to punish those he suspected of being Boxers and confiscate their



The occupation of Beijing. British sector in yellow, French in blue, US in green and ivory, German in red and Japanese in light green.

property. When Mark Twain read of this expedition, he wrote a scathing essay, "To the Person Sitting in Darkness" that attacked the "Reverend bandits of the American Board," especially targeting Ament, one of the most respected missionaries in China.*[127] The controversy was front page news during much of 1901. Ament's counterpart on the distaff side was doughty British missionary Georgina Smith who presided over a neighborhood in Beijing as judge and jury.*[128]

It was reported that Japanese troops were astonished by other Alliance troops raping civilians.*[129] Roger Keyes, who commanded the British destroyer *Fame* and accompanied the Gaselee Expedition, noted that the Japanese had brought their own "regimental wives" (prostitutes) to the front to keep their soldiers from raping Chinese civilians.*[130] Thousands of Chinese women committed suicide; *The Daily Telegraph* journalist E. J. Dillon stated it was to avoid rape by Alliance forces, and he witnessed the mutilated corpses of Chinese women who were raped



Boxers being beheaded in front of a crowd of Chinese

and killed by the Alliance troops. The French commander dismissed the rapes, attributing them to “gallantry of the French soldier.” A foreign journalist, George Lynch, said “there are things that I must not write, and that may not be printed in England, which would seem to show that this Western civilization of ours is merely a veneer over savagery.” *[124]

Many **Bannermen** supported the Boxers and shared their anti-foreign sentiment. *[131] The German Minister **Clemens von Ketteler** was assassinated by a Manchu. *[132] Bannermen had been devastated in the **First Sino-Japanese War** in 1895 and Banner armies were destroyed while resisting the invasion. In the words of historian **Pamela Crossley**, their living conditions went “from desperate poverty to true misery.” *[133] When thousands of Manchus fled south from **Aigun** during the fighting in 1900, their cattle and horses were stolen by Russian Cossacks who then burned their villages and homes to ashes. *[134] The clan system of the Manchus in Aigun was obliterated by the despoliation of the area at the hands of the Russian invaders. *[135]

3.5.2 Reparations

After the capture of Peking by the foreign armies, some of Empress Dowager Cixi's advisers advocated that the war be carried on, arguing that China could have defeated the foreigners as it was disloyal and traitorous people within China who allowed Beijing and Tianjin to be captured by the Allies, and that the interior of China was impenetrable. They also recommended that Dong Fuxiang continue fighting. The Empress Dowager was practical, however, and decided that the terms were generous enough for her to acquiesce when she was assured of her continued reign after the war and that China would not be forced to cede any territory. *[136] Ralph L. Powell judged that the war would have been bogged down for the Alliance if China opted for guerilla insurgency. *[59]

On 7 September 1901, the Qing imperial court agreed to sign the “**Boxer Protocol**” also known as Peace Agreement between the Eight-Nation Alliance and China. The protocol ordered the execution of 10 high-ranking officials linked to the outbreak and other officials who were found guilty for the slaughter of foreigners in China. **Alfons Mumm** (Freiherr von Schwarzenstein), **Ernest Satow** and **Komura Jutaro** signed on behalf of Germany, Britain and Japan



Execution of a Boxer by the French, Teintsin

respectively.

China was fined **war reparations** of 450,000,000 **taels** of fine silver ($\approx 540,000,000$ troy ounces (17,000 t) @ 1.2 oz/tael) for the loss that it caused. The reparation was to be paid within 39 years, and would be 982,238,150 taels with interest (4 percent per year) included. To help meet the payment it was agreed to increase the existing tariff from an actual 3.18 percent to 5 percent, and to tax hitherto duty-free merchandise. The sum of reparation was estimated by the Chinese population (roughly 450 million in 1900), to let each Chinese pay one tael. Chinese custom income and salt tax were enlisted as guarantee of the reparation. China paid 668,661,220 taels of silver from 1901 to 1939, equivalent in 2010 to \approx US\$61 billion on a purchasing power parity basis.*[137]

A large portion of the reparations paid to the United States was diverted to pay for the education of Chinese students in U.S. universities under the **Boxer Indemnity Scholarship Program**. To prepare the students chosen for this program an institute was established to teach the English language and to serve as a preparatory school. When the first of these students returned to China they undertook the teaching of subsequent students; from this institute was born **Tsinghua University**. Some of the reparation due to Britain was later earmarked for a similar program.

The **China Inland Mission** lost more members than any other missionary agency.*[138] 58 adults and 21 children were killed. However, in 1901, when the allied nations were demanding compensation from the Chinese government, **Hudson Taylor** refused to accept payment for loss of property or life in order to demonstrate the meekness and gentleness of Christ to the Chinese.*[139]

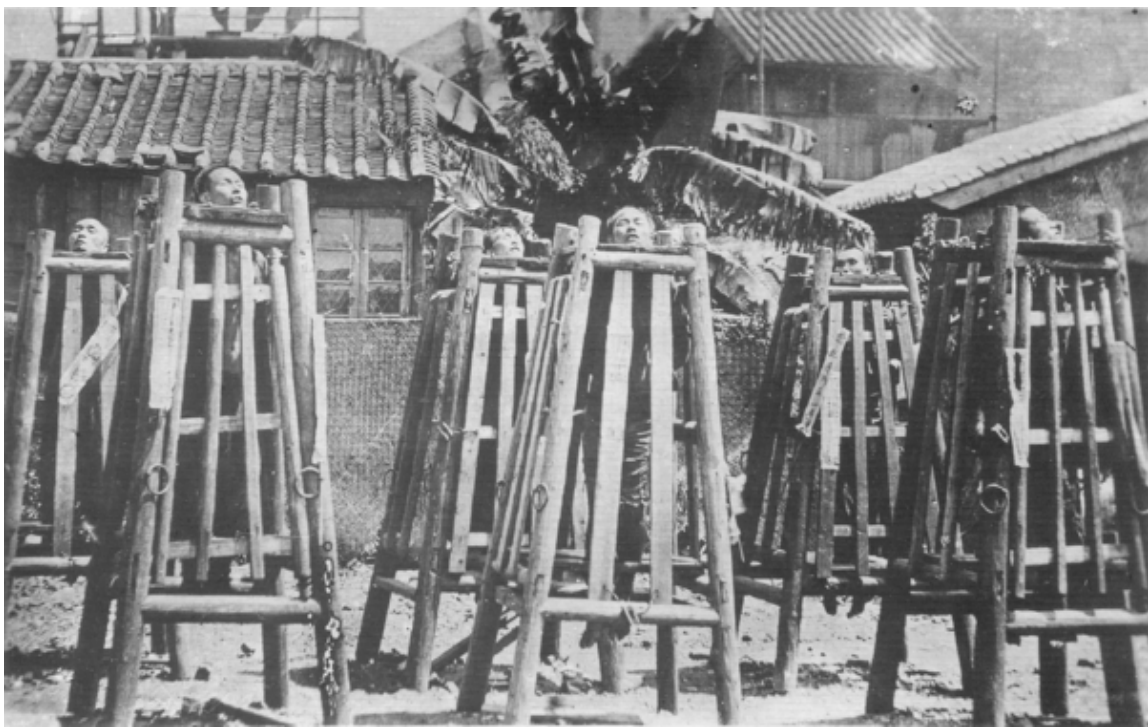
The French Catholic vicar apostolic, Msgr. Alfons Bermyn wanted foreign troops garrisoned in **Inner Mongolia**, but the Governor refused. Bermyn petitioned the Manchu **Enming** to send troops to **Hetao** where Prince Duan's Mongol troops and General **Dong Fuxiang**'s Muslim troops allegedly threatened Catholics. It turned out that Bermyn had created the incident as a hoax.*[140]*[141]

The Manchu Qixiu 啓秀 was executed. The Manchu Gangyi 剛毅 passed away and so could not be executed since he was already dead.

The Qing government did not capitulate to all the foreign demands. The Manchu governor Yuxian (simplified Chinese: 毓贤; traditional Chinese: 毓賢; pinyin: Yùxián; Wade-Giles: Yü-hsien), was executed, but the imperial court



Chinese prisoners, possibly Boxers, beheaded in front of a group of Chinese and Japanese officials



Execution of Boxers after the rebellion.



Japanese troops during the boxer rebellion

refused to execute the Han Chinese General Dong Fuxiang, although he had also encouraged the killing of foreigners during the rebellion.*[142] An execution was impossible to be demanded of the court by the Allies because Dong Fuxiang was the one protecting the Imperial Court.*[143] Empress Dowager Cixi intervened when the Alliance demanded him executed and Dong was only cashiered and sent back home.*[102] Instead, Dong Fuxiang lived a life of luxury and power in “exile” in his home province of Gansu.*[144] Upon Dong's death in 1908, all honors which had been stripped from him were restored and he was given a full military burial.*[144]

In addition to sparing Dong Fuxiang, the Qing also refused to exile the Boxer supporter Prince Duan to Xinjiang, as the Allies demanded. Instead, he moved to Alashan, west of Ningxia, and lived in Wangyeh Fu, where the local Mongol Prince lived. He then moved to Ningxia during the Xinhai Revolution when the Muslims took control of Ningxia, and finally, moved to Xinjiang with Sheng Yun.*[145]

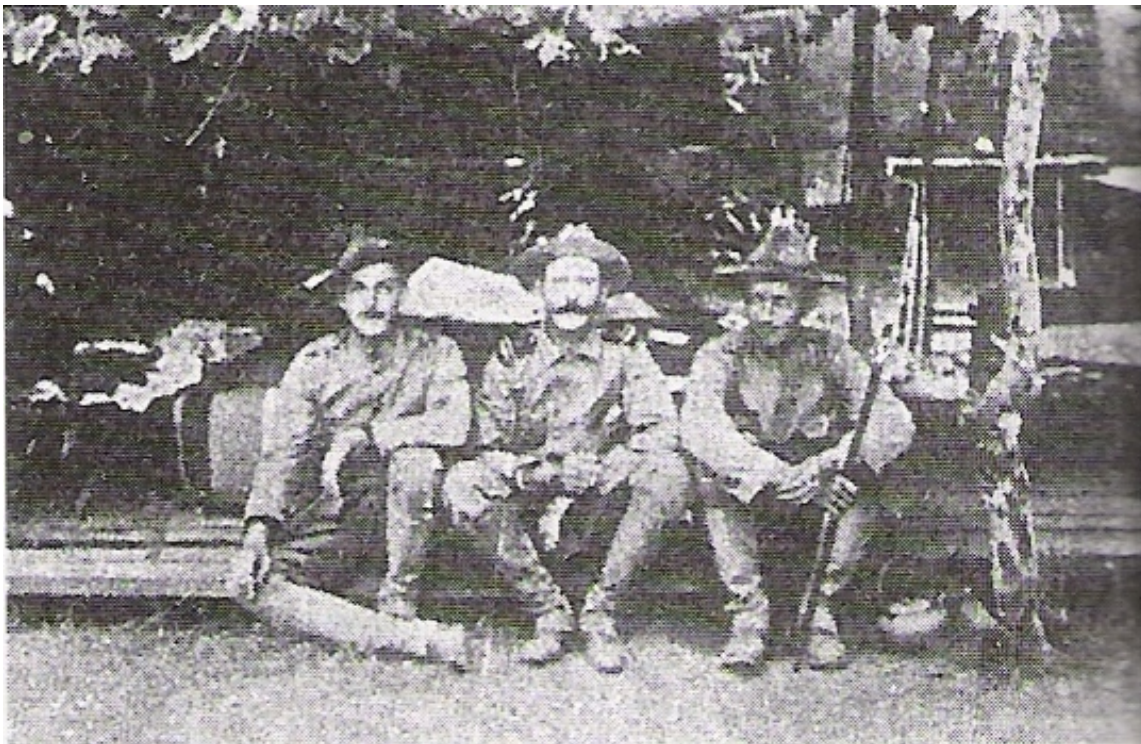
3.6 Long-term consequences

The European great powers finally ceased their ambitions of colonizing China having learned from the Boxer rebellions that the best way to deal with China was through the ruling dynasty, rather than directly with the Chinese people (a sentiment embodied in the adage: “The people are afraid of officials, the officials are afraid of foreigners, and the foreigners are afraid of the people”(老百姓怕官，官怕洋鬼子，洋鬼子怕老百姓)), and even briefly assisted the Qing in their war against the Japanese to prevent a Japanese domination in the region.

Concurrently, this period marks the ceding of European great power interference in Chinese affairs, with the Japanese replacing the Europeans as the dominant power for their lopsided involvement in the war against the Boxers as well as their victory in the First Sino-Japanese War. With the toppling of the Qing that followed and the rise of the Nationalist Kuomintang, European sway within China was reduced to symbolic status. After taking Manchuria in 1905, Japan came to dominate Asian affairs both militarily and culturally with many of the Chinese scholars also educated in Japan with the most prominent example being Sun Yat-Sen who would later found the Nationalist movement of the Kuomintang in China.



*Foreign armies assemble inside the **Forbidden City** after capturing Beijing, 28 November 1900*



American troops during the Boxer Rebellion.

In October 1900, Russia occupied the provinces of Manchuria,* [146] a move which threatened **Anglo-American** hopes of maintaining what remained of China's territorial integrity and the country's openness to commerce under



French 1901 China expedition commemorative medal. Musée de la Légion d'Honneur.

the Open Door Policy.

Japan's clash with Russia over Liaodong and other provinces in eastern Manchuria, due to the Russian refusal to honour the terms of the Boxer protocol which called for their withdrawal, led to the **Russo-Japanese War** when two years of negotiations broke down in February 1904. The Russian Lease of the Liaodong (1898) was confirmed. Russia was ultimately defeated by an increasingly confident Japan.

Besides the compensation, **Empress Dowager Cixi** reluctantly started some reforms despite her previous views. Under her reforms known as the **New Policies** started in 1901, the imperial examination system for government service was eliminated and as a result the system of education through Chinese classics was replaced with a **European liberal system** that led to a university degree. Along with the formation of new military and police organisations, the reforms also simplified central bureaucracy and made a start on revamping taxation policies.* [147] After the deaths of Cixi and the **Guangxu Emperor** in 1908, the **prince regent Zaifeng (Prince Chun)**, the Guangxu Emperor's brother, launched further reforms.

The effect on China was a weakening of the dynasty and its national defense capabilities. The government structure was temporarily sustained by the Europeans. Behind the international conflict, it further deepened internal ideological differences between northern-Chinese anti-foreign royalists and southern-Chinese anti-Qing revolutionists. This scenario in the last years of the Qing dynasty gradually escalated into a chaotic **warlord era** in which the most powerful northern warlords were hostile towards the revolutionaries in the south who overthrew the Qing monarchy in 1911. The rivalry was not fully resolved until the northern warlords were defeated by the **Kuomintang's 1926–28 Northern Expedition**. Prior to the final defeat of the Boxer Rebellion, all anti-Qing movements in the previous century, such as the **Taiping Rebellion**, had been successfully suppressed by the Qing.

Historian **Walter LaFeber** has argued that President **William McKinley's** decision to send 5,000 American troops to quell the rebellion marks “the origins of modern presidential war powers”:* [148]

McKinley took a historic step in creating a new, 20th century presidential power. He dispatched the five thousand troops without consulting Congress, let alone obtaining a declaration of war, to fight the

Boxers who were supported by the Chinese government ... Presidents had previously used such force against non-governmental groups that threatened U.S. interests and citizens. It was now used, however, against recognised governments, and without obeying the Constitution's provisions about who was to declare war.

Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. concurred, writing that:*[149]

The intervention in China marked the start of a crucial shift in the presidential employment of armed force overseas. In the 19th century, military force committed without congressional authorization had been typically used against nongovernmental organizations. Now it was beginning to be used against sovereign states, and, in the case of Theodore Roosevelt, with less consultation than ever.

In the Second Sino-Japanese War, when the Japanese asked the Muslim general Ma Hongkui to defect and become head of a Muslim puppet state under the Japanese, Ma responded through Zhou Baihuang, the Ningxia Secretary of the Nationalist Party to remind the Japanese military chief of staff Itagaki Seishiro that many of his relatives fought and died in battle against Eight Nation Alliance forces during the Battle of Peking, including his uncle Ma Fulu, and that Japanese troops made up the majority of the Alliance forces so there would be no cooperation with the Japanese.*[150]

“恨不得馬踏倭鬼，給我已死先烈雪仇，與後輩爭光”。 “I am eager to stomp on the dwarf devils (A derogatory term for Japanese), I will give vengeance for the already dead martyrs, achieving glory with the younger generation.” said by Muslim General Ma Biao during the Second Sino-Japanese War with reference to his service in the Boxer Rebellion where he already fought the Japanese before World War II, in which he became famous for his victories and wiped out an entire Japanese unit at the Battle of Huaiyang.*[151]*[152] During World War II, the China Information Publishing Company included an article titled “Boxer Veteran Fights Again” on Ma Biao in Volume 4 of its publication “China at War”, which discussed both his service in the Boxer Rebellion in 1900 and his fight against the Japanese in World War II in Henan.*[153]

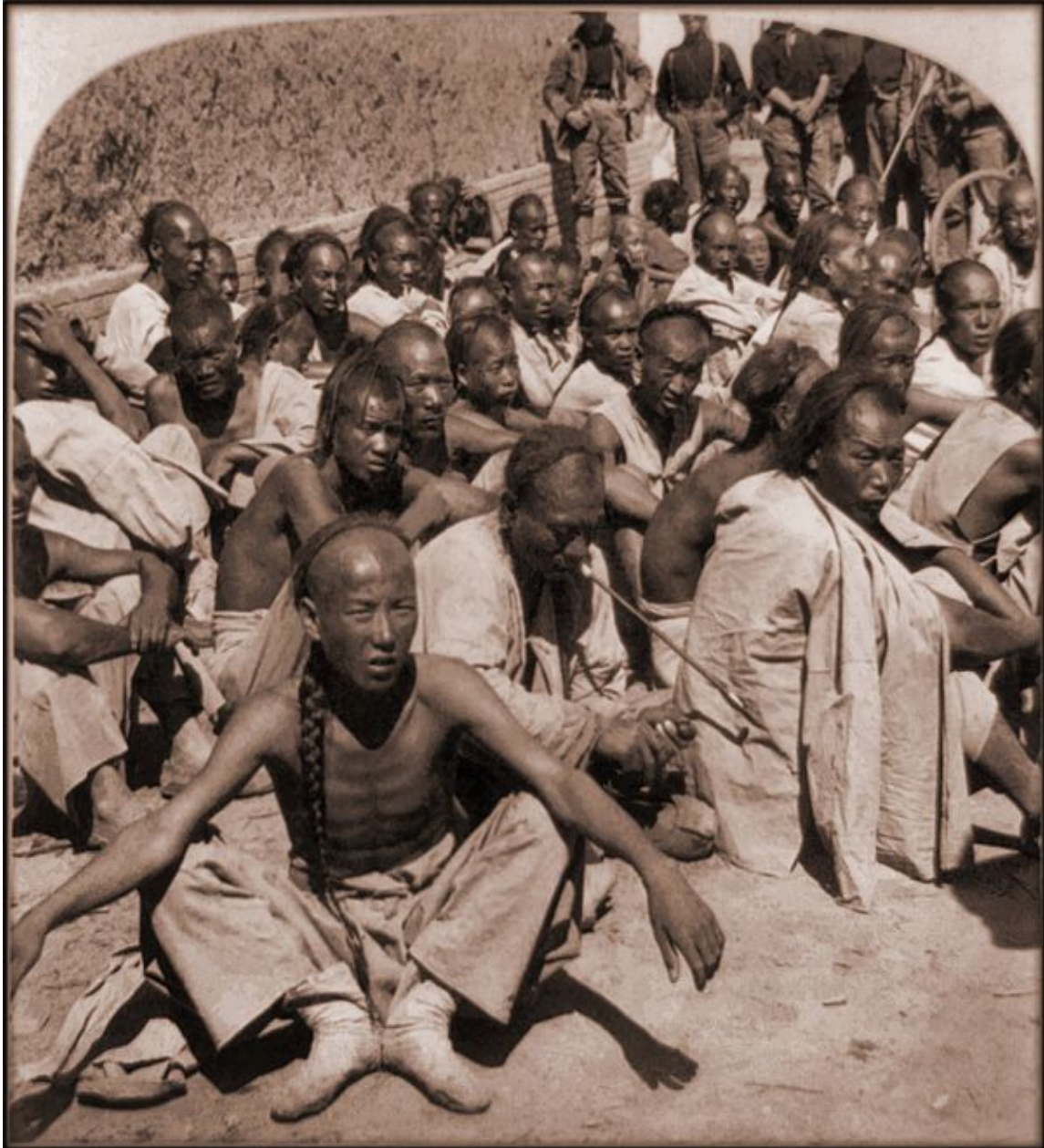
The Muslim martial arts master Wang Zi-Ping served with the Boxers against the Eight Nation Alliance during the war.*[154]*[155]*[156]*[157]

3.7 Controversies and changing views of the Boxers

From the beginning, views differed as to whether the Boxers were better seen as anti-imperialist, patriotic, and proto-nationalist or as “uncivilized”, irrational, and futile opponents of inevitable change. The historian Joseph Esherick comments that “confusion about the Boxer Uprising is not simply a matter of popular misconceptions”, for “there is no major incident in China's modern history on which the range of professional interpretation is as great.”*[158]

Foreign educated Chinese liberals such as Hu Shi often condemned the Boxers for their irrationality and barbarity.*[159] Chinese nationalists initially disdained them for their superstition and xenophobia. Dr. Sun Yat-sen, the founding father of the Republic of China and of the Nationalist Party at first believed that the Boxer Movement was stirred up by the Qing government's rumors, which “caused confusion among the populace”, and delivered “scathing criticism” of the Boxers’ “anti-foreignism and obscurantism.” Sun praised the Boxers for their “spirit of resistance” but called them “bandits.” Students shared an ambivalent attitude to the Boxers, stating that while the uprising originated from the “ignorant and stubborn people of the interior areas”, their beliefs were “brave and righteous”, and could “be transformed into a moving force for independence.”*[160] After the fall of the Qing dynasty in 1911, nationalist Chinese became more sympathetic to the Boxers. In 1918 Sun praised their fighting spirit and said the Boxers were courageous and fearless, fighting to the death against the Alliance armies, specifically the Battle of Yangcun.*[161] The leader of the New Culture Movement, Chen Duxiu, forgave the “barbarism of the Boxer... given the crime foreigners committed in China”, and contended that it was those “subservient to the foreigners” that truly “deserved our resentment”.*[162]

In other countries, views of the Boxers were complex and contentious. Mark Twain said that “the Boxer is a patriot. He loves his country better than he does the countries of other people. I wish him success.”*[163] The Russian writer Leo Tolstoy also praised the Boxers. He accused Nicholas II of Russia and Wilhelm II of Germany of being chiefly responsible for the lootings, rapes, and murders in what he saw as Christian brutality of the Russians and other western troops.*[164] The Russian revolutionary Vladimir Lenin mocked the Russian government's claim that it was protecting Christian civilization: “Poor Imperial Government! So Christianly unselfish, and yet so unjustly maligned! Several years ago it unselfishly seized Port Arthur, and now it is unselfishly seizing Manchuria; it has



Boxers captured by the U.S. Army near Tianjin in 1901.

unselfishly flooded the frontier provinces of China with hordes of contractors, engineers, and officers, who, by their conduct, have roused to indignation even the Chinese, known for their docility.” *[\[165\]](#) The Indian Bengali Hindu [Rabindranath Tagore](#) attacked the European colonialists.*[\[166\]](#) A number of Indian soldiers in the British Indian Army agreed that the Boxers were right and the British stole from the Temple of Heaven a bell, which was given back to China by the Indian military in 1994.*[\[167\]](#)

Even some American churchmen spoke out in support of the Boxers. The evangelist Rev. Dr. [George F. Pentecost](#) said that the Boxer uprising was a “patriotic movement to expel the 'foreign devils'-just that-the foreign devils.” Suppose, he said, the great nations of Europe were to “put their fleets together, came over here, seize Portland, move on down to Boston, then New York, then Philadelphia, and so on down the Atlantic Coast and around the Gulf of Galveston? Suppose they took possession of these port cities, drove our people into the hinterland, built great warehouses and factories, brought in a body of dissolute agents, and calmly notified our people that henceforward they would manage the commerce of the country? Would we not have a Boxer movement to drive those foreign European Christian devils out of our country?”*[\[168\]](#)

The Russian newspaper *Amurskii Krai* criticized the killing of innocent civilians, charging that “restraint” “civiliza-



Qing forces of Chinese soldiers in 1899–1901.

Left: two infantrymen of the *New Imperial Army*. Front: drum major of the regular army. Seated on the trunk: field artilleryman. Right: Boxers.

tion” and “culture” instead of “racial hatred” and “destruction” would have been more becoming of a “civilized Christian nation”. The paper asked “What shall we tell civilized people? We shall have to say to them: ‘Do not consider us as brothers anymore. We are mean and terrible people; we have killed those who hid at our place, who sought our protection’”.* [169]

The events also left a longer impact. The historian Robert Bickers found that for the British in China the Boxer rising served as the “equivalent of the Indian ‘mutiny’” and came to represent the *Yellow Peril*. Later events, he adds, such as the *Chinese Nationalist Revolution* of the 1920s and even the activities of the *Red Guards* of the 1960s, were perceived as being in the shadow of the Boxers.* [170]

In *Taiwan* (Republic of China) and *Hong Kong*, history textbooks often show the Boxer as uncivilised, irrational and xenophobic. But in the *People’s Republic of China*, government textbooks presented the Boxer movement as an anti-imperialist, patriotic peasant movement whose failure was due to the lack of leadership from the modern working class, and described the international army as an invading force. In recent decades, however, large-scale projects of village interviews and explorations of archival sources have led historians in China to take a more nuanced view. Some non-Chinese scholars, such as Joseph Esherick, have seen the movement as anti-imperialist; while others hold that the concept “nationalistic” is anachronistic because the Chinese nation had not been formed and the Boxers were more concerned with regional issues. Paul Cohen’s recent study includes a survey of “the Boxers as myth”, showing how their memory was used in changing ways in 20th century China from the *New Culture Movement* to the *Cultural Revolution*.* [171]

In recent years the Boxer question has been debated in the People’s Republic of China. In 1998, the critical scholar Wang Yi argued that the Boxers had features in common with the extremism of the *Cultural Revolution*. Both events had the external goal of “liquidating all harmful pests” and the domestic goal of “eliminating bad elements of all descriptions” and this relation was rooted in “cultural obscurantism.” Wang explained to his readers the changes in attitudes towards the Boxers from the condemnation of the May Fourth Movement to the approval expressed by *Mao Zedong* during the Cultural Revolution.* [172] In 2006 *Yuan Weishi*, a professor of philosophy at *Zhongshan University* in Guangzhou, wrote that the Boxers by their “criminal actions brought unspeakable suffering to the nation

and its people! These are all facts that everybody knows, and it is a national shame that the Chinese people cannot forget.” * [173] Yuan charged that history text books had been lacking in neutrality in presenting the Boxer Uprising as a “magnificent feat of patriotism”, and not presenting the view that the majority of the Boxer rebels were both violent and xenophobic. * [174] In response, some labeled Yuan Weishi a “traitor” (Hanjian). * [175]

3.8 Terminology

The first reports coming from China in 1898 referred to the village activists as “Yihequan”, (Wade–Giles: I Ho Ch'uan). The first known use of the term “Boxer” was September 1899 in a letter from missionary Grace Newton in Shandong. It appears from context that “Boxer” was a known term by that time, possibly coined by the Shandong missionaries Arthur H. Smith and Henry Porter. * [176] Smith says in his book of 1902 that the name

I Ho Ch'uan... literally denotes the 'Fists' (Ch'uan) of Righteousness (or Public) (I) Harmony (Ho), in apparent allusion to the strength of united force which was to be put forth. As the Chinese phrase 'fists and feet' signifies boxing and wrestling, there appeared to be no more suitable term for the adherents of the sect than 'Boxers,' a designation first used by one or two missionary correspondents of foreign journals in China, and later universally accepted on account of the difficulty of coining a better one. * [177]

On 6 June 1900 the *Times* of London used the term “rebellion” in quotation marks, presumably to indicate their view that the rising was in fact instigated by Empress Dowager Cixi. * [178] The historian Lanxin Xiang refers to the “so called 'Boxer Rebellion,'" and explains that “while peasant rebellion was nothing new in Chinese history, a war against the world's most powerful states was.” * [179] The name “Boxer Rebellion”, concludes Joseph Esherick, another recent historian, is truly a “misnomer”, for the Boxers “never rebelled against the Manchu rulers of China and their Qing dynasty” and the “most common Boxer slogan, throughout the history of the movement, was “support the Qing, destroy the Foreign.” He adds that only after the movement was suppressed by the Allied Intervention did both the foreign powers and influential Chinese officials realize that the Qing would have to remain as government of China in order to maintain order and collect taxes to pay the indemnity. Therefore, in order to save face for the Empress Dowager and the imperial court, the argument was made that the Boxers were rebels and that support from the imperial court came only from a few Manchu princes. Esherick concludes that the origin of the term “rebellion” was “purely political and opportunistic”, but it has shown a remarkable staying power, particularly in popular accounts. * [180]

Other recent Western works refer to the “Boxer Movement”, “Boxer War” or Yihetuan Movement, while Chinese studies use 义和团运动 (Yihetuan yundong), that is, “Yihetuan Movement.” In his discussion of the general and legal implications of the terminology involved, the German scholar Thoralf Klein notes that all of the terms, including the Chinese ones, are “posthumous interpretations of the conflict.” He argues that each term, whether it be “uprising”, “rebellion” or “movement” implies a different definition of the conflict. Even the term “Boxer War”, which has become widely used by recent scholars in the West, raises questions, as war was never declared, and Allied troops behaved as a punitive expedition in colonial style, not in a declared war with legal constraints. The Allies took advantage of the fact that China had not signed “The Laws and Customs of War on Land”, a key document at the 1899 Hague Peace Conference. They argued that China had violated its provisions but themselves ignored them. * [181]

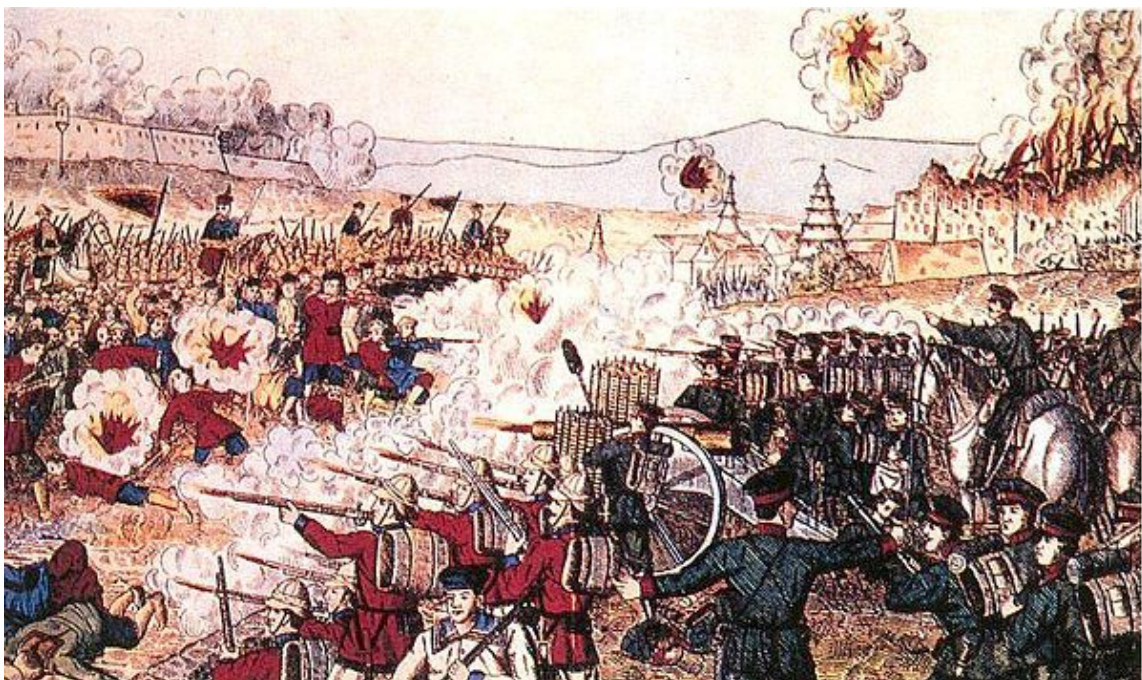
3.9 Later representations

By 1900, many new forms of media had matured, including illustrated newspapers and magazines, postcards, broadsides and advertisements, all of which presented images of the Boxers and of the invading armies. * [182] The rebellion was covered in the foreign illustrated press by artists and photographers. Paintings and prints were also published including Japanese wood-blocks. * [183] In the following decades, the Boxers were a constant subject for comment. A sampling includes:

- In the Polish play *The Wedding* by Stanisław Wyspiański, first published on 16 March 1901, even before the rebellion was finally crushed, the character of Czepiec asks the Journalist (*Dziennikarz*) one of the best-known questions in the history of Polish literature: “*Cóż tam, panie, w polityce? Chińczyki trzymają się mocno!*” (“*How are things in politics, Mister? Are the Chinese holding out firmly!?*”). * [184]



U.S. Marines fight rebellious Boxers outside Beijing Legation Quarter, 1900. Copy of painting by Sergeant John Clymer.



British and Japanese forces engage Boxers in battle.

- Liu E, *Lao Can Yuji** [185] sympathetically shows an honest official trying to carry out reforms and depicts the Boxers as sectarian rebels.
- G. A. Henty, *With the Allies to Peking, a Tale of the Relief of the Legations* (New York: Scribners, 1903; London: Blackie, 1904). Juvenile fiction by a widely read author, depicts the Boxers as “a mob of ruffians.”
- A false or forged diary, *Diary of his Excellency Ching-Shan: Being a Chinese Account of the Boxer Troubles*, including text written by Edmund Backhouse, who claimed he recovered the document from a burnt building.

It is suspected that Backhouse falsified the document, as well as other stories, because he was prone to tell tales dubious in nature, including claims of nightly visits to the Empress Dowager Cixi. * [186]

- In Hergé's *The Adventures of Tintin* comic *The Blue Lotus*, Tintin's Chinese friend Chang Chong-Chen when they first meet, after Tintin saves the boy from drowning, the boy asks Tintin why he saved him from drowning as, according to Chang's uncle who fought in the Rebellion, all white people were wicked.
- The novel *Moment In Peking* (1939), by Lin Yutang, opens during the Boxer Rebellion, and provides a child's-eye view of the turmoil through the eyes of the protagonist.
- *Tulku*, a 1979 children's novel by Peter Dickinson, includes the effects of the Boxer Rebellion on a remote part of China.
- *The Diamond Age or, A Young Lady's Illustrated Primer* (New York, 1996), by Neal Stephenson, includes a quasi-historical re-telling of the Boxer Rebellion as an integral component of the novel
- The novel *The Palace of Heavenly Pleasure* (2003), by Adam Williams, describes the experiences of a small group of foreign missionaries, traders and railway engineers in a fictional town in northern China shortly before and during the Boxer Rebellion.
- Illusionist William Ellsworth Robinson a.k.a. Chung Ling Soo had a bullet catch trick entitled “Condemned to Death by the Boxers” , which famously resulted in his onstage death.
- The 1963 film *55 Days at Peking* directed by Nicholas Ray and starring Charlton Heston, Ava Gardner and David Niven. * [187]
- In 1975 Hong Kong's Shaw Brothers studio produced the film *Boxer Rebellion* (Chinese: 八國聯軍; pinyin: *bāguó liánjūn*; Wade–Giles: *Pa kuo lien chun*; literally: “Eight-Nation Allied Army”) under director Chang Cheh with one of the highest budgets to tell a sweeping story of disillusionment and revenge. * [188]
- Hong Kong's Shaw Brothers *Legendary Weapons of China* (1981), director Lau Kar Leung. A comedy starring Hsiao Ho (Hsiao Hou) as a disillusioned boxer of the Magic Clan who is sent to assassinate the former leader of a powerful boxer clan who refuses to dupe his students into believing they are impervious to firearms.
- There are several flashbacks to the Boxer Rebellion in the television shows *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Angel*. During the conflict, Spike kills his first slayer to impress Drusilla, and Angel decisively splits from Darla.
- The 2003 film, *Shanghai Knights*, starring Jackie Chan and Owen Wilson, shows that the Boxers still exist, working for Lord Rathbone, who wants to assassinate many members of the British Royal Family.
- *The Last Empress* (Boston, 2007), by Anchee Min, describes the long reign of the Empress Dowager Cixi in which the siege of the legations is one of the climactic events in the novel.
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- The pair of graphic novels by Gene Luen Yang, with colour by Lark Pien, *Boxers and Saints*, describes the “bands of foreign missionaries and soldiers” who “roam the countryside bullying and robbing Chinese peasants.” Little Bao, “harnessing the powers of ancient Chinese gods” , recruits an army of Boxers, “commoners trained in kung fu who fight to free China from 'foreign devils.'” * [190]
- The 2013 video game *BioShock Infinite* featured the Boxer Rebellion as a major historical moment for the floating city of Columbia. Columbia, in an effort to rescue American hostages during the rebellion, opened fire upon the city of Peking and burned it to the ground. These actions resulted in the United States recalling Columbia, which led to its secession from the Union.
- The Boxer Rebellion is the historical backdrop for the episode titled “Kung Fu Crabtree” (Season 7, Episode 16, aired 24 March 2014) of the television series *Murdoch Mysteries*, when Chinese officials visit Toronto in 1900 in search of Boxers who have fled from China.

3.10 See also

- Battle of Peking (1900)
- Century of humiliation
- China Relief Expedition
- History of Beijing
- Imperial Decree on events leading to the signing of Boxer Protocol
- List of 1900–30 publications on the Boxer Rebellion
- Opium War
- Xishiku Cathedral (西什庫天主堂)
- Donghak Rebellion, an anti-foreign, proto-nationalist uprising in pre-Japanese Korea
- Eight-Nation Alliance
- The Mutual Protection of Southeast China
- Boxer Indemnity Scholarship Program
- *Gengzi Guobian Tanci*

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- [55 Days at Peking](#) at the Internet Movie Database
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Chapter 4

Battle of Port Arthur

For the land battle, see [Siege of Port Arthur](#). For the First Sino-Japanese War battle in 1894, see [Battle of Lushunkou](#).

The **Battle of Port Arthur** (Japanese: 旅順口海戦 Hepburn: *Ryojunkō Kaisen*)* [2] of 8–9 February 1904 (Monday February 8 - Tuesday February 9) marked the commencement of the Russo-Japanese War. It began with a surprise night attack by a squadron of Japanese destroyers on the Russian fleet anchored at Port Arthur, Manchuria, and continued with an engagement of major surface combatants the following morning; further skirmishing off Port Arthur would continue until May 1904. The battle itself ended inconclusively, though later events would result in the war ending in a Japanese victory. For a major European power to lose to the Japanese was not only inconceivable to the world at large but also fraught with dire circumstances for the Imperial regime; the Russian people, from the nobility down to the recently emancipated serfs, lost confidence in the military and in the Tsarist political system. This led directly to the Russian Revolution of 1905, and would be well-remembered upon yet-more-disastrous defeats to come later in World War I.

4.1 Background

The opening stage of the Russo-Japanese War began with pre-emptive strikes by the Imperial Japanese Navy against the Russian Pacific Fleet based at Port Arthur and at Chemulpo. Admiral Togo's initial plan was to swoop down upon Port Arthur with the 1st Division of the Combined Fleet, consisting of the six pre-dreadnought battleships *Hatsuse*, *Shikishima*, *Asahi*, *Fuji*, and *Yashima*, led by the flagship *Mikasa*, and the 2nd Division, consisting of the armored cruisers *Iwate*, *Azuma*, *Izumo*, *Yakumo*, and *Tokiwa*. These capital ships and cruisers were accompanied by some 15 destroyers and around 20 smaller torpedo boats. In reserve were the cruisers *Kasagi*, *Chitose*, *Takasago*, and *Yoshino*. With this large, well-trained and well-armed force, and surprise on his side, Admiral Togo hoped to deliver a crushing blow to the Russian fleet soon after the severance of diplomatic relations between the Japanese and Russian governments.

On the Russian side, Admiral Stark had the pre-dreadnought battleships *Petropavlovsk*, *Sevastopol*, *Peresvet*, *Pobeda*, *Poltava*, *Tsesarevich*, and *Retvizan*, supported by the armored cruiser *Bayan* and the protected cruisers *Pallada*, *Diana*, *Askold*, *Novik*, and *Boyarin*, all based within the protection of the fortified naval base of Port Arthur. However, the defenses of Port Arthur were not as strong as they could have been, as few of the shore artillery batteries were operational, funds for improving the defenses had been diverted to nearby Dalny, and most of the officer corps was celebrating at a party being hosted by Admiral Stark on the night of 9 February 1904.

As Admiral Togo had received false information from local spies in and around Port Arthur that the garrisons of the forts guarding the port were on full alert, he was unwilling to risk his precious capital ships to the Russian shore artillery and therefore held back his main battle fleet. Instead, the destroyer force was split into two attack squadrons, one squadron with the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd flotillas to attack Port Arthur, and the other squadron, with the 4th and 5th flotillas, to attack the Russian base at Dalny.

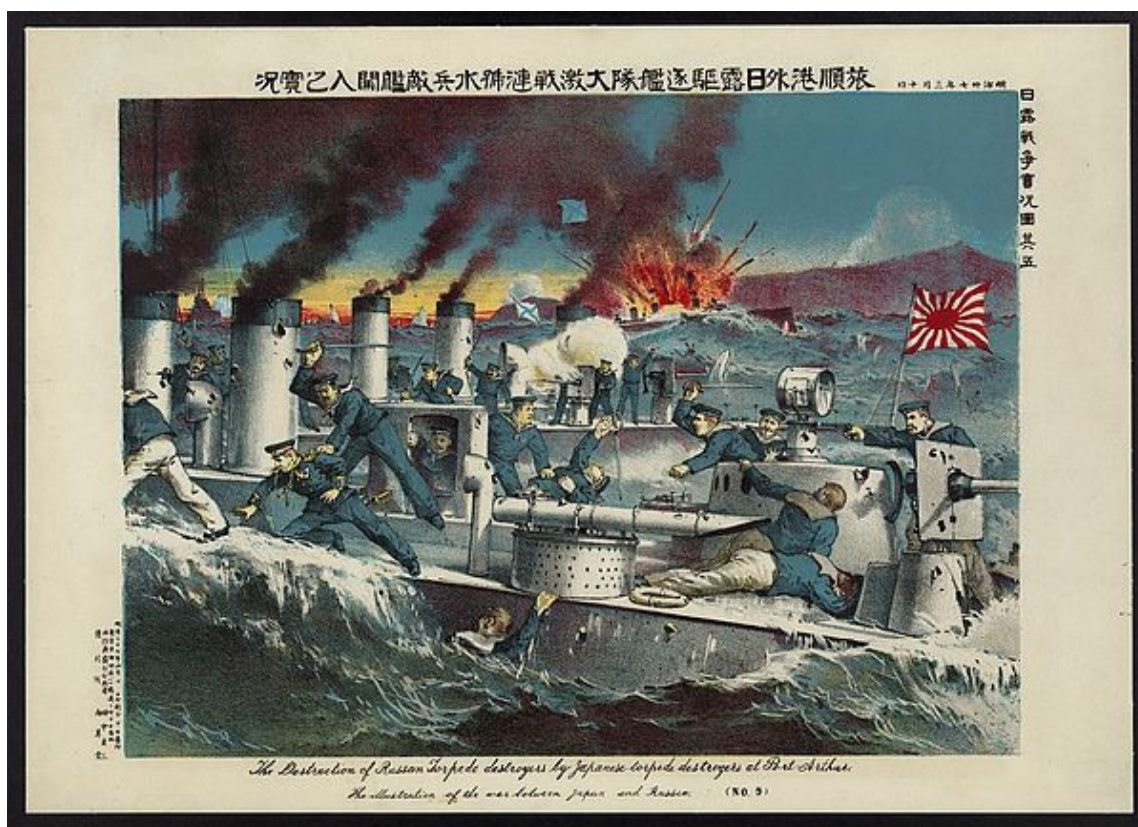


Illustration of the destruction of Russian destroyers by Japanese destroyers at Port Arthur.

4.2 The night attack of 8–9 February 1904

At about 22:30 on Monday 8 February 1904, the Port Arthur attack squadron of 10 destroyers encountered patrolling Russian destroyers. The Russians were under orders not to initiate combat, and turned to report the contact to headquarters. However, as a result of the encounter, two Japanese destroyers collided and fell behind and the remainder became scattered. At circa 00:28 on 9 February, the first four Japanese destroyers approached the port of Port Arthur without being observed, and launched a **torpedo** attack against the *Pallada* (which was hit amidship, caught fire, and keeled over) and the *Retvizan* (which was holed in her bow). The other Japanese destroyers were less successful, many of the torpedoes became caught in the extended torpedo nets* [3] which effectively prevented most of the torpedoes from striking the vitals of the Russian battleships.* [4] Other destroyers had arrived too late to benefit from surprise, and made their attacks individually rather than in a group. However, they were able to disable the most powerful ship of the Russian fleet, the battleship *Tsesarevich*. The Japanese destroyer *Oboro* made the last attack, around 02:00, by which time the Russians were fully awake, and their searchlights and gunfire made accurate and close range torpedo attacks impossible.

Despite ideal conditions for a surprise attack, the results were relatively poor. Of the sixteen **torpedoes** fired, all but three either missed or failed to explode. But luck was against the Russians insofar as two of the three torpedoes hit their best battleships: the *Retvizan* and the *Tsesarevich* were put out of action for weeks, as was the **protected cruiser** *Pallada*.

4.3 Surface engagement of 9 February 1904

Following the night attack, Admiral Togo sent his subordinate, Vice Admiral Shigeto Dewa, with four cruisers on a **reconnaissance** mission at 08:00 to look into the Port Arthur anchorage and to assess the damage. By 09:00 Admiral Dewa was close enough to make out the Russian fleet through the morning mist. He observed 12 battleships and cruisers, three or four of which seemed to be badly listing or to be aground. The smaller vessels outside the harbor entrance were in apparent disarray. Dewa approached to about 7,500 yards (6,900 m) of the harbor, but as no notice was taken of the Japanese ships, he was convinced that the night attack had successfully paralyzed the Russian fleet,

and sped off to report to Admiral Togo.

Unaware that the Russian fleet was getting ready for battle, Dewa urged Admiral Togo that the moment was extremely advantageous for the main fleet to quickly attack. Although Togo would have preferred luring the Russian fleet away from the protection of the shore batteries, Dewa's mistakenly optimistic conclusions meant that the risk was justified. Admiral Togo ordered the First Division to attack the harbor, with the Third Division in reserve in the rear.

Upon approaching Port Arthur the Japanese came upon the Russian cruiser *Boyarin*, which was on patrol. *Boyarin* fired on the *Mikasa* at extreme range, then turned and fled. At around 12:00, at a range of about 5 miles, ^[1] combat commenced between the Japanese and Russian fleets. The Japanese concentrated the fire of their 12" guns on the shore batteries while using their 8" and 6" against the Russian ships. Shooting was poor on both sides, but the Japanese severely damaged the *Novik*, *Petropavlovsk*, *Poltava*, *Diana* and *Askold*. However, it soon became evident that Admiral Dewa had made a critical error, the Russians had recovered from the initial destroyer attack, and their battleships had steam up. ^[5] In the first five minutes of the battle *Mikasa* was hit by a ricocheting shell, which burst over her, wounding the chief engineer, the flag lieutenant, and five other officers and men, wrecking the aft bridge.

At 12:20, Admiral Togo decided to reverse course and escape the trap. It was a highly risky maneuver that exposed the fleet to the full brunt of the Russian shore batteries. Despite the heavy firing, the Japanese battleships completed the maneuver and rapidly withdrew out of range. The *Shikishima*, *Mikasa*, *Fuji*, and *Hatsuse* all took damage, receiving 7 hits amongst them. ^[1] Several hits were also made on Admiral Hikononojo Kamimura's cruisers as they reached the turning point. The Russians in return had received about 5 hits, distributed amongst the battleships *Petropavlovsk*, *Pobeda*, *Poltava*, and the *Sevastopol*. ^[1] During this same time, the cruiser *Novik* had closed to within 3,300 yards (3,000 m) of the Japanese cruisers and launched a torpedo salvo. All missed although the *Novik* had received a severe shell hit below the waterline.

4.4 Outcome

Although the naval Battle of Port Arthur had resulted in no major warship losses, the IJN had been driven from the battlefield by the combined fire of the Russian battleships and shore batteries, thus attributing to them a minor victory. ^[1] The Russians took 150 casualties to around 90 for the Japanese. Although no ship was sunk on either side, several took damage. However, the Japanese had ship repair and drydock facilities in Sasebo with which to make repairs, whereas the Russian fleet had only very limited repair capability at Port Arthur.

It was obvious that Admiral Dewa had failed to press his reconnaissance closely enough, and that once the true situation was apparent, Admiral Togo's objection to engage the Russians under their shore batteries was justified.

The formal declaration of war between Japan and Russia was issued on 10 February 1904, a day after the battle. The attack, conducted against a largely unassuming and unprepared neutral power in peacetime, has been widely compared to the 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor. ^[6]

4.5 Subsequent naval actions at Port Arthur, February–December 1904

On Thursday 11 February 1904, the Russian minelayer *Yenisei* started to mine the entrance to Port Arthur. One of the mines washed up against the ship's rudder, exploded and caused the ship to sink, with loss of 120 of the ship's complement of 200. *Yenisei* also sank with the only map indicating the position of the mines. The *Boyarin*, sent to investigate the accident, also struck a mine and was abandoned, although staying afloat. She sank two days later after hitting a second mine.

Admiral Togo set sail from Sasebo again on Sunday 14 February 1904, with all ships except for *Fuji*. On the morning of Wednesday 24 February 1904, an attempt was made to scuttle five old transport vessels to block the entry to Port Arthur, sealing the Russian fleet inside. The plan was foiled by *Retvizan*, which was still grounded outside the harbor. In the poor light, the Russians mistook the old transports for battleships, and an exultant Viceroy Yevgeni Alekseyev telegraphed the Tsar of his great naval victory. After daylight revealed the truth, a second telegram needed to be sent.

On Tuesday 8 March 1904, Russian Admiral Stepan Makarov arrived in Port Arthur to assume command from the unfortunate Admiral Stark, thus raising Russian morale. He raised his flag on the newly repaired *Askold*. On the morning of Thursday 10 March 1904, the Russian fleet took to the offensive, and attacked the blockading Japanese squadron, but to little effect. In the evening of 10 March 1904, the Japanese attempted a ruse by sending four destroyers close to the harbor. The Russians took the bait, and sent out six destroyers in pursuit; whereupon the

Japanese mined the entrance to the harbor and moved into position to block the destroyers' return. Two of the Russian destroyers were sunk, despite efforts by Admiral Makarov to come to their rescue.

On Tuesday 22 March 1904, *Fuji* and *Yashima* were attacked by the Russian fleet under Admiral Makarov, and *Fuji* was forced to withdraw to Sasebo for repairs. Under Makarov, the Russian fleet was growing more confident and better trained. In response, on Sunday 27 March 1904, Togo again attempted to block Port Arthur, this time using four more old transports filled with stones and concrete. The attack again failed as the transports were sunk too far away from the entrance to the harbor.

On 13 April 1904, Makarov (who had now transferred his flag to *Petropavlovsk*) left port to go to the assistance of a destroyer squadron he had sent on reconnaissance north to Dalny. He was accompanied by the Russian cruisers *Askold*, *Diana*, and *Novik*, along with the battleships *Poltava*, *Sevastopol*, *Pobeda*, and *Peresvet*. The Japanese fleet was waiting, and Makarov withdrew towards the protection of the shore batteries at Port Arthur. However, the area had been recently mined by the Japanese. At 09:43, *Petropavlovsk* struck three mines, exploded and sank within two minutes. The disaster killed 635 officers and men, along with Admiral Makarov. At 10:15, *Pobeda* was also crippled by a mine. The following day, Admiral Togo ordered all flags to be flown at half mast, and that a day's mourning be observed for his fallen adversary. Makarov was officially replaced by Admiral Nikolai Skrydlov on 1 April 1904; however, Skrydlov was unable to reach his command due to the Japanese blockade, and remained at Vladivostok overseeing command of the Vladivostok cruiser squadron until recalled to St Petersburg on 20 December.* [7]

On 3 May 1904, Admiral Togo made his third and final attempt at blocking the entrance to Port Arthur, this time with eight old transports. This attempt also failed, but Togo proclaimed it to be a success, thus clearing the way for the Japanese Second Army to land in Manchuria. Although Port Arthur was as good as blocked, due to the lack of initiative by Makarov's successors, Japanese naval losses began to mount, largely due to Russian mines. On 15 May, two Japanese battleships, the 12,320-ton *Yashima* and the 15,300-ton *Hatsuse*, sank in a Russian minefield off Port Arthur after they both struck at least two mines each, eliminating one-third of Japan's battleship force, the worst day for the Japanese Navy during the war.

Further naval operations from Port Arthur resulted in two break-out attempts by the Russians. The first was on 23 June 1904, and the second on 10 August, the latter of which resulted in the *Battle of the Yellow Sea*, which was tactically inconclusive. Afterwards, the Russian fleet did not make any more attempts to break out from their port, while the Japanese fleet dominated the waters for the duration of the war. But mines laid by Russian minelayers were a continuing problem for the IJN and resulted in more losses. On 18 September 1904, the 2,150-ton gunboat *Heien* struck a Russian mine west of Port Arthur and sank. The same fate befell the 2,440-ton cruiser *Saien* on 30 November in the same minefield, and on 13 December, the 4,160-ton cruiser *Takasago* sank in another Russian minefield a few miles south of Port Arthur while giving naval gunfire support to the Japanese armies now besieging the port.

4.6 See also

- Sidney Reilly, who allegedly handed plans of the Port Arthur defenses over to the Japanese

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- [2] Sometimes also *Ryojunktōgai Kaisen* (旅順港外海戦)
- [3] Grant p. 16, 17
- [4] Grant p. 40
- [5] Forczyk p. 42
- [6] <https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1499&dat=19420119&id=-e4ZAAAIBAJ&sjid=8SIEAAAAIBAJ&pg=4412,1516787>
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4.9 External links

- Russo-Japanese War Research Society: Battle of Port Arthur
- Russian Navy history of war
- See more Russo-Japanese War Maps at the Persuasive Cartography, The PJ Mode Collection, Cornell University Library

Coordinates: 38°46′48″N 121°15′28″E﻿ / ﻿38.78005°N 121.25782°E﻿ /

Chapter 5

Siege of Port Arthur

This article is about the land battle. For the naval battle, see [Battle of Port Arthur](#). For the First Sino-Japanese War battle in 1894, see [Battle of Lushunkou](#).

The **Siege of Port Arthur** (Japanese: 旅順攻囲戦, *Ryojun Kōisen*; Russian: Оборона Порт-Артура, *Oborona Port-*



Location within China

Artura, August 1, 1904 – January 2, 1905), the deep-water port and Russian naval base at the tip of the Liaodong Peninsula in Manchuria, was the longest and most violent land battle of the Russo-Japanese War.

Port Arthur was widely regarded as one of the most strongly fortified positions in the world at the time. However, during the First Sino-Japanese War, General Nogi Maresuke had taken the city from the forces of Qing China in only a few days. The ease of his victory during that previous conflict, and overconfidence by the Japanese General Staff in Japan's ability to overcome improved fortifications made by the Russians, led to a much longer campaign, with much heavier losses than expected.

The Siege of Port Arthur saw the introduction of much technology used in subsequent wars of the 20th century

(particularly in World War I) including massive 28 cm howitzers capable of hurling 217-kilogram (478-pound) shells over 8 kilometers (5.0 miles), as well as rapid-firing light howitzers, Maxim machine guns, bolt-action magazine rifles, barbed wire entanglements, electric fences, arc lamp searchlights, tactical radio signalling (and, in response, the first military use of radio jamming), hand grenades, extensive trench warfare, and the use of modified naval mines as land weapons.

5.1 Background

The Russian forces manning the defenses of Port Arthur under Major-General Baron Anatoly Stoessel consisted of almost 50,000 men and 506 guns (including the crews of the Russian warships in port). He also had the option of removing the guns from the fleet to bolster the land defenses. The total population of Port Arthur at the time was around 87,000, which meant that a very high proportion of the population were combatants.

Russian improvements to the defences of Port Arthur included a multi-perimeter layout with overlapping fields of fire and making the best possible use of the natural terrain. However, many of the redoubts and fortifications were still unfinished, as considerable resources were either in very short supply or had been diverted to improving the fortifications at Dalny, further north on the Liaodong Peninsula.

The outer defense perimeter of Port Arthur consisted of a line of hills, including Hsiaokushan and Takushan near the Ta-ho River in the east, and Namakoyama, Akasakayama, 174-Meter Hill, 203-Meter Hill and False Hill in the west. All of these hills were heavily fortified. Approximately 1.5 kilometers (0.93 miles) behind this defensive line was the original stone Chinese wall, which encircled the Old Town of Lushun from the south to the Lun-ho River at the northwest. The Russians had continued the line of the Chinese wall to the west and south, enclosing the approaches to the harbor and the New Town of Port Arthur with concrete forts, machine gun emplacements, and connecting trenches.

General Stoessel withdrew to Port Arthur on July 30, 1904. Facing the Russians was the Japanese Third Army, about 90,000 strong, backed by 474 artillery guns, under the command of General Baron Nogi Maresuke.

5.2 The Battles

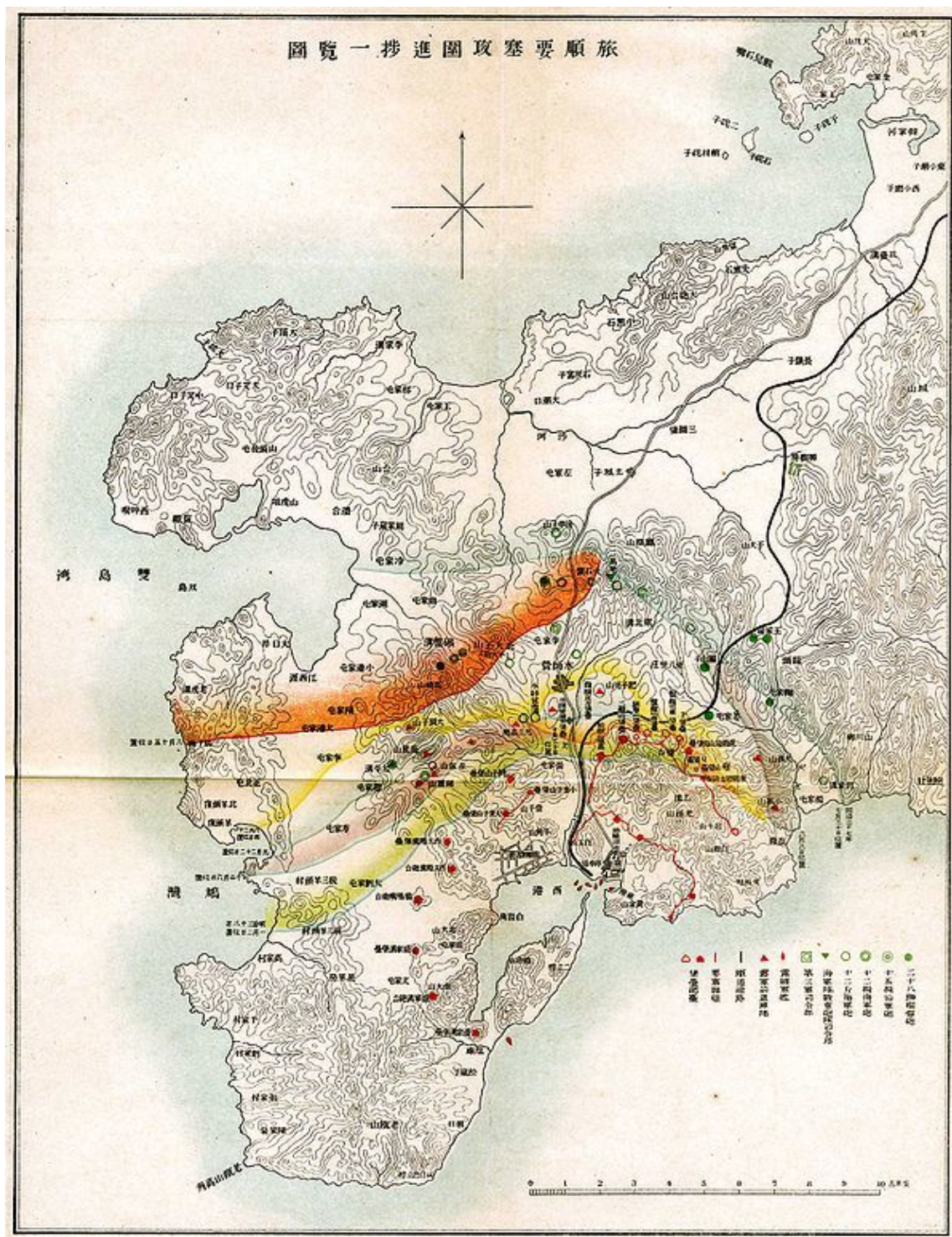
5.2.1 Battle of the Orphan Hills

The shelling of Port Arthur began on August 7, 1904 by a pair of land-based 4.7-inch (120 mm) guns, and was carried on intermittently until August 19, 1904. The Japanese fleet also participated in shore bombardment, while in the northeast the army prepared to attack the two semi-isolated hills protruding from the outer defense perimeter: 600-foot (180 m) high Takushan (Big Orphan Hill) and the smaller Hsuaokushan (Little Orphan Hill). These hills were not heavily fortified, but had steep slopes and were fronted by the Ta River, which had been dammed by the Russians to provide a stronger obstacle. The hills commanded a view over almost a kilometer of flat ground to the Japanese lines, and it was thus essential for the Japanese to take these hills to complete their encirclement of Port Arthur.

After pounding the two hills from 04:30 in the morning until 19:30 at night, General Nogi launched a frontal infantry assault, which was hampered by heavy rain, poor visibility and dense clouds of smoke. The Japanese were able to advance only as far as the forward slopes of both hills, and many soldiers drowned in the Ta River. Even night attacks resulted in unexpectedly high casualties, as the Russians used powerful searchlights to expose the attackers to artillery and machine gun cross-fire.

Undeterred, Nogi resumed artillery bombardment the following day, August 8, 1904, but his assault stalled again, this time due to heavy fire from the Russian fleet led by the cruiser *Novik*. Nogi ordered his men to press on regardless of casualties. Despite some confusion in orders behind the Russian lines, which resulted in some units abandoning their posts, numerous Russian troops held on tenaciously, and the Japanese finally managed to overrun the Russian positions mostly through sheer superiority in numbers. Takushan was captured at 20:00, and the following morning, August 9, 1904, Hsiaokushan also fell to the Japanese.

Gaining these two hills cost the Japanese 1,280 killed and wounded. The Japanese Army complained bitterly to the Navy about the ease with which the Russians were able to obtain naval fire support, and in response the Japanese Navy brought in a battery of 12-pounder guns, with a range sufficient to ensure that there would be no recurrence of a Russian naval sortie.



Advances of the Japanese 3rd Army

Blue line: July 30, Red: August 15, Yellow: August 20, Green: January 2

The loss of the two hills, when reported to the Tsar, caused him to consider the safety of the Russian Pacific Fleet trapped at Port Arthur, and he sent immediate orders to Admiral Wilhelm Vitgeft, in command of the fleet after the death of Admiral Stepan Makarov, to join the squadron at Vladivostok. Vitgeft put to sea at 08:30 on August 10, 1904 and engaged the waiting Japanese under Admiral Tōgō Heihachirō in what was to become known as the *Battle of the Yellow Sea*.

On August 11, 1904, the Japanese sent an offer of temporary cease-fire to Port Arthur, so the Russians could allow all non-combatants to leave under guarantee of safety. The offer was rejected, but the foreign military observers all

decided to leave for safety on August 14, 1904.

5.2.2 Battle of 174 Meter Hill

At noon on August 13, 1904, General Nogi launched a **photo reconnaissance balloon** from the Wolf Hills, which the Russians unsuccessfully attempted to shoot down. Nogi was reportedly very surprised at the lack of coordination of the Russian artillery efforts, and he decided to proceed with a direct frontal assault down the Wantai Ravine, which, if successful, would carry Japanese forces directly into the heart of the city. Given his previous high casualty rate and his lack of heavy artillery, the decision created controversy in his staff; however, Nogi was under orders to take Port Arthur as quickly as possible.

After sending a message to the garrison of Port Arthur demanding surrender (which was immediately refused), the Japanese began their assault at dawn on August 19, 1904. The main thrust was directed at 174 Meter Hill, with flanking and diversionary attacks along the line from Fort Sung-shu to the Chi-Kuan Battery. The Russian defensive positions on 174 Meter Hill itself were held by the 5th and 13th East Siberian Regiments, reinforced by sailors, under the command of **Colonel Tretyakov**, a veteran of the **Battle of Nanshan**.

Just as he had done at the Battle of Nanshan, Tretyakov, although having his first line of trenches overrun, tenaciously refused to retreat and held control of 174 Meter Hill despite severe and mounting casualties. On the following day, August 20, 1904, Tretyakov asked for reinforcements but, just as at Nanshan, none was forthcoming. With more than half of his men killed or wounded and with his command disintegrating as small groups of men fell back in confusion, Tretyakov had no choice but to withdraw, and 174 Meter Hill was thus overrun by the Japanese. The assault on 174 Meter Hill alone had cost the Japanese some 1,800 killed and wounded and the Russians over 1,000.

The assaults on the other sections of the Russian line had also cost the Japanese heavily, but with no results and no ground gained. When Nogi finally called off his attempt to penetrate the Wantai Ravine on August 24, 1904, he had only 174 Meter Hill and the West and East Pan-lung to show for his loss of more than 16,000 men. With all other positions remaining firmly under Russian control, Nogi at last decided to abandon frontal assaults in favor of a protracted **siege**.

On August 25, 1904, the day after Nogi's last assault had failed, Marshal **Ōyama Iwao** engaged the Russians under General **Aleksey Kuropatkin** at the **Battle of Liaoyang**.

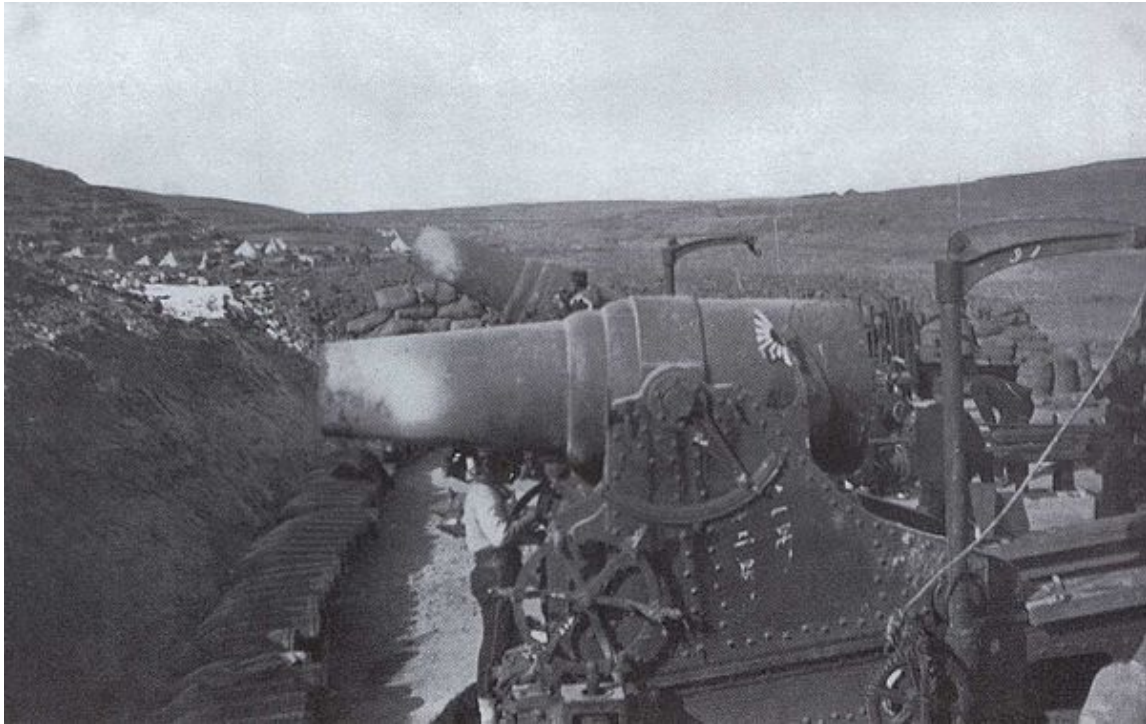
5.2.3 The siege

Having failed in his attempts to penetrate the Port Arthur fortifications by direct assault, Nogi now ordered **sappers** to construct trenches and tunnels under the Russian forts in order to explode **mines** to bring down the walls. By now, Nogi had also been reinforced by additional artillery and 16,000 more troops from Japan, which partially compensated for the casualties sustained in his first assaults. However, the major new development was the arrival of the first battery of huge 11-inch (280 mm) **siege howitzers**, replacing those lost when the transport **Hitachi Maru**, loaded with a battalion of the First Reserve Regiment of the Guards, was sunk by Russian cruisers on June 15, 1904. The massive 11-inch howitzers could throw a 227-kilogram (500.4-pound) shell over 9 kilometers (5.6 miles), and Nogi at last had the firepower necessary to make a serious attempt against the Russian fortifications. The huge shells were nicknamed "roaring trains" by the Russian troops (for the sound they made just before impact), and during their period at Port Arthur over 35,000 of these shells were fired. The **Krupp** howitzers had originally been installed in shore batteries in forts overlooking **Tokyo Bay** and **Osaka Bay**, and had been intended for anti-ship operations.

While the Japanese set to work in the **sapping** campaign, General Stoessel continued to spend most of his time writing complaining letters to the Tsar about lack of cooperation from his fellow officers in the navy. The garrison in Port Arthur was starting to experience serious outbreaks of **scurvy** and **dysentery** due to the lack of fresh food.

Nogi now shifted his attention to the Temple Redoubt and the Waterworks Redoubt (also known as the Erhlung Redoubt) to the east, and to 203 Meter Hill and Namakoyama to the west. Strangely, at this time neither Nogi nor Stoessel seem to have realized the strategic importance of 203 Meter Hill: its unobstructed views of the harbor would (if taken by the Japanese) have enabled them to control the harbor and to fire on the Russian fleet sheltering there. This fact was only brought to Nogi's attention when he was visited by General **Kodama Gentarō**, who immediately saw that the hill was the key to the whole Russian defense.

By mid-September the Japanese had dug over eight kilometers (5 miles) of trenches and were within 70 meters (230 feet) of the Waterworks Redoubt, which they attacked and captured on September 19, 1904. Thereafter they successfully took the Temple Redoubt, while another attacking force was sent against both Namakoyama and 203



Japanese 11-inch howitzers during the Siege of Port Arthur

Meter Hill. The former was taken that same day, but on 203 Meter Hill the Russian defenders cut down the dense columns of attacking troops with machine gun and cannon fire in swathes. The attack failed, and the Japanese were forced back, leaving the ground covered with their dead and wounded. The battle at 203 Meter Hill continued for several more days, with the Japanese gaining a foothold each day, only to be forced back each time by Russian counter-attacks. By the time General Nogi abandoned the attempt, he had lost over 3500 men. The Russians used the respite to begin strengthening the defenses on 203 Meter Hill yet further, while Nogi began a prolonged artillery bombardment of the town and those parts of the harbor within range of his guns.

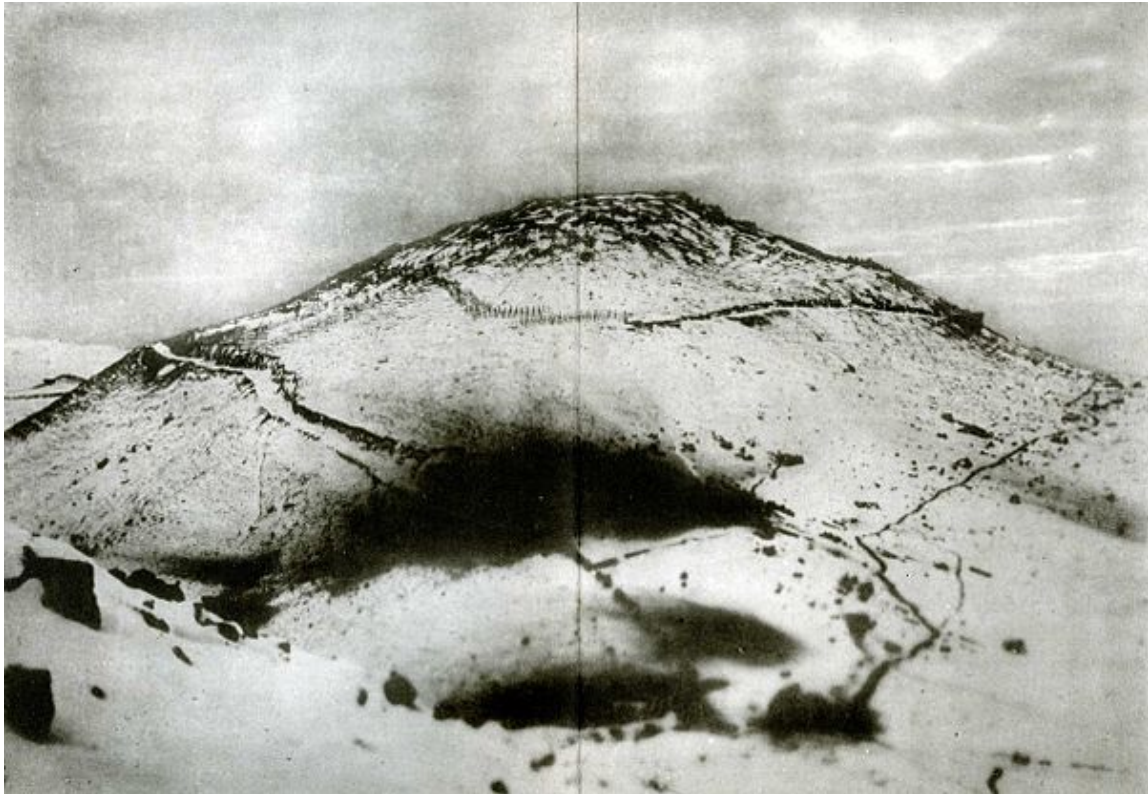
Nogi attempted yet another mass “human wave” assault on 203 Meter Hill on October 29, 1904, which, if successful, was intended to be a present for the **Meiji Emperor's** birthday. However, aside from seizing some minor fortifications, the attack failed after six days of hand-to-hand combat, leaving Nogi with the deaths of an additional 124 officers and 3611 soldiers to report to his Emperor instead of a victory.

The onset of winter did little to slow the intensity of the battle. Nogi received additional reinforcements from Japan, including 18 more Krupp 11-inch (280 mm) howitzers, which were manhandled from the railway by teams of 800 soldiers along an eight-mile (13 km) long narrow gauge track that had been laid expressly for that purpose. These howitzers were added to the 450 other guns already in place. One innovation of the campaign was the centralization of the Japanese fire control, with the artillery batteries connected to the field headquarters by miles of **telephone** lines.

Now well aware that the Russian Baltic Fleet was on its way, the Japanese Imperial Headquarters fully understood the necessity of destroying what Russian ships were still serviceable at Port Arthur. It thus became essential that 203 Meter Hill be captured without further delay, and political pressure began to mount for Nogi's replacement.

5.2.4 Battle of 203 Meter Hill

The highest elevation within Port Arthur, designated “203 Meter Hill”, overlooked the harbor. The name “203-Meter Hill” is actually a misnomer, as the hill consists of two peaks (203 meters and 210 meters high, and 140 meters apart) connected by a sharp ridge. It was initially unfortified; however, after the start of the war the Russians realized its critical importance and built a strong defensive position.*[3] As well as the natural strength of its elevated position with steep sides, it was protected by a massive redoubt and two earth-covered keeps reinforced by steel rails and timber, and completely surrounded by electrified barbed wire entanglements. It was also connected to the neighboring strongholds on False Hill and Akasakayama by trenches. On top of the lower peak was the fortified Russian command post in reinforced concrete. The Russian defenders entrenched on the summit of were commanded



203 Meter Hill, December 14, 1904



Port Arthur viewed from the summit of the 203 Meter Hill, November 2004

by Colonel Tretyakov, and were organized into five companies of infantry with machine gun detachments, a company of engineers, a few sailors and a battery of artillery.*[4]

On September 18, Japanese General Kodama visited General Nogi for the first time, and drew his attention to the strategic importance of 203 Meter Hill.*[5] Nogi directed the first infantry assault against the hill on September 20,*[3] but found its fortifications impenetrable to Japanese artillery and was forced to retreat by September 22 with over 2500 casualties.*[5] He then resumed his attempts to break through the fortifications at Port Arthur in other locations, cumulating in a six-day general assault at the end of October, which cost the Japanese a further 124 officers and 3611 men.*[5] News of this defeat inflamed Japanese popular opinion against Nogi. General Yamagata urged his *court-martial*, but Nogi was saved from this only through the unprecedented personal intervention of *Emperor Meiji*. However, Field Marshal *Oyama Iwao* found the continuing unavailability of the 3rd Army's manpower to be intolerable, and sent General *Kodama Gentarō* to compel Nogi to take drastic action, or else relieve him of command. Kodama returned to visit Nogi again in mid-November, but decided to give him one last chance.*[6] After arduous sapping work and an artillery assault with the new Krupp 11-inch siege guns, mines were exploded underneath some of the Russian fortifications on the main defense perimeter from November 17–24, with a general assault planned for the night of November 26. Coincidentally, this was the same day that the Russian Baltic Fleet was entering the *Indian Ocean*. The assault contained a *forlorn hope* attack by 2600 men (including 1200 from the newly arrived *IJA 7th Division*) led by General *Nakamura Satoru*,*[6] but the attack failed, with direct frontal assaults on both Fort Erhlung and Fort Sungshu once again beaten back by the Russian defenders. Japanese casualties were officially 4,000 men, but unofficially perhaps twice as high.*[5] Russian General *Roman Kondratenko* took the precaution of stationing snipers to shoot any of his front line troops attempting to abandon their positions.

At 08:30 on November 28, with massive artillery support, Japanese troops again attempted an assault up the sides of both Akasakayama and 203 Meter Hill. Over a thousand 500 lb (230 kg) shells from the 11-inch (280 mm) howitzers were fired in a single day to support this attack. The Japanese reached as far as the Russian line of barbed wire entanglements by daybreak and held their ground throughout the following day, November 29, while their artillery kept the defenders busy by a continuous bombardment. Nonetheless, the Japanese forces suffered serious losses, as the Russian defenders were well positioned to use *hand grenades* and machine guns against the tightly packed mass of Japanese soldiers. On November 30, a small party of Japanese succeeded in planting the Japanese flag at the summit of the hill, but by the morning of December 1, the Russians had successfully counterattacked. Still retaining the authority to replace Nogi if necessary, Kodama assumed temporary command of the Japanese front-line forces, but officially maintained the despondent Nogi in nominal command.*[5]

The battle continued throughout the following days with very heavy hand-to-hand combat with control of the summit changing hands several times. Finally, at 10:30 on December 5, following another massive artillery bombardment during which Russian Colonel Tretyakov was severely wounded, the Japanese managed to overrun 203 Meter Hill, finding only a handful of defenders still alive on the summit. The Russians launched two counter-attacks to retake the hill, both of which failed, and by 17:00, 203 Meter Hill was securely under Japanese control.

For Japan, the cost of capturing this landmark was great, with over 8,000 dead and wounded in the final assault alone, including most of the *IJA 7th Division*.*[4] For Nogi, the cost of capturing 203 Meter Hill was made even more poignant when he received word that his last surviving son had been killed in action during the final assault on the hill. The Russians, who had no more than 1,500 men on the hill at any one time, lost over 6,000 killed and wounded.*[5]

5.2.5 Destruction of the Russian Pacific Fleet

From the vantage point on 203 Meter Hill overlooking Port Arthur harbor, Nogi could now bombard the *Russian fleet* by relocating his heavy 11-inch (280 mm) howitzers with 500 pound (~220 kg) armor-piercing shells on the summit. This done, he systematically started to sink the Russian ships within range.

On December 5, 1904, the battleship *Poltava* was destroyed, followed by the battleship *Retvizan* on December 7, 1904, the battleships *Pobeda* and *Peresvet* and the cruisers *Pallada* and *Bayan* on December 9, 1904. The battleship *Sevastopol*, although hit 5 times by 11-inch (280 mm) shells, managed to move out of range of the guns. Stung by the fact that the Russian Pacific Fleet had been sunk by the army and not by the Imperial Japanese Navy, and with a direct order from Tokyo that the *Sevastopol* was not to be allowed to escape, Admiral Togo sent in wave after wave of *destroyers* in six separate attacks on the sole remaining Russian battleship. After 3 weeks, the *Sevastopol* was still afloat, having survived 124 *torpedoes* fired at her while sinking two Japanese destroyers and damaging six other vessels. The Japanese had meanwhile lost the cruiser *Takasago* to a mine outside the harbor.

On the night of January 2, 1905, after Port Arthur surrendered, Captain *Nikolai Essen* of the *Sevastopol* had the



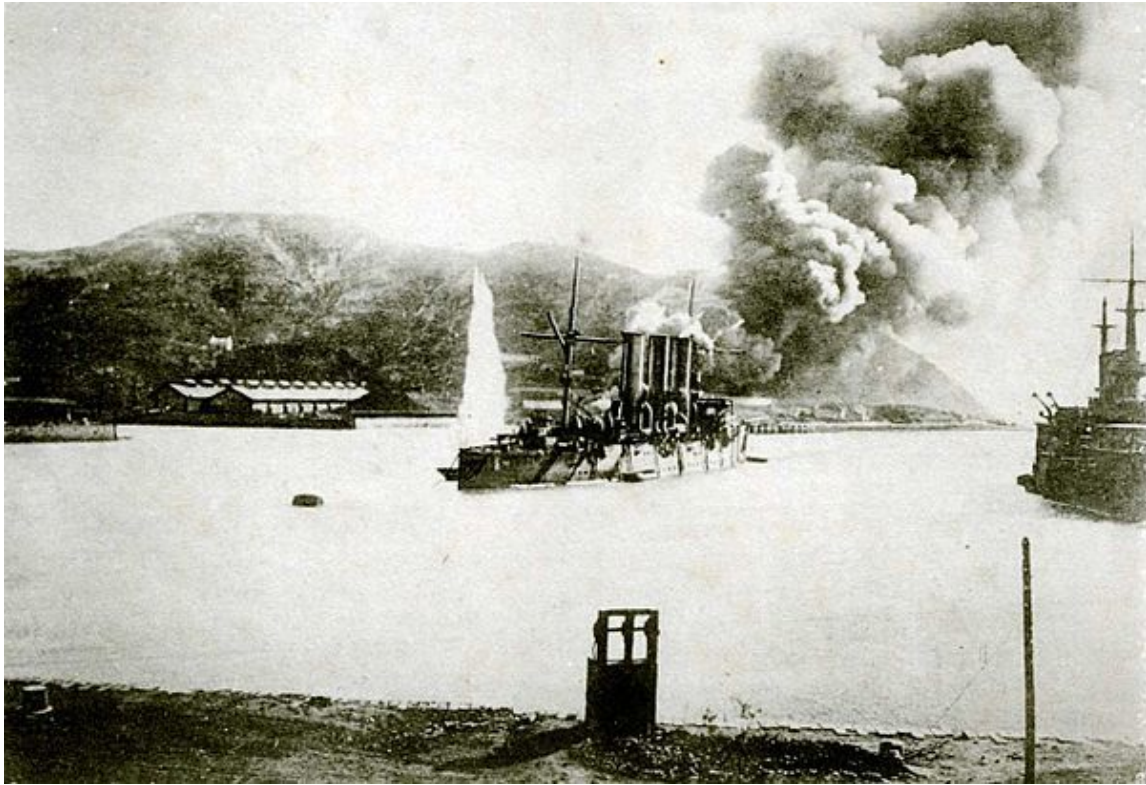
Japanese 11-inch howitzer firing; shell visible in flight

crippled battleship scuttled in 30 fathoms (55 m) of water by opening the sea cocks on one side, so that the ship would sink on its side and could not be raised and salvaged by the Japanese.

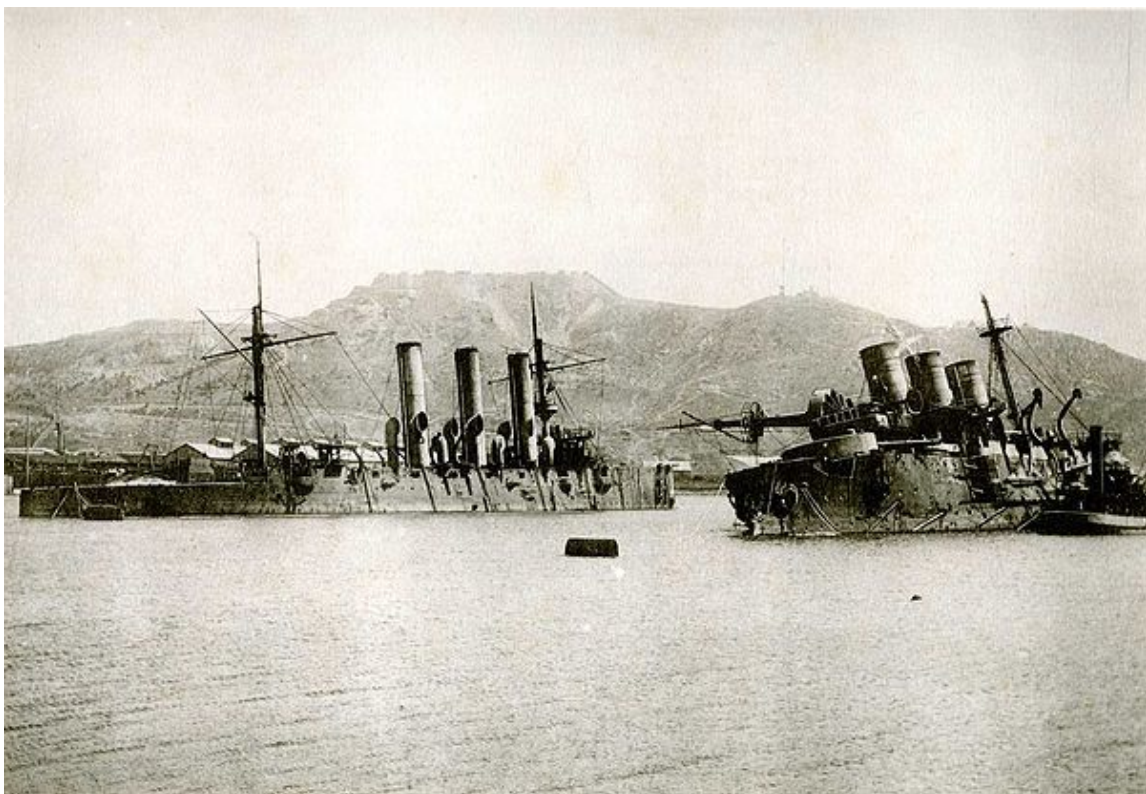
5.2.6 The surrender

Following the loss of the Pacific Fleet, the rationale for holding onto Port Arthur was questioned by Stoessel and Foch in a council on December 8, 1904, but the idea of surrender was rejected by the other senior officers. Japanese trench and tunnel warfare continued. With the death of General Kondratenko on December 15, 1904 at Fort Chikuan, Stoessel appointed the incompetent Foch in his place. On December 18, 1904, the Japanese exploded an 1,800-kilogram (3,968-pound) mine under Fort Chikuan, which fell that night. On December 28, 1904, mines under Fort Erhlung were detonated, destroying that fort as well.

On December 31, 1904, a series of mines were exploded under Fort Sungshu, the sole surviving major fortress, which



Pallada under fire as the Oil Depot burns



Pallada and Pobeda

surrendered that day. On January 1, 1905, Wantai finally fell to the Japanese. On the same day, Stoessel and Foch sent a message to a surprised General Nogi, offering to surrender. None of the other senior Russian staff had been



Nogi (Center left), Stoessel (Center right) and their staffs.

consulted, and notably Smirnov and Tretyakov were outraged. The surrender was accepted and signed on January 5, 1905 in the northern suburb of **Shuishiying**.

With this, the Russian garrison was taken into captivity, and civilians were allowed to leave, but the Russian officers were given the choice of either going into **prisoner-of-war camps** with their men or being given parole on the promise of taking no further part in the war.

The Japanese were astounded to find that a huge store of food and ammunition remained in Port Arthur, which implied that Stoessel had surrendered long before the fight was over. Stoessel, Foch and Smirnov were **court-martialed** on their return to **St Petersburg**.

As for Nogi, after leaving a garrison in Port Arthur, he led the surviving bulk of his army of 120,000 men north to join Marshal Oyama at the **Battle of Mukden**.

5.2.7 Losses

Russian land forces in the course of the siege suffered 31,306 casualties,*[2] of whom at least 6,000 were killed.*[2] Lower figures such as 15,000 killed, wounded, and missing are sometimes claimed.*[1] At the end of the siege, the Japanese captured a further 878 army officers and 23,491 other ranks; 15,000 of those captured were wounded. The Japanese also captured 546 guns*[2] and 82,000 artillery shells.*[2] In addition the Russians lost their entire fleet based at Port Arthur, which was either sunk or interned. The Japanese captured 8,956 seamen.*[2]

The Japanese army casualties were later officially listed as 57,780 casualties (killed, wounded and missing),*[2] of whom 14,000 were killed.*[2] In addition 33,769 became sick during the siege (including 21,023 with **beriberi**).*[2] The Japanese navy lost 16 ships in the course of the siege, including two battleships and four cruisers.*[2]

There were higher estimates of Japanese army casualties at the time such as 94,000*[7]–110,000*[1] killed, wounded, and missing, though these were written without access to the Japanese Medical History of the War.



Wrecked ships of the Russian Pacific Fleet, which were later salvaged by the Japanese navy

5.3 Aftermath

The capture of Port Arthur and the subsequent Japanese victories at the **Battle of Mukden** and **Tsushima** gave Japan a dominant military position, resulting in favorable arbitration by U.S. President **Theodore Roosevelt** in the **Treaty of Portsmouth**, which ended the war. The loss of the war in 1905 led to major political unrest in Imperial Russia (see: **Russian revolution of 1905**).

5.4 In popular culture

In 1980 a Japanese war drama film directed by **Toshio Masuda** and titled *The Battle of Port Arthur* (sometimes referred as *203 Kochi*) depicted the Siege of Port Arthur.*[8] The film starred **Tatsuya Nakadai** (as General **Nogi Maresuke**), **Tetsurō Tamba** (as General **Kodama Gentarō**) and **Toshirō Mifune** (as **Emperor Meiji**).

In 1983, the battle for Port Arthur was portrayed in the **Reilly, Ace of Spies** episode “Prelude to War” .

In the *Girls Und Panzer* der film a reference was called upon hill 203.

5.5 References

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5.6 External links

- The Russo-Japanese War Research Society
- Siege of Port Arthur Stereoviews Lafayette College Library, from the collection of Richard Mammana
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5.7 Notes

- [1] Оборона Порт-Артура. А. фон-Шварц, Ю. Романовский. 1908
- [2] Clodfelter, Micheal, *Warfare and Armed Conflicts, a statistical reference, Volume II 1900-91*, pub McFarland, ISBN 0-89950-815-4 p648.
- [3] Kowner, *Historical Dictionary of the Russo-Japanese War*, p. 400.
- [4] Jukes, *The Russo-Japanese War 1904-1905*, p. 59-60.
- [5] Connaughton, *Rising Sun and Tumbling Bear*, p. 230-246.
- [6] Warner, *The Tide at Sunrise*, p. 428-432.
- [7] *Port Arthur, the siege and capitulation, Volume 1*, Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett, 1906, p.464
- [8] *The Battle of Port Arthur (203 Koshi)* in the Internet Movie Database

Coordinates: 38°48′45″N 121°14′30″E / 38.81250°N 121.24167°E

Chapter 6

Battle of Yalu River (1904)

This article is about the first battle of the Russo-Japanese War. For the naval battle of the First Sino-Japanese War, see [Battle of Yalu River \(1894\)](#).

The **Battle of Yalu River**, (Russian: Бой на реке Ялу, *Boi na reke Yalu*) (Japanese: 鴨江会戦, *Ōryōkō Kaisen*) lasted from 30 April to 1 May 1904, and was the first major land battle during the [Russo-Japanese War](#). It was fought near Wiju (modern village of [Uiju, North Korea](#)) on the lower reaches of the [Yalu River](#), on the border between [Korea](#) and [China](#).

6.1 The Russian Situation

The [Russian](#) commander in the Far East, General Alexei Kuropatkin's strategy was to only engage the Japanese in defense stalling actions, while waiting for enough reinforcements to be brought up to the front via the single-track [Trans-Siberian Railway](#) to take the offensive. He had estimated that it would take at least 6 months to build his forces up to suitable levels. He also had received strict orders not to hinder the Japanese progress through Korea from Viceroy Yevgeni Alekseyev, but to hold the line at the Yalu River to prevent the Japanese from crossing into Manchuria.

On 22 April 1904, Kuropatkin dispatched the “Eastern Detachment” under the command of Lieutenant-General Mikhail Zasulich with 16,000 [infantry](#), 5,000 [cavalry](#) and some 62 [artillery](#) pieces to fight a static delaying action at the north bank of the river. However, this force was spread out piecemeal over a 170-mile front, whereas the Japanese Army could concentrate its efforts on any single point of its choosing. Furthermore, General Zasulich did not hold the [Japanese](#) in a very high regard. Most of the Russian forces were deployed near Wiju, blocking the main road from Korea to Manchuria. Small detachments guarded the bank up and down the river.

6.2 The Japanese Situation

After the success of the [Imperial Japanese Navy](#) at the [Battle of Chemulpo Bay](#) on 9 February 1904, the way was clear for the [Imperial Japanese Army](#) to deploy the 2nd, the 12th, and the [Guards Divisions](#) of the [Japanese 1st Army](#), commanded by Major-General Baron Tamemoto Kuroki, into [Korea](#). The total strength of Japanese force was about 42,500 men. The Japanese 1st Army advanced quickly northwards from [Chemulpo](#) (modern [Incheon](#)), with advance units entering [Pyongyang](#) on 21 February 1904 and [Anju](#) by 18 March 1904. Learning their lessons in logistics and transport from the [Sino-Japanese War](#), the Japanese army hired some 10,000 local laborers at wages well above the local norms, and paid also for any food and supplies procured locally. This contrasted greatly with the behavior of the Russian troops previously in northern Korea.

By seizing the port of Chinampo (modern [Nampo](#), North Korea) at the mouth of the [Taedong River](#) outside of [Pyongyang](#) with the spring thaw, the Japanese were able to land the remaining components of the 1st Army by 29 March.

By 21 April 1904 the Japanese 1st Army was concentrated and hidden south of Wiju. The Japanese were in the same positions on the southern bank of the Yalu River that they had been in August 1894. The Japanese knew the



Japanese troops landing on Nampho.

exact locations of the Russians deployment from intelligence by forward scouts disguised as Korean fishermen, the Russians made no effort to conceal their positions. * [2] By 23 April, the Japanese knew the layout the Russian trench line and details of the defensive positions around the area of Antung. * [2] Intelligence was so effective that the Japanese estimate of the Russian troop strength was only exceeded by 1000 and the estimate of the guns which was only two less of the actual number. * [2] The Japanese made every effort to keep their positions hidden. Screens of trees, millet and bushes were used to conceal activity as well as roads, artillery and other equipment. * [2]

6.3 Prelude

The prelude to major action took place at 21:45(9:45 P.M.) on the night of 25 April 1904, when two battalions of the Japanese 2nd Division seized two islands in the Yalu River without opposition. After reinforcement at 0400 on 26 April by units from the Guards Division and a brief firefight, the forward Russian observation post withdrew to the main Russian lines on the north shore.

Japanese engineers determined that ten bridges 1,630 yards(1490.5m) would be required to span the river. A third of these were steel prefabricated pontoons which weighed 100 pounds each. * [3] The remainder were made from local resources. In full view of Russian positions, the Japanese began constructing a **causeway** across the Yalu River, which was immediately targeted by two Russian batteries. With the Russians so engaged, the Japanese prepared nine other bridges that could quickly be moved into position for a rapid assault across the river at other locations.

Once the midstream islands were secured, General Kuroki ordered a feint on the lower Yalu River when Japanese gunboats engaged **Cossack** detachments at the river mouth. This convinced General Zasulich that the main Japanese attack would fall on the vicinity of the town of **Antung**, and he concentrated his forces there.

Kuroki was thus able to maneuver against the weak Russian left, and deployed the 12th Division and Guards Division across the Yalu River at a fordable point. The Russians observed these movements with trepidation, and General Kashtalinsky informed General Zasulich that the Japanese were about to assault the position in force and his position was in danger of being flanked. Zasulich chose to ignore the reports, thinking that the attack was only a feint, and redeployed a single battalion with four guns. Zasulich remained convinced that the main Japanese attack would fall at Antung, and kept his main force as well as his reserves at that location.



"Picture of Our Valorous Military Repulsing the Russian Cossack Cavalry on the Bank of the Yalu River" by Watanabe Nobukazu (1874-1944), March 1904.



Japanese Troops Crossing the Yalu River.

6.4 The Main Battle

The Japanese main attack began in the early morning hours of 27 April 1904. By 0300, the balance of the 12th Division had crossed the river and was advancing in three columns. While the Japanese 12th Division advancing on the right, the Guards Division was moving into position in the center. By 0400, the artillery of the Guards Division was within range of the exposed Russian lines. The Japanese First Army continued its three-pronged advance and was across the Yalu by midnight of 29 April 1904 with very little opposition. Limited visibility masked the Japanese movements from Russian observation. When the fog finally lifted about 0500, the Japanese artillery opened up on the Russian formations.

The 2nd Division took its position on the center, advancing on the newly erected causeways leading from the town of Wiju and thus catching the Russians in a pincer movement at the hamlet of Chuliengcheng, on the Manchurian-side of the Yalu River opposite Wiju. By 1000, the Russians were in full retreat, with a Japanese attempt to block their escape towards Fenghuangcheng to the north.

The Japanese had a number of 4.7 inch howitzers, custom-made by Krupp, which they used with devastating effect on the exposed Russians. In light of these developments, General Zasulich was strongly encouraged by his staff to pull back to a more defensible position. However, the general stubbornly refused to concede, even sending a telegram to Tsar Nicholas II in Saint Petersburg informing that victory was soon certain. He chose to ignore General Kuropatkin's phased withdrawal orders (as confirmed by Kuropatkin's chief of staff, General V.V. Sakarov).

General Kuroki had planned to continue the advance of the 12th Division to envelope the Russian left. However, now that the enemy artillery had been neutralized, he decided to engage the Guards and the 2nd Division in a simultaneous

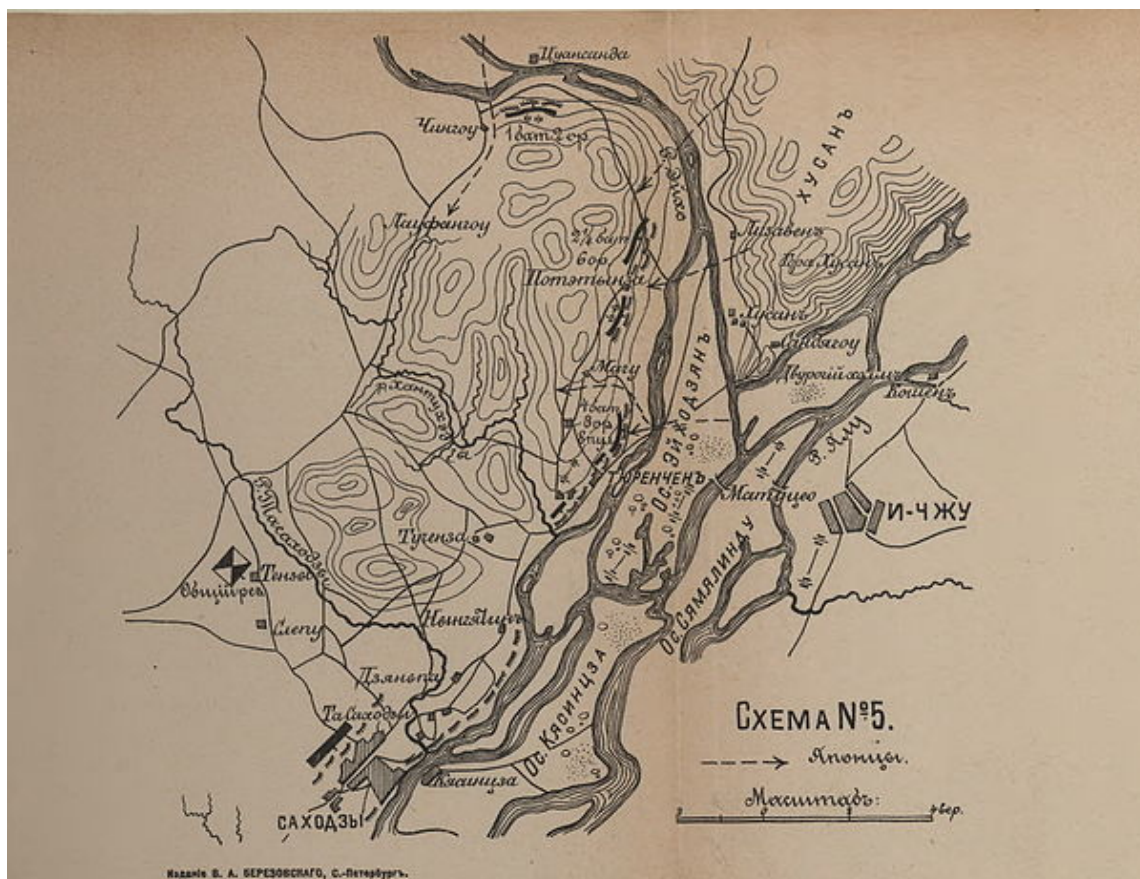


Map of the crossing over the Yalu River by the Japanese 1st. Army.

assault. It was at this point the Japanese encountered the first serious resistance from the Russian lines. The advance of the 2nd Division was disrupted for a time, and had any of the Russian artillery survived, the outcome might have been different. The Russians were driven from their trenches with severe losses, and the survivors fell back to the tops of the hills, the position that Zasulich's advisors had unsuccessfully encouraged him to fall back to earlier. During the retreat, a counterattack was made by elements of the Russian 12th East Siberian Rifle Regiment, which was cut to pieces and opened further the breaks in the Russian lines.

The Russian position now became wholly untenable, and remaining formations now were in danger of being encircled. General Zasulich was ordered to retreat. The 11th East Siberian Rifle Regiment, which was covering a retreat, was cut off by the Japanese and suffered large casualties during its breakthrough back to the other Russian forces. At the appearance of the Japanese 12th Division, the Russian left flank panicked and collapsed.

At 1730 on 1 May 1904, remnants of the Russian Eastern Detachment either surrendered or escaped towards



Russian map depicting positions of the Eastern detachment and Japanese advance.

Fenghuangcheng to the north and the Battle for the Yalu River came to an end.

6.5 Outcome

The Battle of the Yalu River ended in victory for Japan. The combat had cost the Japanese 1036 dead and wounded out of the total 1st Army strength of 42,500* [4] The Russian Eastern Detachment suffered some 2700 casualties overall,* [4] including about 500 killed, 1000 wounded, 600 prisoners and the loss of 21 of 24 field guns.

6.6 Importance

The Battle of the Yalu River was the first major land campaign of the Russo-Japanese War. The defeat of the Russian Eastern Detachment removed the perception that the Japanese would be an easy enemy, that the war would be short, and that Russia would be the overwhelming victor.* [5]

6.7 References

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6.8 Notes

- [1] Russian Main Military Medical Directorate (*Glavnoe Voенno-Sanitarnoe Upravlenie*) statistical report. 1914.
- [2] Connaughton, p.55
- [3] Connaughton, p.56
- [4] Connaughton, p.64
- [5] Connaughton, p.65

6.9 External links

- [Russo-Japanese War research society](#)

Chapter 7

Battle of the Yellow Sea

The **Battle of the Yellow Sea** (Japanese: 黄海海戦 *Kōkai kaisen*; Russian: Бой в Жёлтом море) was a major naval engagement of the Russo-Japanese War, fought on 10 August 1904. In the Russian Navy, it was referred to as the **Battle of 10 August**.^[1] The battle foiled an attempt by the Russian fleet at **Port Arthur** to break out and form up with counterparts from **Vladivostok**, forcing them to return to port. Four days later, the **Battle off Ulsan** similarly ended the Vladivostok group's sortie, forcing both fleets to remain at anchor.

7.1 Background

The Imperial Russian Navy's First Pacific Squadron, commanded by Admiral **Wilhelm Vitgeft**, had been trapped in Port Arthur since the Imperial Japanese Navy's blockade began on 8 February 1904 with the **Battle of Port Arthur**. Throughout late July and early August, as the Imperial Japanese Army laid siege to Port Arthur, relations between Admiral Vitgeft and Russian Viceroy **Yevgeni Alekseyev** increasingly soured. Viceroy Alekseyev, a former Admiral, favored an aggressive **sortie** so as to enable the First Pacific Squadron to link up with the Vladivostok Squadron and thereby create a naval force powerful enough to challenge the Japanese fleet. Admiral Vitgeft believed in a **fleet in being**,^[2] which simply stayed at anchor, while at the same time contributing some of his weaponry to the **land battle** as the safest course to follow. Although passive, Vitgeft's preference was actually more in keeping with the Russian Navy's doctrine,^[2] which was building up strength (waiting for the arrival of the Baltic Fleet, also known as the 2nd Pacific Squadron), and then engaging the Japanese navy in decisive battle.

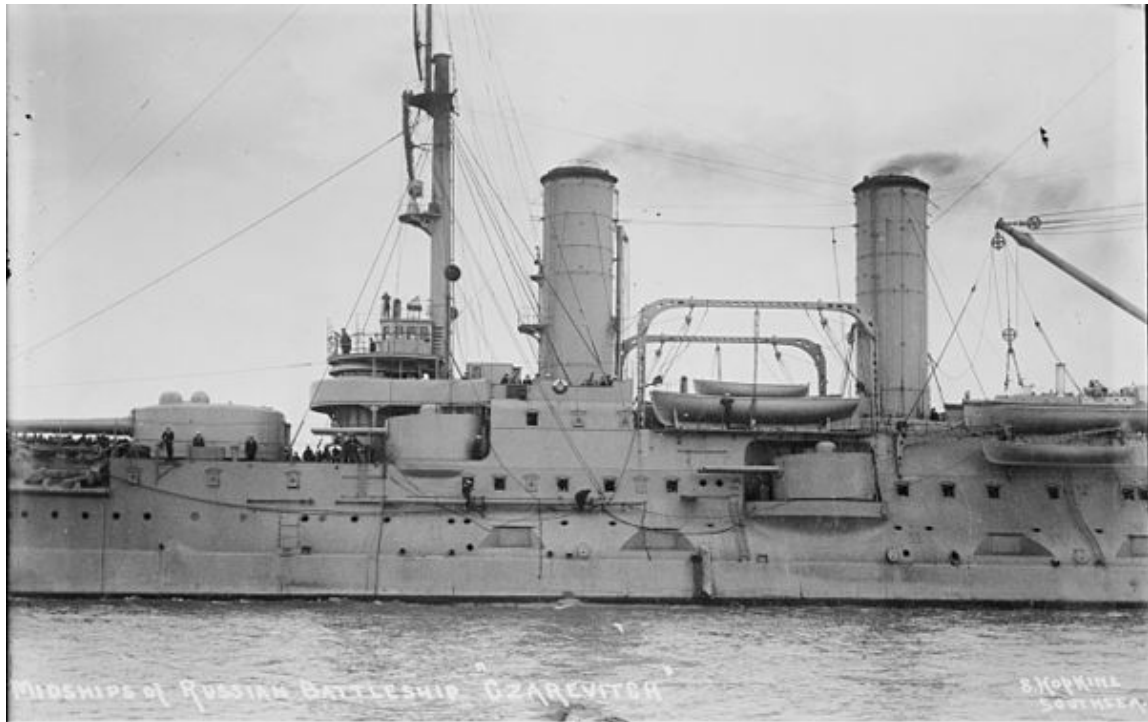
Alekseyev appealed to **St. Petersburg**, and **Tsar Nicholas II** replied that he fully shared the Viceroy's opinion. Faced with an Imperial writ and threat of legal action, Admiral Vitgeft was ordered to sail for **Vladivostok** immediately.^[3] By 06:15 hours, on 10 August 1904, Admiral Vitgeft, flying his flag in the battleship *Tsesarevich*, began leading his battleships from the harbor.

7.2 Battle

7.2.1 Opening moves

At 09:55 hours his fleet had cleared the harbor's entrance, and as Admiral Vitgeft's Pacific Squadron completed their exit, he wisely made a feint to the south-west to conceal his actual intent, whereby he succeeded in delaying Admiral **Heihachiro Togo**'s concentration of his forces.^[3] Although Vitgeft's move had bought him time, Togo had nonetheless previously issued orders for his warships to assemble near *Encounter Rock*, in the event Admiral Vitgeft was to take that route. By 1100 hours, however, it was clear in which direction Vitgeft's fleet was sailing: they were headed for the open sea. The Russian squadron consisted of the battleships *Tsesarevich*, *Retvizan*, *Pobeda*, *Peresvet*, *Sevastopol*, and *Poltava*, protected cruisers *Askold*, *Diana*, *Novik*, and *Pallada*, and 14 destroyers.

At about 12:25 the battleship fleets sighted each other near *Encounter Rock* at a range of about 11 miles (18 km). Vitgeft's battlefleet was headed southeast at 13 knots (24 km/h; 15 mph), while Togo, on an intercepting course, came from the northeast at 14 knots (26 km/h; 16 mph). His fleet consisted of Japan's four surviving battleships *Mikasa*, *Asahi*, *Fuji*, and *Shikishima*, the armoured cruisers *Nisshin* and *Kasuga*, as well as eight protected cruisers,



Midship view of the Russian flagship, Tsesarevich.



Japanese Admiral Togo's flagship, Mikasa.

18 destroyers, and 30 torpedo boats. During this time, Admiral Dewa's four cruisers came into view, fast approaching from the south at 18 knots (33 km/h; 21 mph), and Togo attempted to squeeze Admiral Vitgeft's fleet between the two advancing columns.

Just after 13:00, Togo attempted to cross Vitgeft's *T* and commenced firing his main batteries from the extreme range of more than 8 miles.* [4] Vitgeft, with the battleship *Retvizan*, returned fire, but the range was excessive for both sides and no hits were scored. Togo had miscalculated his speed when trying to cross the enemy's *T*, and Vitgeft simply made a quick turn to port, maintained his speed, and increased his range from Togo's fleet. Within minutes,

Admiral Vitgeft was again headed for the open sea, and Admiral Togo's pincer move had failed, as Admiral Dewa's cruisers had to turn quickly to avoid Togo's battle line, and thus broke contact without having fired a shot. As Togo observed Vitgeft's battle line swiftly move past his own in opposite directions, he quickly ordered each warship to turn about individually, which put his cruisers into the lead, but now parallel with Vitgeft's battle line.

At about 13:25 hours, and again at a range of over 8 miles (13 km), Togo's battleships opened fire on Vitgeft's flagship and *Retvizan*, hitting the latter 12 times. By about 13:30 hours the Russian flagship had returned fire, knocking out Togo's wireless communications with two 305 mm (12 in) shell direct hits at this extreme range. For nearly half an hour the two battleship fleets pounded each other, slowly closing their range, until by 14:05 hours they reached about 3.5 miles (5.6 km), at which time both fleets let loose with their secondary 155 mm (6 in) guns. As the fleets continued to pound each other with all available guns, Togo's flagship was beginning to feel its wounds, and he tried to turn his vessel a bit, due to the hits she was taking (she ended up being hit 20 times), and urgently tried to have his cruisers engage the Russian battleline. But with his radio shot out, he had to rely on flag signals and radio relays from accompanying warships.

7.2.2 Stern chases

The Japanese cruisers had re-established contact with the Russian battleline, but were quickly driven off by their 305 mm gunfire. Both battlefleets were maintaining about 14 knots, but again, Vitgeft had managed to get past Togo, and the Japanese were forced to commence a stern chase. By 14:45 hours the Japanese flagship had closed to within about 7 miles (11 km) of the trailing battleship *Poltava*, which had been unable to maintain its fleet's 14 knots due to engine troubles. *Mikasa* and *Asahi* soon began to pound *Poltava*, scoring several hits. However, Admiral Ukhtomsky in the battleship *Peresvet* observed the plight of *Poltava* and ordered his division to fall back and help *Poltava*, and they began concentrating their gunfire onto *Mikasa* and *Asahi*. With Admiral Ukhtomsky's division firing, coupled with *Poltava*'s rejoining of the fight, *Mikasa* and *Asahi* began taking too many hits, and upon the urging of his chief of staff, Togo used his superior speed to break contact, race ahead of Vitgeft's fleet, and try to re-establish contact again under more favorable conditions. By 15:20 hours the range was opened and the firing ceased.*[5]

As the battleships had broken contact, Admiral Dewa with his cruisers attempted to get into action, when suddenly the Russian battleships opened up on him. At about 15:40 hours one 305 mm shell hit Dewa's cruiser, *Yakumo* from a range of over 8 miles, which was well out of range of his 203 mm (8 in) guns.*[5] Admiral Dewa decided that his four Japanese cruisers had no business tangling with any Russian battleships.

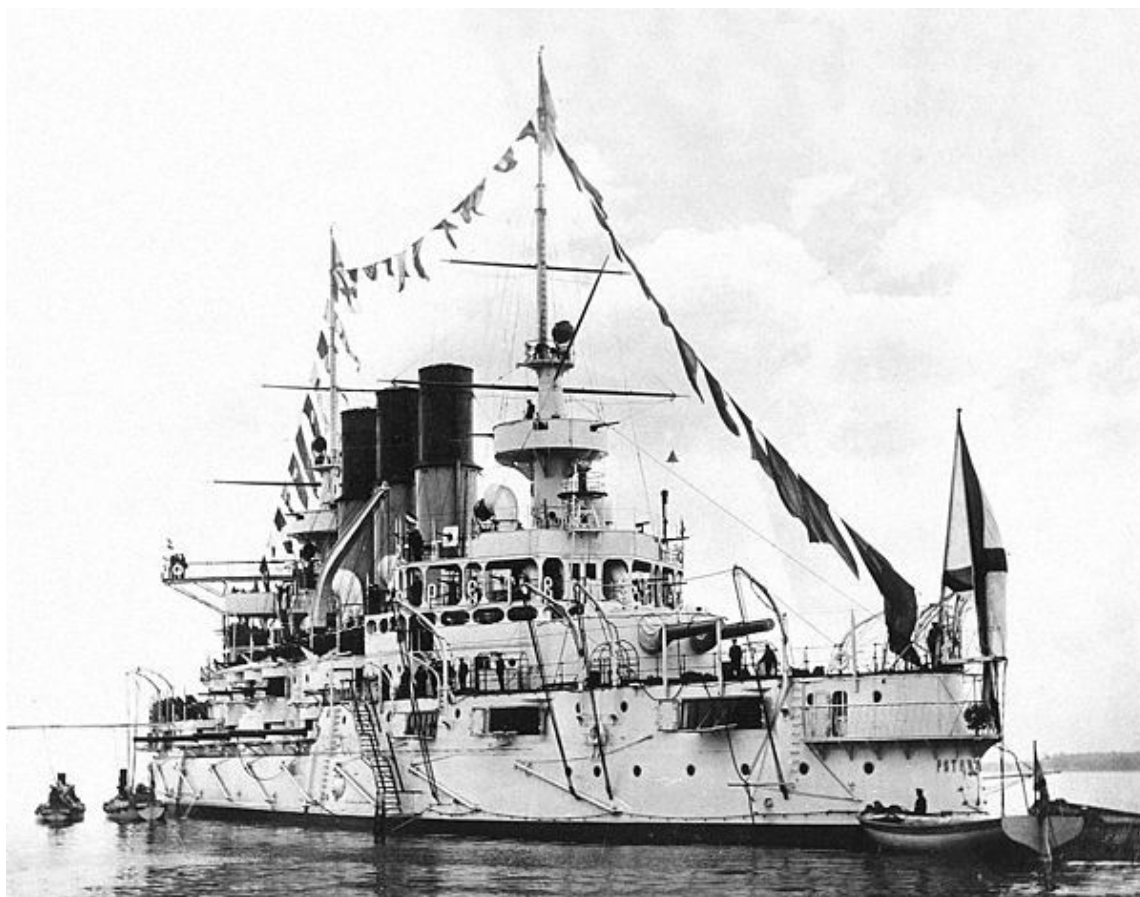
By this time, only Togo's 6 warships (4 battleships and 2 armored cruisers) were chasing Vitgeft's 10 warships (6 battleships and 4 cruisers).*[5] With darkness only 3 hours away, Admiral Vitgeft believed that he had outranged Admiral Togo, and would lose him totally when darkness came. Togo knew this too, and ordered a 15 knots (28 km/h; 17 mph) speed to catch up to the tail end of Vitgeft's fleet. By 17:35 hours Togo's warships had closed to within 3.5 miles of the again lagging battleship *Poltava*, and opened fire upon her. Admiral Dewa also showed up with his cruisers, and Togo ordered all battleships and cruisers to shell *Poltava*, hoping to at least sink one Russian battleship.*[5] However, the Russian commander, Captain Ivan P. Uspenskiy of *Poltava* would not go down meekly, and his crewmen scored several hits on Admiral Togo's flagship. At this time, the *Shimose* shells loaded inside the 305 mm guns became incredibly unstable and began detonating inside the gun barrels; knocking out of action one 305 mm on *Shikishima* at 17:45 hours, and two 305 mm barrels on *Asahi* at 18:10 hours. By 18:30 hours, Togo only had 11 of his original 17 305 mm guns still in action.

7.2.3 Hand-Off

Although the range had dropped to about 3 miles, the secondary batteries of 155 and 203 mm guns were still ineffective, and *Poltava* and *Peresvet*, although heavily damaged, were still with the Russian battleline. By 18:30 hours, Togo was still having trouble controlling his battleship's gunfire; *Shikishima* and *Asahi* were blasting away at the crippled *Poltava*, *Fuji* was shooting at *Pobeda* and *Peresvet*, while the flagship *Mikasa* was duelling with the Russian flagship *Tsesarevich*. No IJN warships were shooting at the Russian battleships *Retvizan* and *Sevastopol*, which allowed them to freely blast away at *Mikasa*. With darkness only 30 minutes away, the Japanese flagship *Mikasa* almost no longer combat effective, and Russian gunfire seemingly becoming more accurate and effective with each cannon shot; the flagship signaled to *Asahi* to take over (known as a battle handoff) the shooting upon the lead Russian battleship.*[6] Within 10 minutes of being relieved by *Asahi*, Admiral Togo got his lucky break, when at 18:40 hours *Asahi* fired a 305 mm salvo into the Russian flagship *Tsesarevich*, instantly killing Admiral Vitgeft and his immediate staff, and jamming the flagship's steering wheel. The explosion had wedged the wheel into a port turn, sharp enough so that

Tsesarevich heeled over 12 degrees. *Retvizan*, which was unaware of the situation on the flagship, followed in her wake. By the time *Pobeda* arrived at the turning point, *Tsesarevich* had swung around 180 degrees and was heading back into her own line. With no signal to indicate what had happened, the other ships were unaware that *Tsesarevich* was not only out of control and without its admiral, but was actually without anyone at all in command.

7.2.4 Charge of battleship *Retvizan*



Russian battleship Retvizan, whose captain received severe wounds in the ship's brave solo charge against the Japanese fleet.

Prince Pavel Ukhtomsky of the battleship *Peresvet* soon realized that the flagship was out of action, and attempted to gain control of the Russian squadron. But a Japanese shell, falling wide, cut the foremast of *Peresvet*, preventing the signal flags from being hoisted as usual; they had to be hoisted along the bridge instead. Being thus almost hidden from view, the signal apparently was only seen on *Sevastopol*, no other Russian capital ships followed Ukhtomsky's lead.

At the same time Captain Eduard Schensnovich commanding *Retvizan*, immediately turned his battleship towards Togo's battleline, charging directly into it with all weapons firing, despite being down by the bow from battle damage. Togo's battleline shifted their fire onto *Retvizan* as the range dropped to less than three miles. There were so many shell splashes surrounding the charging battleship, that Japanese gunners were unable to adjust their fire. However, as Togo's battleships were running low on 305 mm shells, and many of his main guns were out of action, he decided to play it safe, and with the Russian squadron scattered, he turned the fight over to his cruisers and destroyers.

As Togo's ships began their turn, they fired a final salvo, hitting the enemy battleship with several shells, one of which seriously wounded Captain Schensnovich in the stomach. *Retvizan* laid smoke and also began to turn away, but the battleship had effectively ended the duel between the opposing pre-dreadnoughts, and had saved the flagship from destruction.* [7] There was little choice but to give up the attempt to reach Vladivostok and to return to Port Arthur. Even this proved impossible to coordinate, and many ships wandered off on their own.

Two hours later, the bulk of the Russian fleet returned to the relative safety of Port Arthur. Five battleships, a cruiser and nine destroyers made it back. The damaged *Tsesarevich* and three escorting destroyers sailed to Kiaochou, where

they were interned by German authorities.*[8]*[9] The cruiser *Askold* and another destroyer sailed to Shanghai and were likewise interned by Chinese authorities. The cruiser *Diana* escaped to Saigon, where it was interned by the French.*[9] Only the small cruiser *Novik* sailed east around the Japanese home islands to try to reach Vladivostok. However, on 20 August 1904 pursuing Japanese cruisers forced the ship aground at Sakhalin, where it was destroyed by the crew after engaging the Japanese at the Battle of Korsakov.

7.3 Analysis

The Battle of the Yellow Sea was naval history's first major confrontation between modern steel battleship fleets, so with the exception of Admiral Togo's 20 minute duel with Russian Admiral Stark's battleships at Port Arthur on 9 February 1904, both Vitgeft and Togo were new to fighting modern steel battleship fleet actions.

Although Admiral Oskar Victorovich Stark had been replaced by Admiral Stepan Makarov shortly after the Port Arthur battle, Makarov in turn was replaced by Vitgeft, following Makarov's death in April 1904, when his battleship *Petropavlovsk* blew up and sank in the Yellow Sea, after striking mines.*[2] Had Admiral Stark remained in command at the time of the Yellow Sea battle, Admirals Togo and Stark would have met on equal terms, both retaining about equal combat experience in battleship fleet actions. But the naval force that Togo was to meet at Tsushima the following year was not the same type of battle fleet that he engaged at the Yellow Sea either. Though Admiral Vitgeft was new, many of his men were not, most of them were veterans of Far East duty, with some of them veterans of the 1900 Boxer Rebellion in China.*[10] Thus, when Togo fought Vitgeft's fleet in the Yellow Sea in August 1904, he quickly found that they knew how to sail, and they were good gunners.

7.3.1 Rangefinders and gunnery

During the late 1890s, it was thought that around 3 to 4 miles would be the norm for battleship engagements. Although 305 mm/40 caliber guns were quite capable of reaching out to the ranges that the Yellow Sea battle had opened up with (8 miles), the lack of effective range-finders and gun sights forced practical 305 mm (12 inch) gunfire to be held within a 3 to 4 mile range. During the battle, Russian battleships had been equipped with Liuzhol Rangefinders with a range out to 4,000 metres (4,400 yd), while Japanese pre-dreadnoughts had been equipped with the latest (1903) Barr & Stroud coincidence rangefinders, which had a range of 6,000 metres (6,600 yd).*[11] Notwithstanding all of the above, the world was quite surprised after the opponents opened fire upon one another while still over 8 miles apart.*[12]

The Yellow Sea engagement lasted some 6 to 7 hours, with about 4 of those hours being direct combat.*[13] During those nearly four hours of fighting, roughly 7,382 rounds were expended by both sides, ranging in size from 155 to 305 mm shells. Of those 7,382 shells fired, approximately 5,956 had been from 155 mm guns; 3,592 from the Imperial Japanese Navy, and 2,364 from the Imperial Russian Navy. 307 203 mm shells had been fired by the IJN, and none by the Russian fleet. Admiral Vitgeft's fleet had expended 224 254 mm shells compared to Togo's 33 shells. The long range gunnery duel that had commenced at a range of over 8 miles, and which began with 305 mm main gun fire, ended with 305 mm gun fire near darkness, during which time 862 305 mm main gun rounds were fired; 259 from the Russian battleships, and 603 from the Japanese battleships.*[13]

7.3.2 Battle damage and casualties

The nearly seven hours of naval combat coupled with the estimated 7,382 fired shells, had produced:*[6] for a hit rate of 1.7%.

Captain Eduard N. Shchensnovich, who had bravely charged his battleship into Admiral Togo's battleline, thus ending the battleship fleet duel, and saving the Russian flagship from destruction, later died from his wounds received from that action in April 1910, at the age of 58.*[14]

7.3.3 Result

The Russians wanted to breakout and sail to Vladivostok (relocating the fleet to there would have left the Japanese needing to mount a new campaign if it wanted to besiege the Russian fleet again and such a campaign would have overtaxed the resources of Field Marshal Oyama). The Japanese had an underlying objective to destroy the Russian

fleet while minimising their own losses. Once the Russian fleet left Port Arthur the Japanese initially sought to prevent it returning there, when the Japanese realised the Russians were not returning to Port Arthur they also sought to prevent the Russians reaching an alternative port, the Japanese prevented the Russians from reaching Vladivostok but failed to stop most of the fleet returning to Port Arthur. Neither side achieved its tactical goals. The Japanese, however, were successful to prevent the breakout, and returning Russian ships were later eliminated in the course of the *Siege of Port Arthur*.

7.4 Notes

- [1] Semenov (1907) p. 49 & 62
- [2] Forczyk p. 46
- [3] Forczyk p. 48
- [4] Forczyk p. 50
- [5] Forczyk p. 51
- [6] Forczyk p. 52
- [7] Forczyk p. 53
- [8] Forczyk p. 53, 54
- [9] Naval War College, p. 162
- [10] Forczyk p. 36
- [11] Forczyk p. 56 & 57
- [12] Forczyk p. 50, 72
- [13] Forczyk p. 73
- [14] Forczyk p. 37, 53

7.5 References

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7.6 External links

- Russo-Japanese War Research Society
- Russian Navy history of war: <http://flot.com/history/steemfleet/index.htm>
- article in Russian Language - <http://ship.bsu.by/main.asp?id=3905#3905>

Chapter 8

Battle of Sandepu

The **Battle of Sandepu**, (also known as the **Battle of Heikoutai**) (Japanese: 黒溝台会戦 (*Kokkōdai no kaisen*), Russian: Сражение при Сандепу) was a major land battle of the Russo-Japanese War. It was fought within a group of villages about 36 miles (58 km) southwest of Mukden, Manchuria.* [2]

8.1 Background

After the Battle of Shaho, the Russian and Japanese forces faced each other south of Mukden until the frozen Manchurian winter began. The Russians were entrenched in the city of Mukden, whereas the Japanese were occupying a 160 kilometer long front with the Japanese 1st Army, 2nd Army, 4th Army and the Akiyama Independent Cavalry Regiment. The Japanese field commanders thought no major battle was possible and assumed that the Russians had the same view regarding the difficulty of winter combat.

The Russian commander, General Alexei Kuropatkin was receiving reinforcements via the Trans-Siberian Railway, but was concerned about the impending arrival of the battle-hardened Japanese Third Army under General Nogi Maresuke to the front after the fall of Port Arthur on 2 January 1905.

On Kuropatkin's staff at Mukden was General Nikolai Linevich, who had been brought over from Vladivostok to command the 1st Manchurian Army and Kuropatkin's left flank. The center was held by General Alexander Kaulbars's 3rd Manchurian Army. The right flank was commanded by General Oskar Gripenberg, the inexperienced newly arrived commanding general of the 2nd Manchurian Army. The 2nd Manchurian Army consisted of the 8th European Army Corps, a division of the 10th, the 61st Reserve Division, the 5th Rifle Brigade, and the 1st Siberian Army Corps under General Baron Georgii Stackelberg, besides a large body of cavalry, or approximately, 285,000 men and 350 guns.

Gripenberg was initially pessimistic towards Kuropatkin's plans for an offensive against the Japanese left wing, which was left in an exposed northern position close to Russian territory near the small village of Heikoutai. He agreed to the plan on the condition that all three Russian armies coordinate their attack. Details of the plan were leaked by St Petersburg to a war correspondent from the *Echo de Paris*, who credited the plan to Gripenberg. This news article, as well as Gripenberg's major redeployments of his forces in 14 and 16 January, signaled the Russian intentions to the Japanese.

8.2 The Mishchenko Raid

Kuropatkin's first move was to send General Pavel Mishchenko south with 6000 cavalry and six batteries of light artillery with the aim of destroying Newchang Station on the South Manchurian Railroad. The station was known to have a large stockpile of food and supplies. Mishchenko was also instructed to destroy railway bridges and sections of the train track along the way. Departing on 8 January, Mishchenko made unexpectedly slow progress due to inclement weather and the lack of forage and supplies along the way. By the time he reached the station on 12 January, it had been heavily reinforced by the Japanese. After failing to take the station in three attempts, he was forced to withdraw, returning to Mukden on 18 January. The damage made by his dragoons to the rail tracks was quickly repaired by the Japanese.* [3]

8.3 The Battle of Sandepu

On 19 January, Kuropatkin issued orders for the Second Manchurian Army to attack in a maneuver to outflank **General Oku**'s Japanese Second Army and to drive it back across the Taitzu River before Nogi's Third Army could arrive. However, Gripenberg was not allowed to commit all of his forces – Kuropatkin limited him to three divisions plus the 1st East Siberian Army Corps and cavalry. The Japanese were aware of these plans, causing Oyama to reinforce his left flank. Kuropatkin afterwards blamed premature moves by Gripenberg for alerting the Japanese.*[4]

On 25 January 1905, the battle began with an attack by the 1st Siberian Rifle Corps on the fortified village of Heikoutai, which the Russians took with severe losses. The Russian 14th Division, which was intended to attack the fortified village of Sandepu (三界坝村), failed to coordinate its attack with the 1st Siberian, and attacked on the following day, 26 January, instead.*[4] Hampered by a lack of maps, reconnaissance and poor weather conditions, with occasional blizzards the Russians also attacked the wrong village, occupying the neighboring hamlet of Paotaitzu, which came under a strong artillery barrage and counterattack from Sandepu, which was occupied in strength by the **Japanese 5th Division**.*[5] Rather than come to their rescue, Gripenberg sent a false report to Kuropatkin that Sandepu had been taken, and ordered his men to rest on 27 January. However, the rest area assigned to Stackelberg's troops was in Japanese hands, and despite standing orders to the contrary, Stackelberg ordered his men to attack. After losing 6000 men,*[2] Stackelberg was forced to fall back.

By the morning of 28 January, Gripenberg found that he was separated from Kaulbars by the village of Sandepu, which prevented any attempt to link forces. However, as he still outnumbered the Japanese defenders by seven divisions to five divisions, he insisted on continuing the offensive. His decision was not supported by Kuropatkin, who acted with his usual caution and hesitation, and ordered Gripenberg's forces back. Stackelberg, again ignoring orders, continued to attack, and with the help of Mishchenko's cavalry, took part of Sandepu village. Simultaneously, the Russian 10th Army Corps under General **Konstantin Tserpitsky**, with Gripenberg's consent, succeeded in securing positions to the rear of Sandepu. Despite the advantageous situation, Kuropatkin then relieved Stackelberg of his command for insubordination, and again demanded that Gripenberg withdraw. Advancing Russian soldiers, their morale high as they were on what appeared to be a successful offense for the first time since the beginning of the war, could not understand the reason.

Oyama then launched a massive counteroffensive on 29 January 1905, and succeeded retaking Heikoutai by mid-morning.*[5]

Immediately after the battle, Gripenberg resigned his commission, claiming illness and was replaced by Kaulbars. On his return to St Petersburg, he stopped at **Harbin** where he bitterly blamed Kuropatkin for the debacle in the newspapers, declaring that he was a "traitor" and claiming that Kuropatkin withheld crucial support due to jealousy at his success. He continued a harsh publicity campaign against Kuropatkin in the newspapers after his return to Russia.*[4] Stackelberg was also relieved of his command by Kuropatkin, and charged with insubordination.*[2]

8.4 Results

Total Russian **casualties** at the Battle of Sandepu were 1,781 killed, 9,395 wounded and 1,065 MIA per modern Soviet sources,*[6] although other sources put to toll at over 20,000 men.*[7] Japanese casualties totaled around 9,000 with only 2,000 killed.*[2]

As the battle ended in a tactical stalemate, neither side claimed victory. In Russia, the **Marxists** used the newspaper controversy created by Gripenberg, and by Kuropatkin's incompetence in previous battles, to drum up more support in their campaign against the government.

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8.6 Notes

- [1] Russian Main Military Medical Directorate (*Glavnoe Voennno-Sanitarnoe Upravlenie*) statistical report. 1914.
- [2] Kowner, *Historical Dictionary of the Russo-Japanese War*, p. 342-343.
- [3] McCullagh, F. *With the Cossacks*
- [4] Jukes, page 65
- [5] Connaught, page 277
- [6] Soviet Casualties and Combat Losses in the Twentieth Century by G. F. Krivosheev
- [7] Connaught, page 278

Coordinates: 41°47'N 123°26'E / 41.783°N 123.433°E

Chapter 9

Battle of Mukden

For the 1931 incident that led to the Japanese invasion of Manchuria, see [Mukden Incident](#).

The **Battle of Mukden** (奉天会戦 *Hōten kaisen*), one of the largest land battles to be fought before World War I and the last and the most decisive major land battle of the Russo-Japanese War,* [6] was fought from 20 February to 10 March 1905 between Japan and Russia near Mukden in Manchuria. The city is now called Shenyang, the capital of Liaoning province in China.

The Russian forces, numbering more than 340,000, under General Alexei Nikolajevich Kuropatkin, fought the attacking Imperial Japanese Army forces numbering more than 280,000, led by Marshal Marquess Oyama Iwao.* [2] Involving more than 600,000 combat participants, it was the largest battle since the Battle of Leipzig in 1813, and also the largest modern-era battle ever fought in Asia before World War II.

9.1 Background

Following the Battle of Liaoyang (24 August to 4 September 1904), Russian forces retreated to the river Sha Ho south of Mukden and regrouped. From 5 October 1904 to 17 October 1904, during the Battle of Shaho, the Russians unsuccessfully counter-attacked, but managed to temporarily slow the Japanese advance.

A second Russian counter-offensive, the Battle of Sandepu, fought from (25 – 29 January 1905) was likewise unsuccessful.

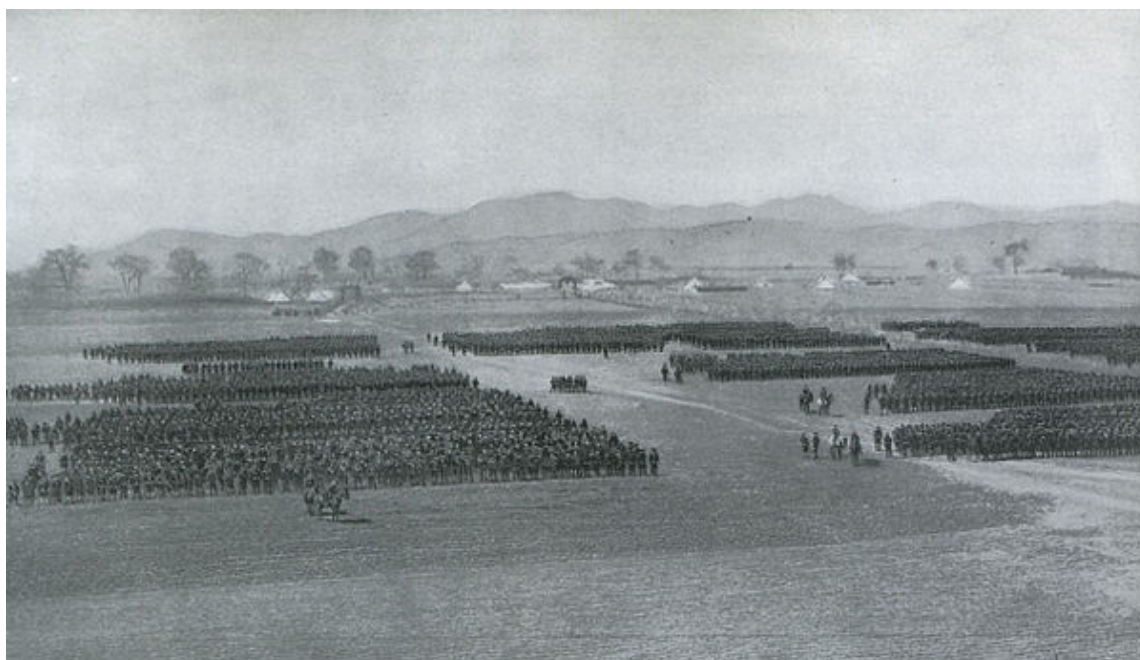
The fall of Port Arthur to General Nogi freed up the Japanese 3rd Army, which advanced north to reinforce the Japanese lines near Mukden in preparation for an attack.

By February 1905, the manpower reserves of the Japanese army had been drained. With the arrival of General Nogi's Third Army, Japan's entire fighting strength was concentrated at Mukden. The severe casualties, bitter cold climate, and approach of the Russian Baltic Fleet created pressure on Marshal Oyama to effect the complete destruction of the Russian forces, rather than just another victory from which the Russians could withdraw further into Manchuria.

9.2 Disposition of Forces

The Russian line to the south of Mukden was 90 miles (140 km) long, with little depth and with a central reserve. On the right flank, in flat ground, was the Second Manchurian Army under General Baron von Kaulbars (who had replaced the unfortunate General Oscar Gripenberg). In the center, holding the railway and the highway was the Third Manchurian Army under General Baron von Bilderling. The hilly terrain on the east flank was held by the First Manchurian Army under General Nikolai Linevich. This flank also held two-thirds of the Russian cavalry, under General Paul von Rennenkampf. General Kuropatkin had thus disposed his forces in a purely defensive layout, from which it would be difficult to impossible to execute an offensive without opening a major gap in the lines.

On the Japanese side, the Japanese First Army (General Kuroki) and Japanese Fourth Army (General Nozu) advanced to the east of the rail line, and the Japanese Second Army (General Oku) to the west. General Nogi's Japanese Third Army was kept concealed behind the 2nd Army until the start of battle. A newly formed Japanese *Ōryokukō* (Yalu



Formation of a Japanese division

River) Army under General Kawamura provided a major diversion on the Russian eastern flank. The Yalu River Army was much under strength, and consisted only of the IJA 11th Division (from Port Arthur) and reservists. Despite that it was technically not under the Japanese Manchurian Army but directly under Imperial General Headquarters to attack Primorsky Krai politically, the division was substantially under Manchuria HQ under the commander's decision.

General Kuropatkin was convinced that the main Japanese thrust would come from the mountainous eastern side, as the Japanese had proven themselves effective in such terrain, and the presence of the former 3rd Army veterans from the 11th Division in that area reinforced his convictions.

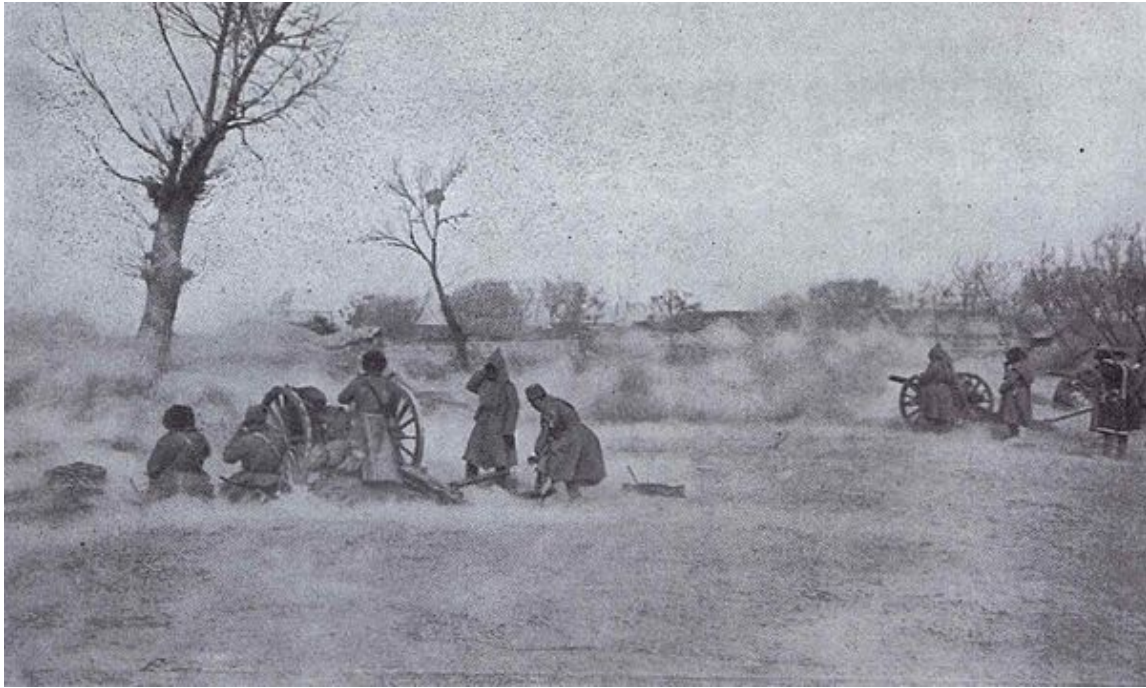
Field Marshal Oyama's plan was to form his armies into a crescent to encircle Mukden, cutting off the possibility of Russian escape. He was explicit in his orders that combat within the city of Mukden itself was to be avoided. All during the war, the Japanese had pursued a meticulous civil affairs policy aimed at avoiding civilian casualties and keeping the Chinese populace on their side – a stark contrast with the previous First Sino-Japanese War and subsequent Second Sino-Japanese War.

9.3 The battle

The battle opened with the Japanese 5th Army attacking the left flank of the Russian forces on 20 February. On 27 February 1905 the Japanese 4th Army attacked the right flank, while other Japanese forces also attacked the Russian front lines. On the same day, the Japanese 3rd Army began its movement in a wide circle northwest of Mukden.

By 1 March 1905, action on the eastern and center fronts was largely static. The Japanese had made small advances but under heavy casualties. However, by 7 March, General Kuropatkin began withdrawing forces from the eastern front to counter the Japanese 3rd Army's moves on the western flank of Mukden, and was so concerned about General Nogi's movements that he decided to lead the counterattack himself. The shifting of forces from east to west was not well coordinated by the Russians, causing the 1st and 3rd Manchurian Armies to all but disintegrate into chaos. Then Kuropatkin decided to withdraw his troops north towards Mukden to face the Japanese forces head-on on the city's southwest and at the banks of the Hun River in the city's southeast.

Then Field Marshal Oyama seized the chance he had been waiting for, and his orders to “attack” were changed to “pursue and destroy”. Luck was further with the Japanese due to the late thaw in the weather. The Hun River, guarded by the Russian left flank commanded by Major General Mikhail Alekseyev, remained frozen, and was not an obstacle to the Japanese attack. However, as they crossed the river, the Japanese attack was hampered when they encountered stiff resistance and heavy artillery fire coming from the Russians, now commanded by General Paul von Rennenkampf, resulting in yet more heavy casualties, but after heavy fighting had succeeded in taking the northern



Russian field gun during the battle.

bank of the river, causing the Russian defense lines defending the bank to collapse and the far edge of their left flank to be partially cut off from the rest of the main body of Kuropatkin's army. At the same time a salient was formed just 15 kilometers west of Mukden, enabling the Japanese to totally encircle the Russians on their right flank in the process.

All but encircled and with no hope for victory, General Kuropatkin gave the order to retreat to the north at 18:45 on 9 March. The Russian withdrawal was complicated by General Nozu's breach through Russian rearlines over the Hun River, and quickly turned into a disorganized rout. The panicked Russian forces abandoned their wounded, weapons and supplies in their flight north towards Tieling.

At 10:00 AM on 10 March, Japanese forces occupied Mukden. After they occupied Mukden the Japanese continued their hard-driven pursuit of the Russians, but this was hampered when Oyama knew that his army's supply lines were stretching too thin; however, he continued the pursuit of the enemy, though in a lazy, slow manner. The pursuit was stopped 20 kilometers short of Mukden, but the Russians were already fleeing farther north from Tieling towards the Sino-Russian border at a fast pace, and the battle was over with the Japanese as the victor.

9.4 Conclusion

Russian casualties amounted to nearly 90,000.*[3][4] The Russians had also lost most of their combat supplies as well as most of their artillery and heavy machine guns. Fearing further Japanese advances, General Kuropatkin ordered that the town of Tieling be put to the torch, and marched his remaining men 10 days further north to a new defense line at Hsipingkai (modern Siping, Jilin province, China), where General Mikhail Batyanov (who replaced General von Bilderling as commander of the Third Manchurian Army) organized defenses against a possible renewed Japanese offensive. However, Kuropatkin did not hold this line for very long, and soon organized a complete withdrawal of Russian forces from the region. The Japanese forces suffered 75,000 casualties*[3][4] which included a higher percentage of killed and wounded over the Russians. The Japanese captured 58 artillery pieces.*[7]

No serious fighting on land occurred after this battle as both Russian and Japanese armies were exhausted from the conflict.



Russian Cavalry under Reconnaissance Mission during the Battle of Mukden

9.5 Aftermath

With the defeat of the Russian Manchurian Army in Mukden, the Russian forces were driven out of southern Manchuria for good. However, with problems concerning its overstretched supply lines, the Japanese army failed to destroy the Russian forces stationed in the region completely and Kuropatkin's forces, though severely demoralized, short of supplies and in the verge of disintegration, were still largely intact. But the battle of Mukden was decisive enough to shatter the Russians' morale and, with the unfinished Trans-Siberian railroad now under Japanese hands, undermined the tsarist government's war effort. The final, decisive battle of the war would be eventually fought on the waters of Tsushima.*[8]

The victory shocked the imperial powers of Europe, as they thought that although the Russians had more manpower and material, the Japanese proved overwhelming throughout the battle. The battle became a proof that the Europeans were not invincible and could be even decisively outmatched in battle. Two Russian generals, Aleksandr Samsonov and Paul von Rennenkampf, the future commanders of two armies which would fight in the even more disastrous Battle of Tannenberg in World War I, began to loath each other as von Rennenkampf, the commander of the Russian left flank during the battle, was accused by Samsonov of failing to assist him during the fighting, and Samsonov later publicly complained against von Rennenkampf. But it shocked Tsar Nicholas II more when news of the defeat reached the palace in St. Petersburg; it proved to them that a relatively tiny Asian empire, like Japan, could defeat a powerful and huge European empire. The tsarist government was irritated over the incompetence and clumsiness of their commanders during the battle, and the government was very frustrated that it again shifted its imperialist policies towards the Balkan region after the war, eventually becoming a precursor for the First World War.



Russian troops in combat against Japanese troops.



Retreat of Russian soldiers towards the Sino-Russian border after the battle.

9.6 Notes

- [1] Tucker 2009, p. 1542: “Thus, the Battle of Mukden is not the decisive victory that the Japanese need.”

- [3] Menning p.194
- [4] Martin p.207
- [5] Russian Main Military Medical Directorate (*Glavnoe Voenno-Sanitarnoe Upravlenie*) statistical report. 1914.
- [6] Palmer, Colton & Kramer 2007, p. 673
- [7] “Russo-Japanese War, Lessons Not Learned,” page 88, by Major James D. Sizemore. The Japanese captured relatively few Russian artillery pieces at Mukden.
- [8] Tucker 2009, p. 1542.

9.7 References

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Coordinates: 41°47′N 123°26′E / 41.783°N 123.433°E

Chapter 10

Battle of Tsushima

The **Battle of Tsushima** (Russian: Цусимское сражение, *Tsusimskoye srazheniye*), also known as the **Battle of Tsushima Strait** and the **Naval Battle of the Sea of Japan** (Japanese: 日本海海戦, *Nihonkai-Kaisen*) in Japan, was a major naval battle fought between Russia and Japan during the **Russo-Japanese War**. It was naval history's only decisive sea battle fought by modern steel battleship fleets,*[2]*[3] and the first naval battle in which **wireless telegraphy** (radio) played a critically important role. It has been characterized as the “dying echo of the old era – for the last time in the history of naval warfare ships of the line of a beaten fleet surrendered on the high seas.”*[4]

It was fought on May 27–28, 1905 (May 14–15 in the **Julian calendar** then in use in Russia) in the **Tsushima Strait** between **Korea** and southern **Japan**. In this battle the **Japanese** fleet under Admiral **Tōgō Heihachirō** destroyed two-thirds of the **Russian** fleet, under Admiral **Zinovy Rozhdestvensky**, which had traveled over 18,000 nautical miles (33,000 km) to reach the Far East. In London in 1906, Sir **George Sydenham Clarke** wrote, “The battle of Tsushima is by far the greatest and the most important naval event since **Trafalgar**”;*[5] decades later, historian **Edmund Morris** agreed with this judgment.*[6] The destruction of the Russian navy caused a bitter reaction from the Russian public, which induced a **peace treaty** in September 1905 without any further battles.

Prior to the **Russo-Japanese War**, countries constructed their battleships with mixed batteries of mainly 152 mm (6-inch), 203 mm (8-inch), 254 mm (10-inch) and 305 mm (12-inch) guns, with the intent that these battleships fight on the battle line in a close-quarter, decisive fleet action. The Battle of Tsushima conclusively demonstrated that battleship speed and big guns*[7] with longer ranges were more advantageous in naval battles than mixed batteries of different sizes.*[8]

The **wireless telegraph** had been invented during the last half of the 1890s, and by the turn of the century nearly all major navies were adopting this improved communications technology. Nonetheless Tsushima would be “the first major **sea battle** in which wireless played any role whatsoever.”*[9] **Alexander Stepanovich Popov** of the Naval Warfare Institute had built and demonstrated a wireless telegraphy set in 1900, and equipment from the firm **Telefunken** in Germany was adopted by the Imperial Russian Navy. In Japan, Professor **Shunkichi Kimura** was commissioned into the Imperial Navy to develop their own wireless system, and this was in place in many Japanese warships before 1904. Although both sides had early wireless telegraphy, the Russians were using German sets and had difficulties in their use and maintenance, while the Japanese had the advantage of using their own equipment.

10.1 Background

10.1.1 Conflict in the Far East

On 8 February 1904 destroyers of the **Imperial Japanese Navy** launched a surprise attack on the Russian Far East Fleet anchored in **Port Arthur**; three ships—two battleships and a cruiser—were damaged in the attack. The Russo-Japanese war had thus begun. Japan's first objective was to secure its lines of communication and supply to the Asian mainland, enabling it to conduct a ground war in Manchuria. To achieve this, it was necessary to neutralize Russian naval power in the Far East. At first, the Russian naval forces remained inactive and did not engage the Japanese, who staged unopposed landings in Korea. The Russians were revitalised by the arrival of Admiral **Stepan Makarov** and were able to achieve some degree of success against the Japanese, but on 13 April Makarov's flagship, the battleship ***Petropavlovsk*** struck a mine; Makarov was among the dead.*[10] His successors failed to challenge the Japanese

Navy, and the Russians were effectively bottled up in their base at Port Arthur.

By May, the Japanese had landed forces on the **Liaodong Peninsula** and in August began the siege of the naval station. On 9 August, Admiral **Wilhelm Vitgeft**, commander of the 1st Pacific Squadron, was ordered to sortie his fleet to **Vladivostok**,^[11] link up with the Squadron stationed there, and then engage the **Imperial Japanese Navy (IJN)** in a decisive battle.^[12] Both squadrons of the **Russian Pacific Fleet** would ultimately become dispersed during the battles of the **Yellow Sea** on 10 August and the **Ulsan** on 14 August 1904. What remained of Russian naval power would eventually be sunk in **Port Arthur**.^[13]

10.1.2 The Second Pacific Squadron

With the inactivity of the First Pacific Squadron after the death of Admiral Makarov and the tightening of the Japanese noose around Port Arthur, the Russians considered sending part of their **Baltic Fleet** to the Far East. The plan was to relieve Port Arthur by sea, link up with the First Pacific Squadron, overwhelm the Imperial Japanese Navy, and then delay the Japanese advance into Manchuria until Russian reinforcements could arrive via the **Trans-Siberian railroad** and overwhelm the Japanese land forces in Manchuria. As the situation in the Far East deteriorated, the Tsar (encouraged by his cousin **Kaiser Wilhelm II**),^[14] agreed to the formation of the *Second Pacific Squadron*.^[15] It would consist of five divisions of the Baltic Fleet, including 11 of its 13 battleships. The squadron departed on 15 October 1904 under the command of Admiral **Zinovy Rozhdestvensky**.

The Second Pacific Squadron sailed through the **North Sea**. As there were rumours of Japanese torpedo boats in the North Sea, several Russian ships fired upon British fishing trawlers off the **Dogger Bank**, causing the Royal Navy to shadow the Russian fleet until a diplomatic agreement was reached.^[15] Barred by Britain from using the **Suez Canal**, the Russians sailed around Africa, and by April and May 1905 had anchored at **Cam Ranh Bay** in French Indochina (now Vietnam). The voyage was long and arduous, and the morale of the crews plummeted. The Russians had been ordered to break the blockade of Port Arthur, but the city had already fallen on 2 January, so the Russian port of Vladivostok became the objective.

10.1.3 Tsushima Strait

The Russians could have sailed through any one of three possible straits to enter the Sea of Japan and reach Vladivostok: **La Perouse**, **Tsugaru**, and **Tsushima**. Admiral Rozhdestvensky chose Tsushima in an effort to simplify his route. Admiral Tōgō, based at **Busan**, also believed Tsushima would be the preferred Russian course. The Tsushima Strait is the body of water eastward of the **Tsushima Island** group, located midway between the Japanese island of Kyushu and the Korean Peninsula, the shortest and most direct route from Indochina. The other routes would have required the fleet to sail east around Japan. The Japanese Combined Fleet and the Russian Second and Third Pacific Squadrons, sent from the Baltic Sea, would fight in the straits between Korea and Japan near the Tsushima Islands.

10.2 Prelude

Main article: **Tsushima Strait order of battle**

Because of the 18,000-mile journey, the Russian fleet was in relatively poor condition for battle. Apart from the four newest **Borodino-class battleships**, Admiral Nebogatov's 3rd Division^[16] consisted of older and poorly maintained warships. Overall neither side had a significant maneuverability advantage.^[17] The long voyage, combined with a lack of opportunity for maintenance, meant the Russian ships were heavily **fouled**, significantly reducing their speed.^[18] The Japanese ships could sustain 15 **knots** (28 km/h), but the Russian fleet could reach just 14 knots (26 km/h), and then only in short bursts.^[17]

Tōgō was able to use the superior maneuverability of his fleet to his advantage, "**crossing the T**" twice. Additionally, there were significant deficiencies in the Russian naval fleet's equipment and training. Russian naval tests with their torpedoes exposed major technological failings.^[19] Tōgō's greatest advantage was that of experience, being the only active admiral in any navy with combat experience aboard battleships.^[20] (The others were Russian Admirals **Oskar Victorovich Stark**, who had been relieved of his command following his humiliating loss in the **Battle of Port Arthur**, Admiral **Stepan Makarov**, killed by a mine off Port Arthur and **Wilhelm Vitgeft**, who had been killed in the **Battle of the Yellow Sea**.)

- The long voyage by the Russian Baltic Fleet
 - blue - Rozhdestvensky fleet
 - yellow - Dobrotvorsky unit
 - red - Nebogatov detachment
 - (dates - New Style)
- Korea and Tsushima Straits and Tsushima Islands.
- Map showing the routes of both fleets.

10.3 Battle

10.3.1 Naval tactics

Battleships, cruisers, and other vessels were arranged into divisions, each division being commanded by a Flag Officer (Admiral). At the battle of Tsushima, Admiral Tōgō was the officer commanding in the battleship *Mikasa* (the other divisions being commanded by Vice Admirals, Rear Admirals, Commodores, Captains and Commanders for the destroyer divisions). Next in line after *Mikasa* came the battleships *Shikishima*, *Fuji* and *Asahi*. Following them were two armoured cruisers.

Admiral Tōgō, by using reconnaissance and choosing his position well, “secured beyond reasonable hazard his strategic objective of bringing the Russian fleet to battle, irrespective of speeds.”*[21] When Tōgō decided to execute a turn to port in sequence, he did so to preserve the sequence of his battleline, with the flagship *Mikasa* still in the lead (which could indicate that Admiral Tōgō wanted his more powerful units to enter action first).

Turning in sequence meant that each ship would turn one after the other whilst still following the ship in front. Effectively each vessel would turn over the same piece of sea (this being the danger in the maneuver as it gives the enemy fleet the opportunity to target that area). Tōgō could have ordered his ships to turn “together”, that is, each ship would have made the turn at the same time and reversed course. This maneuver, the same one effected by the French-Spanish fleet at *Trafalgar*, would be quicker but would have disrupted the sequence of the battleline and caused confusion by altering the battle plans and placing the cruisers in the lead. This was something Tōgō wished to avoid.



Departure of the Combined (Japanese) Fleet.

10.3.2 First contact

Because the Russians desired to slip undetected into Vladivostok, as they approached Japanese waters they steered outside regular shipping channels to reduce the chance of detection. On the night of 26/27 May 1905 the Russian fleet approached the Tsushima Strait.

In the night, thick fog blanketed the straits, giving the Russians an advantage. At 02:45 Japan Standard Time (JST), the Japanese auxiliary cruiser *Shinano Maru* observed three lights on what appeared to be a vessel on the distant horizon and closed to investigate. These lights were from the Russian hospital ship *Orel*, which in compliance with the rules of war, had continued to burn them.*[22] At 04:30, *Shinano Maru* approached the vessel, noting that she carried no guns and appeared to be an auxiliary. The *Orel* mistook the *Shinano Maru* for another Russian vessel and did not attempt to notify the fleet. Instead, she signaled to inform the Japanese ship that there were other Russian vessels nearby. The *Shinano Maru* then sighted the shapes of ten other Russian ships in the mist. The Russian fleet had been discovered, and any chance of reaching Vladivostok undetected had disappeared.

Wireless telegraphy played an important role from the start. At 04:55, Captain Narukawa of the *Shinano Maru* sent a message to Admiral Tōgō in Masampo that the “Enemy is in square 203” . By 05:00, intercepted wireless signals informed the Russians that they had been discovered and that Japanese scouting cruisers were shadowing them. Admiral Tōgō received his message at 05:05, and immediately began to prepare his battle fleet for a sortie.

10.3.3 Beginning of the battle



Z flag

At 06:34, before departing with the Combined Fleet, Admiral Tōgō wired a confident message to the navy minister in Tokyo:

In response to the warning that enemy ships have been sighted, the Combined Fleet will immediately commence action and attempt to attack and destroy them. Weather today fine but high waves.*[23]

The final sentence of this telegram, conveying a poetic and almost serene attitude towards a battle that would risk the entire Japanese fleet, became legendary in the annals of Japanese military history.

At the same time the entire Japanese fleet put to sea, with Tōgō in his flagship *Mikasa* leading over forty vessels to meet the Russians. Meanwhile, the shadowing Japanese scouting vessels sent wireless reports every few minutes as to the formation and course of the Russian fleet. There was mist which reduced visibility and the weather was poor. Wireless gave the Japanese an advantage; in his report on the battle, Admiral Tōgō noted the following:

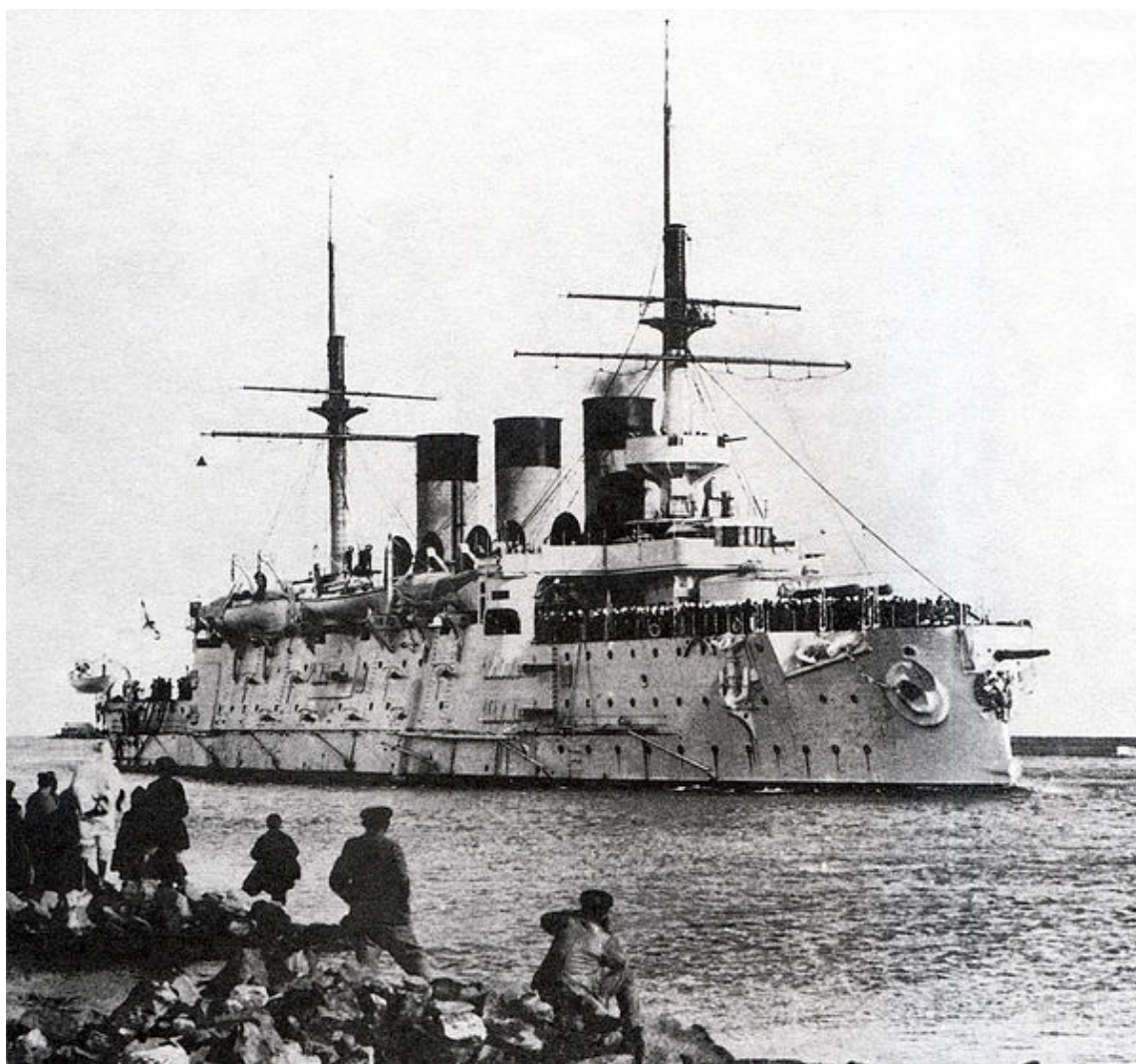
Though a heavy fog covered the sea, making it impossible to observe anything at a distance of over five miles, [through wireless messaging] all the conditions of the enemy were as clear to us, who were 30 or 40 miles distant, as though they had been under our very eyes. *[24]

At 13:40, both fleets sighted each other and prepared to engage. At around 13:55, Tōgō ordered the hoisting of the **Z** flag, issuing a predetermined announcement to the entire fleet:

The Empire's fate depends on the result of this battle, let every man do his utmost duty. *[25]

By 14:45, Tōgō had 'crossed the Russian T' *[26] enabling him to fire broadsides, while the Russians could only reply with their forward turrets. *[27] *[28] *[29]

10.3.4 Daylight action



Russian battleship Oslyabya, the first warship sunk in the battle

The Russians sailed from south southwest to north northeast; “continuing to a point of intersection which allowed only their bow guns to bear; enabling him [Tōgō] to throw most of the Russian batteries successively out of bearing.” *[30]

The Japanese fleet steamed from northeast to west, Tōgō ordered the fleet to turn in sequence, which enabled his ships to take the same course as the Russians, although risking each battleship consecutively. Although Tōgō's U-turn was successful, Russian **gunnery** had proven surprisingly good and the flagship *Mikasa* was hit 15 times in five minutes. Before the end of the engagement she would be struck 15 more times by large caliber shells.*[31] Rozhstvensky had only two alternatives, “a charge direct, in line abreast”, or to commence “a formal pitched battle.”*[30] He chose the latter, and at 14:08, the Japanese flagship *Mikasa* was hit at about 7,000 meters, with the Japanese replying at 6,400 meters. Superior Japanese gunnery then took its toll,*[32] with most of the Russian battleships being crippled. As naval engagements traditionally began at a considerably closer range, Tōgō immediately gained the advantage of surprise.

Commander Vladimir Semenoff, a Russian staff officer aboard the flagship *Knyaz Suvorov*, noted that “It seemed impossible even to count the number of projectiles striking us. Shells seemed to be pouring upon us incessantly one after another.”*[33] The steel plates and superstructure on the upper decks were torn to pieces, and the splinters caused many casualties. Iron ladders were crumpled up into rings, guns were literally hurled from their mountings. In addition to this, there was the unusually high temperature and liquid flame of the explosion, which seemed to spread over everything. I actually watched a steel plate catch fire from a burst.”*[29]

An hour and half into the fight, the first warship to be sunk in the battle was the Russian battleship *Oslyabya* from Rozhstvensky's 2nd Battleship division. Prior to this sea battle, modern armored battleships had never been sunk by gunfire alone, and now the *Oslyabya* had gained the unfortunate distinction of being history's first.*[34]

A direct hit on the Russian battleship *Borodino*'s magazines by the Japanese battleship *Fuji* caused her to explode, which sent smoke thousands of feet into the air and trapped all of her crew on board as the ship slid under the sea.*[29] The Japanese ships suffered only light damage. Rozhstvensky was knocked out of action by a shell fragment that struck his skull. In the evening, Rear Admiral Nebogatov took over command of the Russian fleet. The Russians lost the battleships *Knyaz Suvorov*, *Oslyabya*, *Imperator Aleksandr III* and *Borodino*.

10.3.5 Night attacks

At night, around 20:00, 21 **destroyers** and 37 Japanese **torpedo boats** were thrown against the Russians. The destroyers attacked from the vanguard while the torpedo boats attacked from the east and south of the Russian fleet. The Japanese were aggressive, continuing their attacks for three hours without a break, as a result during the night, there were a number of collisions between the small craft and Russian warships. The Russians were now dispersed in small groups trying to break northwards. By 23:00, it appeared that the Russians had vanished, but they revealed their positions to their pursuers by switching on their searchlights —ironically, the searchlights had been turned on to spot the attackers. The old battleship *Navarin* struck a mine and was compelled to stop, she was consequently torpedoed four times and sunk. Out of a crew of 622, only three survived, one to be rescued by the Japanese and the other two by a British merchant ship.

The battleship *Sissoi Veliky* was badly damaged by a torpedo in the stern, and was scuttled the next day. Two old armoured cruisers — *Admiral Nakhimov* and *Vladimir Monomakh* —were badly damaged, the former by a torpedo hit to the bow, the latter by colliding with a Japanese destroyer. They were both **scuttled** by their crews the next morning, the *Admiral Nakhimov* off *Tsushima Island*, where she headed while taking on water. The night attacks had put a great strain on the Russians, as they had lost two battleships and two armoured cruisers, while the Japanese had only lost three torpedo boats.

10.3.6 XGE signal and Russian surrender

During the night action, Tōgō had deployed his **torpedo boat destroyers** to destroy any remaining enemy vessels, chase down any fleeing warships, and then consolidate his heavy units. At 09:30 on 28 May, what remained of the Russian fleet was sighted heading northwards. Tōgō's battleships proceeded to surround Nebogatov's remaining squadron south of the island of *Takeshima* and commenced main battery fire at 12,000 meters.*[35] Realising that his guns were out ranged by at least one thousand yards and that he could be destroyed at Togo's leisure, Nebogatov ordered the six ships remaining under his command to surrender. **XGE**, an international signal of surrender, was hoisted; however the Japanese navy continued to fire as they did not have “surrender” in their code books and had to hastily find one that did. Still under heavy fire, Nebogatov then ordered white table cloths sent up the mastheads, but Admiral Togo having had a Chinese warship escape him while flying that flag during the 1894 war did not trust them, and continued to fire his main batteries. Togo's experience was reinforced when the Russian cruiser *Izumrud* quickly yanked down her XGE surrender flag and bolted.*[36] Running out of options, Nebogatov finally ordered the Imperial Japanese

Navy flag up the mastheads and all engines stopped.*[37] When Japanese flags began showing up in 12-inch gun range finders, Admiral Togo gave the cease fire and accepted Nebogatov's surrender. Nebogatov was unwilling to sacrifice the lives of his sailors simply to save his own honour.*[nb 1]*[29] He decided instead to accept the shame of surrender, knowing full well he might be shot when he returned to Russia.*[29] He said to his men:

You are young, and it is you who will one day retrieve the honour and glory of the Russian Navy. The lives of the two thousand four hundred men in these ships are more important than mine.*[29]

Neither Nebogatov nor Rozhdestvensky were shot when they returned home to Russia. However, both were placed on trial. Rozhdestvensky claimed full responsibility for the fiasco; but as he had been wounded and unconscious during the last part of the battle, the Tsar commuted his death sentence. Nebogatov, having actually surrendered the fleet at the end of the naval engagement, was imprisoned for several years and eventually pardoned by the Tsar. Both men's reputations were ruined.

Until the evening of 28 May, isolated Russian ships were pursued by the Japanese until almost all were destroyed or captured. Three Russian warships reached Vladivostok. The cruiser *Izumrud*, which escaped from the Japanese despite being present at Nebogatov's surrender, was scuttled by her crew after running aground near the Siberian coast.

10.4 Contributing factors

The Japanese fleets had practised gunnery regularly since the beginning of the war, using sub-calibre adapters in their guns and gaining more experience than the Russians. The Japanese also used mostly high-explosive shells with *shimose* (melinite), which was designed to explode on contact and wreck the upper structures of ships.*[38] The Russians used armour-piercing rounds with small guncotton bursting charges and unreliable fuses.*[39] Japanese hits caused more damage to Russian ships relative to Russian hits on Japanese ships, setting the superstructures, the paintwork and the large quantities of coal stored on the decks on fire. (The Russian fleet often bought low-quality coal at sea from merchant vessels on most of their long voyage due to the lack of friendly fuelling ports).

Japanese fire was also more accurate because they were using the latest issued (1903) Barr & Stroud FA3 coincidence rangefinder, which had a range of 6,000 yards (5,500 m), while the Russian battleships were equipped with Liuzhol rangefinders from the 1880s, which only had a range of about 4,000 yards (3,700 m).*[40] And finally, by 27 May 1905, Admiral Tōgō and his men had two battleship fleet actions under their belts, which amounted to over four hours of combat experience in battleship-to-battleship combat at Port Arthur and the Yellow Sea*[41]—experience which would eliminate the miscalculations and rash decisions made during those battles, while applying the learned lessons from those sea engagements with both finesse and ruthlessness at Tsushima.*[42]

10.5 Aftermath

10.5.1 Russian losses

The battle was a devastating humiliation for Russia which lost all its battleships and most of its cruisers and destroyers. The battle effectively ended the Russo-Japanese War in Japan's favour. The Russians lost 4,380 killed and 5,917 captured, including two admirals, with a further 1,862 interned.*[43]

Battleships

The Russians lost eleven battleships, including three smaller coastal vessels, either sunk or captured by the Japanese, or scuttled by their crews to prevent capture. Four ships were lost to enemy action during the daylight battle on 27 May: *Knyaz Suvorov*, *Imperator Aleksandr III*, *Borodino* and *Oslabya*. *Navarin* was lost during the night action, on 27–28 May, while the *Sissoi Veliky*, *Admiral Nakhimov* and *Admiral Ushakov* were either scuttled or sunk the next day. Four other battleships, under Rear Admiral Nebogatov, were forced to surrender and would end up as prizes of war. This group consisted of only one modern battleship, *Oryol*, along with the old battleship *Imperator Nikolai I* and the two small coastal battleships *General Admiral Graf Apraksin* and *Admiral Seniavin*.*[44] The small coastal battleship *Admiral Ushakov* refused to surrender and was scuttled by her crew.*[44]



Battle damage to the cruiser Zhemchug. Note the shell hole in the stack.



Battle damage to the cruiser Oleg, in Manila Bay

Cruisers

The Russian Navy lost four of its eight cruisers during the battle, three were interned by the Americans, with just one reaching Vladivostok. *Vladimir Monomakh* and *Svetlana* were sunk the next day, after the daylight battle. The cruiser *Dmitrii Donskoi* fought against six Japanese cruisers and survived; however, due to heavy damage she was scuttled. *Izumrud* ran aground near the Siberian coast.*[44] Three Russian protected cruisers, *Aurora*, *Zhemchug*, and *Oleg* escaped to the U.S. naval base at Manila*[44] in the then-American-controlled Philippines where they were interned, as the United States was neutral. The armed yacht (classified as a cruiser), *Almaz*, alone was able to reach Vladivostok.*[45]

Destroyers and auxiliaries

Imperial Russia also lost six of its nine destroyers in the battle, had one interned by the Chinese, with two escaping to Vladivostok. They were — *Buyniy* ("Буйный"), *Bistriy* ("Быстрый"), *Bezuprechniy* ("Безупречный"), *Gromkiy* ("Громкий") and *Blestyashchiy* ("Блестящий") — sunk on 28 May, *Byedoviy* ("Бедовый") surrendered that day. *Bodriy* ("Бодрый") was interned in Shanghai; *Grosniy* ("Грозный") and *Braviy* ("Бравый") reached Vladivostok.

Of the auxiliaries, *Kamchatka*, *Ural* and *Rus* were sunk on 27 May, *Irtuisk* ran aground on 28 May, *Koreya* and *Svir* were interned in Shanghai; *Anadyr* escaped to Madagascar. The hospital ships *Orel* and *Kostroma* were captured; *Kostroma* was released afterwards.

10.5.2 Japanese losses

The Japanese lost only three torpedo boats (Nos. 34, 35 and 69), with 117 men killed and 500 wounded.*[43]

10.5.3 Political consequences

Imperial Russia's prestige was badly damaged and the defeat was a severe blow to the Romanov dynasty. Nearly the entire Russian fleet was lost in a single battle; the fast armed yacht *Almaz* (classified as a cruiser of the 2nd rank) and the destroyers *Grozny* and *Bravy* were the only Russian ships to reach Vladivostok.*[45] In *The Guns of August*, the American historian and author Barbara Tuchman argued that Russia's loss destabilized the balance of power in Europe, it emboldened the Central Powers and contributed to their decision to go to war in 1914.

The battle had a profound cultural and political impact upon Japan. It was the first defeat of a European power by an Asian nation in the modern era,*[46]*[47] using the full breadth of then-modern industrial technology. It also weakened the notion of white superiority, widely accepted in Western society before that.*[48] The victory established Japan as the sixth greatest naval power*[49] while the Russian navy declined to one barely stronger than that of Austria-Hungary.*[49]

In *The Guinness Book of Decisive Battles*, the British historian Geoffrey Regan argues that the victory bolstered Japan's increasingly aggressive political and military establishment. According to Regan, the lopsided Japanese victory at Tsushima:

...created a legend that was to haunt Japan's leaders for forty years. A British admiral once said, 'It takes three years to build a ship, but 300 years to build a tradition.' Japan thought that the victory had completed this task in a matter of a few years ... It had all been too easy. Looking at Tōgō's victory over one of the world's great powers convinced some Japanese military men that with more ships, and bigger and better ones, similar victories could be won throughout the Pacific. Perhaps no power could resist the Japanese navy, not even Britain and the United States.*[43]

Regan also believes the victory contributed to the Japanese road to later disaster, "because the result was so misleading. Certainly the Japanese navy had performed well, but its opponents had been weak, and it was not invincible... Tōgō's victory [helped] set Japan on a path that would eventually lead her" to the Second World War.*[43]

Isoroku Yamamoto, the future Japanese admiral who would go on to plan the attack on Pearl Harbor and command the Imperial Japanese Navy through much of the Second World War, served as a junior officer (aboard *Nisshin*) during the battle and was wounded by Russian gunfire.

10.5.4 Dreadnought arms race

Main article: [Dreadnought](#)

Britain's **First Sea Lord**, **Admiral Fisher**, reasoned that the Japanese victory at Tsushima confirmed the importance of large guns and speed for modern battleships; ^[50]^[51] in October 1905 the British started the construction of *HMS Dreadnought*, which upon her launching in 1906 began a naval arms race between Britain and Germany in the years before 1914. ^[52] The British and Germans were both aware of the potentially devastating consequences of a naval defeat on the scale of Tsushima. Britain needed its battle fleet to protect its empire, and the trade routes vital to its war effort. Winston Churchill, then First Lord of the Admiralty, described British Admiral **John Jellicoe** as “the only man who could lose the war in an afternoon.” German naval commanders, for their part, understood the importance Kaiser **Wilhelm II** attached to his navy and the diplomatic prestige it carried. As a result of this mutual caution, the British and German fleets met in only one major action in **World War I**, the indecisive **Battle of Jutland**.

10.6 Timeline



Aurora, preserved as a museum ship in Saint Petersburg, Russia

27 May 1905 (JST)

- 04:45 The *Shinano Maru* (Japan) locates the **Russian Baltic Fleet** and sends a wireless signal.
- 05:05 The Japanese Combined Fleet leaves port and sends a wireless signal to Imperial Headquarters: “Today's weather is fine but waves are high. (Japanese: 本日天気晴朗なれども波高し)”.
- 13:39 The Japanese Combined Fleet gains visual contact with the Russian Baltic Fleet, and sends up the battle flag.
- 13:55 Distance (Range): 12,000 meters. The *Mikasa* sends up 'Z' flag. (Z flag's meaning: The Empire's fate depends on the result of this battle, let every man do his utmost duty.).



The battleship Mikasa, Admiral Tōgō's flagship at the battle of Tsushima, preserved as a memorial in Yokosuka, Japan

- 14:05 Distance (Range): 8,000 meters. The Japanese Combined Fleet turns their helm apart (i.e. starts a U-turn).
- 14:07 Distance (Range): 7,000 meters. The *Mikasa* completes her turn. The Russian Baltic Fleet opens fire with their main batteries.

- 14:10 Distance (Range): 6,400 meters. All Japanese warships complete their turns.
- 14:12 Distance (Range): 5,500 meters. The *Mikasa* receives her first hit from the Russian guns.
- 14:16 Distance (Range): 4,600 meters. The Japanese Combined Fleet begins concentrating their return fire on the Russian flagship, the *Knyaz Suvorov*.
- 14:43 The *Oslyabya* and *Knyaz Suvorov* are set on fire and fall away from the battle line.
- 14:50 The *Imperator Aleksandr III* starts turning to the north and attempts to leave the battle line.
- 15:10 The *Oslyabya* sinks, and the *Knyaz Suvorov* attempts to withdraw.
- 18:00 The two fleets counterattack each other (distance (range): 6,300 m), and begin exchanging main battery fire again.
- 19:03 The *Imperator Aleksandr III* sinks.
- 19:20 The *Knyaz Suvorov* and *Borodino* sink.

28 May 1905 (JST)

- 09:30 The Japanese Combined Fleet locates the Russian Baltic Fleet again.
- 10:34 Admiral Nebogatov signals “XGE”, which is “I surrender” in the International Code of Signals used at the time.
- 10:53 Admiral Tōgō accepts the surrender.
- Crossing the T: Japanese are in white, the Russians in red
- The *Knyaz Suvorov*, *Oslyabya*, *Imperator Aleksandr III*, and *Sissoi Veliky* breaking off from the main battle
- The first and second Japanese fleets sandwiching the Russian fleet
- The Russian ships fleeing

10.7 On film

The 1969 film *The Battle of the Japan Sea* (日本海大海戦, *Nihonkai-DaiKaisen*) depicts the battle.

- Title: *The Battle of the Japan Sea*
- Release date: 1969
- Directed by Seiji Maruyama
- Starring: Toshiro Mifune as the Admiral Tōgō
- Music by Masaru Sato
- Special effects by Eiji Tsuburaya

10.8 See also

- Naval history of Japan
- Nicholas II of Russia

10.9 Notes

- [1] During Nebogatov's court martial, his defense for surrendering his battle fleet was because his guns were out ranged by the Japanese guns
- [1] 100 Battles, *Decisive Battles that Shaped the World*, Dougherty, Martin, J., Parragon, p.144-45
- [2] Sterling, Christopher H. (2008). *Military communications: from ancient times to the 21st century*. ABC-CLIO. p. 459. ISBN 1-85109-732-5. *The naval battle of Tsushima, the ultimate contest of the 1904–1905 Russo-Japanese War, was one of the most decisive sea battles in history.*
- [3] Naval War College Press (U.S.), ed. (2009). *Joint Operational Warfare Theory and Practice and V. 2, Historical Companion*. Government Printing Office. p. V-76. ISBN 1-884733-62-X. *In retrospect, the battle of Tsushima in May 1905 was the last “decisive” naval battle in history.*
- [4] Brown p. 10
- [5] Semenoff (1907) p. ix
- [6] Morris, Edmund (2001). *Theodore Rex*. ISBN 0-394-55509-0.
- [7] Massie p. 470-480
- [8] Semenoff (1907) p. 124, 135
- [9] Busch p. 137, 138
- [10] Sondhaus 2001, p. 188.
- [11] Forczyk p. 48
- [12] Forczyk p. 26 & 54
- [13] Sondhaus 2001, p. 189.
- [14] Busch p. 214
- [15] Sondhaus 2001, p. 190.
- [16] Forczyk p. 66
- [17] Forczyk p. 33
- [18] Forczyk, p. 32
- [19] In one such trial, of the seven torpedoes fired, one jammed in the tube, two veered ninety degrees to port, one went ninety degrees to starboard, two kept a steady course but went wide of the mark, and the last went round in circles 'popping up and down like a porpoise', causing panic throughout the fleet.” Regan, Geoffrey; *The Guinness Book of Decisive Battles*, 'The Battle of Tsushima 1905', p.176
- [20] Forczyk 8, 43, 73 & back cover
- [21] Mahan p. 456
- [22] Watts p. 22
- [23] Translated by Andrew Cobbing in Shiba Ryotaro, *Clouds Above the Hill*, volume 4, p. 212. Routledge, 2013.
- [24] Admiral Togo’ s report on the Battle of Tsushima, as published by the Japanese Imperial Naval Headquarters Staff, Sept. 1905; <http://www.russojapanesewar.com/togo-aar3.html>
- [25] Koenig, *Epic Sea Battles*, p. 141.
- [26] Semenoff (1907) p. 70
- [27] Mahan p. 457, 458
- [28] Regan; *The Guinness Book of Decisive Battles-The Battle of Tsushima 1905*, pp.176–177
- [29] Regan; *The Guinness Book of Decisive Battles-The Battle of Tsushima 1905*, p.177
- [30] Mahan p. 458

- [31] Busch p. 150, 161, 163
- [32] Sondhaus 2001, p. 191.
- [33] Semenov (1907) p. 62, 63
- [34] Busch p. 159, 160
- [35] Busch p. 179
- [36] Busch p. 184
- [37] Busch p. 186
- [38] Semenov (1907) p. 63
- [39] Semenov (1907) p. 56
- [40] Forczyk p. 56, 57
- [41] Forczyk p. 43 & 73
- [42] Forczyk p. 22 & 77
- [43] Regan; *The Guinness Book of Decisive Battles-The Battle of Tsushima 1905*, p.178
- [44] Willmott 2009, p. 118.
- [45] Willmott 2009, p. 119.
- [46] Forczyk back cover
- [47] Pleshakov p. XVI
- [48] “the Impact of the Russo-Japanese War in Asia” . The American Forum for Global Education. Archived from the original on 2003-01-06. Retrieved 2010-04-25.
- [49] Sondhaus 2001, p. 192.
- [50] Massie, p. 471, 474, 480
- [51] Busch p. 215
- [52] *The Rivalry of Germany and England*, Edward Raymond Turner, The Sewanee Review, Vol. 21, No. 2 (Apr., 1913), pp. 129–147

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10.12 External links

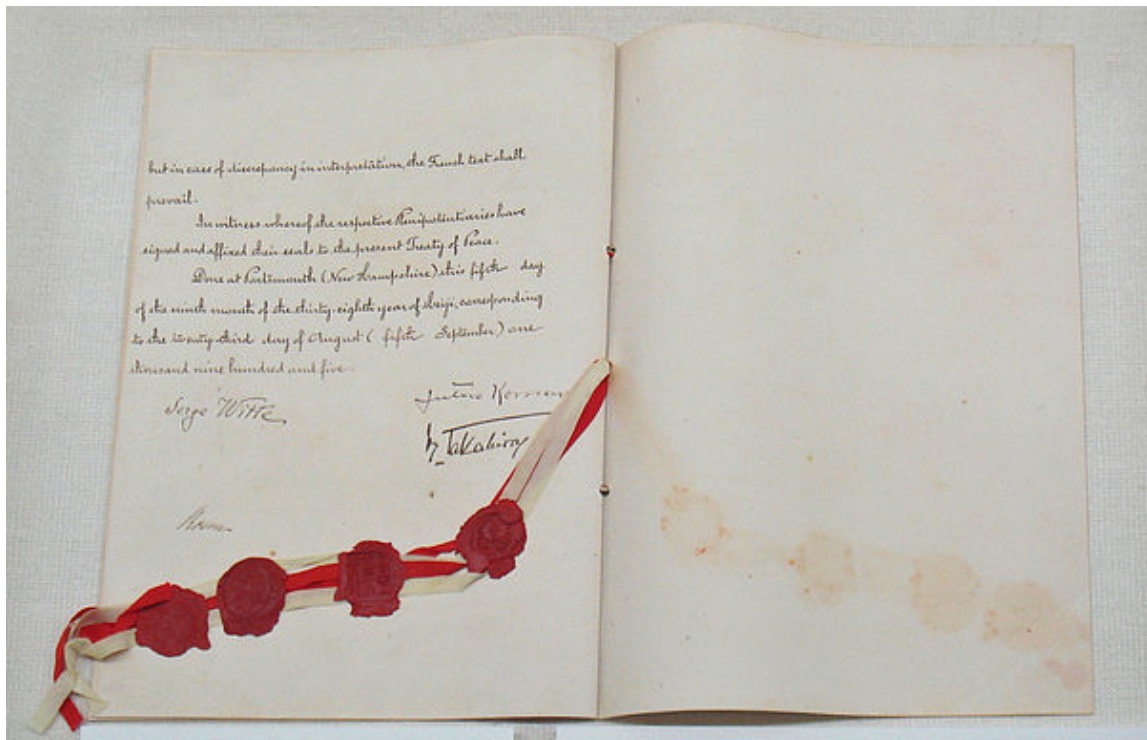
- [History.com](#)—This Day In History: The Battle of Tsushima Strait
- [Battlefleet 1900](#)—Free naval wargame rules covering the pre-dreadnought era, including the Russo-Japanese War.
- [Russojapanesewar.com](#)—Contains a complete order of battle of both fleets. It also contains Admiral Tōgō's post-battle report and the account of Russian ensign Sememov.

Chapter 11

Treaty of Portsmouth

This article is about the 1905 treaty. For the 1713 treaty, see [Treaty of Portsmouth \(1713\)](#). For the treaty between Iraq and the United Kingdom, see [Anglo-Iraqi Treaty \(1948\)](#).

The Treaty of Portsmouth formally ended the 1904–05 Russo-Japanese War. It was signed on September 5,



Japan-Russia Treaty of Peace, or “Treaty of Portsmouth” , September 5, 1905. Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan.

1905*^[1] after negotiations lasting from August 6 to August 30, at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery, Maine, in the United States. U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt was instrumental in the negotiations, and won the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts.

11.1 Background

The war of 1904–05 was fought between the [Empire of Russia](#), an international power with one of the largest armies in the world, and the [Empire of Japan](#), a nation which had only recently industrialized after two-and-a-half centuries of isolation. A series of battles in the Liaodong Peninsula had resulted in Russian armies being driven from southern Manchuria, and the [Battle of Tsushima](#) had resulted in a cataclysm for the Imperial Russian Navy. The war was



Negotiating the Treaty of Portsmouth (1905) — From left to right: The Russians at far side of table are Korostovetz, Nabokov, Witte, Rosen, and Plancon; the Japanese at near side of table are Adachi, Ochiai, Komura, Takahira, and Satō. The large conference table is today preserved at the Museum Meiji-mura in Inuyama, Aichi Prefecture, Japan.

unpopular with the Russian public, and the Russian government was under increasing threat of revolution at home. On the other hand, the Japanese economy was severely strained by the war, with rapidly mounting foreign debts, and its forces in Manchuria faced the problem of ever-extending supply lines. No Russian territory had been seized, and the Russians continued to build up reinforcements via the **Trans-Siberian Railway**. Recognizing that a long-term war was not to Japan's advantage, as early as July 1904 the Japanese government had begun seeking out intermediaries to assist in bringing the war to a negotiated conclusion.* [2]

The intermediary approached by the Japanese side was the United States President Theodore Roosevelt, who had publicly expressed a pro-Japanese stance at the beginning of the war. However, as the war progressed, Roosevelt had begun to show concerns on the strengthening military power of Japan and its impact on long-term United States interests in Asia. In February 1905, Roosevelt sent messages to the Russian government via the US ambassador to St Petersburg. Initially, the Russians were unresponsive, with Tsar **Nicholas II** still adamant that Russia would prove victorious in time. At this point, the Japanese government was also lukewarm to a peace treaty, as Japanese armies were enjoying an unbroken string of victories. However, after the **Battle of Mukden**, which was extremely costly to both sides in terms of manpower and resources, **Japanese Foreign Minister Komura Jutarō** judged that the time was now critical for Japan to push for a settlement.* [2]

On March 8, 1905, Japanese **Army Minister Terauchi Masatake** met with the American minister to Japan, **Lloyd Griscom**, to convey word to Roosevelt that Japan was ready to negotiate. However, from the Russian side, a positive response did not come until after the loss of the Russian fleet at the **Battle of Tsushima**. Two days after the battle, Tsar **Nicholas II** met with his grand dukes and military leadership and agreed to discuss peace. On June 7, 1905, Roosevelt met with **Kaneko Kentarō**, a Japanese diplomat, and on June 8 received a positive reply from Russia. Roosevelt chose **Portsmouth, New Hampshire**, as the site for the negotiations, primarily due to its climate being cooler than that of Washington, D.C.* [2]

11.2 Portsmouth Peace Conference

The Japanese delegation to the Portsmouth Peace Conference was led by Foreign Minister Komura Jutarō, assisted by ambassador to Washington **Takahira Kogorō**. The Russian delegation was led by former Finance Minister **Sergei Witte**, assisted by former ambassador to Japan **Roman Rosen** and international law and arbitration specialist **Friedrich**

Martens.*[3] The delegations arrived in Portsmouth on August 8 and stayed in New Castle, New Hampshire, at the Hotel Wentworth (where the armistice was signed), and were ferried across the Piscataqua River each day to the naval base in Kittery, Maine, where the negotiations were held.

The negotiations took place at the General Stores Building (now Building 86). Mahogany furniture patterned after the Cabinet Room of the White House was ordered from Washington.

Before the negotiations began Tsar Nicholas had adopted a hard line, forbidding his delegates to agree to any territorial concessions, reparations, or limitations on the deployment of Russian forces in the Far East.*[2] The Japanese initially demanded recognition of their interests in Korea, the removal of all Russian forces from Manchuria, and substantial reparations. They also wanted confirmation of their control of Sakhalin, which Japanese forces had seized in July 1905, partly for use as a bargaining chip in the negotiations.*[2]

A total of twelve sessions were held between August 9 and August 30. During the first eight sessions, the delegates were able to reach an agreement on eight points. These included an immediate cease fire, recognition of Japan's claims to Korea, and the evacuation of Russian forces from Manchuria. Russia was also required to return its leases in southern Manchuria (containing Port Arthur and Talien) to China, and to turn over the South Manchuria Railway and its mining concessions to Japan. Russia was allowed to retain the Chinese Eastern Railway in northern Manchuria.*[2]

The remaining four sessions addressed the most difficult issues, those of reparations and territorial concessions. On August 18, Roosevelt proposed that Rosen offer to divide the island of Sakhalin to address the territory issue. On August 23, however, Witte proposed that the Japanese keep Sakhalin and drop their claims for reparations. When Komura rejected this proposal, Witte warned that he was instructed to cease negotiations and that the war would resume. This ultimatum came as four new Russian divisions arrived in Manchuria, and the Russian delegation made an ostentatious show of packing their bags and preparing to depart.*[3] Witte was convinced that the Japanese could not afford to restart the war, and applied pressure via the American media and his American hosts*[3] to convince the Japanese that monetary compensation was something that Russia would never compromise on.*[4] Outmaneuvered by Witte, Komura yielded, and in exchange for the southern half of Sakhalin the Japanese dropped their claims for reparations.*[2]

The Treaty of Portsmouth was signed on September 5. The treaty was ratified by the Japanese Privy Council on October 10,*[5] and in Russia on October 14, 1905.

11.3 Effects

The signing of the treaty settled immediate difficulties in the Far East and created three decades of peace between the two nations. The treaty confirmed Japan's emergence as the pre-eminent power in East Asia, and forced Russia to abandon its expansionist policies there, but it was not well received by the Japanese people.*[6] The Japanese public was aware of their country's unbroken string of military victories over the Russians, but was less aware of the precarious overextension of military and economic power these victories had required. News of the terms of the treaty appeared to show Japanese weakness in front of the European powers, and this frustration caused the Hibiya riots, and the collapse of Katsura Tarō's cabinet on January 7, 1906.*[2]

Because of the role played by President Theodore Roosevelt, the United States became a significant force in world diplomacy. Roosevelt was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1906 for his back channel efforts before and during the peace negotiations, even though he never actually went to Portsmouth.

- Treaty Building in 1912
- Envoy reception
- Key to envoy reception
- Hotel Wentworth, c. 1906

11.4 Commemoration

In 1994, the Portsmouth Peace Treaty Forum was created by the Japan-America Society of New Hampshire to commemorate the Portsmouth Peace Treaty with the first formal meeting between Japanese and Russian scholars and diplomats in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, since the negotiation of the Portsmouth Peace Treaty in 1905. As



Ratification of the Peace Treaty between Japan and Russia, November 25, 1905

the Treaty of Portsmouth is considered one of the most powerful symbols of peace in the Northern Pacific region and the most significant, shared peace history for Japan, Russia and the United States, the Forum was designed to explore from the Japanese, Russian and American perspectives, the history of the Portsmouth Peace Treaty and its relevance to current issues involving the Northern Pacific region. The Forum is intended to focus modern scholarship on international problems in the “spirit of the Portsmouth Peace Treaty”.

11.5 Notes

- [1] “Text of Treaty; Signed by the Emperor of Japan and Czar of Russia”, *New York Times*. October 17, 1905.
- [2] Kowner, *Historical Dictionary of the Russo-Japanese War*, p. 300-304.
- [3] Jukes, *The Russo-Japanese War 1904-1905*, p. 86-90.
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11.7 External links

- The Treaty of Portsmouth, 1905, Russo-Japanese War (actual text)
- Portsmouth Peace Treaty website of the Japan-America Society of New Hampshire
- The Museum Meiji Mura
- Imperial rescript endorsing the treaty of Portsmouth (from the National Archives of Japan)

Chapter 12

Military attachés and observers in the Russo-Japanese War



Western military attachés and war correspondents with the Japanese forces after the Battle of Shaho (1904): 1. Robert Collins; 2. David Fraser; 3. Capt. Adalbert Dáni von Gyarmata; 4. Capt. James Jardine; 5. Frederick McKenzie; 6. Edward Knight; 7. Charles Victor-Thomas; 8. Oscar Davis; 9. William Maxwell; 10. Robert MacHugh; 11. William Dinwiddie; 12. Frederick Palmer; 13. Capt. Berkeley Vincent; 14. John Bass; 15. Martin Donohoe; 16. Capt. ____; 17. Capt. Max Hoffmann; 18. ____; 19. ____; 20. ____; 21. Gen. Sir Ian Hamilton; 22. ____; 23. ____; 24. ____; 25. ____.

Military attachés and observers in the Russo-Japanese War were historians creating first-hand accounts of what was arguably the world's first modern war.*[1] They helped to create primary-source records of this war between Imperial Russian forces and Imperial Japan forces, which has been characterized by some as a rehearsal for the **First World War**.*[2]

12.1 Overview

Main article: [Russo-Japanese War](#)

The multi-national military attachés and observers who took part in the **Russo-Japanese War** were expressly engaged in collecting data and analyzing the interplay between tactics, strategy, and technical advances in weapons and machines of modern warfare. For example, reports evaluating the **stationary battle** at **Port Arthur** and the **maneuver battle** at

Mukden demonstrate the lethality of modern warfare and foreshadow the combined effects of hand grenades, mortars, machine guns, and field artillery in World War I.*[2]



Japanese Minister of the Navy Admiral Yamamoto visiting the captured city of Dalny, just north of Port Arthur, in December 1904. Accompanying the Minister were several Western observers, including Italian naval attaché Ernesto Burzagli, who photographed the inspection tour.

Military and civilian observers from every major power closely followed the course of the war. Most were able to report on events from a perspective somewhat like what is now termed "embedded" positions within the land and naval forces of both Russia and Japan. These military attachés, naval attachés and other observers prepared voluminous first-hand accounts of the war and analytical papers. In-depth observer narratives of the war and more narrowly focused professional journal articles were written soon after the war; and these post-war reports conclusively illustrated the battlefield destructiveness of this conflict. This was the first time the tactics of entrenched positions for infantry defended with machine guns and artillery became vitally important, and both were factors which came to dominate in World War I.*[2]

From a 21st-century perspective, it is now apparent that tactical lessons which were available to the observer nations were disregarded or not used in the preparations for war in Europe and during the course of World War I.*[2]

In 1904-1905, Sir Ian Hamilton was the military attaché of the Indian Army serving with the Japanese army in Manchuria. As the attaché to arrive earliest in Japan,*[3] he was recognized as the dean of the group. Also amongst the Western attachés observing the conflict were the future Lord Nicholson, Chief of the Imperial General Staff; John J. Pershing, later General of the Armies and head of the American Expeditionary Force in the First World War; Douglas MacArthur, later a United States General of the Army; and Enrico Caviglia, later Marshal of Italy.

Press coverage of the war was affected by restrictions on the movement of reporters and strict censorship. In all military conflicts which followed this 1904-1905 war, close attention to more managed reporting was considered essential by the Japanese.*[4] These concerns were considered inessential by the Russian command. The Russian press frequently revealed information deemed crucial by the opposing commanders; and the Japanese profited from the lack of military censorship on the Russian side. Information gathered from Russian newspapers was telegraphed by the Japanese military attaché in the Japanese embassy in Berlin; and it was received by the Japanese armies in Manchuria within six days.*[5]

The Russian war artist Vasili Vereshchagin was invited by Admiral Stepan Makarov to observe the war aboard Makarov's flagship *Petropavlovsk*. On April 13, 1904, the warship hit mines near Port Arthur; and nearly all aboard were killed. Vereshchagin's last work was recovered. The salvaged canvas depicted a council of war presided over by Admiral Makarov.*[6]



Map showing movement of the Japanese 3rd Army.

12.2 Selected military attachés serving with Russian forces

This is a [dynamic list](#) and may never be able to satisfy particular standards for completeness. You can help by [expanding it with reliably sourced entries](#).

12.2.1 Russian Imperial Army

American observers

- Capt. [Sydney Cloman](#), U.S.* [\[7\]](#)
- Capt. [William V. Judson](#), U.S.* [\[8\]](#) Captain William Judson arrived in St. Petersburg in early 1904. He was eventually attached to the Russian Army in Manchuria and was captured by the Japanese at the Battle of Mukden on March 10, 1905. He was returned to the United States by the Japanese.* [\[9\]](#)

Judson's initial prediction about the Russians' chances was positive. In a letter to the U.S. Ambassador dated July 26, 1904, he explained that the Russians were doing better than expected and believed within a few weeks they would have no reason to fear the Japanese any longer. He did cite that the war was not popular among Russian troops, but he felt their attitudes would change when the army went on the offensive.* [\[10\]](#) Upon moving to Manchuria, Judson's opinion of the situation began to change. In a letter to the U.S. ambassador dated October 25, 1904, he described the tactical situation as a stalemate and was not certain as to which side would be victorious.* [\[11\]](#)

Judson was shocked at the carnage produced by modern warfare. He said in his official report, "I saw one battle in which the Russian slain outnumbered the Union dead on twelve of the greatest battlefields of the Civil War."* [\[12\]](#) Judson believed future wars would prove so costly that even victors would not be able to justify waging them. He viewed the Russo-Japanese War as conflict without a clear winner. According to Judson, both combatants were

anxious to seek peace and had little to show for their efforts. He concluded that in order for the U.S. to promote peace, it must exercise diligence in preparing for war and be prepared for an international call for disarmament.*[13]

- Col. Valery Havard U.S. - Colonel Valery Havard, an Assistant Surgeon General in the United States Army, arrived in St. Petersburg as a military attaché on December 7, 1904. He arrived at the front in Manchuria on February 8, 1905.*[14] After being embedded with Russian forces just over a month, Havard was captured by Japanese forces at the Battle of Mukden. Upon reaching Tokyo he was sent back to the United States.*[15]

The purpose of Colonel Havard's observations was to ascertain important information about the changing battlefield and how to apply it to the Army Medical Corps. In his official report, Havard compiled a list of lessons learned from the Russo-Japanese experience. He noted the lack of frontal assaults that were the result of improved weaponry, particularly the machine gun. Flanking movements became more necessary to avoid the machine gun, which necessitated increased frequency and distance of forced marches. In previous wars, soldiers were able to rest at night and armies saw little action during winter months. Both practices had become antiquated. Attacks were often ordered at night and the waging of war never ceased, even in sub-zero temperatures. According to Havard, the result of these trends was soldiers experiencing an increased amount of battle fatigue, as well as resurgence in the usefulness of the bayonet in night assaults.*[16] The Japanese claimed seven percent of their casualties resulted from bayonet wounds.*[17]

According to Havard, casualty trends were changing with the employment of modern weaponry. Hard-jacketed rifle bullets were deadly at greater ranges. Despite this fact, the number of soldiers killed in action by the rifle diminished due to the increased effectiveness of artillery. The advancements in field artillery technology made it necessary for battle lines to be farther apart, resulting in rifles being outside of their effective ranges. The increased accuracy of modern artillery pieces led to increased ratios of artillery casualties. In some battles during the war, fifty percent of casualties were the result of artillery fire. Havard claimed that during Russo-Japanese War, both belligerents experienced higher levels of casualties than had been noted in earlier wars, with a great ratio of killed to wounded. According to Havard, one out of every four soldiers wounded during the conflict died from their wounds.*[18]

Because of his observations in Manchuria, Havard recommended changes to the U.S. Army's Medical Corps. He suggested the war department devise a plan to train and mobilize large numbers of medical personnel for war and to promote the development of civilian organizations like the Red Cross. Because of the increased number of casualties resulting from modern weaponry, Havard stressed the significance of training enlisted soldiers in assisting medical officers in field hospitals. He also spoke to the importance of devising an adequate evacuation system from the battlefield to military hospitals. He explained that railroads were of important in this process. Havard also advocated the implementation of telephone technology in order for hospital staff to have quick access to information from the battle.*[19]

British observers

- Gen. Montagu Gerard, Indian Army*[20]
- Maj. J. M. Horne, UK.*[21]
- Col. W. H. W. Waters, Indian Army*[22]

Other observers

- Capt. Nils Edlund, Sweden*[23]
- Capt. Carl von Hoffman, Germany.*[24]
- Capt. Oskar Nyqvist, Norway*[23]

12.2.2 Russian Imperial Navy

- Somerset Arthur Gough-Calthorpe, UK (1904–1905).*[25]
- Lieutenant Dimitur Dobrev, Bulgaria, present at Tsushima*[26]

12.3 Selected military attachés serving with Japanese forces

This is a [dynamic list](#) and may never be able to satisfy particular standards for completeness. You can help by [expanding it with reliably sourced entries](#).

12.3.1 Japanese Imperial Army



Japanese General Kuroki Tamemoto and his staff were photographed with Western military attachés and war correspondent observers after the [Battle of Shaho](#) (1904). The most senior of the military attachés, Gen. Sir Ian Hamilton, center, stands with left hand in a coat pocket and a stick tucked under his right arm.

American observers

- 1Lt. [Granville Roland Fortescue](#), US Army*[\[27\]](#)
- Maj. [Joseph Kuhn](#), US Army*[\[28\]](#)*[\[29\]](#)
- MG. [Arthur MacArthur, Jr.](#), U.S.A*[\[30\]](#)
- 1Lt. [Douglas MacArthur](#), US Army
- Capt. [Peyton C. March](#), US Army*[\[28\]](#)*[\[31\]](#)
- [Anita Newcomb McGee](#)*[\[32\]](#)
- Capt. [John J. Pershing](#), US Army*[\[33\]](#) Captain John Pershing arrived in Tokyo as an attaché to the Japanese Army on March 5, 1905. At that time he claimed the outcome of the war was uncertain, as both sides were bogged down after months of indecisive fighting. During his first days in the country, the Japanese achieved a pivotal victory at the Battle of Mukden. According to his memoirs, the way the Japanese celebrated led him to believe they had actually expected defeat at the hands of the Russians.*[\[34\]](#) Pershing's observations as an attaché were significant because they provided a first-hand account from the perspective of a company grade officer who had previously seen combat during the Indian Wars and the Spanish–American War.

According to Captain Pershing, the military attachés assigned to the Japanese were treated like royalty when possible. When not in the field, servants were provided and they were given the best provisions available. When they were embedded with the army, the Japanese exercised due diligence in ensuring their safety from battlefield dangers.

Eventually Pershing complained of the overprotective measures employed by his hosts. When he attempted to write to his Army superiors about his dissatisfaction, the Japanese intercepted his correspondence and responded by allowing him more freedom to move about with Japanese troops. On occasion Pershing was present with Japanese cavalry reconnaissance patrols during minor skirmishes with Russian forces.*[35]

In his memoirs, Pershing noted that most American observers were surprised at the tactical success experienced by the Japanese during the war. He explained that the world military minds held the Russian Army in high regard ever since its defeat of Napoleon's Grande Armée almost a century earlier. Though he praised the Japanese for their achievements, he felt they were not as significant as future history books might claim. In his estimation, the Japanese had defeated one of the poorest armies in Europe. The Russians lacked the proper equipment and organization to achieve victory against a modern power. He believed these shortfalls were compounded by the lack of motivation in the Russian ranks, caused by internal domestic strife. The war ended with both the Japanese and the Russians eager to seek peace. Pershing felt that if the war had continued, the Russians may have gained an upper hand as resupply of Japanese troops in Manchuria had become more difficult at the end of hostilities.*[36]

- **Louis Seaman** wrote a book entitled *The Real Triumph of Japan* describing the Imperial Japanese Army Medical Department's success in preventing infectious diseases, especially in relation to casualties sustained. Seaman later wrote, "The supreme test of an army's medical organization comes, of course, in time of battle. The severer the clash of arms, the greater is the strain made upon the medical organization. In no great battle in history has the medical organization proven adequate to the demands made upon it; but the best record ever made in that direction, embodying as it did an approach to perfection, was that of the Japanese in the war with Russia." Seaman's praise, intended to push reforms of the U.S. Army Medical Department, overlooked the reasons for the apparent success by the Japanese Medical Department. Seaman noted that although wartime soldiers throughout the nineteenth century were generally more likely to die from disease rather than from combat trauma, eight percent of the Japanese army died from enemy fire while less than two percent died from disease. However, he attributed the success to Japanese efficiency and did not consider other factors that may have affected the statistics.*[37]

British observers

- **Richard Bannatine-Allason**, UK.*[38]
- **Capt. Alexander Bannerman**, UK*[39]
- **Maj. Aylmer Haldane**, UK
- **LTG. Ian Standish Monteith Hamilton**, Indian Army.*[20]
- **Capt. Arthur Henry Seton Hart-Synnot**, UK*[40]
- **Col. John Hoad**, Australia.*[41]
- **Col. C. V. Hume**, UK*[20]
- **Capt. James Bruce Jardine**, UK*[42]
- **LTG. William Nicholson**, 1st Baron Nicholson, UK
- **Capt. Herbert Cyril Thacker**, Canada.*[43]
- **Col. John Walter Graham Tulloch**, Indian Army.*[44]
- **Capt. Berkeley Vincent**, UK*[45]

French observers

- **Charles Pierre René Victoire Corvisart**, France.*[28]
- **François de Négrier**, France.*[46]
- **Charles-Émile Bertin**, France.*[47]

German observers

- Gunther von Etzel, Germany. * [48]
- Max Hoffmann, Germany. * [28]

Austro-Hungarian observers

- Adalbert Dáni von Gyarmata * [49]
- Erwin Franz * [50]

Italian observers

- Enrico Caviglia, Italy. * [28]

Ottoman observers

- Colonel Pertev Bey, Ottoman Empire * [51]

Swedish observers

- Peter Hegardt, Sweden * [23]

12.3.2 Japanese Imperial Navy



Italian naval attaché Ernesto Burzagli aboard a Japanese naval vessel at Yokohama en route to Port Arthur during the Russo-Japanese War (1904).

- Ernesto Burzagli, Italy. * [52]
- William Pakenham, UK * [53]
- Ernest Charles Thomas Troubridge, UK * [54]

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- Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett, *The Times* (London), * [4] *Daily Telegraph*. * [55]
- Maurice Baring, *The Morning Post* (London). * [56]
- Richard Barry, * [57] *Eastern Illustrated War News*. * [58]
- Luigi Barzini, Sr., *Corriere della Sera* (Milan). * [59]
- John Poster Bass, *Chicago Daily News*. * [60]
- Stephen Bonsal, New York *Herald*. * [55]
- Eugen Binder-Kriegelstein, *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger* (Berlin Local Advertiser). * [61]
- W. H. Brill, Associated Press and Reuter's Telegraph Agency. * [58]
- _____ Brindle, *Daily Mail* (London). * [62]
- Francis Brinkley, *The Times*. * [63]
- Bennet Burleigh, *Daily Telegraph* (London). * [55]
- Robert Moore Collins, Reuters. * [64]
- Franklin Clarkin, *New York Post*. * [58]
- J. M. Cockran, *Leslie's Weekly*. * [58]
- Oscar King Davis, *New York Herald*. * [60]
- Richard Harding Davis, *Collier's*. * [55]
- Georges de la Salle, *Agence Havas* (Paris). * [65]
- George Denny, Associated Press (New York). * [66]
- William Dinwiddie, *New York Herald*. * [55]
- William Henry Donald, *New York Herald*. * [67]
- Martin Henry Donohoe, *Daily Chronicle* (London). * [60]
- James H. Dunn, New York *Globe*. * [4]
- Edwin Emerson. * [4]
- Lewis Etzel, *Daily Telegraph* (London). * [55]
- John Fox, Jr., *Scribner's Magazine*. * [58]
- David Stewart Fraser, *The Times*. * [39]
- _____ Froissart. * [68]
- Lord Brooke, Reuters (London). * [69]
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- Charles E. Hands, *Daily Mail*. * [66]

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- Franz von Jessen.* [71]
- George Kennan, *The Outlook*.* [58]
- Edward Frederick Knight, *Morning Post*.* [55]
- _____ Konishi, *Asahi shimbun* (Osaka).* [72]
- Wilmott Harsant Lewis,* [55] a/k/a William Lewis (war correspondent), *New York Herald*.* [58]
- Richard H. Little, *Chicago Daily News*.* [61]
- Jack London, *Collier's*, *New York Herald*, *Harper's Magazine*, *San Francisco Examiner*, Hearst Press,* [4] *New York Journal*.* [55]
- Robert Joseph MacHugh, *Daily Telegraph*.* [60]
- William Maxwell, *The Standard* (London).* [55]
- Frederick McCormick, Associate Press.* [55]
- John T. McCutcheon, *Chicago Tribune*.* [55]
- Francis McCullagh, *New York Herald*;* [73] *Manchester Guardian*.* [59]
- Frederick Arthur McKenzie, *Daily Mail*.* [74]
- Henry Middleton, Associated Press.* [55]
- Thomas Franklin Fairfax Millard, *New York Herald*.* [55]
- W. G. Morgan, *New York Tribune*.* [58]
- Ludovic Naudeau, *Le Journal* (Paris).* [61]
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12.7 See also

- Military attachés and war correspondents in the First World War
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12.8 Text and image sources, contributors, and licenses

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